

## PROPAGATING *DROSOPHYLLUM* FROM CUTTINGS

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Some years back I saw a short article in the 1988 Carnivorous Plant Newsletter where Richard Tilbrooke described how he had taken some of the plantlets that are often formed on the old flower stalks of *Drosophyllum lusitanicum* and rooted them into new plants (see Carniv. Pl. Newslett. 17(4): 106-107.) However, it seems no one I have heard from was ever able to reproduce that feat. Generally the plantlets slowly died when cut from the mother plant and placed in moist growing medium. Still, when looking at a stem just loaded with the little devils (Fig. 1) it seemed like there must be a way. While I was considering this, it happened that I had made up a standard-strength batch of gibberellic acid (GA3 – 1000 ppm) solution to treat seeds in an attempt to rouse them from a deep dormancy. Since the already-mixed solution was just sitting, I took 3 plantlet cuttings and stood them in the shallow container, cut-end submerged, for one hour each. I then planted them into my standard *Drosophyllum* medium giving them more water than adult plants usually like.



Figure 1: Plantlets growing on the old flower stalk of the parent plant.

For several weeks I watched the plantlet cuttings and waited for the eventual wilting and death of the little green sprigs. But that's not what happened. In fact, I became convinced that they were putting out new growth and getting larger. So I decided to sacrifice one just to see what was really going on (Fig. 2). Since *Drosophyllum* hate having their roots disturbed, I "knew" that the plant was very likely to die, but I repotted it anyway. It continued to grow and eventually produced flowers of its own. Of 3 cuttings taken for propagation, all 3 survived and became independent plants. I believe that anyone who has successfully grown *Drosophyllum* can reproduce these results.



Figure 2: A cut *Drosophyllum* plantlet several weeks after planting showing the new roots (left) and detail of new roots with the old cut sites outlined in red (right).