

# Plant propagation is growing

By PAT HOLLOWAY

Interest in plant propagation has blossomed tremendously in the past few years with the increasing popularity of growing house plants. Many of the propagation techniques are very simple and can be accomplished at home with a minimum amount of equipment. The essential materials include a propagating container, a rooting medium, rooting hormone and a piece of glass or a clear plastic bag.

Just about any container can be used as a propagating box, from a flower pot to a wooden flat or glass terrarium. The container must be able to tolerate

moisture and should be at least four to six inches deep. Three very simple propagating containers include a sturdy shoe box lined with plastic, a glass fish tank, or simply a large, clear plastic bag.

A good rooting medium for most house plants consists of a mixture of one part peat and one part perlite (Sponge-rok). Moisten this mixture thoroughly and allow the excess water to drain. Place about a 3-to-4 inch layer in the container and smooth the surface. Make a hole in the medium for each plant cutting so the cutting ends

are not damaged upon insertion.

Several brands of rooting hormone are available at the local stores. These hormones are mostly in powder form and will help speed the rooting process and promote heavy, uniform roots when applied to the base of the cuttings. For application instructions, follow the directions that come with the package.

After the cuttings have been treated with hormone and placed in the medium, the entire container must be covered to prevent moisture loss. If a terrarium or box is used, a piece of glass over the opening will suffice as long as the cuttings can stand freely without touching the top. If this is not possible, enclose the container in a clear plastic bag and tie it shut. Place the container in a well-lighted area, but not in direct sun. Check the cuttings every week or so, and make sure the rooting medium stays moist but not wet.

Many plants such as wandering jew, Swedish ivy, African violets and some philodendrons can be started in water. For this, a glass jar and a piece of aluminum foil are needed. Fill the jar with water and cover the opening tightly with the foil. With a knife, poke a hole in the foil for each cutting. Place

the jar in a well-lighted area and check the water level occasionally.

One of the simplest types of cuttings is the stem cutting. This type is very useful for many house plants, especially geraniums, coleus, wandering jew and Swedish ivy. Pinch off about a four-to-six-inch piece of stem and remove the lower leaves about one and a half inches from the bottom. If solid rooting medium is used, dip the severed end of the cuttings in rooting hormone and then bury the leafless part in the mixture.

If water is used, insert the cutting through the holes in the foil, so the cutting base is well submerged. Roots will form rather quickly (two to four weeks) either at the base of the cutting or along the buried stem.

To determine if roots have formed in the solid mixture, gently pull upward on the cutting. If your pull meets resistance, and the cutting is difficult to remove, root production has begun.

Remove the cutting from the medium and plant in a soil mix after a large clump of roots has formed. Generously water the soil mix and enclose the pot in a plastic bag for a few days to give the new plant time to adjust to the new soil environment.



# *FBI choice in hospital for surgery*

HOUSTON (AP)—Frank M. Johnson, the man President Carter wants as his FBI director, underwent surgery today and said that if the resulting delay in his taking over created any problems, Carter should appoint someone else.

The operation, performed by famed cardiovascular surgeon Dr. DeBakey,

