

How to Propagate *Delphinium elatum*



Reaching New Heights: Propagating Majestic *Delphinium elatum*

Delphiniums, with their towering spires of vibrant blooms, are a showstopper in any garden. But did you know that propagating these beauties isn't as daunting as it might seem? Multiplying your delphinium stock, specifically the statuesque *Delphinium elatum*, allows you to expand your floral dominion and share these garden gems with friends and family. Let's explore the two most effective methods for propagating these stunning plants: cuttings and divisions.

Method 1: Basal Cuttings – The Early Bird Gets the Delphinium

Taking basal cuttings is an excellent way to create new plants while keeping your existing delphiniums vigorous. Early spring is the prime time for this method, just as new growth emerges.

- **Step 1: Gather Your Supplies:** You'll need a sharp, clean knife or pruning shears, a rooting hormone (powder or gel), and a seed tray or pots filled with a well-draining seed-starting mix.
- **Step 2: Select and Take the Cuttings:** Look for healthy,

new shoots at the base of the plant. These are called basal shoots because they emerge from the base or crown of the delphinium. Sever the shoot cleanly at the soil line, aiming for a cutting that's about 3-4 inches long. Remove the lower leaves, leaving only 2-3 at the top.

- **Step 3: Encourage Rooting:** Dip the cut end of each shoot in rooting hormone, tapping off any excess. Make a small hole in your prepared potting mix and carefully insert the cutting. Gently firm the soil around the base.
- **Step 4: Create a Humid Environment:** Place the tray or pots in a propagator or cover them with a clear plastic bag to maintain humidity. Position them in a bright location but out of direct sunlight.
- **Step 5: Patience is Key:** Keep the soil consistently moist but not waterlogged. Rooting typically takes 4-6 weeks, after which you'll notice new growth. Once the cuttings are well-rooted and showing strong growth, you can transplant them into larger pots or directly into your garden.

Method 2: Division – Rejuvenate and Multiply

Division is another propagation method that reinvigorates mature delphinium clumps while creating new plants. Early spring or fall, after flowering has finished, is the ideal time for this approach.

- **Step 1: Prepare the Plant and the Ground:** Water your delphinium thoroughly the day before dividing. Prepare a new planting area with fertile, well-drained soil.
- **Step 2: Carefully Lift and Divide:** Using a garden fork, gently lift the entire delphinium clump out of the ground. Use your hands or a clean, sharp knife to divide the clump into sections, making sure each section has a good root system and several healthy shoots attached.
- **Step 3: Replanting and Watering:** Plant the divisions at the same depth they were originally growing, spacing

them 18-24 inches apart. Water deeply after planting to settle the soil and reduce transplant stress.

Caring for Your New Delphinium Progeny

Whether started from cuttings or divisions, your new delphiniums will thrive with consistent care. Provide them with:

- **Full Sun to Partial Shade:** Aim for at least 6 hours of sunlight per day.
- **Well-Drained Soil:** Delphiniums dislike soggy roots.
- **Regular Watering:** Keep the soil consistently moist, especially during dry spells.
- **Support:** As these plants grow tall, provide staking or support to prevent stem breakage from wind.

By following these propagation techniques and providing attentive care, you'll soon have a flourishing colony of *Delphinium elatum*, adding vertical beauty and vibrant color to your garden for years to come!