

Minimizing Loss in *Rhododendron* and *Pieris* Production

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RHODODENDRON

We begin taking our cuttings between 20 October and 20 November. We start with a clean cutting, one that has been sprayed regularly all summer. The benches are sprayed with a mixture of 1 Clorox : 9 water (v/v).

We cut the hardened growth off about 2 to 3 in. from the top. Next we strip all the leaves off the cutting except three or four, then wound one side about 1½ in. from the bottom of the cutting. About ¼ in. of the base is quick dipped in a rooting solution of 7500 ppm IBA in 50% wood alcohol. The cutting is stuck about 2 in. deep in a peat cup filled with a mix of 1 perlite : 1 peat moss (v/v). The cups have already been placed in a heated bench. We use a mist system over the top that activates for 15 sec every 10 min during 8 h of daylight until rooting begins. We then cut down the misting time a little each day.

After the roots have formed, we spray the benches in the greenhouse with Alliette every 21 to 24 days until they are potted in the spring. We use Subdue at the recommended rate when we pot them in the middle of May, then continue to spray with Alliette. On or around 20 June we use Alliette at the high rate because it is only a preventative for *Phytophthora* and other wilts. We look for dieback at least twice a week. If we see dieback, we carry the plants out of the nursery.

We try to grow our plants to a salable size in 2 years. We repeat the same treatments the second year.

PIERIS

We take pieris cuttings when their new growth has just fully matured, about 5 July to 15 July. They are cut off about 3 in. from the top, and the leaves are stripped from about 1½ in. of the bottom of the cutting. The cuttings are then dipped about ¼ in. deep into a rooting hormone with fungicide. We use the same misting system for the pieris as we do for the rhododendron.