PLANT CLONES—NOTHING TO SEED HERE

Did you know that seeds are not always needed to grow a new plant? Seeds are made from the pollination and fertilization of flowers. In order to survive, some plants have adapted to be able to produce new plants without being pollinated. This method of producing new plants happens by removing roots, stems, or leaves of existing plants and creating conditions so these parts develop into baby plants. These new plants are clones, or identical twins, of the parent plant.

NANCY B. SAYS TO TRY THIS!

Learn how to grow your own clones from plant cuttings. Taking a cutting means removing a piece of a leaf, stem, or root from a plant and placing it in water, where it will grow the parts it left behind (i.e., a stem will grow roots, a root will grow a stem, etc.). You’re going to use stems in this activity.

THINGS TO DO

1. Ask an adult to help cut stems (cuttings) from two different plants. Use clean scissors and make sure each cutting measures at least 6 inches long and has 4 or more leaves.

2. Remove any leaves on the lowest one-third to one-half of the cutting. You don’t want any leaves under water.

3. Fill both cups with water. Put one cutting in each cup and label each plant using the pencil and paper.

4. Put the cups in a sunny place like a window sill. Check the cups every day and keep clean water in them.

5. Measure the roots with the ruler. Record the measurements and draw or tape photos of different root stages in the boxes on the next page.

FUN FACT

A team of Russian scientists brought back to life a flowering plant from a 32,000-year-old fruit! The fruit dates back to the last Ice Age and was excavated from the fossilized den of an Arctic ground squirrel. Wow!

SUPPLIES REQUIRED:
- 2 clear glass or plastic cups
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil and paper
- Two cuttings, one each from two different plants (ex. mint, basil, ivy, geranium, coleus, fuchsia, pineapple, sage, rosemary)
TRY THIS, TOO!
While the cuttings are growing roots, make planters to move the new plants to. Start with empty, clean milk cartons. Ask an adult to cut the tops off and punch small holes in the bottom for drainage. Paint both milk cartons with two layers of chalkboard paint. After the paint dries, put in an inch of gravel and fill the planters with potting soil to about 3 inches from the top. When the cuttings have grown 4 inches of roots each, they’re ready to be planted. Gently put the new plants in the planters and finish filling them with potting soil. Use chalk to write or draw on the outside of the planters. You can keep one for yourself and give one as a gift!