

Grow More Lilacs: Easy Propagation from Suckers



Grow Your Own Lilac Magic: Propagating Lilacs from Suckers!

Hello fellow garden enthusiasts! Have you ever wished you could have a lilac just like the one in Grandma's garden? Well, I have some exciting news! Propagating lilacs from suckers is the easiest little trick ever! And guess what? Spring is the *perfect* time to do it! The soil's all nice and moist, easy to dig, and those lilacs are practically begging to send out new shoots.

Today, we're diving into the wonderful world of lilac propagation using suckers, or shoots! You're going to love this because it's super simple, and before you know it, you'll have a brand new lilac to call your own!

All you need is a sharp shovel, a bucket of water, and of course, a lilac to harvest from. Ready to get started? Let's get digging!

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Why Suckers are the Secret to Speedy Lilacs

Why choose suckers over cuttings? Well, propagating from suckers is quick and easy. You're guaranteed a brand new lilac that'll burst into bloom way faster than if you started from cuttings.

Speaking of cuttings, my "How to Grow Lilacs" and "How to Root Lilacs from Cuttings" posts are super popular every spring, so it seems like we all have a special place in our hearts for these beauties.

And the best part? Propagating from suckers gives you a brand-new plant that's a *perfect clone* of the parent!

Oh, and be sure to check out the video at the end of this post – you can watch me in action digging up a sucker from my obliging neighbor's gorgeous lilac!

Important FYI: This won't work if your lilac is a grafted variety, so take a quick peek at the trunk. About 6 inches to a foot above the ground, do you see a knobby area where the bark changes? If so, it's grafted, and the suckers won't be true to the top part of the plant.

Speaking of gardening, planting in the proper garden zone is important!

What are Lilac Suckers Anyway?

Suckers are those little shoots that pop up around the base of

your lilac. Some people see them as a bit of a nuisance, whacking them off with the mower or weed wacker but, hold on, suckers are your best friend.

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Check out this gorgeous white lilac in a friend's yard. She was kind enough to let me dig up all the suckers I wanted!

It might take a good sharp shovel and a little bit of muscle, but trust me, it's not too tough.

Look for suckers that are far enough away from the main bush that you can get in there with your shovel and maneuver a bit.

The soil around this lilac was crazy compacted, so I didn't get as much root with the suckers as I'd have liked, but it still worked! If your soil is nice and loose around the base, you can just gently dig back from the sucker to the base of the mother plant. Easy peasy!

Keep digging until you can see the roots, then use your pruners to snip the sucker off as close to the mother plant as you can. This way, you'll get as many roots as possible, which means a happy, fast-growing new lilac!

Time to Dig!

Okay, back to the super-compact soil that hates hand tools!.

Place your shovel as close as possible to the mother plant, and plunge the shovel straight down into the soil to cut through the sucker's root.

You'll probably need to put your weight into it – slicing

through can be tough (a sharp shovel is definitely your friend here!).

Slice down all around the sucker and then pop it right out of the ground. Fingers crossed you've got a good portion of the root system attached!

My new favorite tool is the Root Slayer Shovel. It makes for quick work!

Dig up as many suckers as possible! You might lose a few, but so far, I've had a 100% success rate.

Soak Those Suckers!

Have a bucket of water handy and pop those freshly dug suckers right in. Keeping them nice and moist will minimize shock and keep them hydrated until you're ready to pot them up.

I got caught up with something and couldn't get to them right away, but they did fine in the water for a couple of days! I kept them in the greenhouse, but a shady spot in the yard works just as well.

Potting Your New Lilacs

Sometimes, you'll need to trim the large roots a bit to fit them in the pots, but the smaller roots can stay put!

Fill your 1-gallon pots (or taller 4-inch pots will work) halfway with potting soil, then add the lilac sucker. Finish filling the pot with more soil, gently packing it around the roots.

That's all there is to it!

Lilacs from Potted Lilacs

I had some lilacs I rooted from cuttings still in their containers a few months later, and they were sending up

suckers! So, I decided to divide those as well. This was great, because the roots weren't that big yet.

For potted lilacs, just pop them right out of the pot. The lilacs in the image below need to be planted and I opted to divide them.

Take a garden knife (or a sharp shovel) and slice through the entire root mass, separating the main cutting from the side shoots.

Now, repot them in separate pots with some fresh potting soil!

I ended up getting so many new lilacs that I had plenty to share!

Planting Directly in the Ground

No need to pot them if you don't want to! You can plant those freshly dug suckers right in the ground.

Dig a hole that's deep enough to accommodate the roots, and loosen the soil around it.

Place your lilac sucker in the hole, fill it back in with the loose soil, and gently pat it down. Give it a good watering to settle it in.

Keep your newly planted lilac watered regularly, especially during the first few months while it's getting established. Spring is the best time for this so that the roots can establish.

Share The Lilac Love

And that's all there is to it! I wish you many years of sweet-smelling blooms!

Videos!

Here is a video of me digging up some lilacs!

FAQs about Propagating Lilacs

(Q&A section to come)

I credit my chickens and their leavings for a lot of gardening success because it's makes great soil!

Easy Organic Soil!!

Building healthy soil is great for the environment!

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