

## ***FACTS ON ROOTSTOCKS FOR ROSES***

One question that is always asked, "What is the best rootstock?"

We carry and grow our roses on the best two rootstocks for Florida: Dr. Huey and R. Fortuniana. We have found both to be durable and will perform well in the diverse growing conditions of Florida, with exception of wet or saturated soils.

Dr. Huey is the rootstock used by most of the large producers in the United States. It is adaptable to a wide variety of climates and soil conditions. Its roots tend to grow deep and vertically. Dr. Huey needs to be watered thoroughly during dry periods but will not tolerate wet feet. Florida's climate creates a rapid growing rose on the Dr. Huey rootstock. In 6-8 weeks a Dr. Huey rootstock can be an established plant. It likes to be pruned severely at least once a year. Pruning back to 8-12 inches above the bud union enhances growth. Because of its wide use, variety selection is greatest on Dr. Huey. We purchase the best and they are Grade #1- two year old bush budded on Dr. Huey rootstock. If kept healthy Dr. Huey can live 15 years or more.

R. Fortuniana was discovered in China by a Scottish plant explorer named Robert Fortune. It is best suited for the hot moist conditions of Florida. Its fibrous root system grows about 8" to 10" below the surface of the soil and many times in width. It will out perform any other rootstock in the severe summer conditions of Florida and will withstand drought better than other rootstocks. Because of its vigor, it does not like to be pruned hard. Be gentle with this R. Fortuniana rootstock, it is very delicate. When planting, carefully slide it out of the pot. Because they have only been grafted for one year and it takes at least 6-12 months to get a rose on this rootstock established in the ground or a container.

Both rootstocks R. Fortuniana and the durable Dr. Huey, are fairly resistant to nematodes. It makes no difference what rootstock as to whether the Rose is disease resistant or insect free. It mainly depends on the variety of the Rose and who the parents were and where the variety came from. Even if it says "disease resistant" it might not be in Florida since we still have Black Spot on our Roses. Keep your Rose watered well and fed monthly and you will have healthier roses with fewer problems. Some varieties are very toxic to some fungicides but you may have to choose one that will give control without pesticide injury.