

EXHIBITING WITH DRY WRAPPED ROSES

The warm weather arrived much earlier than expected and there were many good exhibition blooms available to be cut and the rose show was several weeks away. I knew the roses wouldn't stay vibrant for that period of time under normal conditions as a cut specimen in the refrigerator and needed a solution.

I had seen several exhibitors bring dry wrapped roses to a show but didn't understand the process and wanted to learn how they did it. After a little practice, I discovered many varieties survive the challenge. They may not win queen of show, but will compete favorably in collections and work quite nicely in arrangements. There is some color loss after several weeks in a refrigerator, but that is not a problem unless a freshly cut specimen of the same variety is placed next to a dry wrapped rose.

Miniature varieties are very easy to dry wrap as the storage space in the refrigerator is minimal. I use a rectangular plastic food container that can be tightly sealed and put a rolled piece of paper towel under the peduncle. This keeps the petals from scarring when the stems are placed on top of one another. The hybrid tea roses are put in a large plastic bag or hard plastic cylinder. It is important to keep the containers air tight. The following steps complete the dry wrapping process.

1. Cut the bloom slightly less than one half open. A little practice is needed as every variety will not open in the same manner. The stem should be the length that you want to exhibit.
2. Put the stem and foliage in water up to the peduncle for ten minutes. Water containing Chrysal or a mixture of two tablespoons per gallon of vinegar and bleach seem to aid the process. This provides maximum hydration to the bloom and foliage.
3. Remove the cane from the water and wipe dry the end of the stem. Light a candle and seal the cut end with the wax.
4. Spray the bloom and foliage with an insecticide and fungicide that doesn't leave a residue. This will kill the hidden insects and curb petal spotting caused by fungus invasion.
5. Place the package into the refrigerator. A temperature between 33 and 40 degree is desirable. Less fungus will develop at a colder temperature. Do not freeze.
6. The bloom and foliage will wilt while in the refrigerator. Don't be alarmed as this is normal. When the specimen is needed, remove it from the refrigerator and cut off the sealed end and put the stem in water up to the bloom. The bloom and foliage will hydrate as water is absorbed through the stem. The length of time the rose was in the refrigerator will effect the hydration.
7. A little practice will determine if a rose will dry wrap. You will have success with the following varieties, Veterans Honor, St. Patrick, Gemini, Moonstone, Cajun Moon, Let Freedom Ring, Brides Dream, Irresistible,

**Breath of Spring, Erin Alonso, Hot Tamale, Ruby Baby, Ty, First Choice,
Lady E'Owyn, Memphis King, Whirlaway, Tiffany Lynn and many more.**

**Sincerely,
Jim Zimmerman
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