

PROPAGATION OF *CHAMAELAUCIUM UNCINATUM* SCHAUER BY CUTTINGS

A.N. GREEN

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This hardy evergreen shrub is widely used in private and public gardens throughout many areas of Western Australia but mainly in coastal regions south of Carnarvon and inland to the wheatbelt where it is cultivated as a garden shrub in low rainfall districts and with minimum irrigation.

Known locally as Geraldton Wax, it flowers profusely from June to October. Flowers consistently of a disc of five petals are borne on the terminal growth, and have a waxy appearance. They have lasting qualities and make excellent cutting material for florists.

Leaves are short fleshy needles, soft to touch with a strong distinctive aroma when bruised and are rich in oil.

Although it grows readily from seed, about 12 selected cultivars are perpetuated from cutting-grown stock to obtain these better coloured forms. These range from white, pale pink, deep pink to purplish red.

Cuttings are taken between January to April but my best results have been from those taken in late March and early April.

Tip cuttings 2 to 3 inches long, from half-ripened wood at the base with a heel are the best. A heel is not essential but is desirable as a better callus and root growth develops.

Bottom heat is not used unless cuttings are made later than mid-May as normal autumn temperatures are sufficient.

I do not use mist in the normal sense but new cuttings are sprayed lightly once or twice each day for the first 3-4 weeks, but no later than mid-afternoon so that foliage dries off before nightfall.

A steam sterilized medium consisting of sharp sand with 25% rubbed peat moss is put into 5½" squat plastic pots which will accommodate 30 to 40 cuttings.

IBA in talc is dusted on the base of each cutting before "sticking". Currently I am using Pyco Rooting Hormone No. 4 with good results.

Cleanliness is all important. Regular removal of dying and fallen leaves is necessary to reduce fungal disease and, as a precaution, I water all cuttings with a Captan solution once a week.

I have also found that a weekly application of a hormone growth stimulant such as Formula 20 is beneficial. To save time and effort I combine this with the Captan application.

A sound root system is apparent 6-8 weeks after sticking, the pots of cuttings are then placed under a shade cloth frame for one month to harden.

Pricking off is done into 2" tubes in a light sand containing about 10% peat moss. These are placed under glass for 2 weeks, then put outside with a light shade cover over them which is removed 10 to 14 days later depending on weather conditions at the time.

Plants are potted on in the spring and placed in full sunshine. A sandy medium with a little compost gives good results and a mild fertilizer, such as blood and bone, will stimulate growth.

A SUCCESSFUL TECHNIQUE FOR GRAFTING HIBISCUS

ALEX SCOTT

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Hibiscus is a line that we grow well and have built up an Australia-wide trade supplying something like 50,000 a year in containers from a 2" tube to a 4" liner. There is a particularly strong demand for the Hawaiian type of hibiscus. This type produces extremely large flowers in some very unusual shades and colours. Examples which I feel would be known in any areas where hibiscus is grown are 'Surf Rider' and 'Golden Belle'.

When we first started to produce the Hawaiian cultivars from cuttings our stock bushes were young and vigorous and our production results were very high indeed. However as the stock bushes matured, the strike became less and less. I was faced with the decision of having to bed out new stock bushes every few years, or to look into the possibility of grafting.

We had to develop a technique that we could use as our standard procedure and one which could produce a high percentage of success. We set down a series of trials to determine:

- (1) The most suitable rootstocks. The three most satisfactory cultivars were found to be White La France, Ruth Wilcox and Apple Blossom. I personally feel that Apple Blossom is the best of the three rootstocks used. They all produce long canes with well spaced internodes.