

How to Propagate *Draba oxycarpa*



Taming the Tiny Dragon: How to Propagate *Draba oxycarpa*

Draba oxycarpa, the aptly named “sharp-fruited draba,” might sound like a fearsome beast. Fear not! This miniature alpine plant is a charmer, boasting delicate yellow flowers and a tough-as-nails disposition. While finding it at your local nursery might be a dragon-slaying quest in itself, propagating *Draba oxycarpa* is surprisingly achievable. Let’s explore the secrets to multiplying this tiny treasure.

Understanding the Beast:

Hailing from mountainous regions, *Draba oxycarpa* is a cold-hardy perennial that thrives in well-drained, gritty soil and full sun to partial shade. Its diminutive size (rarely exceeding 5cm in height) and mat-forming habit make it perfect for rock gardens, troughs, or even between paving stones.

Propagation Pathways:

While not as prolific as some plants, *Draba oxycarpa* can be propagated through two primary methods:

1. Seed Sowing: A Test of Patience

- **Timing is Key:** Sow seeds in late winter or early spring, ideally 6-8 weeks before the last frost.
- **Chill Out:** For best results, cold stratify seeds by placing the seed tray in the refrigerator (not freezer!) for 4-6 weeks. This simulates the natural winter dormancy period.
- **Light Touch:** Surface sow the seeds on a well-draining seed starting mix. Light is essential for germination, but keep the soil consistently moist.
- **Slow and Steady:** Germination can take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months. Patience, young padawan!

1. Cuttings: A Quicker Quest

- **The Right Time:** Take cuttings in late spring or early summer after flowering, selecting healthy, non-flowering stems.
- **Clean Cut:** Using a sharp, sterilized blade, cut a 3-4cm section just below a leaf node.
- **Hormonal Help:** (Optional) Dip the cut end in rooting hormone to boost success rates.
- **Cozy Conditions:** Plant the cuttings in a well-draining mix, keeping them consistently moist and out of direct sunlight.
- **Rooting Revelation:** You'll see new growth within a few weeks, indicating successful rooting.

Caring for Your Dragonlings:

- **Drainage is King:** *Draba oxycarpa* hates soggy feet. Ensure excellent drainage with a gritty soil mix and avoid overwatering.
- **Sunshine and Shade:** While it prefers full sun, it can

tolerate some shade, especially in warmer climates.

- **Winterizing Warriors:** These alpine champions are cold-hardy but benefit from a light layer of mulch for protection in harsh winters.

Propagating *Draba oxycarpa* might require some patience and a light touch, but the reward is well worth the effort. Seeing these tiny dragons thrive and multiply in your garden is a truly satisfying experience for any plant enthusiast. So go forth, brave gardener, and conquer the propagation quest!