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Propagation of *Jamesia americana*[®]

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INTRODUCTION

Jamesia americana Toor. and A. Gray., cliffbush, is a western North American species occurring in the Rocky Mountain states of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Idaho, California, and New Mexico (Anonymous, 2005). It grows primarily in high, well-drained sites. A member of the *Hydrangeaceae*, it becomes a shrub to around 1.5 m or close to 5 ft. Stems are pubescent and slowly develop peeling bark. Flowers are generally white with a pink form being reported (Griffiths, 1994).

PROPAGATION AND PRODUCTION

Seedling production. Being a species in the *Hydrangeaceae*, production from seed is pretty straightforward, with a surface sowing that is not covered. The seed should be watered in but not kept especially moist. Cold moist stratification is a must, and an ideal approach is to sow the seed, which is fine and dust-like, on to moist surface media in a pot and enclose the pot in a polybag and refrigerate the entire pot for 4 months. Upon satisfying the cold treatment, the pot can then be removed from the polybag and placed in a greenhouse environment and watered only when necessary. Since *Jamesia* is endemic to rather arid climates care should be taken to ensure that the medium is especially well drained and not overwatered. A prophylactic application of Daconil or similar type of fungicide might prove to be beneficial to prevent damping off of the seedling.

Transplanting into individual pots should be delayed until the seedlings are well established. Once transplanted, the seedlings should be placed in sealed clear polyethylene boxes with a moist layer of perlite to provide humidity. The seedlings should be left in these humidity chambers for about 1 week.

Cutting production. While normally kinship to the hydrangeas would indicate an easy production from cuttings, *Jamesia* is not so user-friendly, although it can be accomplished. It is unlikely that the proper timing for the taking of cuttings from wild populations will give promising results.

However, containerized plants do offer some degree of opportunity to grow this plant via cuttings. Potted seedlings should be brought into the greenhouse after sufficient winter vernalization and forced into new growth. After the first flush has produced about 2–3 inches of growth the soft tips can be utilized. Cuttings should be about 24 nodes long with 2–4 leaves. Cuttings should be wounded and direct stuck into individual pots with a substrate of Grace 500 growing mix and perlite (1 : 2, v/v) which provides the necessary drainage to facilitate rooting. Cuttings should be given bottom heat set at 70 oF and mist of 10 sec every 10 min.

Cuttings root in about 3 weeks, with 50%–60% rooting. The mist can be especially harmful to the heavy pubescent leaves and cause rotting. A humidity chamber as outlined about might offer more consistent rooting with less damage to the foliage.

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