

How to Propagate Tropaeolum incisum



From Seed to Showstopper: Propagating Tropaeolum incisum, the “Flame Nasturtium”

The vibrant blooms of Tropaeolum incisum, often called the “Flame Nasturtium,” are a sight to behold. Their fiery orange, red, and yellow petals dance in the summer breeze, adding a touch of tropical flair to any garden. But beyond their beauty, these easy-to-grow climbers offer a unique opportunity for gardeners to delve into the world of plant propagation.

The Perks of Propagation

Propagating your own plants from Tropaeolum incisum seed or cuttings offers several benefits:

- **Cost-effective:** It’s a cheap way to increase your plant collection! Buying seeds or cuttings is much more affordable than purchasing mature plants.
- **Genetic diversity:** Getting seeds from a reliable source ensures you’re getting a genetically unique plant that may show slight variations in color or growth habit.
- **Increased satisfaction:** There’s a sense of

accomplishment in nurturing a plant from scratch, watching it develop from a tiny seedling to a vibrant climber.

Method 1: From Seed to Sprout

Timing is Key: *Tropaeolum incisum* seeds can be sown directly outdoors after the last frost. In colder climates, you can start them indoors about six weeks before the last frost date.

The Process:

1. **Preparation:** Fill seed trays with a well-drained seed-starting mix. Make shallow depressions about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep.
2. **Planting:** Gently place one seed in each depression and cover with soil. Lightly water.
3. **Light and Warmth:** Place the trays in a bright, warm location. Maintain a consistent temperature between 68-75°F.
4. **Thinning:** Once seedlings have a few true leaves, thin them out, leaving the strongest one in each cell.
5. **Hardening Off:** Gradually acclimate seedlings to outdoor conditions before transplanting.

Bonus Tip: Don't bury the seeds too deep! They need sunlight to germinate.

Method 2: Taking Root with Cuttings

Timing is Key: The best time to take cuttings is in spring or early summer when growth is vigorous.

The Process:

1. **Make the Cut:** Use a sharp knife or scissors to take 4-6 inch cuttings from the tips of healthy stems. Remove any lower leaves that will be submerged in water or soil.
2. **Dip in Hormone (optional):** To promote root growth, dip the cut ends of your cuttings into a rooting hormone

solution.

3. **Water Propagation:** Fill a jar or vase with fresh water, placing your cuttings in the water. Change the water every few days to prevent bacterial growth.
4. **Soil Propagation:** Place your cuttings in a pot filled with a peat-based potting mix. Ensure the mix is kept consistently moist.
5. **Patience:** It can take 3-4 weeks for cuttings to develop roots. Keep them in a bright spot out of direct sunlight.

Caring for Your *Tropaeolum incisum*

Once established, both seed-grown and cutting-propagated *Tropaeolum incisum* need similar care:

- **Sunlight:** Provide them with 4-6 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- **Water:** Water regularly, keeping the soil moist but not soggy.
- **Fertilizer:** A balanced liquid fertilizer can be applied every few weeks during the growing season, though it is not essential.

Enjoy Your Blooming Success

From vibrant seeds to flourishing vines laden with flowers, propagating *Tropaeolum incisum* offers a rewarding experience for gardeners of all levels. With a little patience and the right approach, you'll soon have a garden bursting with the beauty and charm of Flame Nasturtium.