

# How to Propagate *Ambrosia dumosa*



## Taming the Desert: Propagating the Tenacious *Ambrosia dumosa*

The Mojave Desert, a realm of scorching sun and parched earth, seems an unlikely place for life to flourish. Yet, life persists, often in the most unassuming forms. Enter *Ambrosia dumosa*, commonly known as white bursage. This resilient shrub, with its silvery leaves and prickly burs, thrives in this harsh environment, a testament to the power of adaptation.

But what if you wanted to cultivate this tenacious desert dweller? Whether you're a seasoned gardener seeking drought-tolerant plants or simply captivated by *Ambrosia dumosa*'s hardy nature, propagating this desert denizen can be a rewarding endeavor.

### Seeds of Success: The Most Common Route

The most common way to propagate *Ambrosia dumosa* is by seed. Here's how:

1. **Collection:** Look for mature burs on the plant, usually in late summer or early fall. The burs are covered in

tiny hooks, so wear gloves for protection.

2. **Extraction:** Carefully remove the seeds from the burs. You can gently crush them or use tweezers for this step.
3. **Stratification (Optional):** While not strictly necessary, cold stratification can increase germination rates. Place the seeds in a damp paper towel, seal them in a plastic bag, and store them in the refrigerator for 4-6 weeks.
4. **Sowing:** Plant seeds in a well-draining potting mix, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch deep. Keep the soil consistently moist but not waterlogged.
5. **Patience:** Germination can be erratic and may take several weeks to months. Be patient and continue to provide the seedlings with adequate light and moisture.

### **Taking Cuttings: A Shortcut to Maturity**

For a faster propagation method, consider cuttings. This method utilizes the plant's ability to regenerate from stem sections.

1. **Timing:** Take cuttings in late spring or early summer when the plant is actively growing.
2. **Selection:** Choose healthy, non-flowering stems. Each cutting should be about 4-6 inches long.
3. **Preparation:** Remove the leaves from the lower half of the cutting and dip the cut end into rooting hormone powder.
4. **Planting:** Plant the cuttings in a pot filled with a well-draining, sandy potting mix.
5. **Environment:** Place the pot in a shaded area and mist regularly to maintain humidity.
6. **Rooting:** It will take several weeks for roots to develop. Once the cuttings show signs of new growth, you can transplant them into individual pots.

### **Caring for Your Desert Progeny**

Once you have successfully propagated your *Ambrosia dumosa*, remember that these plants are adapted to arid conditions. They prefer:

- **Full sun:** Choose a location that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight daily.
- **Well-draining soil:** Avoid heavy clay soils that retain too much moisture.
- **Minimal watering:** Water deeply but infrequently, allowing the soil to dry out completely between waterings.
- **Minimal fertilization:** These plants are adapted to nutrient-poor soils and typically don't need fertilization.

Propagating *Ambrosia dumosa* may require a touch of patience, but the reward of successfully cultivating this desert survivor is well worth the effort. So, embrace the challenge, and bring a touch of the Mojave's resilience into your own backyard.