

TREE PEONIES ROOTED FROM LEAF-BUD CUTTINGS

Tree peonies are generally propagated by grafting cions of named varieties on roots of the herbaceous peony. Unnamed plants may be readily obtained from seed. Propagation by cuttage is considered extremely difficult or impossible by nurserymen.

The January 1955 issue of the National Horticultural Magazine reported on a method of propagating tree peonies from leaf-bud cuttings described in a French horticultural magazine over ninety-five years ago. On the basis of this report, the limited tests reported below were carried out. More extensive tests were not undertaken because of the limited amount of propagating material available. Results suggest that further trials on a larger scale are warranted.

On July 8, 1956, buds of the current season's growth were cut off by making shallow cuts into the stem behind the buds. The leaf stalk was left on and half the leaf was removed. The cut surface of the leaf bud was clipped in Hormodin No. 3 powder. The cuttings were stuck in sharp sand in a propagating bench with bottom heat, under mist. Table 1 presents experimental results.

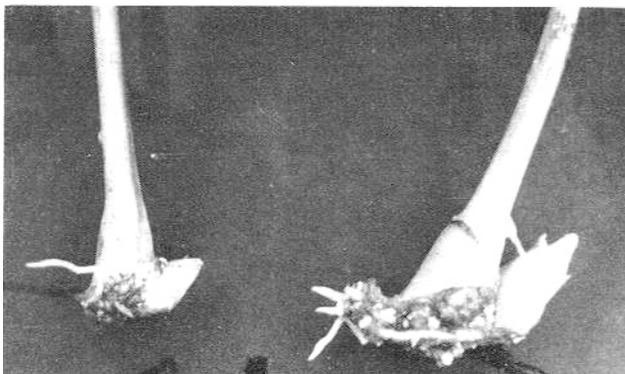


Figure 1 shows rooted leaf-bud cuttings of Satin Rouge. Note the large fleshy roots, which are easily broken during removal from the rooting medium and subsequent planting.

FIGURE 1. Above are rooted leaf-bud cuttings of the tree peony Satin Rouge. Cuttings were made July 8, photographed September 10.

Table 1. Rooting response of leaf-bud cuttings of four varieties of tree peony.
Cuttings taken 9 July 1956.

Variety	Type	Number taken (8 July 1956)	Number rooted (10 Sept 1956)	Number surviving (1 Aug 1958)
Satin Rouge	Lutea hybrid	5	5	2
Silver Sails	“	5	4	0
Shintenchi	Japanese	10	0	0
Yachyo tsubaki	11	5	0	0

Rooted cuttings were planted individually in #10 vegetable tins on 10 September 1956 and were carried in the greenhouse until early –November, then placed outdoors in a covered, unheated frame. No shoot growth was made during this period. In mid-January plants were returned to the greenhouse at 60° F. night temperature. Within 10 days to 2 weeks shoots appeared on three of the Satin Rouge plants. One of these was weak and soon died. Two of the Satin Rouge and all four of the Silver Sails plants died without any shoots emerging.

The two surviving Satin Rouge plants, photographed 28 March 1957, are shown in Figure 2. These plants were placed in the field in the spring of 1957 and are still growing and healthy as of August 1958.



FIGURE 2. Rooted peony leaf-bud cuttings of Satin Rouge variety were growing vigorously more than 9 months after cuttings were made.

It would appear that leaf-bud cuttings of certain varieties of tree peony are easily rooted, while other varieties are more difficult. Both Satin Rouge and Silver Sails are Lutea Hybrids (*Paeonia suffruticosa* x *P. lutea*?); Shintenchi and Yachyo tsubaki are Japanese varieties (*P. suffruticosa*?). Perhaps the different varieties of tree peony will fall into several groups regarding their requirements for rooting. The problem of growing on the rooted cuttings merits further attention. Tests are currently underway on propagation of tree peonies from leaf-bud cuttings, but are limited by the small number of available stock plants used for propagation material.

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