

Alchemilla mollis



Double Your Lady's Mantle: Mastering Alchemilla Mollis Propagation

Alchemilla mollis, better known as Lady's Mantle, is a beloved garden staple. Its velvety, scalloped leaves catch water droplets like glittering jewels, and its chartreuse blooms bring a touch of airy elegance to any border. If you're lucky enough to have this charming plant gracing your garden, you're probably eager to multiply your supply. The good news is that propagating Alchemilla mollis is a relatively simple process with a high success rate. Let's explore the two main methods:

1. Division – The "Set it and Forget it" Method

Division is the easiest and quickest way to propagate Lady's Mantle, yielding established plants ready to thrive. Here's how to do it:

- **Timing is Key:** Early spring or fall, when the weather is cool and moist, is the ideal time for division.
- **Dig Deep:** Carefully lift the entire plant from the ground using a garden fork. Ensure you dig a wide circle to avoid damaging the roots.

- **Divide and Conquer:** Gently tease apart the plant's root system into smaller clumps. Each division should have a good chunk of roots and several healthy shoots.
- **Replant and Rejoice:** Replant the divisions at the same depth they were originally growing, spacing them about 1-2 feet apart. Water thoroughly and watch your new Lady's Mantle plants flourish!

2. Seed Starting – A Rewarding (but Slower) Approach

While division provides quicker results, growing *Alchemilla mollis* from seed offers a rewarding experience and allows you to cultivate a large number of plants. Keep in mind that plants grown from seed may take a year or two to reach the same size as those started from divisions. Here's the step-by-step guide:

- **Harvesting Seeds:** In late summer, collect the tiny seeds from the dried flower heads.
- **Stratification (Nature's Trick):** *Alchemilla mollis* seeds benefit from a period of cold stratification, mimicking natural winter conditions. You can achieve this by either:
 - **Sowing Directly Outdoors:** Sow seeds in a prepared seedbed in the fall. Mother Nature will take care of the stratification process over winter.
 - **Indoor Stratification:** Mix seeds with a bit of damp vermiculite, place them in a sealed plastic bag, and store in the refrigerator for 4-6 weeks before sowing indoors.
- **Sowing Time:** If starting seeds indoors, sow them in a seed-starting mix 6-8 weeks before the last frost.
- **Light and Moisture:** Place the seed trays in a bright location, but out of direct sunlight. Keep the soil consistently moist but not soggy.
- **Transplanting Triumph:** Once the seedlings have developed a few sets of true leaves and the danger of frost has passed, harden them off gradually and transplant them

into your garden.

Caring for Your New Lady's Mantle

Whether you choose division or seed starting, *Alchemilla mollis* thrives in moist, well-drained soil and partial shade. Once established, they are relatively low-maintenance plants. Deadhead spent flower stalks to encourage bushier growth and prevent self-seeding if desired.

By following these simple propagation techniques, you can easily expand your collection of this enchanting plant. With its charming foliage and airiness, Lady's Mantle will bring years of beauty and texture to your garden. Happy propagating!