

Direct Stick Rhododendron Production

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At Monrovia Nursery Company, we do most of our *Rhododendron* cutting production directly into liners (rose pots). We are currently growing 44 cultivars from rooted cuttings. We take our cuttings from containers in the field in October and November.

When the cuttings come in from the field, we prepare them by cutting back the leaves (if it's a large leaf) and cutting out the bud that has formed. The cuttings are approximately 3 to 4 in. long, depending on the variety. After the cuttings are prepared, they get a chlorinated wash with 5 ppm chlorine. After they've been washed, we wound the base of the cutting 180 degrees apart. After this process, the cuttings are ready to be stuck in the mist house.

The rose pots are run through a flat filler and filled with a *Rhododendron* cutting mix, which is 3 peat moss : 2 perlite (v/v). The pots are taken to the mist house where the *Rhododendron* cuttings will be stuck. We use Hormodin #2, #3, or Dip 'n'Grow as hormones. The cuttings are stuck into hormone, then into the liners. After each day of sticking *Rhododendron* cuttings, we give them a preventative drench with Subdue.

The cuttings stay on bottom heat (64F), under mist, until March or April. At this time, they are very well rooted and moved to a shade house. The liners will start to push out and will immediately be potted into 1-gal containers. They will be pruned in gallons after they have established themselves and will be of saleable size in 18 months.