

In Brazil Tibouchina, the glory tree, is also known as 'Quaresmeira' or 'Quaresma Flower' — Quaresma meaning the 40 days of Lent, this being the normal flowering period. This name particularly applies to *Tibouchina granulosa*, and its cultivars

Of the large number of known species, only relatively few have found their way into the greenhouses and gardens of the world outside of Brazil, with the possible exception of Florida and California. They are highly regarded in their homeland for their magnificent floral display during the Lenten period. They are extensively planted in parks and gardens where their decorative and ornamental value is unsurpassed by any other tree or shrub.

Tibouchinas require an acid soil and respond to generous feeding together with adequate watering especially during spring and summer. A warm, sheltered position should be chosen. Any pruning that is necessary should be done after flowering

Our propagation method for tibouchina is as follows: For a rooting mix for cuttings use $\frac{2}{3}$ coarse sand and $\frac{1}{3}$ peat plus a small amount of Diatomite (coarse grade). Use young tip cuttings and treat with a prepared hormone such as "Rite Gro Striking Powder No. 4". Root under mist with bottom heat at about 80°F This should give 90% to 100% rooting

PROPAGATION OF FICUS SPECIES BY AIR LAYERING

DOUG WADEWITZ

Wadewitz Nurseries

Willunga, South Australia

This method can be used to propagate several *Ficus* species such as *F. benjamina* and *F. elastica*

Firstly, get an old pair of secateurs and, in the centre of the cutting blade, grind out 5/16" deep by 3/4" wide (8 mm deep and 20 mm across) and then sharpen that gap or radius in the blade to the same angle as the original blade. To the inside of the handle end, weld a piece of steel 65 mm long and 40 mm wide and in that piece of steel, put a tapered V, 25 mm wide and 30 mm long, which is serrated similar to a saw-tooth or multi-grip plier's teeth.

Next you need a sheet of aluminum foil similar in thickness and quality to take-a-way trays (the difficulty is trying to buy this material from the manufacturers of take-a-way trays; you have to buy 28 lb rolls and months of proving you are not

going to be in opposition to them) These rolls come in widths of about 200 mm, so you have to bend and cut them in half, making a sheet 100 mm × 100 mm

Now you require moist sphagnum moss for each sheet of tin foil, one handful of moss in the centre of the sheet. (The foil is very sharp, so treat with respect.) Using the secateurs, you now place them around the stem of the *Ficus* branch and squeeze gently till you can hear a light noise as you cut into the cambium. Now gently go around with the same tension till you have completely cut around the outer layer.

Again repeat the same operation 1" or so above or below the first cut. With the sharp point of the secateurs cut up the back, then with the handle end where the saw tooth is, move that around and remove the collar of bark. Here you dust or paint rooting hormone in the cut area. The air layer is usually 1½" to 2 feet long.

Now with the moist sphagnum moss in the sheet of aluminium foil, wrap the foil around the exposed branch and squeeze the edges of the foil together. Some people tie a stake above and below the air layer, otherwise sometimes the top may break off.

Using this method it takes about 6 weeks or more before roots grow into the sphagnum moss.

EFFECT OF PROPAMOCARB AND pH ON THE GROWTH OF FERNS AND *PILEA*

ROSS J. WORRALL

*Horticultural Research Station
Gosford, New South Wales*

Abstract. Propamocarb applied at the rate of 0.17 mg per litre of medium every three weeks, stimulated the growth of *Pilea cadierei* 'Minima' apparently in the absence of any phycomycetous fungi, against which it has a narrow spectrum of activity. It however inhibited the growth of the ferns, *Thelypteris nymphalis*, *Polypodium membranifolium*, *Nephrolepis exaltata* 'Fluffy Ruffles' and *Pteris tremula*, but had no significant effect on the growth of *Cyrtosium falcatum* or *Selaginella kraussiana*. There was no interaction between propamocarb and the pH of the medium. The optimum pH for *T. nymphalis* dry weight was 5.96, frond area 5.97, *C. falcatum* dry weight 5.98, frond area 6.01, *P. membranifolium* dry weight 6.41, *N. exaltata* dry weight 6.12, frond area 6.08, *P. tremula* dry weight 6.11, frond area 6.03, *Selaginella* dry weight 6.30. The optimum pH for the growth of *P. cadierei* was equal to or in excess of 6.57.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Propamocarb has been recently registered as a fungicide in New South Wales for the control of *Pythium* in ornamental