

# Santolina ericoides



## Multiplying the Sunshine: Propagating Your Santolina (It's Easier Than You Think!)

Santolina, with its charming silver foliage and button-like yellow flowers, is a garden favorite for a reason. This sun-loving Mediterranean native, particularly the popular *Santolina ericoides* (also known as cotton lavender), isn't just beautiful; it's surprisingly easy to propagate. This means you can multiply your stock and fill your garden with its silvery charm without breaking the bank.

### Two Methods for Success:

While Santolina can be grown from seed, the most common and reliable propagation method is through cuttings. This involves taking a cutting from a healthy plant and encouraging it to develop roots. You have two main options for this:

#### 1. [Softwood Cuttings](#) (Springtime Magic):

- **Timing is Key:** Take softwood cuttings in late spring or early summer when the plant is actively growing. Look for new growth that is pliable but not too soft.

- **Cut and Treat:** Use a sharp, clean knife or pruning shears to take cuttings about 3-4 inches long, cutting just below a leaf node. Remove the lower leaves, leaving only 2-3 pairs at the top. Dip the cut end in rooting hormone to encourage faster root development.
- **Planting:** Fill small pots with a well-draining potting mix. Create a hole with a pencil and gently insert the cutting, ensuring the leaf nodes are buried. Water thoroughly.
- **Humidity is Key:** Cover the pots with a plastic bag or place them in a propagator to maintain high humidity levels. Keep the cuttings out of direct sunlight until they root.
- **Patience is a Virtue:** Rooting can take 4-6 weeks. You'll know they are successful when you see new growth. Once rooted, gradually acclimate the cuttings to outdoor conditions before transplanting them.

## 2. Semi-Hardwood Cuttings (Late Summer Success):

- **The Right Timing:** Take semi-hardwood cuttings in late summer, targeting slightly woodier stems that have grown that season.
- **Similar Process:** Follow the same steps as with softwood cuttings – cut below a node, remove lower leaves, and use rooting hormone.
- **Overwintering:** Plant the cuttings in pots and keep them in a sheltered location like a cold frame or an unheated greenhouse over the winter.
- **Spring Transplanting:** Plant out the rooted cuttings in their permanent positions in the spring.

### Tips for Success:

- **Healthy Parent Plant:** Always take cuttings from a healthy and disease-free Santolina plant.
- **Sharp and Clean Tools:** Use sterilized tools to prevent the spread of diseases.

- **Well-Draining Soil:** Santolina prefers well-drained soil. Use a suitable potting mix or amend your garden soil with grit or sand.
- **Avoid Overwatering:** Do not overwater the cuttings as this can lead to root rot.

Propagating Santolina is a rewarding experience that allows you to expand your garden for free. With a little patience and care, you'll soon have an abundance of these beautiful, silver-leaved plants to brighten up your borders and attract pollinators to your garden.