



by Peter Bint

The plant you see here is *Hoya kerrii*. The first picture shows a leaf cutting purchased by the owner of this plant in January 2013. Although he owned a couple more Hoyas he had never tried to grow them from leaf cuttings. Many succulents will grow from a leaf cutting so why shouldn't this one? Upon asking a friend and his wife who also propagated plants as a business he received a reply that did not bring great hope. He was told that it would probably remain as a single leaf though there was a slight possibility that it might develop into a plant. The plant was kept on the kitchen windowsill which faced southwest and for a number of years it did nothing more than produce a swollen base to the leaf which continued to look healthy. The owner was not aware that this was actually a good sign.

After four and a half years a bud like structure appeared at the point where the leaf joined the root which caused great excitement. Slowly a stalk developed from this bud and new leaves began to appear. This was the first success of his patience but no flowers showed any sign of appearing. After about another four years a mistake was made and the plant was moved into a partially shaded greenhouse. The plant disliked its new home. This was probably due to the greenhouse being too cold in winter and also too damp. The Hoya developed unsightly brown spots on the leaves, a typical sign of cold damp. So it was quickly brought back into the house where it thanked the owner by putting out new leaves. We are into 2022 now and the Hoya added another thank you by producing a flower bud and the resultant flowers as seen in the photograph.

Hoyas will actually grow readily from cuttings but it is better to have two leaves on a stem as it aids root production. They can be rooted in a soil mix that is water retentive but they can also be rooted by standing the cutting in a glass of water. By this second method the plant will need potting on once it has developed a good root system. A typical cactus mix will work though some growers prefer to use a more water retentive mix. After about two years it will need moving into a bigger container as the roots can be extensive but bear in mind they are slow growers. They need feeding monthly with a low nitrogen feed to encourage flowers. Another point to remember is that Hoyas like to be warm so they need to be in a shaded hot box if in a greenhouse. In the house they benefit from morning sun and an east or south east window is best. They do not like direct hot summer afternoon sun and should be protected from it or the leaves will turn yellow and the plant will suffer and stop growing. Another point to remember is that they rest in winter.

So, to all people who like to experiment this is a tale of hope. Many, many plants will strike from cuttings. The cutting should be made below a node, that is the point where leaves emerge from the stem, and it is better to have two leaves than one on a stemmed plant and the roots will form at that node where you made the cut. The leaves should be on the next node up the stem. On stemless plants you use a single leaf. **GOOD GROWING**