

# Perennial Propagation Coordinator

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## Job Description

This is basically a year round position that requires a very good practical knowledge of how to propagate and grow large numbers of healthy, attractive perennial plants for our annual Plant Sale. Work revolves around the propagation year which, for purposes here, runs from May to May, or from Plant Sale to Plant Sale. This position oversees and coordinates all aspects growing of perennials and shrubs from cuttings. The coordinator works with, and delegates to, other committee members to insure: plant starts are acquired as needed; maintains the care the growing plants until the sale, tracking the inventory and sizes of plants, making sure the plants are cleaned, readied for the sale (reviewing for size and quality), and properly labeled & priced.

The main goals of the committee are to:

- Educate ourselves on propagation techniques and learn how to take herbaceous cuttings; and
- Increase the quality and variety of perennials offered at our annual spring plant sale.

## Responsibilities

Committee Chair oversees and delegates the various functions of the committee. These include:

- **Chair:** Committee co-ordination; weekly emails outlining upcoming work & priorities. Plant, soil and miscellaneous purchasing. In co-ordination with committee members introduces new plants into production. Back up for inventory, & tag printing. Plant Sale & Board of Directors committee representative. Assists, as needed, with all committee positions.
- **Grower:** Irrigation, fertilization, weed control. With 2-3 people for backup & assistance.
- **Sanitation:** Keep Grow Alley, Wiser & Container areas clean & organized. Work with Grower on shade for Grow Alley.
- **Inventory & Tags:** Counting & printing. 3 - 4 people.
  - May/September - checks inventory of weekly cuttings.

- Fall transplanting- checks weekly transplant numbers. Sends to Committee Co-Ordinator for tag printing. Tags will be stuck the following week.
- Late March- final pre-sale inventory.
- **Purchasing:** 2 people as back up to Chair.
- **Education:** 2 – 3 people. Allows MG's to share expertise in a variety of areas.
  - Safety- tool safety, fairground growing area (tripping), cats, hormone.
  - Tool Maintenance
  - Plant Propagation Basics- nodes, leaves, roots. Hormone use.
  - Types of cuttings: tip, heel, mallet. Softwood, hardwood.
  - Irrigation systems.
  - Plant identification.
  - Weed identification.
  - Others as needed or desired.
- Additional folks are for back up; to share the load/prevent burnout/provide education for other MG's.

### **General Propagation Procedures**

- Send weekly email to committee list describing work to be accomplished.
- Encourage folks to check their gardens to see if they can supply cuttings of any material that will be propagated. Make sure member plants are included in the cutting lists for a given work session
- Remind everyone to bring gloves, clippers, forks (for soil movement) and to dress for the weather as we work outside. If heat is anticipated an earlier start time may be needed. Cold weather may cause cancellation of work or a late start time.
- Prep for the work party also includes getting cell packs cleaned and set up with flats to hold them and filling wheelbarrows with soil to fill cell packs. An alternative is to have 1 -2 folks spend a ½ hour or so filling flats for the next work party during the current work party.
- Give instruction on the process of performing the cuttings.
- When finished with cutting the amount requested the MG must enter the quantity cut. This forms the basis for inventory.
- Once cuttings are stuck, they should be watered in and placed in Grow Alley under shade. Because of how our sprinklers are arranged there is a particular pattern to follow when laying down flats. Shade cloth needs to be put up before any cuttings are done, preferably the week before cutting work starts.

The shade cloth is generally stored in the GH under the benches. When taking cloth down in the fall front & back ends should be labeled and the side by the fence should be labeled as well.

- We have centralized our growing operation at the fairgrounds in the alley next to our greenhouse. We have a misting system and portable irrigation lines for our perennial crops.
- Setup outside misting section where hardy cuttings are located with shade cloth and the misting irrigation turned on. Timer is set for misting 3 times each day. The rear area is used to house plants in gallon and is irrigated every 3rd day. The timer is changed with summer weather and plant needs.
- Assign Crop Watchers. This job requires stopping by the fairground, checking on the irrigation of all cuttings and plants once a week, scouting for problems (watering, insects, diseases, critter damage, etc).
- Assign Daily Waterers- people take turns watering plants daily as soon as it starts to get hot until the plant sale is held.

### **Plant Sale – Timeline**

#### **Late May – June:**

- Buy perennials for shifting and fall dividing for the following year.
- Make sure there is adequate soil for summer, fall season. Order if needed, arrange for volunteers to move soil.
- Put shade up in Grow Alley.

#### **June – early August**

The following is the suggested dates and plants for the summer cuttings. Cuttings are treated with powdered hormone (purchased from Marion Ag, St. Paul) and stuck 2 – 3 cuttings per cell, held in flats. Most cuttings will root in 2 – 4 weeks.

- **June week 1** Send e-mail reminder with meeting schedule.
- **June week 2** Herb cuttings
- **June week 3** cuttings from fairground, Extension and Newberg HS landscapes, Spike Veronicas, Artemisias
- **June week 4** cuttings from herbs-lavenders, salvias, rosemary, thymes, oreganos, agastaches, perovskia, teucrium and rue
- **July week 1** cuttings from groundcovers-mosses, bluestar creeper, waldestenia, ajugas, fragarias, mazus, creeping and mounding thymes.

- **July week 2** cuttings from herbaceous perennials-penstemons, cistus and cousins, heliopsis, lysimachias, roses, erysimums, hebes, hardy salvias
- **July week 3** cuttings of vines, garden phlox, monardas, eriophyllum and any re-dos
- **July week 4** cuttings of sedum and sempervivens, seeding of member-collected perennial seeds
- **August week 1** cuttings of fuchsias and mints
- **August week 2** cuttings of premium annuals-bacopa, geraniums, verbena, bidens, brachycombe, and any plants needing protection in a heated greenhouse during winter.

### **August – October**

- Acquire soil, arrange for deliveries and scheduling volunteers to move the potting soil inside the greenhouse.
- Hard goods Inventory and Purchasing. This job includes inventory of useable containers and purchasing containers and other hard goods (hoses, irrigation parts, etc.) as needed for the following year.
- Transplanting begins in late summer at the fairground and continues through winter.
- Create inventory list while transplanting so that tags can be printed.
- Tags are to be printed during the week and stuck the following week. This allows for a current inventory, and accurately tagged plants. Care must be taken with certain plants that have a difficult time growing under our conditions: Mints, Rosemary, Lavender, Lamium, Fuchsias and others; as they may ultimately be too small to sell. Wait to print these tags.

### **December:**

- Transplant tender perennials and some annuals at Newberg High School; where they will grow over the winter (until approximately mid-March).

### **January - March:**

- Buy plants from YC Soil & Water or Native plant sale for transplanting and plant sale in the current year; or to grow in larger sizes for the plant sale in subsequent years.
- Finish any tagging needed.

- Clean plants – remove weeds & dead leaves.

### **March:**

- Finish cleaning plants.
- Finish tagging plants.
- Finish pricing plants.

### **April - to Day of Plant Sale:**

- In the month leading up to the sale 1 – 3 days of work per week may be needed. Pricing and labeling take a lot of time and volunteer effort.
- Assess variety & quantity/quality of perennial plants and shrubs grown for final inventory. At a minimum 2 people are needed.
- Buy in finished plant material to replace, or supplement, needed plants.
- Buy plants to add diversity to plants to be sold at the sale.

### **Resources**

#### **Seeds:**

- Territorial Seeds
- Nichols Garden Nursery
- Select Seeds
- Outside Pride
- Botanical Interests
- Harris Seed
- High Country Gardens
- American Meadows

#### **Plants:**

- Peoria Nursery – will deliver with a minimum order of 25 flats. Get total when placing order and request a check from the Treasurer. Perennial finished product.
- Yoshitomi – go to nursery to select and pick up product. Generally annual finished product. At the present time the GH Chair has been using her personal credit card to purchase and getting reimbursed later.

#### **Materials:**

Marion Ag Services, St. Paul  
St. Paul Highway  
503.678.2017

OBC Northwest  
1076 SW Berg Parkway  
Canby, 97013  
503.266.2021

*As your job evolves, please note changes to your responsibilities in this document*