

FORTUNIANA (FORTUNEANA) CUTTINGS, TRANSPLANTING AND BUDDING.

Notes from workshops delivered to the Heritage Roses in Australia (Perth, WA)

'Buddies' Group 2019 & 2020

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STRIKING FORTUNIANA CUTTINGS

TAKING FORTUNIANA CUTTINGS: First up, grow a Fortuniana bush if you don't have access to cuttings. I have spares so you could buy one from me.

Equipment: gloves; sharp secateurs or a Stanley Trimmer; a large jar (or bucket); very small black plastic pots, or Jiffy Pots to strike the cuttings in. Black plastic pots are preferable to Jiffy pots.

Six (6) weeks **before** taking your cuttings, mix 'Scotts Osmocote Seed and Cutting Premier Potting Mix' with almost half as much Perlite and mix in a sprinkling of Macrocoate or Nutricote. This Scotts Potting Mix was available from Bunnings in 2022. Push it firmly into your little black pots or Jiffy Pots, and drench with water daily, unless it rains a lot, to remove the tannic acid. **This is essential to do** because there is Coir Peat in the Scotts Mix. It's not as acidic as Peat Moss but it is still very harmful to callous and root development. Di Durston's own mix works well too.

JUNE: Sometime in June, take good quality Fortuniana cuttings. Look for vigorous quick-growing side-shoots from strong stems. These shoots should be green in colour; red stems might be too soft to strike. Fortuniana cuttings taken from old dry wood are not desirable. Neither is young fresh growth. Ideally the stems should be 18 to 25cm long and the best thickness is 4mm (pencil thick).

If your established Fortuniana bush has longer canes, then you can either make a few cuttings from that cane or try striking a single standard with it instead! With long canes, leave behind a 5cm stub at the base where the cane has grown out from the thick branch so that the stub can produce more growth for next year on your bush (leave 2 or 3 buds).

To preserve your cuttings, put some water in the bottom of a bucket to place your freshly cut stems into if travelling. Do this either the afternoon before or on the morning of your striking day.

You might need to consult a book or google how to take rose cuttings specifically. Basically, leave the top two buds and slice off all the remaining ones below. Do a V-shaped cut just below bottom bud.

Once prepared and placed into small pots, your Fortuniana cuttings will take about 4 weeks to callous over before the roots can start to grow out from the calloused area at the base of the stem. The calloused area is the cambium layer at work.

Soak your cuttings in AGRI FOS solution (1ml per half-litre) before planting and pour on some more from a watering can after planting. Or use Previcur if available. These prevent rotting.

CUTTINGS AFTER-CARE

Water cuttings daily unless it rains; twice a day on hot October or November days. Every 2 weeks, repeat AGRI FOS /Previcur drench using a watering can at the same rate as above. Do this 4 times. Feed cuttings with liquid fertiliser each month.

By August you might see some Fortuniana cuttings starting to shoot. Some advanced ones might even be producing tiny premature flower buds. If so, you should very carefully nip the flower buds off leaving as much stalk as possible. They will then continue to grow without producing any more flower buds (for the time being). Feed a little if leaves start to become yellow.

Some cuttings might die back with the tops darkening and shrivelling. Try to cut these off below the dieback part of the cutting down to fresh clean wood. It is wise to clean and then dip your secateurs into bleach before, and between cuts, to stop the rot. Inevitably you will lose a small number of cuttings anyway. When this happens, pull them out and dispose of them.

TRANSPLANTING and GROWING CUTTINGS

Equipment: Rose Soil Mix and fertilisers: gloves; pots (I use 200ml black plastic pots); potting mix (I use a Rose Mix from WA and J King in the suburb of Martin); seaweed conditioner (such as Seamungus pellets); slow-release fertiliser (like Nutricote, Macroco, or Osmocote); complete fertiliser (like Sudden Impact or Eco Prime Purple); GoGo Juice (liquid pro-biotic); and Blood & Bone.

N.B.: Measurements - for references to fertilisers etcetera “one handful” is interpreted as roughly ½ cup or 8 tablespoons.

PREPARING TO TRANSPLANT

NOVEMBER: When transplanting Fortuniana cuttings in the first 2 weeks or so of November, put Seamungus halfway up the pot at a rate of one handful per 3 pots, and water well. Then almost fill the pot with more mix and water again. Dig a little hole and put a sprinkle of slow-release fertiliser in the soil mix and cover slightly with more mix. The bolus of roots will sit on the mix to allow them to feed off the slow-release quickly. Then fill in with the dug-out soil mix, press down firmly and water again. Give them water each day from then on. It is most important to place your cuttings in full sun. Some people make the mistake of placing them in the shade. No need to. They're tough.

AFTER TRANSPLANTING

One week after transplanting, add further slow-release fertiliser to the surface soil mix (at the rate of one handful per 12 pots). If your cuttings have transplanted well after two weeks, you can spread one handful of Seamungus across three pots or use Gogo Juice and a little bit of blood and bone as well. Feed monthly.

Early in January 6 weeks before you intend to bud apply a complete fertiliser of your choice at a rate of one handful per 9 pots. This greens them up in readiness for budding.

Fortuniana cuttings (transplanted or not) will need to be watered 2 or 3 times on hot to very hot days.

BUDDING (demonstrated in workshop)

PREPARING THE BUDWOOD

Cut your varietal bud-wood stems on the morning that you choose to propagate. Cut off a flower stem that is about 24cm long with recently spent petals and put it in a bottle or bucket with water in the base. Tag your variety name securely (very important).

THE BUDDING TECHNIQUE

Proposed process of workshop - Demonstration of budding onto an established Fortuniana cutting growing in a 20cm in a pot; Participants use their own bud-wood to follow suit on their potted

Fortunianas. NO MORE WORKSHOPS PROPOSED. Google the technique yourself first. Then if needed contact me or Di Durston (di.durston@gmail.com) or Franco Panicciari (francop@inet.net.au) for helpful hints.

Equipment:

- Sharp budding knife (I use a Victorinox Budding/Grafting knife (these are Swiss-made and cost \$58.58 (as at 2nd Feb 2019) from StrataGreen at 5 Barrel Way, Canningvale (email: info@stratagreen.com.au or phone 1300 866 367). Whatever you use, make sure that your knife is very sharp.
- Rubber ties (Flexibands), 24cm x 6mm: available from S Brundrett and Sons P/L, PO Box 400, Webb Street, Narre Warren, Victoria, 3805 or contact me for a few. Cut the bands in halves (12cm).
- Some beginners (if right-handed) wear a rubber thimble on their left thumb for protection.

Aim to bud on or very close to 23rd JANUARY. A bit later doesn't matter. February is fine too. Don't bud in the rain or if the Fortuniana plants are still wet after watering.

- Most budders bud about half-way up the Fortuniana cutting or even up higher to give the rose bush a long stem. However, there is a theory that you place your bud a little below half way because it is claimed that the sap is less concentrated down there, and so there is less chance of 'bud-burn' and subsequent dying off.
- Once budded, you can then water the pot because water can't penetrate inside the Flexiband. Position the pot so that the bud is facing the sun.

BUDDING AFTER-CARE

Even by budding early in January, you can expect that only about 10% will shoot out quickly, say in about 5 or 6 weeks.

At the end of February, if there are too many side shoots growing from the two Fortuniana branches, rub some of them off with your thumb or finger or cut them off fully with secateurs.

MARCH: By now you probably might be able to ease off the very short, dried leaf-stalk of each of the buds to hopefully reveal the remaining green buds underneath. The odd one might be beginning to shoot.

In mid-March you can give your budded Fortuniana a light dressing of Sudden Impact or Eco Prime Purple, at one handful per 18 pots. Or liquid fertiliser.

You can cut one end of the tied Flexiband with your budding knife; no more than just enough to cut it. Once cut, it should start to unravel quickly. Remove it completely. Look at the scion (bud-shield). Has it remained green all around? If any part is dead or dying, eventually the whole scion will die. Nothing can stop it.

Up until the end of March you can repeat the budding process if your original bud did not take (definitely do this before the end of March - the sooner the better, but not if it is raining). Try to put the replacement bud somewhere below the first one, as long as the soil or the edge of the pot doesn't get in your way. If not, do your T-cut in the best spot above your first attempt but you will have to be a little more careful with your knife than you were first up. You can practise the whole technique on established rose bushes or even gum trees in your garden from mid-January to the end of March to give you more experience and confidence.

Remember to give your successfully budded roses some liquid fertiliser or General-Purpose Fertiliser to keep the buds active (don't exceed the suggested rate).

APRIL: If more side-shoots of Fortuniana have grown back, once again nip or cut some of them right off but not the lot. Three weeks into April, apply slow-release fertilizer at 1 handful per 12 pots.

MAY: At the end of May, add Seamungus at one handful per 3 pots.

JUNE: **IT'S CUTTINGS TIME AGAIN** (incidentally)!

JULY: **CUTTING OFF THE FORTUNIANA TOPS**: Early July is the time to cut the Fortuniana tops off your budded rosebushes (but in some cases not!). Hopefully the cut won't weep with rising sap. If it does, that can't be helped, but it rarely kills the bud anyway.

NB. How to do this depends upon the state of the bud. You have 4 options:

1. If the implanted bud has shot out strongly since the time of budding and the young rose plant looks as if it will be self-supporting as a bush, cut all of the Fortuniana off with one slanted cut with sharp clean secateurs just **above** the top of the original T-cut made during the budding operation.
2. If the bud has grown into a short stem only, leave only one Fortuniana side branch when cutting it off. This will allow the short stem to develop fully over the next few months. When the new bush is strong and self-supporting, cut off the remaining Fortuniana.
3. If the bud has fattened up well but hasn't shot as yet, cut off all the Fortuniana as in option 1. This cut can easily appear daring and dramatic to you but in about 4 to 6 weeks, the fat bud will shoot out strongly and grow well.
4. If the bud is still staring at you, is doing absolutely nothing and is still flat level with the Fortuniana stem, leave one Fortuniana side-branch only when cutting back, as in option 2. Keep an eye on the bud for months if necessary until it shoots out eventually and grows into a young bush. Only then do you cut off the Fortuniana completely above the original bud.

It is best to use cleaned and very sharp secateurs because the cleaner the cut the better. It is also recommended to dip secateurs repeatedly into ½ strength bleach between cuts to stop any rotting.

FUTURE CARE FOR ESTABLISHING BUDDED VARIETIES

When the new shoots on your budded rose varieties are about 6cm long, you can give them some half-strength liquid fertiliser. It is most important to refrain from applying any complete rose fertiliser until the new shoots are at least about 10 cm long. 6 weeks later you can give them a bit more (little and often is best). The older and stronger they grow, the more you can give them (of course). If you are using manure only at this stage, add a little Sulphate of Potash as well.

Don't ever let your successfully budded rose bushes dry out when the weather warms and hots up or leave 'unreliables' in charge of them if you holiday! Fancy losing them after all your diligent work! I advise that you keep these detailed Guidelines handy and consult them monthly. Also only attempt to learn this skill of budding if you are serious about it. Once mastered, the rewards are great.

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