

Activity: Propagation Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: All

## TH Activity Plan – Starting Jade Plant in Soil

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**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will propagate jade plant (*Crassula Ovata*) houseplant from cuttings.

**THERAPEUTIC GOALS:**

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Learn houseplant names & information, propagation techniques & plant part names; practice sequential steps for successful plant propagation

**Physical:** Practice fine motor skills & hand eye coordination

**Psychological/Emotional:** Consider how new beginnings occur in plants & humans

**Sensory:** Sensitize self/sensory exposure to textures of plants & mixing soil with bare hands; practice tactile sensory tolerance

**Social:** Share tools and materials with fellow participants

**Materials**

**For each participant:**

Jade plant cuttings at least three inches long

Small pots (2-4")

Pre-moistened soil-less potting mix

Scoops or large spoons

Optional: dowel/pencil, gloves, wipes

Small dishes, trays or potting tides

Stick labels - one per pot

Marker

Watering can/squeeze bottles  
Water

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:**

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Plan for each participant to have three jade plant cuttings. Prepare soil-less mix & water.
2. Facilitator begins session by demonstrating the vegetative propagation procedure that is very effective with jade plants.
3. Moisten soil mix if necessary and mix thoroughly.
4. Using scoops or spoons participants fill each pot with pre-moistened soil mix to the rim, tapping pot gently on table to help soil settle.
5. Participants write their name, plant name and date on label and place in pot.
6. Using a pencil, dowel or finger, participants make (3) three 1/4 inch deep holes into each pot for the cuttings.
7. Place cuttings into the holes and gently firm the soil around the base of the plant.
8. Use the watering can or squeeze bottles to gently water the entire pot until water runs out of the bottom of the pot.
9. Place plants in filtered sunlight or under grow lights. Keep slightly damp and warm. Do not cover. Do not over water.

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** For participants with cognitive deficits or developmental delays, some of the propagation tasks can be done ahead: pre-fill pots, have cuttings ready, pre-moisten and mix soil, have water ready, make the holes for the cuttings and make labels. If participants are able to complete the propagation process independently, they can assume additional responsibilities by helping others with any of tasks

including assisting in getting water, setting and cleaning up, and taking cuttings off a mother plant.

The therapeutic goals in the cognitive intellectual domain and the psychological domain can complement one another in this activity. Participants can expand their horticultural knowledge at whatever level is appropriate as they consider new beginnings, including creating new jade plants. Using new plants as a metaphor for a new beginning, discussions, questions, and even puzzles can prompt how humans can have new beginnings. For school aged children and youth, this can be the start of a new school year, school or activity. It can also address changes in family structures, recovery after accidents, new medical or neurodevelopmental diagnoses, or career exploration in the horticulture sector.

For other populations, new beginnings might mean life-affirming activities after surgery, near death experiences, death of loved ones, recovery from addiction, or complex trauma. These span many populations involved in therapeutic horticulture and the activity and discussions can be tailored to individual and/or group specifics (Columbia University, 2023). New beginnings for someone in recovery will be quite different than for someone recently released from a correctional facility (Bonterra, 2021). However, jade plant propagation can represent new beginnings, with literal new growth occurring, with meaning and applications for each situation or circumstance. This versatile TH activity can deliver in a variety of ways: improve client outcomes; new plants for individuals to take home and nurture; new plants for program needs; plant donations to other organizations; or for fundraising purposes.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitator is responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts.** Facilitator and participants need to use caution whenever using sharps. Participants with memory challenges including dementia, should be closely supervised for potential ingestion of soil or cuttings.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** Jade plants have interesting background and history. Originating in southern Africa, it was in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that Dutch explorers introduced jade plant to Europe (Pore, 2023). In African and Chinese herbal medicine jade has been used for skin and stomach ailments though it is *not recommended here*. Jade is considered to give off nourishing *qi* or vital energy, with many incorporating the custom of having a jade plant inside a home or business for good luck.

#### **REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:**

- Bonterra. (2021). 4 elements of successful reentry programs for inmates.  
<https://www.bonterratech.com/blog/successful-reentry-programs>
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- Everything Plants. (2019). [How to grow a jade plant from branch and leaf cuttings](#). [YouTube].
- Pore, J. (2023). The auspicious arrival of the jade: Herald of good fortune. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.  
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Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.