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### Don't Toss Those Cuttings!

If your plants are getting leggy and you want to trim them back, don't toss those cuttings. Think of propagating plants through stems or tips as one more way to recycle, with the added benefit of sharing your favorite plants with friends or enlarging your own garden.

There are several easy ways to propagate plants, but one of the easiest is the pillow garden. It will require mostly things you have in your household, and a few things you don't.

You will need:

- Cuttings of your favorite plant
- Rooting hormone
- A plastic bag
- Good quality potting soil
- Scissors or clippers
- Plant labels



First, prepare the stem by cutting it just below the leaf node, the spot where the leaf is located. Remove lower leaves and blooms. The cutting will need only a few leaves to root.

Next, dip the end of the stem in a rooting hormone to stimulate growth. It's best to put a small amount of the hormone in a separate container, like a jar lid, and dip the tip end of each plant into that. This will avoid spreading plant disease throughout the jar of hormone.

Now, fill your plastic bag with damp potting soil, and seal the open ends. Really stuff it full so that the medium is deep. The soil also should be moist enough to support the plant stems, but not dripping.

Poke small drainage holes in the bottom of the bag to allow water to drip out in case the soil is too wet. Insert a dibble stick or some other pointed tool through the plastic in the top of the bag where you want to insert cuttings.

Dip the dampened tip of each prepared cutting into the rooting hormone. You can crowd the cuttings in. This ensures that if some fail, you will still have a healthy crop. Insert the cuttings into the bag and watch for roots. On some plants, roots will appear as quickly as a couple of weeks.

When you see roots, carefully cut the bag apart from hole to hole, and replot your new plants.

Tips:

- You can use any type of plastic bag, but those with zippered tops are great at holding in the moisture. Also, clear bags allow you to see the roots.
- The pillow garden usually requires little to no additional water if you used damp potting medium from the first. If you decide your plants need more moisture, fill a syringe with water and stick it into the soil through the plastic.
- Some plant cuttings are easier to propagate than others. For the greatest success, try begonias, impatiens, coleus, several ivy varieties, jade plant and geraniums. Experiment to determine which plants work the best for you.