

PROPAGATING ROSES BY CUTTINGS

Propagating roses by cuttings affords an inexpensive way in which to acquire additional plants. It may take two or three years for the plants to grow into multi-caned specimens, and all canes will produce blooms identical to those of the mother plant. Generally hybrid teas, grandifloras, and some floribundas are propagated by budding or grafting onto hardier, more disease resistant rootstock. Plants grown from cuttings, particularly hybrid teas, are less disease resistant, may not be as vigorous, and may not live as long as grafted or budded plants. Any viruses within the mother plant, which may not be obvious when the cuttings are made, may be propagated as well.

Cuttings of roses may be made at various times during the year. Most of this writer's experience with this method of propagation has been done at winter pruning time (mid-January to mid-February); however, this fall an experiment was done, taking ten cuttings on November 8. Six were made with single stems and four with forked stems (doubles). The cuttings were inserted into commercial potting mix and were checked on December 3, with the following results: three of the doubles and all six of the singles had formed root calluses; one single already had a tiny root. Since the mother plants were approaching dormancy when the cuttings were taken, top growth is not expected before the usual time in the spring. By December 12, some of the buds had begun to swell slightly.

To Make Rose Cuttings

Always begin with **healthy** plant material and **sharp, clean tools** (hand pruners or a knife). Select a pencil-sized or larger stem which has bloomed; look for the slightly enlarged area where the bloom stem branches from a larger stem; cut through that area at an angle, leaving a portion of the enlargement on the material to be used for propagation (the accompanying illustration shows where two cuts may be made). Cut the stem to **four to six inches** in length (it may be wise to make a straight cut across the top of the stem so it doesn't get planted upside down). Remove all leaves.

Dip the angled end of the stem in water and then into rooting hormone (such as Rootone), shake off the excess hormone and insert about one-half the length of the stem into potting soil and water well. Keep moist but not wet. **Hint:** It is a good idea to make at least three or four cuttings of each desired variety, since not all will root. (This writer has had 60 - 70 percent success by inserting the cuttings directly into garden soil.) After growth begins in the spring, the cuttings may be placed into individual 5- or 6-inch pots or planted directly into the garden.



Illustration showing where two cuts may be made