

Grow a Legacy Plant

Overview: Propagating a legacy plant is a beautiful way to foster connections between family, friends, or classmates, share the wonder of gardening, and save some money while doing it!

Materials:

- Cuttings, offshoots, or seeds from a meaningful plant (see Background Information)
- Small pots
- Potting soil
- T-type plant labels (Optional)
- Paper and writing utensils (Optional)



Approximate Time to Complete: Varies by plant type

Location: Indoor or Outdoor

Ages: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall

Background Information

Legacy plants are plants that have been passed on to others through seed saving, cloning, and other types of propagation. Creating legacy plants with kids can be a great way to explore propagation together, foster connection between generations, offer a memento at the end of a program, and so much more!

In the Southern US, plants like these are part of a tradition called "pass-along plants." These are plants that have been passed among family and friends from generation to generation. In general, pass-along plants are easy to propagate by seed, bulbs, and/or cuttings and have a story behind them that gets passed along too. Pass-along plants are a reminder of the generations of plants that have been lovingly tended over many years. Some of the plant varieties are no longer readily available in garden centers, making them extra special.

Examples of common pass-along plants include perennials like daylilies and bearded iris, annuals like cleome and calendula, spring-blooming bulbs like daffodils and crocus, houseplants like Christmas cactus and spider plants, and succulents like aloes and hens-and-chicks. Heirloom vegetable varieties, including tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers, are also popular pass-along plants, with each generation of gardeners saving seeds for replanting and sharing.

Plants that are native to your region make ideal legacy or pass-along plants; they'll support the local pollinator populations and generally will fit nicely into a habitat without taking over.

Invite kids to ask their relatives about plants that are special to them or that have strong memories for them. Then delve into the stories around the plants and select one or more that are relatively easy to propagate. Or, start your own legacy by having kids choose a plant and crafting a story around it.

For example, a large fern that has been tended by a beloved grandparent can be propagated and grown by family members for generations. Best friends could be growing the same snake plant in two different places. A succulent growing in a school garden can be

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propagated and shared with each student in a garden club at the end of the school year. There is a wide variety of plants that can work for this activity, but the main determining factor should be a plant with meaning to all those involved.

Instructions:

1. Brainstorm with kids what available plant they'd like most for a legacy plant and research how to propagate that plant successfully. For help identifying a plant, you can use a recognition app like [iNaturalist](#). Below are some helpful articles with guidance:
 - [Making New Houseplants with a Rooting Pot](#)
 - [Grow Baby Succulents](#)
 - [Growing Baby Ferns](#)
 - [Six Easy-to-Grow Herbs](#)
2. Gather the cuttings, spores, or seeds needed from the existing plant and take the necessary steps to root or sprout them.
3. Transfer your new plants to small pots with some appropriate potting soil and tend to them until they have grown large enough to either re-pot or plant outside.
4. Optional Extensions: Have kids create a label for their legacy plant with its name and the location and age of its parent plant. You can take it a step further by having kids write the story of their legacy plant, including the origin of its parent plant, the person who grows it, and why this legacy plant is meaningful to them. Consider having kids create more legacy plants to share with others as birthday and holiday gifts.

Photos: Left - a yellow Boston fern that came from the ferns one KG Staff member's grandmother grew on her front porch in North Carolina. Right – a Louisiana iris that one KG Staff member's father passed along to her.



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