

## Potting Dormant Roses

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*Joseph J. Maisano, Jr.*

*Cooperative Extension Horticulture & Turf Agent*

Garden roses are a popular ornamental summer flowering crop. Consumers desiring color can purchase potted roses from late spring through early fall for planting in their gardens. Growers should offer the consumer a variety of colors since customer preference will often vary from year to year. Red, pink and yellow are the most popular colors.

Dormant bare root rose plants should arrive at your business about two months before you plan to sell them.

Upon arrival, the shipment should be opened and inspected. If plants arrive frozen, notify the trucking company immediately. Dormant rose plants can take some freezing if they are thawed slowly (over a two to three day period at 34-40°F.). The plants should not be allowed to dry out. Therefore, they should be potted as soon as possible after delivery.

The soil should be well drained and with the pH (6.5) adjusted with agricultural limestone and amended with superphosphate. The container should be 8 to 10 inches deep.

At the time of potting, the top of the rose plant should be pruned and the roots trimmed.

Stems should be pruned to within 6-8 inches of the crown, leaving 2-4 eyes from which new growth will emerge. Unpruned long canes produce weak growth and are more subject to drying, thus roses benefit from pruning. Long thin roots should be removed along with any broken roots. This will stimulate new white vigorous roots to develop.

Rose plants should be potted to a depth barely covering the bud union. A little soil should be placed in the bottom of the pot followed by the prepared plant. Next fill the pot by firmly tamping soil around the roots to eliminate air pockets which can dry out emerging roots. The pot should be filled to within one inch of the top.

After potting, all containers should be thoroughly watered to moisten the soil and firm the plant in the pot.

Next, tent the plants with opaque plastic to keep the humidity high about the stems and to allow new roots to develop in the pot. Temperature should remain about 50-55°F. When the new shoots begin to appear and elongate, gradually remove the plastic to harden off the new growth. Clear plastic, unless shaded, will heat up during warm spring days and will burn the new growth. It can also kill the stems if the temperature remains too high. Slow starting plants should remain under the plastic tent until they produce satisfactory growth.

When new shoots are about 4-6 inches long, start fertilizing with a water soluble fertilizer on a bi-weekly basis. Dry fertilizer, or osmocote, may be used later in the summer to maintain adequate nutrient levels.

As growth progresses, a spraying program containing fungicide and insecticide should be maintained. Alternating sprays of Benomyl (Benlate), Folpet or Acti-dione will aid in the control of black spot fungus and powdery mildew. The insecticides Malathion, Diazinon and Maverik will control insect problems.

Potted roses should not be allowed to dry out. If this occurs too often, buds can abort thus removing plants from potential sale. During the summer, attention to pruning, feeding, spraying and watering will ensure that first quality roses are available for sale all season long