

## The Production of *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia'

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The production of *Robinia pseudoacacia* 'Frisia' from start to finished product in 5 months, excluding growing of the rootstock, is discussed below.

### ROOTSTOCK—JUNE

The rootstock (*R. pseudoacacia*) is one-year-old seedlings grown in open ground. These are harvested in June and the roots cut back to fit a 7-cm square tube. The stem is cut back to about 30 cm. Once potted they are put under cover (tunnel or glasshouse) without heating.

### SCION WOOD—JULY

The scion wood after going dormant in winter (June - July) is harvested from the mature *R. pseudoacacia* 'Frisia' trees. The wood that is selected is one year old. Trees can be grown especially for this purpose and each year pollarded to produce good scion wood. The wood is then cut into 30 cm lengths and each end dipped into hot petroleum candle wax to seal it. The wax can be heated in boiling water to melt it. The wax floats to the surface of the water and the cuttings are dipped into it. Once the ends have been sealed they are wrapped in damp sphagnum moss and placed in a plastic bag. The bag is then put into a fridge at a temperature of 2 to 4C.

### GRAFTING—AUGUST

Once the rootstocks have started to break bud and the sap flow has commenced, grafting can be started. We use a grafting machine which produces a "V" graft. Because the rootstock is in 7-cm tubes they are much easier to handle than bigger containers. The graft is made about 10 cm above the tube and the scion is cut so there are two buds left. One-bud scions can be used if there is limited bud wood. With two buds the strongest shoot can be selected. It is important to select the thickness of the scion wood to match the thickness of the rootstock. Matching the cambium layers is not that critical as long as they cross somewhere on the graft. Once the graft is completed and tied, the whole graft (rootstock shoot and scion) is dipped into melted wax. This protects the graft and buds from drying out. As the buds swell—3 to 4 weeks later—they crack the wax. At this stage suckers from the rootstock need to be removed as they grow.

### POTTING—SEPTEMBER

Once the scions have grown 15 to 20 cm the grafts are potted into 10-litre buckets and put outside on the container block in a sheltered spot. The new shoot is tied to a 2-m stake and at this stage needs tying every 2 weeks as the shoot grows. The 10-liter container has two major roles:

- Allows good root growth.
- Provides blow-over support for 2 m trees.

By the end of December trees should be 1.5 to 2 m high. Once shoot growth is 2 m high it is topped; this causes the tree to start branching at a good height. Lower branching is not always desirable as the branches can have large thorns and be hazardous.

## **Grafting *Ilex dipyrena*—How to Repeat Beginners Luck!**

**Steuart Welch**

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### **BACKGROUND**

*Ilex dipyrena* is a rather distinctive and handsome species among the many in our collection of 40 plus holly species and cultivars at Cannock Wood Nursery. This large shrub to small tree species, is native to the Himalayas. Although it is not a great garden centre plant there is a demand for it from plant collectors who have seen it growing in the wild, as well as those who see it in our collection. We grew our plant from cuttings taken from Eastwoodhill in April 1976. That attempt involved about 12 cuttings which produced about 4 to 5 trees. At that time I was a novice so records were non-existent except for the labels on the bench. One tree was planted in our garden and has grown to approximately 3 m by 1993. Further attempts at propagation have been fruitless, or maybe I should say plantless, which is frustrating as the cutting material looks perfect. The cuttings just sit and callus but no roots! Hence my paper title of how to repeat beginners luck! As with all my holly propagation, I use Seradix No.3 - Hardwood and have also tried Liba 10000 at 1 part to 3 parts of water. Some cuttings have gone on bottom heat, some without, and some outside behind the shed—but no plants.

### **THINGS I HAVE HEARD**

Two thoughts come to mind before I carry on. First, years ago I read—I do not know where—about a strange habit which hollies have that appears to make them different from other plants. The second is a belief that older trees give better cutting material than very young trees. This second idea came from a fellow nurseryman. I had given him some cuttings and 2 years later he offered me a plant. I said that I had a tree, I just wanted to know how to grow more. His observation was that all the cuttings with flower buds failed, while all that succeeded had none. So this year I have tried again with all this in mind. Cuttings were taken in mid June with particular attention to flower buds. Four months later some have callused, most are green, and in basic language they are looking good. However, roots have not been forthcoming in time for the I.P.P.S conference. They will not hurry for propagator or publisher so maybe I should give some more cuttings away.