

How to Propagate *Valeriana locusta*



Wake Up Your Garden with Vibrant Valerian: A Guide to Propagation

Valerian (specifically *Valeriana locusta*, also known as corn salad or mache) is a delightful addition to any garden, prized for its tender leaves and delicate, nutty flavor. But this versatile green is more than just a tasty salad base. It's easy to grow, thrives in cooler temperatures, and even boasts pretty, pale pink flowers!

Ready to welcome this versatile plant into your garden? Let's explore the best ways to propagate Valerian.

Two Paths to Propagation: Seeds vs. Divisions

Valerian offers two main methods of propagation—seeds and divisions. Each comes with its advantages, making it easy to choose the best fit for your gardening style.

1. Starting from Seed: A Beginner-Friendly Option

Direct sowing seeds right into your garden bed is the most common propagation method for Valerian. Here's a step-by-step guide:

- **Timing is Key:** Valerian thrives in cooler temperatures. Sow seeds in early spring or late summer for a fall harvest or early fall for an overwintered crop ready in early spring.
- **Prepare Your Bed:** Choose a spot with partial shade, especially during the hotter months. Well-drained soil is crucial to prevent root rot.
- **Sow with Care:** Scatter seeds thinly over the prepared soil and lightly rake them in, ensuring they're about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. Water gently to avoid dislodging the seeds.
- **Thinning for Success:** Once your seedlings reach 2-3 inches tall, thin them out to about 4-6 inches apart. This gives each [plant space to grow to its full potential](#).

2. Propagating through Division: Multiplication for Mature Plants

If you have an established Valerian plant, division is an excellent way to multiply your stock and invigorate older plants.

- **When to Divide:** Spring or early fall, when temperatures are cooler, are ideal times for dividing.
- **Digging In:** Carefully lift the entire plant, ensuring you get as much of the root system as possible.
- **Dividing Carefully:** Using a sharp, clean knife or garden shears, divide the plant into sections, ensuring each section has a healthy amount of roots and shoots.
- **Replanting:** Replant the divisions at the same depth they were originally growing. Water them in well and provide shade until they show signs of new growth.

Tips for Propagation Success

No matter your propagation method, these tips will help your Valerian thrive:

- **Keep it Consistent:** Consistent moisture is key, especially during germination. Aim for soil that's moist but not waterlogged.
- **Fertilize Lightly:** Valerian doesn't need much fertilizer. A light application of balanced fertilizer in spring is usually sufficient.
- **Pest Patrol:** Keep an eye out for slugs and snails, which are drawn to Valerian's tender leaves. Diatomaceous earth or copper tape can help deter these pests.

Reaping the Rewards:

Whether you start from seed or division, propagating Valerian is a rewarding experience. With a little care and attention, you'll soon be enjoying an abundance of this delicious and versatile green. So, why wait? Get started on your Valerian propagation journey today, and taste the freshness of homegrown goodness!