

How To Prepare Epiphyllum Cuttings



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You will only require two tools to properly prepare epiphyllum cuttings. They are a sharp pair of pruning shears, a black, fine-pointed permanent marker.



Using the pruning shears, cut across the stem between the areoles.

When selecting epiphyllum stems for cutting, try to cut healthy, plump, unblemished ones. This is especially true if you are preparing cuttings for sale or trade. If you are making more than one cutting, try to remove an entire stem at its base or where it connects with another stem. This will help to keep the plant you are cutting as attractive as possible without leaving a lot of truncated stems.



These are four epiphyllum stems before and after they have been processed into cuttings. The one-foot ruler shows the scale.



Because the areoles tend to alternate in a zig-zag pattern up the stem, your cut will be at an angle across the stem rather than a straight 90 degrees.

Areoles are the vegetative buds on the edges of the stems at the base of each lobe. Areoles will eventually produce another stem, or a flower. Each cutting should be around seven inches long, a little longer or slightly shorter is OK. The length of the cutting is less important than it is to make sure the cutting has at least seven to nine viable areoles.



Some epiphyllum growers like to make a nice, neat, symmetrical chevron-shaped cut at the base of their cuttings. This is an optional step and really has no bearing as to whether the cutting will root successfully or not. If you like to do this, go ahead! It can't hurt anything. Take your cutting(s) and your pruning shears and proceed as follows:

Starting at the midrib, cut diagonally across the longer side of the cutting while trying to approximate the angle of the original cut on the opposite side.

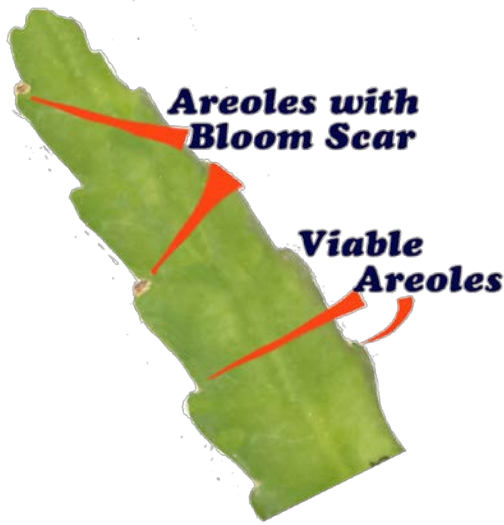


This picture shows a close-up of a cutting with several viable areoles to show you what they look like. They don't look like much! Again, each cutting should have seven to nine areoles that look like this

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The photo also shows areoles with bloom scars. Each of the areoles with a bloom scar shown in this picture has produced a flower. You can see that they look very different from the viable areoles. If you have a cutting where all or nearly all of the areoles are showing bloom scars, it will probably root, but it probably will not produce any new stem growth. So, avoid making or buying cuttings that have less than 7 to 10 viable areoles.



Properly Marking your Cuttings

Many hybrid epiphyllums develop a waxy coating on the surface of the stems. The wax can become a problem if you are making and labeling a lot of cuttings as it can build up on the tip of your permanent marker as you mark the cuttings. This can be removed from the marker with a paper towel and a solvent.

It is important to keep track of what hybrid varieties or species plants your cuttings came from, you will want to properly label them. This is true whether you are making cuttings for sale for your friendly neighborhood epiphyllum society, for trade with fellow epiphyllum growers or if you are starting a new plant for yourself. Remember, new cuttings cannot be potted up for at least ten days to two weeks while the cut surfaces heal over. This is plenty of time for you to forget where they came from. Even if you don't care what varieties you are growing, some day you will probably trade cuttings with someone who does care. So, label those cuttings!

Labels should be made using a black, fine-tipped permanent marker. The label should include the name of the hybrid, exactly as it appears in the Epiphyllum Society of America's Directory of Species and Hybrids. In the example pictured above, the hybrid name is 'Padre', color of the flower is abbreviated 'Pk,' for pink and the size is "L" for large.

The cutting would show **Padre PK - L**

Flower colors are abbreviated as follows:

O for Orange; PK for Pink; Pur for Purple; R for Red; W for White; Y for Yellow

Hybrids with two colors listed should be labeled with the predominant color first, for example where white was the predominant color, **W/Y (White, Yellow)**.

Hybrids with three or more colors listed should be labeled with the predominant color **red-multi**.

Flower sizes are abbreviated:

- **XS (Extra Small; under 2")**,
- **S (Small; 2" to 5")**,
- **M (Medium; 5" to 7")**,
- **L (Large; 7" to 9")**
- **XL (Extra Large; 10" or larger)**.

The flower color and size information comes from the ESA's Directory.

