

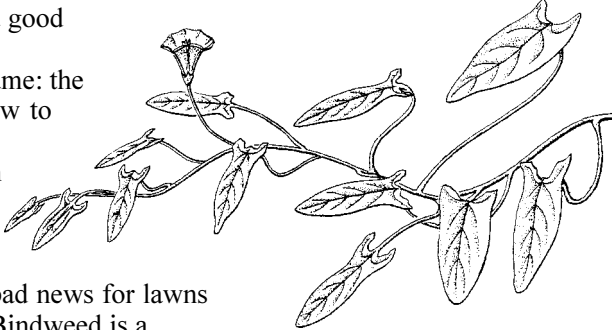


Horticulture

Propagation of Shrubs from Softwood Cuttings

Bindweed Season is Here

There is a good reason behind bindweed's name: the stems can grow to eight feet, intertwining in and among other plants.



Bindweed is bad news for lawns and gardens. Bindweed is a perennial that quickly spreads by seed and runners. The roots may grow to 20 feet deep.

Two things will help rid the lawn and garden of this diligent plant, old fashioned pulling and a 2,4-D product. Pulling can help eliminate bindweed if it is pulled close to the ground and it is not seeding. Bindweed develops dark seeds usually July through September. It can, however, produce seed as early as June. If the plant is seeding, pulling it will

further spread the seed.

Pulling is unlikely to get rid of all bindweed. When it is detected in the yard, begin your spray program. Apply herbicide treatment in the morning when a sunny day is forecast. Keep children and pets away from sprayed weeds until there is no visible liquid on them. Reapplication of the herbicide will probably be necessary in two weeks. Always follow herbicide label directions. (MJF)

Night Blooming Flowers Offer Evening Enjoyment

During the day, most people are hard at work and don't have time to enjoy their gardens. Evenings may be the only time you get a chance to sit back and relax. What could be more relaxing at the end of a long day than a fragrant, luminous garden?

Gardens designed for evening enjoyment are called moon gardens. Plants used in moon gardens have one or more of the following characteristics: evening bloom time, fragrance and white flowers or foliage.

Plants that bloom in the late afternoon or night allow for evening enjoyment. Fragrant flowers provide aromatherapy at the end of a hard day. Illuminated only by moonlight, white or pale flowers and foliage add an celestial quality to a garden.

Several night-blooming flowers that are ideal for a moon garden are listed below. Night blooming flowers rely on a strong fragrance, rather than bright colors, to attract pollinators. Other plant possibilities for a moon garden include artemesia, lamb's ear, fragrant roses, dusty miller and white flowered annuals and perennials.

MOONFLOWER (*Ipomea alba*) This fragrant flowering vine has large heart shaped leaves. Showy flowers open in the evening and last until the next morning. Moonflowers have a sweet fragrance and can be up to 5 to 6 inches across. Closely related to morning glory, this quick growing annual may climb up to 15 feet. Although it takes a longer and warmer soil conditions to become established, it is every bit as vigorous as the morning glory.

FOURO'CLOCKS (*Mirabilis jalapa*) This flower is appropriately named. Its blossoms open in late afternoon,



Four O'Clocks

scentsing the air with a sweet fragrance before closing the next morning. Plants grow up to 3-foot tall with a bushy habit and blossom continuously from late spring through fall. The 1-inch trumpet-shaped flowers come in shades of red, yellow, white or rose.

YUCCA (*Yucca filamentosa*) Flowers of this spiky perennial are open all day but at night the droopy blossoms lift and release a soapy smell. Yucca is a broad leaved evergreen that forms a low cluster of long, pointed leaves. During the growing season, a long stalk will grow up to 6 feet tall and produce large numbers of white bell shaped flowers. Once established it may be difficult to remove from the landscape. Yucca is hardy in zones 4 to 9.

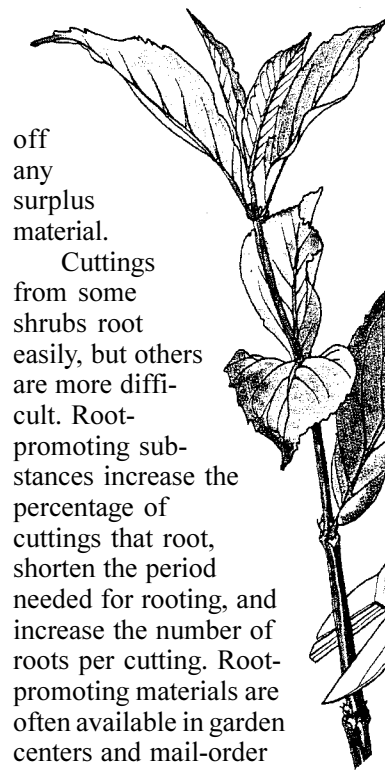
FLOWERING TOBACCO (*Nicotiana glauca*) *Nicotiana* is an annual plant that produces fragrant, tubular flowers that open in evening. Flowers are borne on draping branches and come in pink, purple, red, white and yellow. Plants grow in any garden soil and prefer full sun to partial shade. (MJF)

Many ornamental shrubs in the home landscape may be propagated by softwood cuttings. Softwood cuttings are taken in late May through early July from the current season's growth. Cutting material should be flexible but mature enough to snap when sharply bent. Lilac, forsythia, weigela, barberry, potentilla and viburnum are some of the shrubs that may be propagated from softwood cuttings.

A proper rooting medium is needed to successfully root softwood cuttings. The rooting medium must not only retain moisture but also drain well and provide physical support. Coarse sand, perlite, and vermiculite are good rooting materials.

The container that holds the rooting medium must have holes in the bottom for drainage. If only a few cuttings are taken, a large clay or plastic pot should be adequate. A wooden or plastic flat may be used if larger quantities are rooted. Once the container has been filled, the medium should be watered and allowed to drain before the cuttings are inserted.

When taking cuttings, remove plant material with a sharp knife. Softwood cuttings should be approximately 4 to 6 inches long. Pinch off the leaves on the lower half of the cutting. Also remove any flowers. Make a fresh cut just below the point where one or two leaves are attached to the stem (node), then dip the base (cut end) of the cutting in a root-promoting compound. Tap



off any surplus material.

Cuttings from some shrubs root easily, but others are more difficult. Root-promoting substances increase the percentage of cuttings that root, shorten the period needed for rooting, and increase the number of roots per cutting. Root-promoting materials are often available in garden centers and mail-order companies. Most products are in powder form.

To avoid brushing off the powder when inserting the cuttings, make holes in the rooting medium with your finger or a pencil. Insert the cuttings approximately 2 inches deep into the rooting medium. After all the cuttings are inserted, carefully water the medium and let it drain.

Water is critical to the survival of the cuttings. A cutting has no root system to absorb water, yet continues to lose water through its leaves. The cutting will wilt and die if it loses a large quantity of water. Water loss can be reduced by placing a clear plastic bag over the cuttings and container.

Once covered, place the cuttings in bright light, but not direct sunlight. Inspect the cuttings daily. Water the rooting medium if it begin to dry.

Rooting of most deciduous shrubs should occur in six to eight weeks.

Examine a few cuttings after four or five weeks. Carefully dig up several cuttings to check on root development. If rooting is poor, place the cuttings back in the medium, water them

in, then cover again with a plastic bag. When the cuttings have a well-developed root system, they should be hardened off in preparation for transplanting. Remove the covering but don't allow the cuttings to wilt. Keep the rooting medium moist. After several days, carefully remove the cuttings and transplant them into individual pots with a good potting mix. The young plants can be planted into the ground in a few weeks. Home gardeners may want to grow them in the garden for one or two years before moving the small shrubs to their permanent site in the landscape.

It takes several years for rooted cuttings to become nice-sized plants. However, many gardeners find rooting cuttings and growing the small shrubs to be fun and rewarding. (MJF)

2002 June/July Garden Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 Plug Zoysiagrass	4	5 Watch for cabbage worms	6 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	7 Power rake zoysiagrass	1/8
9	10 Control apple maggot	11	12 Apply fungicide to pines for needle blight	13 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	14	15 Check bluegrass for sod web worm
16	17 Control bagworms	18 Prune spring flowering shrubs	19 Watch for bean leaf beetle	20 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	21	22
23	24 Watch for squash vine borer	25	26 Check roses for black spot	27 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	28	29
30	1 Control bean leaf beetle	2 Remove faded flowers from annual plants	3 Check garden plants for spider mites	4 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	5	6 Plant fall garden
7	8 Control squash vine borer	9 Check tomatoes for blight	10	11 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	12 Pull weeds	13
14	15 Keep garden well watered	16	17 Pick flowers to dry or press	18 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	19	20
21	22	23 Divide iris	24 Prune suckers on maple tree	25 Backyard Farmer 7 p.m. NETV	26	27
28	29 Store extra seeds	30	31 Turn compost pile			

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MJF)