

## **Minis on the Move**

By Susan Clingenpeel, DVM

My first garden (without motherly guidance) began with our first home in Richmond, VA in 1994. My husband's quest for advanced schooling led to a move to Columbus, OH in 1998. Now that his program is almost completed, it is time for the last (hopefully) move to Athens, GA.

These two moves have allowed me to become adept at starting new gardens and learning to move the plants to which I am especially attached. These plants include minis that have been difficult to obtain, ones no longer in commerce and roses that have a special sentimental value.

All the moving can be difficult for a rosarian but it does have some advantages. I have been able to correct mistakes I have made in my first beds and I have developed a successful system for moving my valued varieties. The following information can be applied to the large roses as well. The only difference is that they are more work and often a bit slower to recover than the minis.

The most important factor when moving with plants is planning. Evaluate which plants you want to take. I always make a list of all the plants I would like to take and then attempt to narrow the list to a reasonable number. My move to Georgia will consist of sixty minis, two Hybrid Teas and ten Old Garden roses. It really makes no sense to dig up a 'Miss Flippins' when the plant can easily be obtained from any mini nursery once you get to your new destination.

There is one exception to this rule: If you have a plant that consistently produces exceptional blooms, I suggest keeping it. I have a 'Irresistible' which makes every move because the plant's blooms never have "holes in the center"; that can be a problem for many 'Irresistible' plants. My 'Berry Grape' moves with me because its only available source is a nursery in California that ships notoriously weak plants; and my 'Evening Shadows' comes along because it is no longer commercially available.

Once I know which plants will make the move, I plan to dig them up when they are dormant. This can be done in late fall or the early spring at pruning time. I make sure they are dug up when there has been a recent rain. If this is not possible, I water the bushes thoroughly.

All of my transplants are transferred into 7-gallon plastic pots. If the minis have been planted for several years, I will remove the soil from the plants and trim any damaged roots. If the bushes are large, you can actually split the bush into several plants. I then plant them in the pots with a fresh soil mixture.

If the soil in your beds is relatively fresh and you don't want to split your plants, just dig the roses in one large ball and place them in the pots. If you are digging them up in the

spring, I usually prune the bushes when I transplant them. I am of the theory that one good “shock” is better than two separate small ones.

Make sure the plants are well watered. If it is springtime, just treat them as normal bushes. If you transplant in the fall, wean them to the area where you plan to winter the plants. The minis can stay in the pots indefinitely.

If you wish to transplant the minis once at your new home, this process should also be done when the plants are dormant. One thing I learned during the most recent “dig” was that some plants that were taken from beds and placed in pots actually have improved their growth. This finding was especially true of my singles.

I am a huge fan of single varieties. These plants are often hard to find and I have several older varieties. I dug up all of my singles (12) to take to Georgia and placed them in the pots. The roses are “summering” at my Mom’s since we have had an exceptional summer. They are all growing well. Some of the varieties, which were weak growers in the ground, have done much better since transplantation.

I am actually considering leaving all my singles in pots permanently. Even if you are not moving, if there is a variety performing poorly in a bed, dig it up and see if the performance improves in a pot.

All my minis, which were potted in early spring for the move, did well. They produced good show blooms and seem not to have stressed over making the first leg of the move from Columbus to Charleston.

Occasionally I have transplanted a mini at the “wrong time”. Most recently, as I was doing my final packing to move in June, I found a mini in my garden that had sported. Not one to let an opportunity pass me by, I thoroughly drenched the plant with water for several days, and then dug the plant during the evening. When a plant is not dormant, it is important to disturb the root ball as little as possible. Dig as large a root ball as possible when transferring it to a pot.

Water the plant both morning and night and keep it in total shade for at least ten days. Slowly begin increasing exposure to sunlight. The rose will go into shock for up to a month and may lose a few leaves, but with a lot of TLC it usually does fine.

I usually will feed Fish Emulsion weekly starting two weeks post transplanting. Although optimally it is best to transplant a rose when dormant, it can be done very carefully during the growing season – must have lots of patience.

Take time to plan the location of your new bed. Prepare the beds well prior to transplanting the roses. Your roses should be transplanting the roses. Your roses should be transplanted while dormant to avoid shock. Make sure they receive a lot of water for the first week and you’ll be rewarded with a beautiful garden that is quickly established.

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