

Lycopodium digitatum



Fanning the Ancient Flames: Propagating Running Cedar (Lycopodium digitatum)

The plant world is full of wonders, and few are as captivating as *Lycopodium digitatum*, commonly known as running cedar or fan clubmoss. This evergreen creeper, with its prehistoric lineage and delicate, fan-like fronds, brings a touch of ancient woodlands to gardens and terrariums alike. While often found gracing shaded forest floors, did you know you can propagate running cedar and welcome this botanical marvel into your own space?

Before we delve into the how-to, let's understand what makes this plant so special. Unlike most plants we cultivate, *Lycopodium digitatum* doesn't flower or produce seeds. Instead, it belongs to a fascinating group called lycophytes, reproducing through spores much like ferns. This ancient lineage makes propagating running cedar a unique and rewarding experience.

Methods for Multiplying Your Mossy Magic:

There are two primary ways to propagate running cedar:

1. Spore Propagation (The Patient Approach):

- **Collecting Spores:** In late summer, look for yellowish cone-like structures called strobili on the tips of mature fronds. Carefully collect these, as they contain the spores. Allow them to dry thoroughly in a paper bag, and the dry spores will eventually release.
- **Sowing Spores:** Prepare a seed tray with a moist, sterile seed-starting mix. Sprinkle the spores thinly over the surface, mist lightly, and cover with plastic wrap to maintain humidity.
- **Patience is Key:** Spore germination can take several months. Keep the tray in a warm, shaded location and maintain consistent moisture. Once the seedlings are large enough to handle, gently transplant them into individual pots.

2. Division (The Quick Route to Success):

- **Timing is Everything:** Spring is the ideal time for division. Look for established clumps of running cedar.
- **Divide and Conquer:** Carefully dig up the clump, ensuring you get a good portion of the root system. Using a sharp, clean knife or your hands, gently tease apart sections of the plant, making sure each division has roots and stems.
- **Potting Up:** Plant the divisions in well-draining soil, water thoroughly, and place them in a shady location. Keep the divisions consistently moist as they establish themselves.

Tips for Thriving Cedar:

- **Soil & Site:** Running cedar thrives in acidic, well-draining soil that replicates its woodland habitat. Choose a location with dappled shade or indirect light.
- **Moisture Matters:** Consistent moisture is key. Keep the soil evenly moist, but avoid overwatering which can lead

to root rot.

- **Patience, Young Padawan:** Remember, running cedar is a slow-growing plant. Be patient and provide consistent care, and you'll be rewarded with a lush, fascinating piece of prehistory for years to come.

Propagating *Lycopodium digitatum* might seem daunting at first, but the rewards are well worth the effort. Whether you choose the patient path of spores or the quicker route of division, you'll be participating in a legacy of growth that dates back millennia. So go forth, propagate, and enjoy the unique beauty of running cedar in your own green space.