

2/11

# PLANTING STORIES

The Story of  
Intergenerational  
Wisdom  
explored with  
a Pelargonium



Co-funded by  
the European Union





# WELCOME

The Planting Stories Pathways project is brought to you by KulturNest e.V. Germany and Tilia – association for the promotion of culture and cultural heritage, Croatia.

During in-depth research in both countries we discovered a simple and surprising phenomenon that happens between people and plants. When we truly connect with our houseplants, both we and they flourish.

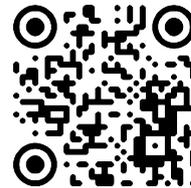
From these experiences, we've created 11 zines for people who are curious to learn how to develop their connection with plants and with themselves. The fun-to-use zines are filled with simple activities, reflections, and ideas inviting readers to explore their relationship with plants in their own way, at their own pace.



Zines can be printed on any ordinary printer and used whenever it feels right – whether there's a single plant or a green corner available. There's no right or wrong way to work with them.

We believe this gentle connection with plants offers comfort, grounding, and resilience that travels with people wherever they go.

For the full range of Planting Stories educational materials, more information on the background of this zine and how to use it, please scan this QR code.



## A few words from this author

Hey, I'm Beth, your host and lead author of this zine.

A few years ago someone gave me a small cutting of a Pelargonium, I think it's Pelargonium 'citrosun' but it might be the Pelargonium 'graveolens' commonly known as the Rose Pelargonium. I keep googling and sniffing my plant but I still can't tell! Pelargoniums are often confused with Geraniums too, but I've come to the conclusion that the name is not as important as the wonderful fragrance and surprising healing properties of this well known plant. My Gran used to grow many geraniums and this plant reminds me of her. I think of all she taught me which I in turn hope to pass on.

So I am happy to introduce you to Pelargoniums, our guide for intergenerational wisdom.

## How much time do I need?

This depends on you, everyone likes to learn at a different pace. Perhaps set aside 20 minutes at first, or a full hour if you have it. You can complete the zine in one go or work through slowly, coming back to learn again when you have time. However, the most important thing is that you have uninterrupted time to yourself and a plant to work with.

## What materials do I need?

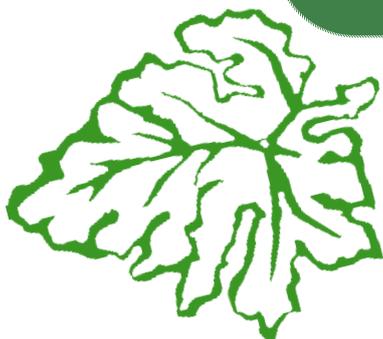
Besides time;

1. Ideally a pelargonium or geranium plant, but another plant next to you is just fine.
2. You will also need a pen or pencil and, if you like, a variety of colours.
3. Come with curiosity, ready to learn.

.....

## How ready am I to start learning today?

I am not really open to this.



I am open to this and I feel ready! I have time, space, a pen and my plant.



Oh! Let me just grab my pencil and a plant.

I'm curious but I don't have the materials I need.

Whatever happens is ok. I'm ready.



I need extra motivation to start.



Is there something you can do to become more ready?

Take care of that first and come back another day if you need to.

**It is now time to arrive,  
to focus on this learning journey.**

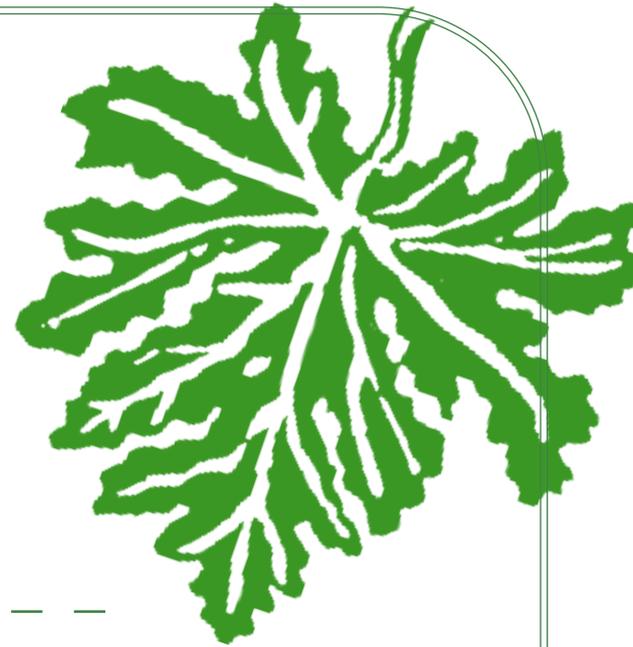
Sit with your plant.  
Take a few deep breaths.  
Become aware of where you are, get as comfortable as you can.

Look carefully at your plant, take your time.

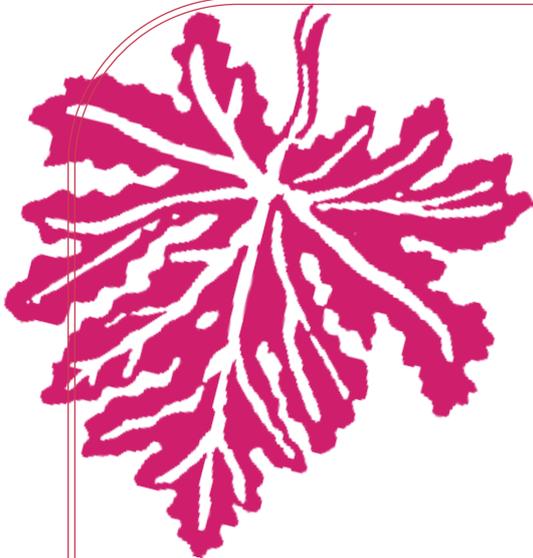
Gently touch its leaves, feel the soil, check its roots, stems, shape, colours...

Take a few more deep breaths while doing this and.... take your time.

How does it feel to slooow dooown?



-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



Observe your plant again, write down or sketch anything you notice. How wet is the soil? What colours do you see in the leaves? How tall is the plant? How would you describe it? Gently rub one of the leaves, what is the texture like? What is the smell like?



**This is the story  
of a pelargonium,  
but it is also your  
story.**

With a deep breath, smell your own hands,  
what does the smell remind you of?

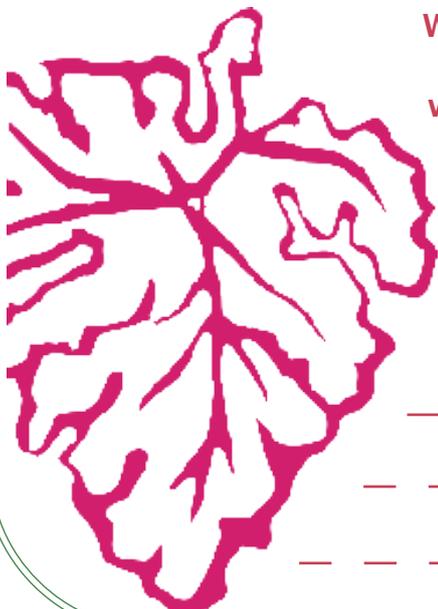
Oh right.... Your fingers probably smell like  
the plant now! Gently rub another leaf and  
notice how the smell is transferred from the  
plant to you.

This is a good metaphor for how people we  
spend time with also pass their wisdom to us  
through their presence, words and actions.

**Write down the names of a few people,  
who are older than you, that you have  
learnt from.**



-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----



**Write down the names of a few people,  
who are younger than you, that you  
would like to share your wisdom with.**

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

On this page, you can read some facts about Pelargoniums. On the opposite page, explore what the fact might mean as a metaphor in your own life.

Use your imagination and write freely, using more paper if you need to.



To care for a rose pelargonium, provide well-drained soil, at least six hours of direct sunlight daily, and consistent watering, allowing the soil to dry slightly between waterings. Fertilise monthly with a high-potash liquid feed during the growing season, and pinch back or deadhead regularly to promote bushier growth and more blooms.

During winter, move plants to a frost-free location and reduce watering significantly.



Disease Management: Be alert for issues like root rot (often a sign of overwatering) or Pelargonium rust. Good ventilation in growing areas helps prevent disease.

Pelargoniums come from South Africa and other southern African continents. They like a lot of sunshine and can handle fairly dry soil. However, they need some extra care coping with European winters.



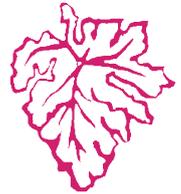
Other than being grown for their beauty, certain species are important in the perfume industry and are cultivated and distilled for their scents of citrus, mint, pine, spices, various fruits or even cola! The oils of the scented pelargoniums contain citronellol, geraniol, eugenol, alpha-pinene and many other compounds.

## Hint, refer back to the previous page

What might 'enough light', 'consistent watering' 'fertilisation in the growth season' and 'pinching back to promote growth' look like in your life?



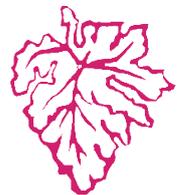
What care do you need in the 'winter' times of your life?



Sometimes we can give or receive too much care! How would you avoid 'over-watering' and make sure your relationships have enough 'ventilation'?



How do you adapt to different conditions and traditions from the ones you were raised with?



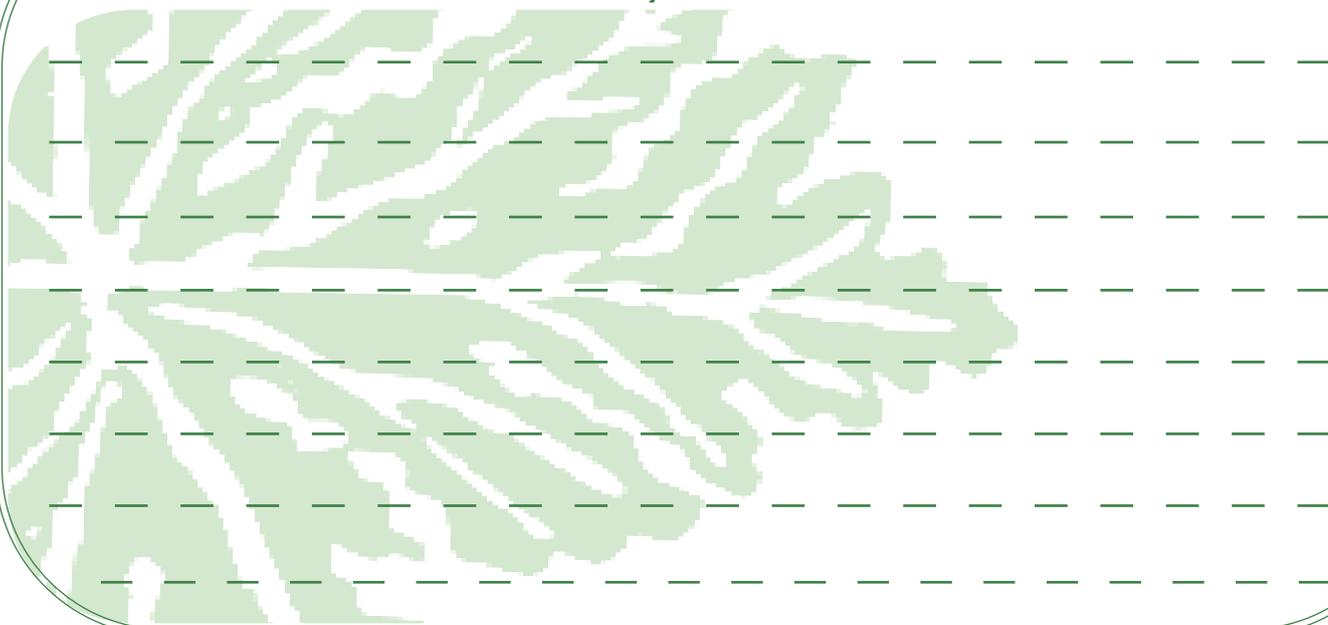
Does the fragrance of this plant remind you of anyone? What isdom did that person pass on to you?



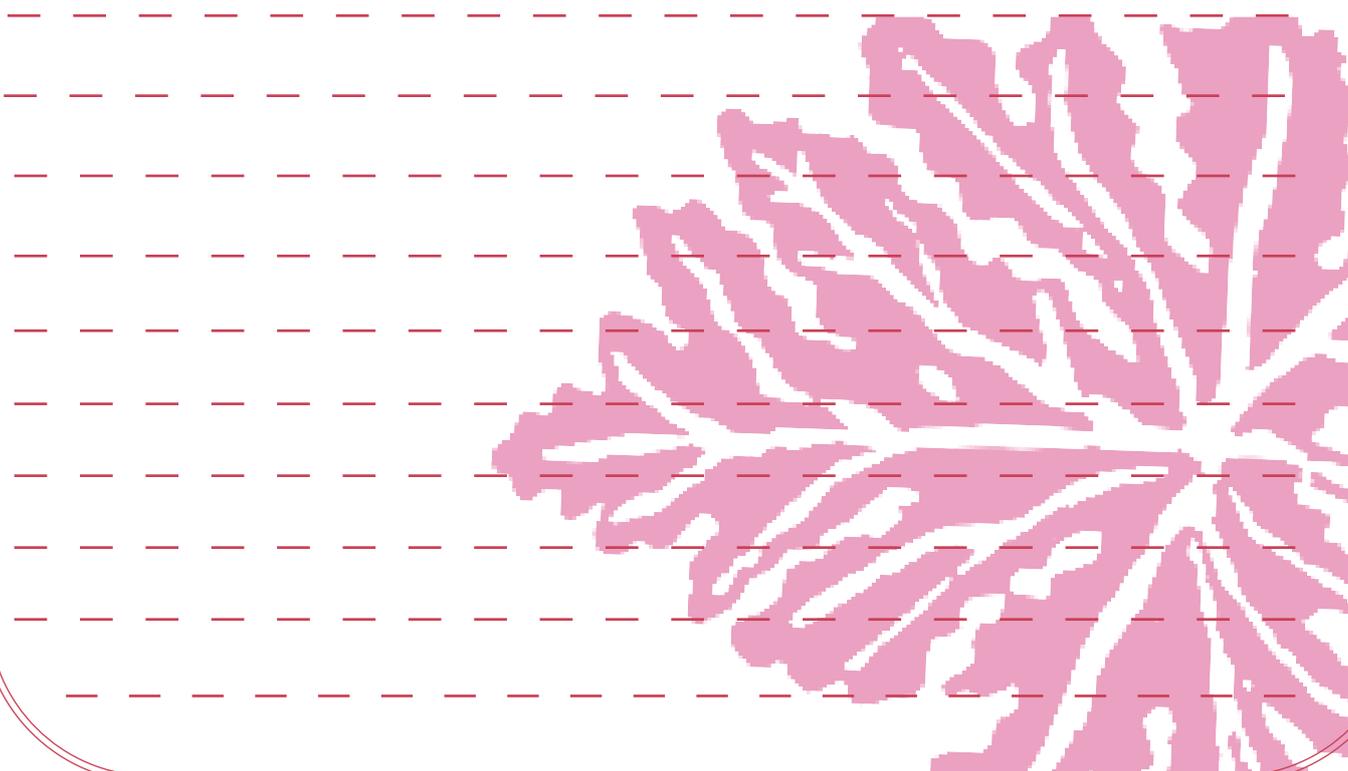
**Pelargoniums are also popular because they are very easy to grow from cuttings.**

The cutting carries all the DNA of the parent plant. Metaphorically, all the wisdom of one plant grows into the next.

**What wisdom are you grateful to have received from elders in your life?**



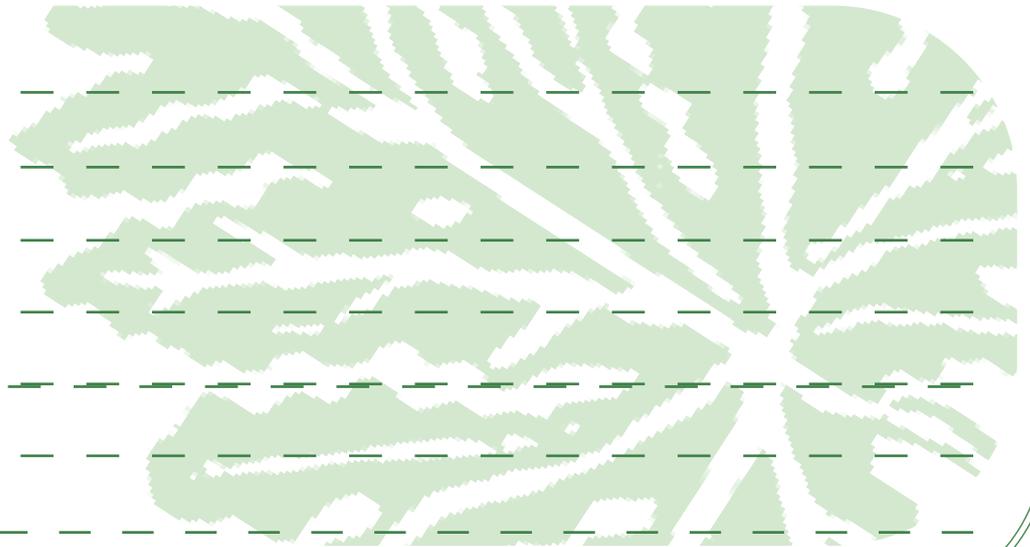
**Which wisdom would you like to pass on to the next generation?**



## Did you know, this plant contains some amazing properties?

Apart from its pleasant aroma, Pelargonium essential oil has anti-inflammatory, antidepressant, sedative, anxiety-reducing, anti-aging, muscle-relaxing and many more properties to promote good health. As well as extracting the oils, the scented leaves can be used in teas\* or potpourri.

Which of Pelargonium's properties might be helpful for you today?



Next, using the concept of healthy properties as a metaphor, which properties would you like to pass on to others?

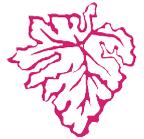


\*Before making tea or consuming the leaves of this plant, please make sure the species you own are edible.

Although Pelargoniums can be grown from seed, you can also make new plants by taking cuttings from the new growth in the spring.

Pelargoniums put out new shoots in the spring, so that growth is a year younger than the previous growth. We could think about it this way. When you look at an older pelargonium, you are looking at many generations.

Do you know how many years of growth your plant may have?



-----  
-----

What about your own family? How many generations back do you know?

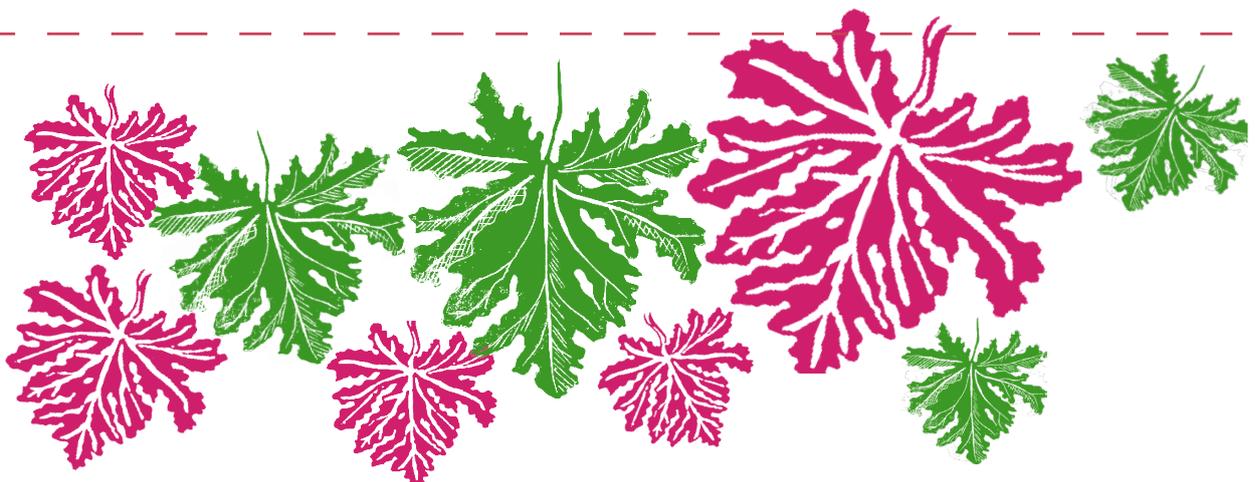


-----  
-----  
-----

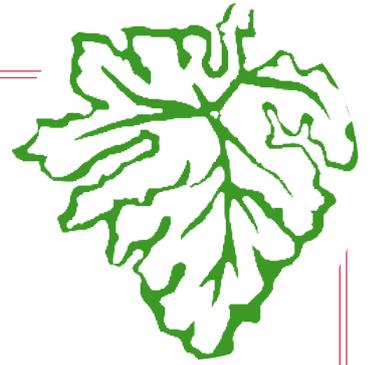
Which skills, qualities or characteristics run through your whole family?



-----  
-----  
-----



Use the space below to draw  
your family tree:





## Closing reflections

What have you discovered about inter-generational wisdom by studying Pelargonium?

- What have you enjoyed most about this exploration?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- What has changed in the way you look at your plant now?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

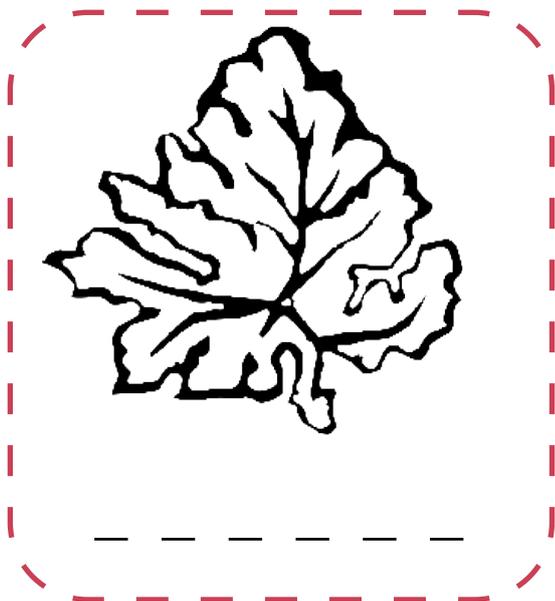
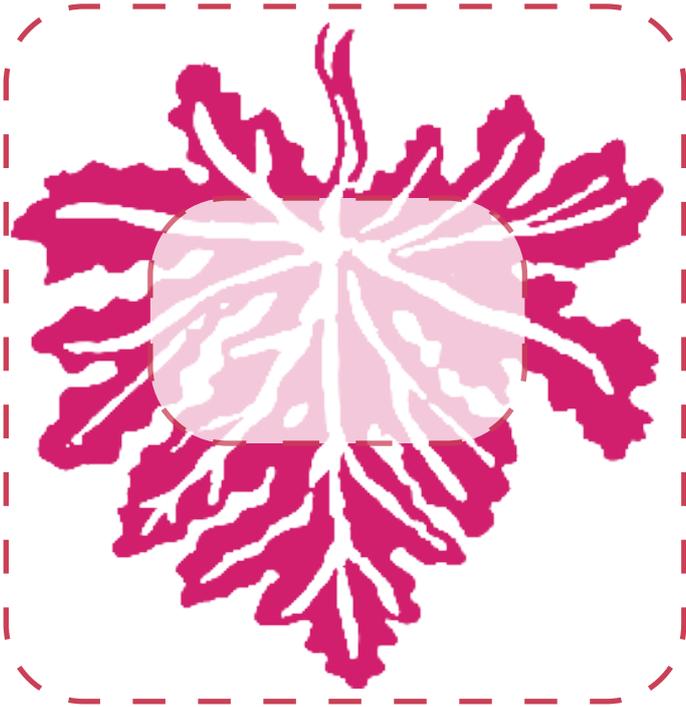
---

---



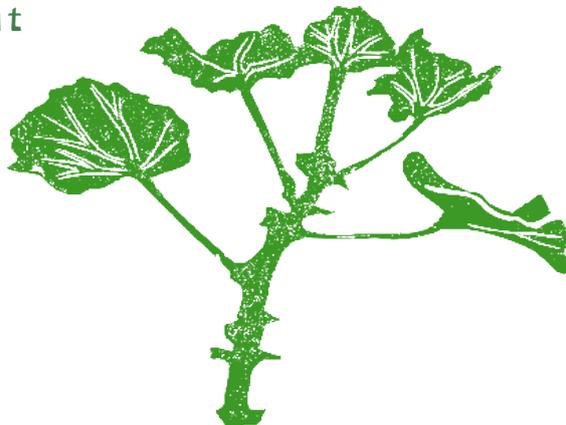
## Closing reflections

On the leaves on this page, or on a separate piece of paper, write down the most helpful words that you would like to remember. Cut these out and put them in a wallet or a coat pocket so you always have them with you. Take them out from time to time and continue your reflections.



## Some practical tips on how to take a cutting:

- Take a cutting from soft, new growth. Leave about four or five nodes (leaf points) long



- Remove lower leaves



- Leave in a glass of water until roots appear



- Plant into soil or plant compost.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS  
JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND  
CONNECTION

Co-created by  
KulturNest e.V. and Tilia  
Lead author and illustrator:  
Elisabeth Fraser

Check for other resources at:  
<https://www.kulturnest.org/socio-cultural/planting-stories>  
or [udruga-tilia.hr/plantingstories](http://udruga-tilia.hr/plantingstories)

Planting Stories – Self-Directed Learning Pathways © 2025 by KulturNest e.V.,  
TILIA Organization for promotion of culture and cultural heritage is licensed under  
CC BY-SA 4.0.

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are  
however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the  
European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).  
Neither the European union nor the granting authority can be held responsible  
for them.

Project 2024-1-DE02-KA210-ADU-000251246