

# Aubretia, Fremontodendron

## Project HNS 55

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# Propagating clonal Aubretia and Fremontodendron by cuttings

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Clonal *Aubretia* and *Fremontodendron* could be more fully exploited if they were not difficult to propagate. This research improved the understanding of their propagation requirements.

### Subjects

<i>Aubrieta</i>	'Dr Mules' 'Greencourt Purple' 'Red Carpet'
<i>Fremontodendron</i>	'California Glory' 'Pacific Sunset'

### Treatments

Investigations centred on stockplant management, cutting type and preparation, treatment with indolylbutyric acid (IBA) and growing-on conditions.

### Conclusions

These supposedly difficult subjects are amenable to improved propagation techniques, and varieties within species followed the same trends. Limited comparisons between commercial operations and the conditions in these experiments suggest that nurserymen tend to propagate *Aubrieta* 'too dry' and *Fremontodendron* 'too wet'.

### Detailed results

#### *Aubrieta*

- Stockplants should be repotted in late winter, otherwise cutting production and quality will be impaired. A growing medium of equal parts medium Irish peat and fine bark (Cambark) with 2 g per litre Ficote 140 16:10:10, was satisfactory.
- Cuttings can be propagated whenever they are available, and repeat harvests are possible.
- Prepare 5 cm (2 in) cuttings with leaves stripped off the lower one third section of stem.
- Treatment with IBA is unnecessary.
- The type of rooting medium used is not critical, but equal parts peat and bark was satisfactory (medium Irish peat and Cambark Fine, with mini-Osmocote 18:6:12) at 0.5 g/L.

- Avoid water stress during preparation and propagation. Despite being a plant which can grow in relatively dry conditions, cuttings rooted best under moderately heavy mist.
- Root in modules placed on a 10 cm deep sand bed, and wean after about 6 weeks, potting-off into 0.5 litre pots after a further 3 weeks.
- Grow well-established plants outside to develop a compact cushion and to avoid *Botrytis* infection. Protection may be used to target marketing dates.

#### *Fremontodendron*

- Grow stockplants in an unheated polytunnel. Maximise the number of cuttings produced by cutting above each node to prepare single-node cuttings with a non-nodal base.
- It is unnecessary to treat with IBA, and unnecessary to remove the felt-like hairs from the stem. (NB. Possible health hazards associated with these irritant hairs can be minimised by heavily wetting shoots during collection and cutting preparation).
- Ensure that the rooting medium is well-drained (e.g. by placing modules containing equal parts fine Cambark and peat onto a 10 cm deep sand bed).
- Avoid excessive wetting, especially if drainage is doubtful; just enough wet fog or mist to keep leaves very lightly wetted is usually enough, but increase if wilting occurs.
- Avoid excessive shade; in summer 25% of available light proved satisfactory.

The full report on this project contains additional information on the environmental needs of cuttings from a wide range of species.