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Bill's Guidelines for Finishing Roses from Liners

1. **Environment**- Whether your location is indoors or outdoors, your location must have ample light from dawn to dusk. Your location should have good air circulation and the plant material should never be standing in water.
2. **Planting** - Liners should be potted up as soon as you receive them. We have cut them back prior to shipping so they are ready to plant upon arrival. To remove liners from trays, push on the root mass from the bottom of the cell while grasping the plant at the base of the foliage. Plant at the same level as the soil so that the crown of the plant is even with the soil level. Do not bury the crown of the plant. After planting, irrigate with either clear water, a light rate of fertilizer (60-80 ppm) or a fungicide drench. Make sure that this is a thorough irrigation. You want the soil to be just slightly moist before the next irrigation, so let the soil dry down. This will allow the plant time to adapt and to establish new roots.
3. **Pinching** - There are many thoughts on pinching but our preference is what I call the "human touch." In 2 to 3 weeks (depending on the container size), the roots should be reaching the outside of the pot. At that time the plant will begin to grow rapidly. We usually wait until buds start to form before we give the plant its first pinch but the size of the pot dictates the timing of first pinch. If it is a 4 to 6-inch pot, we generally pinch the plant to one well developed "five leaflet" above the last cut. If it is an 8-inch pot or bigger, we go two "five leaflets" above the last cut. Subsequent pinches should be made on the same basic schedule. We look for bud development to dictate the time of the pinch. Many prefer time frames around 4 to 5 weeks apart. Pinching is truly an art form and dictates the overall shape of the finished plant. Every time you pinch, try to envision your end goal. The final pinch depends on the finishing location. General timing if it's outdoors would be 6 to 7 weeks or if it's indoors, 5 to 6 weeks. NOTE: Do not pinch a dry plant. Irrigate your plants before pinching and let them dry down as you normally would.
4. **Fertility/Irrigation** - We use constant feed at 125 ppm. Every four weeks, we do an overhead drench with a fungicide to leach the soil and prevent disease. We water the edges daily with clear water and during hot weather we'll even out crops with clear water as well. Moisture management is the largest, most critical detail. You don't want to over water. Roses prefer a thorough watering but they do not want 'wet feet.' To reduce disease, avoid leaving foliage wet into the night. We like to dry our plants down so that they are just slightly moist before the next irrigation. It is imperative that irrigation decisions are made and executed early in the day. You want your foliage to be dry and your relative humidity to be as low as possible at the end of the day. If you can achieve this, you will eliminate 75% of your problems.
5. **Growth Regulators** – When necessary, we use Bonzi at 1 oz/1 gallon of water. Once we see ¼ to ½" - inch of new growth we begin applications once a week. If you see the plants getting away from you, applications can be made three days apart.
6. **Lighting** - Roses should be grown in full sun for fastest flowering and highest quality. Supplemental HID lighting is recommended for early Spring crops at 350 to 500 foot-candles for 13 hours daily. Optimum night temperatures are 58 to 65°F with day temperatures of 68 to 75 degrees F.

Option #1 - Short Cycle

This option is for planting a liner into a one-to-three gallon container. Finishing time is 60 to 75 days. Finishing time for a two gallon is 70 to 80 days. Actual growing times may vary due to weather conditions. Liners are potted up in late February or March, sheared at least once, and forced for late spring sales. Allow for one more shear and 5 to 6 weeks of growing for a fuller plant.

Option #2 - Long Cycle

This option is for planting a liner potted into 2 to 5 gallon containers. Liners are transplanted into finished containers May-June. When the plants are fully rooted and the flower buds are cracking color, plants are sheared to a height of six inches. Successive shears should be 1 to 2-inches above previous cut. Two to three more growing and mowing cycles during summer will build a multi-branched bush. Plants can be sold in the fall where planting at that time of year is common. The balance of the plants are over-wintered in cold frames to protect from heavy frost. The finishing time for the plants depends on the growing environment.