

# Rooting Cuttings



by Jim Delahanty

Potting Soil, perlite, 1-gallon containers, rooting compounds; mist/sprayer.

1. Start with a 1-gallon container. Fill it two-thirds of the way up with a mix of potting soil and perlite (roughly 2-1). Water to let the soil/perlite mix subside.
2. Take a cutting with two or three or more bud-eyes or axils and trim off the lower leaves. Cut the top two or more sets of leaves in half. Depending on the size of the stem, mash, slit, expose the cambium layer, or do nothing with the bottom.
3. Dip the bottom stem in a hormone mix: (Clonex, or Dip n Grow liquid. Avoid powders.) Make a hole in the potting soil with a similar size stick. And place the stem about an inch or so deep. Place up to four cuttings in a 1-gallon container.
4. I mist the cuttings every morning and evening. The greatest enemy of the cutting development is a desiccating wind or drop in humidity. Although many people create a mini-greenhouse effect by using plastic bags to maintain a high humidity factor, I find this produces mostly fungus on the cutting and soon dead twigs. The point is that there must be some minimal humidity maintained.
5. Place the cuttings in an environment where they will not get direct sunlight, but will get enough sufficient indirect light so as to avoid rotting. I also periodically water the cuttings with a compound called B'cuzz which aids in the development of roots. Actually the product is fairly expensive but it does help to root cuttings and increased my success rate from 12% to 50%.

6. After a short period of time, the old leaves will wither and fall off or require removal. New leaves will start to develop, a very hopeful but not yet definitive sign. The point, of course, is to develop new roots. This can take as short a period of time as three weeks or so. Unfortunately, it can also take up to seven months; it depends on whether the cutting turns black—the definite sign you have failed.
7. Some roses are more easily rooted than others. International Herald Tribune had a hundred percent success rating, so I had ten plants; Mme Elisa de Vilmarin took me four tries and two years before I could root two cuttings. The growth rate of the cuttings will depend on a lot of factors including the vigor of the plant, the climate conditions, and the size of the new pot.
8. Moving the rooted cutting to a new pot: The trick is to be accurate in your assessment of whether there are new roots. Usually, if you see strong leaf growth, the roots are ready for transplanting. Always use a one-gallon container to transfer the roots from a cutting to the next size up. Putting a rooted cutting in too large a container can cause the plant to wilt and die for reasons of the plant's inability to reach out into the soil if the soil should dry out at the top.
9. Really significant growth will occur after the plant has been moved from the one-gallon container into three or five gallon container.
10. Be careful about violating the hybridizer's rights. There is both a legal and an ethical question involved. A patent gives the owner a twenty-year exclusive on reproduction rights and that exclusive right includes even non-commercial purposes. Most roses are not patented and may be reproduced with impunity.

