

# Stevia lilloi



## Sweet Success: Propagating Stevia Lilloi for a Bountiful Supply of Natural Sweetener

Stevia Lilloi, a lesser-known cousin of the popular sugar substitute Stevia rebaudiana, offers the same incredible sweetness with potential advantages in hardiness and growth habit. Whether you're an experienced gardener or just starting out, propagating this remarkable plant is a rewarding endeavor, allowing you to enjoy a natural, calorie-free sweetener right from your backyard.

## Two Roads to Stevia Success: Seeds vs. Cuttings

While Stevia Lilloi can be grown from seeds, success rates can be inconsistent due to their small size and variable germination needs. For the most reliable results, propagation from cuttings reigns supreme:

### 1. Starting from Cuttings:

- **Timing is Key:** Early summer, when the plant is actively growing, offers the highest chance of success.
- **Selecting the Perfect Cutting:** Choose a healthy stem that is 4-6 inches long, ideally without any flower buds. Make a clean cut just below a leaf node (where the leaf attaches to the stem) using a sharp, sterilized knife or pruning shears.
- **Preparing the Cutting:** Remove the lower leaves, leaving 2-3 pairs at the top. You can dip the cut end in rooting hormone powder to encourage faster root development, though this isn't strictly necessary.
- **Planting and Patience:** Plant the cutting in a pot filled with well-draining potting mix, burying the bottom node. Mist the soil regularly, keeping it consistently moist but not waterlogged. Place the pot in a bright location, out of direct sunlight.
- **Rooting Success:** In 4-6 weeks, you should start seeing new growth, indicating the cutting has successfully rooted. You can gently tug on the cutting to confirm root development.

## 2. The Seed Route – A Test of Patience:

- **Sourcing Seeds:** Stevia Lilloi seeds can be challenging to find. Check online specialty retailers or consider seed-saving from mature plants.
- **Sowing with Care:** Due to their small size, surface sowing is best. Sprinkle the seeds over a moist seed-starting mix and gently press them down, ensuring they have good contact with the soil.
- **Light and Warmth:** Stevia seeds need light to germinate. Maintain a temperature of around 70-75°F (21-24°C) using a heat mat if necessary.
- **Germination Gamble:** Be prepared for inconsistent and potentially lengthy germination times, ranging from a few weeks to a couple of months.
- **Thinning the Herd:** Once seedlings have a few sets of

true leaves, thin them out, leaving the strongest ones to flourish.

## Caring for your Stevia Progeny:

Regardless of your chosen propagation method, once your Stevia Lilloi babies are established, follow these care tips for thriving plants:

- **Light and Location:** Stevia Lilloi thrives in full sun to partial shade. Choose a location that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight for optimal growth and sweetness.
- **Well-Drained Soil:** These plants are sensitive to overwatering. Ensure your soil or potting mix drains efficiently to prevent root rot.
- **Regular Watering:** Water deeply when the top inch of soil feels dry.
- **Pinching for Bushiness:** Regularly pinch back the growing tips to encourage a bushier growth habit and increase leaf production.

With a little patience and the right know-how, you can propagate Stevia Lilloi and enjoy a bountiful supply of this all-natural sweetener. So ditch the sugar, roll up your sleeves, and get ready to cultivate your own sweet success!