

Callitris preissii



Taming the Native Beauty: A Guide to Propagating the Rottnest Island Cypress (*Callitris preissii*)

The Rottnest Island Cypress (*Callitris preissii*), a majestic conifer native to Australia, boasts an intriguing silhouette and remarkable resilience. If you're looking to welcome this unique tree into your garden, propagating it yourself offers a rewarding challenge.

While not for the faint of heart, successfully nurturing a Rottnest Island Cypress from scratch promises a deep sense of accomplishment. Let's delve into the intricacies of propagating this captivating species.

Method One: [Seed Propagation](#) – A Test of Patience

Seed propagation, while more time-consuming, offers a greater sense of achievement and allows you to witness the entire life cycle of your cypress.

1. **Seed Collection and Preparation:** Source fresh seeds from

mature cones in late summer or early autumn. Gently crush the cones to release the seeds, then soak them in warm water for 24 hours to enhance germination rates.

2. **Sowing:** Plant the seeds individually in well-draining seed-raising mix, burying them about 1 cm deep. Maintain consistent moisture and place the pots in a warm, bright location out of direct sunlight.
3. **Patience is Key:** Germination can be erratic, taking anywhere from a few weeks to several months. Some seeds might even sprout the following season.
4. **Transplanting:** Once seedlings are a few centimeters tall and have developed a robust root system, transplant them into individual pots or directly into the ground, ensuring excellent drainage.

Method Two: Cutting Propagation – A Faster Route

Taking cuttings offers a quicker method for those eager to expand their cypress collection or replicate a specific specimen.

1. **Timing is Crucial:** The ideal time for taking cuttings is late autumn or early winter when the plant's energy is focused on root development.
2. **Select Healthy Shoots:** Choose semi-mature, healthy shoots about 10-15 cm long with firm, woody bases.
3. **Prepare the Cuttings:** Remove the lower leaves, leaving only a few at the top. Dip the cut end in rooting hormone to encourage root development.
4. **Potting Up:** Plant each cutting in a well-draining mix, burying the bottom third of the stem. Water gently and place in a warm, sheltered spot with indirect sunlight.
5. **Root Formation:** Keep the potting mix consistently moist but not waterlogged. It can take several weeks for roots to develop. Once new growth emerges, you'll know your cutting has taken root.

Nurturing Your New Cypress:

Regardless of the propagation method, young Rottnest Island Cypress trees require attentive care:

- **Well-Drained Soil:** They thrive in loose, sandy soil with excellent drainage. Avoid heavy clay soils that can lead to root rot.
- **Sun Lovers:** Ensure your cypress receives ample sunlight, ideally 6-8 hours per day.
- **Water Wisely:** Water deeply but infrequently, allowing the soil to dry out slightly between waterings. Overwatering can be detrimental.
- **Pruning for Shape:** Regularly prune your cypress to maintain its shape and remove any dead or diseased branches.

Propagating the Rottnest Island Cypress might require some effort, but the rewards are well worth it. With patience and the right care, you can cultivate these resilient trees and enjoy their unique beauty for years to come.