



My Method of Sticking (Rooting) Rose Cuttings by Becky Smith

"How do I propagate rose cuttings?" That's the number one question we receive from our website. There are many, many answers to this question—every gardener has their own method. There are countless ways to root roses, but over the years and trying many different methods, I have found this method works best for me.

A few things to note before you begin:

- Keep in mind that some rose bushes may still be protected under patent rights and are not to be propagated by anyone other than the patent holder.
- Since you never know when you might come upon a treasure you want to root, keep a "cuttings kit" in your car. My kit contains pruners, zip lock plastic bags, a roll of paper towels, a jug of water, a permanent marker, and plastic shopping bags. An ice chest is also a necessity for a rose rustler. Once I take my cutting, I wrap the lower stems with a damp paper towel and place in a zip lock bag (labeled with the date and the name of the rose or location of the cutting) and place in the ice chest. Note that cuttings can stay in the fridge for a few weeks before they need to be stuck.
- Stick quite a few cuttings as not all of them will take. It's better to have extras. The more you stick the better chance you have for success. This method can also be used for propagating perennials, herbs, and other plants.



- Try to take cuttings early in the day (cloudy days work best for me). Spring and fall are the best time to take cuttings, but I have been known to start cuttings anytime I have access to special cuttings.
- Prepare cuttings from one variety at a time to keep from confusing the cuttings during preparation.

Follow these steps to propagate cuttings from the rose bush you want to replicate:

In a large pot, mix the potting medium of rose soil with added perlite or a good quality of potting soil.



Prepare a flat of 4-inch pots with the soil. Water until the soil is damp.



In a dish, mix about a tablespoon of Consan Triple Action 20 with about a tablespoon of Hasta Gro and fill the rest of the dish with water. I use this mixture to dip the prepared cuttings in and let them soak for a few minutes until I'm ready to stick them.



I cut up mini-blinds to make my plant labels and use a pencil to write the date and the name of the rose or the location where the mother plant was found.



Cutting with a spent bloom

The rose cutting should be about 6-8 inches in length and should be taken from a stem with a spent bloom. Below the bottom node, cut the stem at an angle. This makes a larger surface for the roots to develop. Then, with my thumbnail, I lightly scratch the outer layer of the part of the stem that will be planted in the ground. Once the cutting is prepared, put it in the mixture of the Hasta Gro, Consan with water and let it sit in this mixture while other cuttings of the same variety are prepared. When the cutting is planted, 2-3 nodes (where the leaves come out) should be planted in the soil with the leaves removed and 2-3 nodes should be above the soil with leaves intact.



Cutting ready to stick

The next step is to use a pencil or bamboo stake and push down into the soil to make a hole that is deep enough to plant the cutting up to about 50 percent of its length. I make two holes for two cuttings in each 4-inch pot. Dip the end of the cutting in a rooting hormone and slightly tap the cutting to remove excess rooting hormone before sticking the cutting into the hole. Lightly push the soil around the cutting and tap soil around cutting. Do the same thing for each cutting. Label each pot with the name of the mother plant and the date. Then, water each pot.

The next step is to plant the 4-inch pots with the cuttings under a big oak tree and place a jar over each pot to form a sort of miniature greenhouse. The size of the jar is variable meaning that different size jars work better with certain types of cuttings. Sometimes a small jar is adequate and sometimes a taller jar is necessary, depending on the cutting length and the size of the leaves, which will vary. It is extremely important that the soil moisture for the cuttings does not dry out during the rooting time. The jar will help hold in the humidity, but can be a problem if it gets the hot afternoon sun as it will overheat and kill the cutting. The tree helps to shade the cuttings.



While the cuttings are rooting, some of the leaves may turn yellow. If so, lift the jar and remove the yellow leaves, and then replace the jar.

When the cutting grows to the top of the jar, it has probably rooted and should be bumped up to a gallon pot. Place the pots in a shady area and gradually move them to a sunny area. Once the cuttings have adjusted to the gallon pots in a sunny location, I begin to lightly fertilize them.



The Texas Rose Rustlers have some rules of etiquette that they always follow when they take cuttings.

1. Always ask permission to take cuttings from the owner. Sometime offering to pay for the cuttings or agreeing to take the owner a rooted cutting can prompt the owner to allow you to take cuttings.
2. Always leave a rose in better shape than it was before you take a cutting. Trim out the deadwood, weed around the bush, etc.

These roses are easy to root:

Archduke Charles

Carefree Beauty

Cecile Brunner

Cramoisi Superieur

Duchesse de Brabant

Louis Phillippe

Maggie

Martha Gonzalez

Monsieur Tillier

Mrs. B. R. Cant

Mrs. Dudley Cross

Quietness

Red Cascade

Safrano

If you have any questions about my method for doing cuttings, please contact me at becky.smith662@gmail.com.