

How to Propagate *Lycopus uniflorus*



Multiplying the Modest Bugleweed: A Guide to Propagating *Lycopus uniflorus*

Lycopus uniflorus, more commonly known as northern bugleweed or common bugleweed, might not be the showiest plant in the garden, but this unassuming perennial offers a quiet beauty and surprising resilience. Whether you're looking to expand your patch of bugleweed or share its subtle charm with a friend, propagation is key. Let's dive into the methods that will have your bugleweed thriving:

Understanding the Bugleweed:

Before diving into propagation, it's helpful to understand a bit about how bugleweed grows. This member of the mint family is known for its spreading habit, achieved through rhizomes – underground stems that send out roots and shoots. This natural tendency to spread gives us our first clue about propagation.

Methods for Success:

1. Division: The easiest and most effective way to propagate *Lycopus uniflorus* is through division. This method capitalizes on the plant's natural rhizomatous growth. Here's how:

- **Timing:** Spring or early fall offer the best conditions for dividing bugleweed.
- **Process:** Gently dig up a mature clump of bugleweed, ensuring you get a good amount of the root system. Using a sharp, clean knife or garden spade, divide the clump into smaller sections, each with a healthy portion of roots and shoots.
- **Replanting:** Replant the divisions at the same depth they were originally growing, spacing them about 12-18 inches apart. Water thoroughly and keep the soil consistently moist as the divisions establish themselves.

2. Seed Starting (with a caveat)::

While *Lycopus uniflorus* does produce seeds, they can be a bit trickier to germinate than other perennials. Here's how to try it:

- **Collecting Seeds:** Collect seeds from mature flower heads in the late summer or early fall.
- **Stratification (Important!):** Bugleweed seeds benefit from cold stratification to mimic natural winter conditions. Place seeds in a moist paper towel, seal them in a plastic bag, and store them in the refrigerator for 4-6 weeks.
- **Sowing:** After stratification, sow seeds in a seed-starting mix, pressing them lightly into the surface. Keep the soil consistently moist and warm (around 70°F).
- **Germination:** Germination can take anywhere from 2-4 weeks. Once seedlings have a few sets of true leaves, they can be transplanted outdoors after the last frost.

Tips for Success:

- **Well-Drained Soil:** *Lycopus uniflorus* prefers moist, well-drained soil.
- **Partial Shade:** While it can tolerate some sun, bugleweed thrives in partial shade, making it a great choice for woodland gardens or areas with dappled light.
- **Water Wisely:** Keep the soil consistently moist, especially during the first growing season after propagation. Once established, bugleweed is relatively drought-tolerant.
- **Pest and Disease Resistant:** This easy-going perennial is generally pest and disease-free, making it a low-maintenance addition to your garden.

Propagating *Lycopus uniflorus* is a rewarding endeavor. Whether you choose division or seed starting, you'll be playing a part in expanding this plant's subtle charm and adding a touch of understated elegance to your garden.