

How to Propagate Sextonia rubra



Painting the Town Red: Propagating Your Very Own Sextonia Rubra

Sextonia rubra, more affectionately known as the “Red Dragon Tree” or “Red Ironbark”, is a showstopper in any garden. Native to Australia, this vibrant beauty flaunts fiery red new growth that matures to a deep, glossy green. Its architectural form, drought tolerance, and striking aesthetic make it a coveted choice for landscaping. Ready to add this fiery wonder to your own outdoor haven? Propagation is easier than you think! Let’s explore the two most effective methods:

1. [Seed Propagation](#): A Rewarding Challenge

Propagating Sextonia rubra from seed is a fantastic way to connect with the plant’s life cycle, though it requires patience. Here’s what you need to know:

- **Seed Collection & Preparation:** Sextonia rubra produces small woody capsules containing the seeds. Collect these capsules when they turn brown and begin to split open. Extract the seeds and soak them in warm water for 24 hours to enhance germination rates.

- **Sowing:** Use a well-draining seed raising mix and plant the seeds about 1cm deep. Mist the soil gently and cover the tray with a plastic dome or cling wrap to create a humid environment.
- **Germination:** Be patient! Germination can take anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of months. Ensure the soil remains consistently moist but not waterlogged.
- **Transplanting:** Once the seedlings have developed a few sets of true leaves, they can be carefully transplanted into individual pots.

2. Cutting Propagation: The Faster Track to Success

For quicker results, consider propagating *Sextonia rubra* from cuttings:

- **Timing is Key:** Take cuttings in late spring or early summer when the plant is actively growing.
- **Cutting Selection:** Choose healthy, semi-hardwood stems that are about 10-15cm long. These are stems that are beginning to harden but still have a bit of flexibility.
- **Prepare the Cuttings:** Remove the leaves from the bottom third of the stem. Make a clean cut just below a leaf node (where the leaf joins the stem).
- **Hormone Power:** Dip the cut end of the stem into rooting hormone powder to encourage root development.
- **Potting Up:** Plant the cuttings in a well-draining potting mix, burying the bottom node. Water lightly and cover the pot with a clear plastic bag to create a humid environment.
- **Root Development:** Keep the cuttings in a warm, bright spot out of direct sunlight. Roots should develop within 4-8 weeks.
- **Transplanting:** Once the cuttings show signs of new growth, they are ready to be transplanted into individual pots or directly into the garden.

Tips for Success:

- **Well-Draining Soil:** *Sextonia rubra* is susceptible to root rot, so ensure excellent drainage by amending your soil with perlite or sand.
- **Sunlight Appreciation:** These trees thrive in full sun to partial shade. Choose a location that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight a day.
- **Watering Wisely:** Water deeply but infrequently. Allow the soil to dry out slightly between waterings.
- **Patience Pays Off:** Propagating plants takes time and care. Don't get discouraged if it takes a little while for your new *Sextonia rubra* to flourish.

By following these simple steps, you can propagate your very own *Sextonia Rubra* and enjoy its fiery beauty for years to come. So, get ready to paint your garden red with this stunning Australian native!