

Rose Propagation

Bob Brown, Badsey, Worcestershire

We all know roses are budded commercially and I reckon most of us feel chary about the budding process. But commercial budding is done principally because the demand is great, and the process supplies lots of propagules quickly and because it's cheaper than the way you or I would do it. So:

CUTTINGS

Experience has taught me that October and November are the best times to take rose cuttings. Not that I grow a lot of roses. I reckon that although the blooms are wonderful they're mostly held on unkempt and often gawky thorny bushes. However, some reward me with flowers virtually continuously like *Rosa chinensis* 'Bengal Beauty' and others like *Rosa* 'The Fairy' have neat bushes. The very idea of taking rose cuttings had never occurred to me until Helen Dillon gave me bits of 'Bengal Crimson' on November 1st 1996 and told me they'd root – which they did – all of them.



Rosa chinensis 'Bengal Beauty'

I use pretty well anything from the outside of the plant – twigs which have had flowers on them (I'd take off any hips). I don't even look for twigs with leaves attached as long as the twigs themselves are green. However, maybe the odd leaf gives the cutting an advantage. I reckon these twigs qualify as ripe or half to almost ripe cuttings. Put them round the outside of a pot filled with compost, vermiculite, silver sand, Perlite or even garden soil (although this will grow weeds). Forget the rooting hormone. Cotswold Garden Flowers used to use it but that was only because it was easier than arguing with the propagator. Put the pot somewhere ordinary but sheltered, like a cold greenhouse or close into a house wall. Look underneath the pots for emerging roots in mid to late spring.

SUCKERS

Some roses are easier to propagate in other ways like *Rosa spinosissima* (the burnet rose, - burnet because the leaves resemble *Sanguisorba*). This suckers. Maybe the concept of a suckering rose might put you off and indeed they will finally need a lot of space. Use thorn-proof gloves when propagating because as the name suggests the prickles (not really thorns) are abundant and sharp. The bushes are usually neatly shaped with pretty compound leaves, and they flower once, in May and June. I have four kinds; 'William III' with single deep carmine flowers, 'Cedric Morris' with full double pink flowers, 'Dunwich Rose' which I believe was found on the coast of Suffolk and 'Merthyr Mawr' which was found at Ogmore-on-Sea on the South Wales coast. 'Merthyr Mawr' is my favourite because it has creamy white flowers contrasting with its dark, red-edged bluish foliage, black hips and orange autumn foliage. The flower buds are striped with dark chestnut brown.



Rosa 'William III'



Rosa 'Cedric Morris'



Rosa 'Dunwich Rose'



Rosa 'Merythr Mawr'



SEED

I acquired and sold seedlings of other worthy roses, especially *Rosa glauca*, only ever by digging up self-sown seedlings. If you are intent on raising roses from seed allow the hips to blet (two nice earthy words), and sow outside or inside. Remember that unless the Rose you started with is a species, the result will differ from the mother plant. And, know that the juvenile rose's shape, habit and even foliage will usually differ from its mature form.

What are you going to do with all these plants? There's a limit to how many even a rose garden can absorb. But there's always the annual gardening club sale.

Two Late Bloomers

Sally Goymer, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

The *Iris* is named 'Tempting Fate', maybe it is because this photo was taken today (09/10/23).

It has two stems, one with five buds and the other with two. Is it unusual to flower at this time of year as well as June.

The *Agapanthus* 'Black Magic' has taken three or four years to come into flower from a tiny plant, but well worth the wait. I'm saving the seeds.



Iris 'Tempting Fate'



Agapanthus 'Black Magic'