HOW DO YOU PROPAGATE BULBS?

Methods of bulb propagation include propagation via offsets, bulblets, scaling, basal cuttage, cuttings and micro propagation.

Offsets are a type of side shoot that grow from the base of the bulb. They are removed from mother plant when dug up and replanted into the soil. Tulips and daffodils are propagated using offsets. Bulblets are small immature bulbs that grow on the mother plant. They may develop on the aerial stem and these are referred to as bulbils. The bulbils form in axils of the leaves and may fall to the ground shortly after flowering. Easter lilies can be propagated through bulblet removal.

Different propagation methods

Scaling method involves removing individual scales of the bulb. The scales are then kept in the right environment to allow for 3-5 small bulblets to form on the base of the scale. Most lily species can be propagated this way.

Micropropagation method involves placing bulb scales into an in-vitro culture. The meristematic tissue near the basal plate then produces adventitious shoots from the scales.

Basal cuttage

As for basal cuttage it entails the techniques of scouring and scooping. Bulbs which have finished flowering must be used. When scooping, the whole basal plate is scooped and removed from the bulb and must be deep enough to remove the main stem. New bulbs develop on exposed bulb scales.

When scouring ,cuts are made across the bulb's base, deep enough to slice through the growing point. Wounded growing points grow bulblets and hyacinth can be propagated through this.

Propagation by cuttings

After flowering, the stem is cut. However, instead of growing new roots and shoots, new bulblets grow in the axils of the leaves. Leaf cuttings are used to propagate blood lilies. Well developed leaves are removed from the stem and basal ends submerged in rooting medium to develop new bulblets.

Hippeastreum bulbs are propagated using bulb cuttings whereby mature bulb is cut into vertical sections. Cutting should contain a part of the basal plate and 3-4 scales attached.