

Budding Enterprise at Southern Roses

Last week the budding season has begun for Southern Roses. Approximately 50 000 roses will be handbudded by the owners Geert van de Laak, Wilma Verhaegh and some seasonal employees. If you are driving down state Highway one just south of Edendale over the next few weeks, you will see the team from Southern Roses hard at work on this task. The hand-budding is just one of the specific tasks which are part of the culture of Southern Roses in Edendale.



Budding season starts end of January.

The manner in which Southern Roses grow their roses is **unique** to New Zealand. At this nursery the rose is bred of its natural origin by using so-called 'seedlings'. Wild rose varieties grow exclusively in the Northern hemisphere, preferring the more moderate climates. By then modifying these innovative roses, many new variants arise, which also thrive very well in the Southern hemisphere. Southern Roses is using the most appropriate variant of a wild rose to their requirements, based on factors such as geographic location and climate preferences.

These wild rose variants, usually grow in rough terrain and are prove in harsh waether conditions, provide the fruit, known as 'rose hip', which will be picked and peeled in Autumn. In this way it is possible to saw rose seed in Spring, which will be lifted once the seed has grown to the size of a seedling. Only the best quality seedlings will be selected and the necks of the seedlings need to be straight and have a thickness of between the 4-8 mm. These seedlings will be planted mechanically in early Spring.

During Summer these seedlings will be called rootstock as they have grown to the perfect size to be ready for budding. A bud will be put in every rootstock by hand, which is called the 'T-bud' and finally covered with a rubber band to protect the plant from dirt and moisture penetrating the T-bud.

The budding material or budwood will be cut from the flowering roses, budded last year. Approximately 8 months after the seedling roses have been budded the wild crown will be pruned off just above the 'T-bud'. The crowns of the wild roses will get removed from the field and burned. Small rootstock stumps will remain, from which the bud starts to grow until it has reached the status of a strong, natural bush rose.

In Autumn the bush roses will be lifted mechanically, sorted on quality, labeled and finally dispatched to the customer on the requested date.

This rose culture is unique to New Zealand. In that the seedling will perform the basis of the plant. It then becomes a plant with a strong rootsystem and also with a natural attachment of the bud to the heart of the seedling meaning it won't break off easily by heavy storms.

This rose is significantly stronger, has more branches and will grow till a satisfactory, full flowering bush rose of a high quality. This budded seedling rose is healthier, has a powerful flowerformation which is also less sensitive to the wilting disease. All these advantages will guarantee the long life span of these bush roses. No viruses can persist and other deseases are less common.

In short, a rose Geert and Wilma are proud of most importantly, a rose which will satisfy the customer without a doubt!