

# How to Propagate Besleria selloana



## Propagating Besleria selloana: A Gardener's Challenge and Reward

Besleria selloana, sometimes called the "Velvet Besleria" due to its soft, velvety foliage, is a captivating plant prized for its striking, vibrant flowers and unique texture. Its popularity among plant enthusiasts is steadily growing thanks to its relative rarity and the visual appeal of its blooms. However, propagating this species presents a unique set of challenges that require patience and understanding. While its beauty is undeniable, its propagation success rates can be significantly lower than easily propagated plants. This article explores various methods for propagating Besleria selloana outlining both the difficulties and the potential rewards.

### Seed Germination:

Currently, there are no known reliable methods for seed germination propagation of Besleria selloana. While the plant

does produce seeds, their viability and germination rate have proven exceptionally low, even under controlled conditions. Further research into specific germination requirements is necessary before this method can be considered viable for propagating this species.

### **Cuttings:**

Cuttings offer a more promising approach compared to seed propagation. However, challenges remain.

- **Challenges:** *Besleria selloana* cuttings are notoriously slow to root. The success rate is heavily influenced by factors such as the age and health of the parent plant, the time of year, and the environmental conditions provided. Rot is a significant risk, particularly in humid environments.
- **Practical Tips:** Take semi-hardwood cuttings in late spring or early summer from healthy, non-flowering stems. Use a sharp blade to minimize damage, and dip the cut ends in rooting hormone before planting in a well-draining, sterile propagation mix. Maintain high humidity using a humidity dome or plastic bag, ensuring adequate ventilation to prevent fungal diseases. Bottom heat can improve rooting success.
- **Rewards:** Successful propagation through cuttings offers a relatively quick way to increase the number of plants, preserving desirable traits of the parent.

### **Division:**

Division is a viable method, but it is only applicable to established, mature plants with sufficient root mass.

- **Challenges:** Carefully separating the root ball without damaging the individual plant sections requires considerable skill and patience. Improper division can

lead to the loss of the entire plant. The plant has delicate roots that are easily broken.

- **Practical Tips:** Divide the plant in late spring or early autumn when the plant is actively growing. Ensure each division has a healthy set of roots and stems. Use a sharp, clean knife or spade and plant promptly to minimize stress.
- **Rewards:** Increased plant numbers with minimal risk of genetic variation, as you'll be propagating clones. Faster growth of established plants compared to cuttings.

### **Tissue Culture:**

Tissue culture offers the potential for large-scale propagation, overcoming some of the challenges associated with cuttings and division.

- **Challenges:** Tissue culture requires specialized equipment, a sterile environment, and expertise in plant tissue culture techniques. It is a costly and technically demanding procedure.
- **Practical Tips:** Sterile techniques are paramount to preventing contamination. Using appropriate growth media and plant growth regulators are critical. This method requires specific knowledge and training, making it challenging for the home gardener.
- **Rewards:** High propagation rates, disease-free plantlets, and the potential for large-scale propagation for commercial purposes or conservation efforts.

### **Conclusion:**

Propagating *Besleria selloana* presents several challenges, irrespective of the chosen method. Seed propagation is unreliable; cuttings are slow and require meticulous care;

division is only feasible for mature plants; and tissue culture demands significant resources and expertise.

However, the rewards are considerable. The unique beauty of this plant and the satisfaction of successfully propagating it – overcoming the inherent difficulties – make it a deeply rewarding endeavor for passionate gardeners. Patience, a keen eye for detail, and a willingness to experiment are key to success. Don't be discouraged by initial setbacks; each attempt brings valuable learning experience, ultimately contributing to mastery of propagating this captivating plant.