

PROPAGATION OF SELECTED FORMS OF CALLISTEMON

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Growing cutting-propagated callistemons in containers has almost made production from seed impractical. Several cultivars are now available and the ones I prefer for nursery production are:

'Park Special' — originated in W.A. and has proved to be a magnificent red cultivar.

'Gawler Hybrid' — a large red-flowering form from South Australia.

'Endeavour' — one of the best and one of the most popular.

'Dawson River' — a lovely vivid red with a weeping habit.

'Viminalis Prolific' — very compact flowered form.

'Hannah Rae' — a pleasant red, most useful for tub specimens.

'Captain Cook' — a most imposing dwarf form with deep red flowers and very useful in mass plantings.

'Western Glory' — a splendid delicate pink.

Cuttings are taken around November at the beginning of the summer months, although when I have been very pressed for stock I have taken cuttings during the winter months and had quite good results. There are two types of wood used depending on the cultivar. Half-ripened tips are used for 'Park Special', 'Viminalis Prolific', 'Captain Cook', 'Hannah Rae' and 'Dawson River'. For 'Endeavour', 'Gawler Hybrid' and 'Western Glory' more mature type tips give best results. Cuttings approximately 10 cm long are stripped of leaves over half their length. In my experience it does not seem to make any difference in the rooting of these cuttings if heel or node cuttings are used. "Pyco 4" hormone powder is used and the rooting medium is 50% peat and 50% polystyrene foam. Cuttings are inserted into flat trays 2 cm apart and placed under mist with bottom heat for approximately three to four weeks, by which time roots should be apparent through the bottom of the trays. Trays of cuttings are then removed to a hardening-off area, such as a shade house, for two weeks or more before further potting on.