

How to Propagate *Cylindropuntia imbricata*



Cholla-ing the Odds: How to Successfully Propagate *Cylindropuntia Imbricata* (and Why You Should!)

The *Cylindropuntia imbricata*, also known as the “cholla” or “jumping cholla,” is a striking cactus with a unique, segmented appearance. These prickly beauties are a sight to behold in the wild, but did you know you can easily propagate them yourself?

Growing a cholla from cuttings is surprisingly simple and rewarding. Once established, they’re relatively low-maintenance, drought-tolerant plants that can add a touch of the desert to your garden or even your home.

Why propagate from cuttings?

- **Easy:** Cholla propagation is remarkably straightforward,

even for novice gardeners.

- **Fast:** Unlike starting from seed, cuttings readily root and grow rapidly, giving you a mature plant faster.
- **Abundant:** Cholla produces many segments, providing ample material for propagation.

Getting started:

1. **Choose your source:** If you already have a cholla plant, there's your source. Otherwise, you can usually find cholla cuttings online, at nurseries, or through gardening communities.
2. **Gather your supplies:** You'll need sharp gardening shears, a plastic bag, and a well-draining potting mix.
3. **Select a segment:** Choose a healthy, mature segment without any signs of pests or diseases. Avoid using segments from the base of the plant, as they might have difficulty rooting.
4. **Prepare the segment:** Using your shears, cut cleanly through the segment, making sure you have a smooth, fresh surface. Leave the cutting in a dry place for a few days to allow the cut to callous over.

Planting and care:

1. **Potting mix:** Cholla prefers a well-draining mix that doesn't hold moisture for extended periods. A cactus potting mix or a blend of equal parts potting soil, sand, and perlite is ideal.
2. **Planting:** Place the calloused cutting into the prepared potting mix, burying it about half the segment's length. It's important to ensure the roots are well-protected from moisture.
3. **Watering:** Unlike some cacti, you can actually water the cholla regularly. Water deeply but infrequently, allowing the soil to dry out completely between waterings. During the dormant months, reduce watering even further.

4. **Sunlight:** Cholla thrives in full sun, so position your pot in a sunny location, ideally with at least six hours of direct sunlight per day.

Tips for success:

- **Sanitize your shears:** Before making cuts, sterilize your shears with rubbing alcohol to prevent the spread of infections or diseases.
- **Watch for pests:** Be vigilant for pests like mealybugs, aphids, and scales, which can damage your precious cholla.
- **Patience is key:** Give your cholla time to establish its roots. It may take a few weeks or even months before you see significant growth.

With a little patience and care, you can successfully propagate your own cholla cactus and enjoy its unique beauty for years to come. Just remember to handle it with caution – those spines are sharp!