Air Layering Camellias

This instructional presentation was prepared by the Master Gardeners of Jefferson County, Florida and the County Cooperative Extension Service.
Layering is a simple and inexpensive propagation method. It produces a clone, or an exact duplicate, of the mother plant.

Air Layering...
the quick and easy propagation method
Layering involves the formation of roots on the upright portion of a stem, while it is still attached to a plant.
Camellias are typically propagated in the spring, and layers are removed in late September or October.
Air layering is a method of plant propagation used to induce plant stems to root while they are still attached to the mother plant.
The stem is wounded by cutting with a knife and kept moist in some media to stimulate root growth in moist rooting media above ground. The rooted stem is then detached to become a new plant growing on its own.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Select your favorite cultivar

Select a healthy, vigorously growing branch
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Prepare the stem, branch or limb for layering

Completely girdle the branch by removing a strip of bark from all around the stem.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Prepare the stem, branch or limb for layering

PMake the girdle at least 12-18 inches from the top of the branch
Prepare the stem, branch or limb for layering

Scrape all conductive tissue adhering to the wood with a knife
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Wrap the cut with moist spaghnum

PWrap excess moisture from the sphagnum. Use moist but not wet moss.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Wrap the cut with moist spaghnum moss

Place a ball - a handful or so - of moist spaghnum moss on a sheet of aluminum foil
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Wrap the cut with moist spaghnum

Apply a shake or two of rooting hormone to the cut or to the surface of the moss.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Wrap the cut with moist spaghnum

Wrap the cut branch in the sphagnum, with the powdered rooting hormone in contact with the cut.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Wrap in foil

Tightly wrap the aluminum foil around the moss, making sure it is sealed.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Wrap in foil

PTwist the two ends in opposite directions, sealing the layer completely
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Tag it, then wait

So you don’t forget, identify the cultivar with a tag - attach the tag above the layer so you remove the tag with the layered plant later.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Now you wait a few months

When you feel the firm root mass formed, remove the layered plant by cutting the stem just below the foil. You can carefully unwrap the foil to check root formation, and re-wrap if necessary.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Now you wait a few months

Air layered Camellias are typically removed from the mother plant in mid-September through October.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Plant it and enjoy it

When the newly rooted plant is removed, gently unwrap the foil, and plant in a container. All the buds should be removed, and perhaps some of the rangy foliage.
Steps in Air Layering Camellias

Plant it and enjoy it

Plant the new Camellia in a container - or directly in the garden. And enjoy.
With special thanks to:
Mary McLeod, Advanced Master Gardener
Ferd Naughton, Advanced Master Gardener