

How Degree Days Affect Rooting Percent of *Cotoneaster acutifolia* Cuttings[®]

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What is a degree day? Degree days are accumulated heat units to help measure seasonal life cycles of plants and insects. Midwest Groundcovers formerly took *Cotoneaster acutifolia* cuttings at about 1000 degree-days and achieved about 25% rooting. By taking them earlier, at 360 to 400 degree-days (mid May for 2001) Midwest Groundcovers now achieves about 75% rooting.

THE PROCESS

At 360-400 degree-days 5-inch to 6-inch long cuttings are taken.

After a 2500 ppm KIBA dip, the cuttings are stuck in pre-dibbled sand frames, which are then covered with white poly. Misting occurs every 20 to 30 minutes when sunny, then is gradually reduced when cuttings begin to root in 4 to 5 weeks.

Seven weeks later, the poly is vented.

Nine weeks after venting, the poly is removed and is replaced with a 50% shade cloth for about 1 week. At this time the fertilizer program begins.

Late October early November cuttings are dug and stored in a cooler at 38°F. If the cuttings were left to over winter in the sand frames, they could suffer from stem-splitting.