

Easy-care, hardy perennials reward you year after year with blooms or lush foliage. The plants are usually sold in containers through garden centers or mail order catalogues.

To "do it yourself" when starting perennial vines, root stem cuttings in water or a non-organic rooting medium. Water-grown roots are more brittle and easy to break in potting than those started in non-organic material, such as perlite or vermiculite.

Use a sharp knife to take a section four to six inches long from a mature vine. Cut just below a point where leaf joins stem; roots develop best there. Remove lower leaves so the bottom inch or two of the cutting is bare. Fill a clean clay pot with evenly moistened vermiculite, perlite, or sand and insert stem end. Water and keep in a cool, light place. Roots appear in three to six weeks.

If cuttings tend to wilt, enclose the pot and stem in a plastic bag. Use a rubber band to hold the bag in place. It's easily removed when the pot needs moisture.

Whether the young vine is homegrown or purchased, transplant it outdoors following the same procedure. Dig and break up clods to a depth of eight to 10 inches. Add peat or another amendment if the soil is clayey. Carefully knock the plant out of its container and set it in the hole.

Fill the hole, firm soil lightly, and water. Tie the main stem to a stake, or tape it to a wall. Apply plant food after new growth appears.

Shrub or climbing roses, often treated as vines, are available in bare-root, container-grown, or balled-and-burlapped form.