

## Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

### Plant parenthood



Yellow potatoes are cut into pieces, dried for a day, then planted.

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You can buy bags of garden soil, potting soil, and compost. If you are planting in a pot, make sure to purchase new potting soil which has the necessary nutrients to help your plants flourish.

If you are buying plants to boost your autumn curb appeal, simple-to-grow suggestions include pansies, ornamental kale, snapdragons, chrysanthemums, primulas, violas, and Iceland Poppies.

My favorite way of birthing new vegetation is through propagation. Many of the specimens in my garden have been slips, cuttings, seeds, divisions, roots, bulbs, or pinches from my mom's, sibling's, or friend's gardens. A garden is to share and there is nothing more satisfying than growing florals derived from a beloved garden.

Here are ways to become a plant parent or grow your current plant family for little or



This rose sprang from a cutting from this past February.

no cost. In the botanical world, we call it sexual propagation or asexual propagation.

#### Sexual Propagation

Be a seed saver. Save seeds from your favorite flowers. Because of random pollination by a variety of insects, the baby may differ from the mother. My favorite seeds to save from my flowers are nigella, sunflower, hollyhock, cosmos, nasturtium, calendula, marigold and lavender. I'm scattering the nasturtium this autumn and the rest will be sowed in the spring. In my potager, I collected the seeds of arugula, sugar snap peas, pole beans, and Swiss Chard. If you saved these vegetable seeds from your summer crops, sow them now. I have grown numerous trees from seeds (and pits) including magnolia, Asian Pear, apple, plum, peach, flowering cherry, Japanese maple, pistache, and loquat. When you gather the seeds, dry them on a screen and place them into a brown paper bag. Label with the date and

store in a dark space until you are ready to sow.

#### Asexual Propagation

This is also called vegetative propagation because the vegetative parts of the plants are used: stems, leaves, roots, and organs.

Cuttings, pinches, and slips: Soon I'll be pinching my geraniums and pelargoniums. After letting the cuttings harden off for a few days, they will be planted directly in the ground throughout my hillside in sunny areas. Every year in February, I hard prune my many rose bushes. I gave over a hundred cane cuttings to my neighbor and within three months, she had a glorious blooming rose garden. Pinch a small piece of a succulent and it will grow in a pot or the ground. My prolific grapevines are the result of cuttings from our Napa vineyards.

**Dividing:** Using a garden fork, divide daylilies, Bearded irises, Bergenia, peonies, astilbe, bleeding hearts, Oriental lilies, Naked ladies, and other perennials that are getting too crowded. Rhizomes that are divided such as Bergenia and Bearded iris, can be cut into smaller pieces and planted. Many bulbs multiply including Naked Ladies and daffodils. By digging up a few, you can greatly increase the blooms in your landscape. I started with one Naked Lady (*Amaryllis Belladonna*) bulb and now boast a blanketed slope of hundreds.

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Photos Cynthia Brian

This Asian Pear tree was grown from seed and produces profusely.