

## AIR LAYERING

With both ground and air layering, the technique below should be followed, noting the differences between deciduous and coniferous trees.

- First remove a ring of bark, about as deep as the tree is wide. (for Conifers, read the section below)
- Smear the upper cut with hormone rooting compound, and wrap in wet florist's moss (Sphagnum).
- Enclose in a plastic bag, and tie both ends.
- Check regularly for root growth, and that the moss is still damp.
- Allow time for enough roots to develop to support the tree. (see Note)
- Cut tree from stock tree.
- Pot tree into a container but **do not remove moss**.
- Tie the tree into the container to stop it rocking around, rocking will break the new roots, and kill the tree.

Note: In most cases you are advised to leave the layering until the plant is in growth the following year.

### Air-Layering Conifers

The 'Ringing' method works well with deciduous species; however, for conifers, an alternative way is best. This involves wrapping a piece of strong wire around the trunk, and twisting it until it bites right into the bark. Then cut a number of small nicks in the bark just above the wire, and apply rooting hormone compound, then wrap in moss. Conifers take longer to root by layering, and may not show roots until the following year.

On the whole, most species will root but pines are stubborn, and may take up to five years to do so. Air layering should be your preferred option as it produces a good radial root formation. The moss in the bag must be kept moist at all times. There is a tendency for the water in the moss to be absorbed into the trunk, and out through the leaves. You may have to open the top of the bag, and pour water into it.

When it's time to separate your tree, try to create a balance between the volume of root, and the amount of foliage present. This may mean reducing the foliage, but a tree that is 'out of balance' may find it difficult to survive.

When planting the tree, choose a deep pot, and put the root ball deep down into it, filling the pot with soil. This will stop the tree rocking in the wind, and damaging the new roots.

Under no circumstances should you try to remove the moss as this will damage the soft new roots. The moss will decompose in a short while, and any left can be removed when the tree is next repotted.

Source: [www.bonsaiprimer.com](http://www.bonsaiprimer.com)