

# How to Propagate *Achillea eriophora*



## Propagating Woolly Yarrow (*Achillea eriophora*): A Gardener's Guide

### Introduction:

*Achillea eriophora*, commonly known as Woolly Yarrow, is a captivating perennial prized for its unique, woolly-textured foliage and charming, delicate flower heads. This plant, native to mountainous regions, boasts a silvery-grey hue that adds textural contrast and subtle elegance to any garden. Its drought tolerance and adaptability make it a popular choice among gardeners, however, propagation can present some unique challenges. While relatively easy to establish once grown, the successful propagation of Woolly Yarrow requires some understanding of its specific needs.

### Seed Germination:

Currently, there are no known reliable methods for seed germination propagation of *Achillea eriophora*. While seeds may

be produced, their germination rate is notoriously low, and success is inconsistent even under optimal conditions. This is likely due to factors such as dormancy mechanisms in the seed coat and specific environmental requirements not yet fully understood.

### **Cuttings:**

Cuttings offer a much more reliable method for propagating *Achillea eriophora*.

- **Challenges:** Success depends on timing and technique. Taking cuttings from healthy, non-flowering stems is crucial. Woolly Yarrow's somewhat woody stems can be difficult to root.
- **Practical Tips:** Take semi-hardwood cuttings in late spring or early summer. Use a sharp knife or shears to create cuttings 4-6 inches long, removing lower leaves before planting. Dip the cut ends in rooting hormone to stimulate root development. Plant the cuttings in a well-draining propagating mix, ensuring good humidity (use a propagation dome or plastic bag to maintain moisture). Keep the cuttings in bright indirect light and maintain consistently moist (but not waterlogged) conditions.
- **Rewards:** Cuttings offer a relatively quick propagation method, producing genetically identical clones of the parent plant. This is particularly useful for preserving desirable traits in a specific cultivar.

### **Division:**

Division is another effective method for propagating Woolly Yarrow.

- **Challenges:** This method is best done in spring or early autumn, when the plant is actively growing or beginning to go dormant. Dividing too early or too late can weaken the plant. Careful handling is essential to avoid

damaging the root system.

- **Practical Tips:** Dig up the mature plant carefully, loosening the soil around the root ball. Use a sharp knife or spade to divide the plant into several sections, ensuring each section has healthy roots and shoots. Replant the divisions immediately, spacing them appropriately. Water thoroughly after planting.
- **Rewards:** Division is a relatively straightforward method offering a faster route to larger numbers of plants compared to cuttings. It also helps rejuvenate older plants, ensuring vigour and continued flowering.

### **Tissue Culture:**

While tissue culture is a viable method for mass propagation of many plants, it is not commonly employed for *Achillea eriophora* due to the relative ease and success of cuttings and division.

- **Challenges:** Tissue culture requires specialized equipment, sterile conditions, and considerable expertise. The initial set-up and ongoing maintenance can be costly and time-consuming.
- **Practical Tips:** This is a highly technical method requiring specialist knowledge and facilities. Success depends heavily on the use of appropriate media, hormones, and sterile techniques.
- **Rewards:** Tissue culture allows for the rapid production of large numbers of genetically identical plants from small amounts of source material. This is ideal for large-scale commercial propagation or preserving rare cultivars.

### **Conclusion:**

Propagating *Achillea eriophora* presents unique challenges, but the rewards are worth the effort. While seed germination is unreliable, the success rate with cuttings and division is

relatively high. Choosing the appropriate method depends on your resources and the number of plants desired. The satisfaction of nurturing a cutting from a small stem into a thriving plant, or dividing a mature clump into several robust individuals, is profoundly rewarding. Remember patience and attention to detail are key to success, so don't be discouraged by initial setbacks. The beauty and resilience of Woolly Yarrow make the propagation process a worthwhile endeavour for any dedicated gardener.