



The Ventura Rose

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Volume 18, Issue 4

VCRS Meets at: 5100 Adolfo Rd, Camarillo

Visit our Website at:
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This Month's Meeting Presentation

Ventura County Rose Society
Our May *and* June meetings will feature

THURSDAY, MAY 26

Dr. James Downer

**What's Bugging
Your Garden?**

THURSDAY, JUNE 28

Ron Whitehurst

**Bees and Other
Garden Pollinators**

Doors open: 6:30 p.m.
Featured Presentation: 7:30 p.m.

The Ventura Rose

Volume 18, Issue 4
Ventura County Rose Society
www.venturarose.org

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May & June Presentations

May 26, 2011 Presentation What's Bugging Your Garden?

The prolific bloom production of May also brings a prodigious number of insects, mites, and other predators to feast on your bounty. Dr. A. James Downer of the University of California Cooperative Extension Ventura County will comment on pest diagnosis and the various techniques for repelling or at least controlling the ill-effects of this invasion. He will also identify plant damage and/or the little beasties if you will bring them to the meeting suitably encased in a plastic bag.



Dr. A. James Downer
Photo credit: UC Davis

Dr. A. James Downer received his undergraduate degree at Cal Poly, Pomona in Botany and Ornamental Horticulture. Two years later he was awarded his Master's degree in Biology and Plant Pathology. University of California Riverside conferred his Ph.D. degree in Plant Pathology in

1998. His specialties include the pathology of landscape ornamentals, mulches, potting soils and root rot. His administrative duties include Advisor of the Master Gardener program. Some readers will recall the advice regarding the potency of commercially available potting soils; that information was collected by Dr. Downer and published in Landscape Notes of September, 2010.

June 28, 2011 Presentation Bees and Other Pollinators

Honey bees are under attack from farm and garden insecticides, habitat loss, pests and diseases. The bee is the poster child for the other pollinators that are less well known by the public. These other bees are also in decline. What's a gardener to do? Ron Whitehurst, pest control adviser with Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, will give some practical suggestions to make your garden pollinator friendly.

Ron Whitehurst is a specialist in biological pest control and a co-owner of the Ventura County based producer of biological pest control supplies: Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, Inc. Not only is Ron involved in promoting the mission of sustainable integrated pest management, he is also a project leader for the Dietrick Institute for Applied Insect Ecology, setting up urban pest management demonstrations open to the public.



Photo credit: Ron Whitehurst

Ron Whitehurst obtained a degree in Biology from Indiana University and after graduation, quickly became involved in the burgeoning organic movement through publications and grower associations. He moved to Northern California over 30 years ago and to Ventura in 1997. One of his early mentors was Everett (Deke) Dietrick (1920-2009), a noteworthy pioneering biocontrol entomologist and the founder of the Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, Inc.

Ron currently evaluates products that are suitable for bio-control programs after a stint as marketing manager with Rincon-Vitova. He is currently writing a book called 'Reading Weeds;' it concerns the use of weeds as soil indicators.

Both the May and June presentations will take place at the Ventura County Educational Conference Center, 5100 Adolfo Rd, Camarillo. The starting time for both presentations will be 7:30 p.m.■



BUGGED?

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Web Resources

Sue Hopkins

**Past-President, Heritage Roses Northwest
(and Rainy Rose Society member)**

Did you find a new computer under the Christmas tree or make a New Year's resolution that this is the year you're going online? Perhaps you're determined to make this a year of cataloging your roses, learning more about rose culture, or talking with people in Great Britain, France, Japan or Australia about roses? Maybe you're planning a trip or you simply want to see photos of other rose growers' gardens. Have you figured out how to Google and now you wonder how to make use of being friended onto Facebook? These are only a few of the myriad reasons that more and more rose fans are going online. I've compiled some of my favorite sites to get you started. Here are friends old and new, inspiration and education, beauty and a wider world. All of these websites offer links to other websites and before you know it, you're off on your internet gardening adventure. If you come across Barking Dogs Garden or SeattleSuze, you've found me, so stop by and say hello or if you're shy, just have a look. Have fun!



Online Encyclopedia: 1) www.HelpMeFind.com: The worldwide rose, peony and clematis database of descriptions, photographs, nurseries, gardens, references and more, compiled through individual gardener

contributions and maintained by a staff of expert volunteers. Free access to some portions of database, but because it only lives through volunteerism, your best support is a \$24 or more annual membership. Invaluable. 2) For pests and disease in the garden, check out Baldo Villegas' Bugs (www.sactorose.org/rosebug).

Garden Communities: 1) www.Gardenweb.com Antique rose and Rose forums. The long-established website now owned by iVillage is the largest on the Web and caters to gardeners, designers, cooks, pet owners, and photo galleries. The Antique Rose Forum is the busiest of all online rose forums. 2) www.Gardenbuddies.com: An international group of like-minded gardeners covering multiple plants and topics, with forums that are particularly strong on clematis and roses. 3) www.Rosarianscorner.net Owned and managed by Rosarian and photographer, Cliff Orent, who also owned the now defunct EuroDesert Roses. 4) www.Greatrosarians.com: The website of Clair Martin, former curator of the Huntington Rose Garden and founder of Great Rosarians of the World awards. 5) Facebook (www.facebook.com) is like the old corner store in a small town. Everyone you know pops in on a pretty regular basis, you exchange a piece of current news or opinion and take pleasure in seeing their faces, but you probably don't have time for a cup of coffee and a chat. On FB, you can join a group of like-minded people who care about gardening or roses (ARS has a page, as does the spanking new American Rose Exhibitors Society), send a virtual rose (even upload one of your own photos), or just share a thought or a laugh. It's a light and easy way to be part of a larger community of rose lovers without being overwhelmed by a need to say or do anything. You can contribute a little or a lot – your call.

Rose Organizations: 1) American Rose Society www.ars.org -Membership includes a monthly magazine, an annual, and four specialty journals. 2) Royal National Rose Society of United Kingdom www.rnrs.org -

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a look at what's happening in the U.K.

3) Heritage Rose Foundation www.hrf.org - several forums that include frequent visits by experts Heritage Rose Group www.heritagerosegroup.org and locally, Heritage Roses Northwest. 4) Gold Coast Heritage Rose Group www.goldcoastrose.org is the local chapter of the Heritage Rose Group and features commentary and information on both southern and northern California old garden rose matters.

Intriguing blogs: 1) Designer and Author, Carolyn Parker's blog www.rosesfromatoz.com. 2) Heirloom Gardener, the gardening adventures of a NJ mother www.heirloomgardener.blogspot.com. 3) Roses and Stuff, a gardener's blog from Sweden, written in Swedish and English www.rosorochris.blogspot.com. 4) Paul Barden's blog on hybridizing roses www.paulbarden.blogspot.com.

Photographs: 1) Roger's Roses www.rogersroses.com the free website of Roger Phillips' rose photo collection. 2) Paul Barden's Beyond Old Garden Roses www.rdrop.com/~paul. 3) EveryRose.com, a collection from various sources based in British Columbia, started in 1997. www.everyrose.com.

Mail-Order Nurseries: 1) Northland Rosarium www.northlandrosarium.com of Spokane, WA carries roses proven to flourish in the PNW. 2) Rogue Valley Roses www.roguevalleyroses.com on a hilltop in Medford, OR has a

burgeoning collection of roses in all classes. The owner, Janet Inada, is a longtime Rosarian and speaks frequently to rose groups. 3) Antique Rose Emporium www.antiqueroseemporium.com features both old and 'found' roses suitable for the South and Southwest. 4) Palatine Roses www.palatineroses.com in Ontario, Canada offers the beautiful Freelanders and Fairy Tales as well as many more moderns by Kordes and Buck. 5) Vintage Gardens in Sebastopol, CA www.vintagegardens.com offers the largest selection of roses in the U.S.A., including many difficult-to-find old hybrid teas and floribundas as well as polyanthas and Old Garden Roses. 6) Chamblee Roses www.chambleeroses.com located in Tyler, TX has some of the best prices on the largest plants, many with multiple canes.

Some of the forums and websites require you to sign on as a member, establish a screen name and a password. There is usually no cost involved and security is high within the sites, meaning that you're unlikely to be bothered by scammers. I have had no trouble at all with personal information being given away without my permission, other than Facebook. Facebook is now implementing privacy boundaries that you control according to your desires, not theirs. If you have concerns, ask a friend for more information or ask people who are also on the site. There will always be people who are very helpful and will walk you through the steps needed to reach your own comfort level. What you'll find is that many of the people you thought had abandoned gardening have simply become busier and are taking advantage of the opportunity to sit at their desks or in their easy chairs and chat about roses from a comfortable spot in their own time at their own pace. It's a virtual breath of fresh air.■

Editor's note: This article was adapted from an original publication in the January, 2010 issue of *Raindrops* published by the Rainy Rose Society and edited by Sue Tiffany.

Taylor's Guide to Roses, Based on Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening

Barbara Osterberg

I found this book on my bookshelf, thinking it was quite old. I discovered that the copyright is 1961, a 4th edition, which isn't so old after all. I was curious to see if I could find this book on the internet. Yes, there were lots of "Taylor's Guide to Roses", though they had different front covers. Mine has a picture of the rose called 'Pascali' on the front cover. The books on the web had a pink rose; unfortunately, I couldn't tell which rose nor could I see the copyright date. Evidently, this book is part of a series of gardening books which cover topics ranging from an encyclopedia of gardening to bulbs and perennials. My particular book is just about roses.

One of the best things about Taylor's Guide to Roses is the size, and the layout. The size measures 4.25" x 8.50" which makes it very easy to tuck under your arm while shopping for new roses, should you need a quick reference, or you could tuck it in the glove compartment of your car to use when rose rustling. It contains an introduction which describes how to use the book, color plates, and an encyclopedia of roses.



'Royal Lavender'
Photo credit: Barbara Osterberg

For fun, I looked up a few of my roses. The first was 'Royal Lavender,' which is thriving terrifically in Oxnard. It has a lovely lavender flower, highly fragrant and was bought at the rose auction a few years ago. It's a climber, blooms profusely and the flowers are long lasting. Well, I couldn't find this rose listed in the encyclopedia, which was disappointing because I wanted to know how it should be growing in my yard. I did find 'Mr. Lincoln,' one of my favorite roses for outstanding fragrance. Taylor describes 'Mr. Lincoln' as perhaps the most popular hybrid tea in its color range and the rose was an All America Rose Selection for 1965. Flowers are dark red, double, 30-40 petals; good all season bloom, very fragrant. The rose is described as disease resistant and winter hardy. In my opinion, this rose blooms very well in Oxnard, but it is not disease resistant. The fragrance is outstanding, the rust is horrible.



'Mme Isaac Pereire'
Photo credit: Barbara Osterberg

Let's try another rose, such as 'Madame Isaac Pereire.' I've read that a gardener either loves this rose or hates it. Taylor describes this rose as having intense fragrance, winter hardy and disease resistant. *What?????* This rose is NOT disease resistant. If you look at it wrong, the leaves break out in mildew, and if you threaten to pull the leaves off, they immediately turn yellow, hyperventilate and reward you with black spot. This rose is described as a typical Bourbon rose, big and billowy with a rich dark pink color. The flowers are double, with a profuse midseason bloom followed by fair repeat bloom. What about the fragrance? It is

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The Rose Garden in May

to die for. This is one ugly climber, but the ugly leaves disappear when the tall, about 10 foot high, bush is covered with dark pink blooms. My back yard fills with the fragrance of this rose. It is not for cutting unless you want to cut the whole branch which could have 15-20 flowers strung along the limb. The stems of the flowers are very short, not long on the bush, and as they age, turn brown. I have a few blooms left on the plant after the winds last week and I can still smell its fragrance.

The color plates in this book contain 396 varieties of roses, which provide a sample of the many varieties of roses that are available to the rose enthusiast. Many of my own roses were described and pictured in this book which serves as an armchair catalog to review during the winter months when considering new rose procurements. I used the color guide about 15 years ago when just beginning my rose growing experience. I can say that the color plates are quite accurate even if the disease description is not.

The book includes a short history of the rose and articles written by rose experts of their time. There is a references and tips section, which includes how to gather and arrange roses, design tips for gardens, and even tips on buying containers and vases. The pest and diseases section is full of line drawings of insects and the book even talks about methods of control. It mentioned that controlling plant pests and diseases is not as overwhelming a task as it may seem because many measures, performed on a day-to-day basis, are preventive, so that you don't have to rely on pesticides that may not be very effective once a culprit has attacked your roses. Uh oh, don't know if I agree with that statement. I'm still fighting the aphid damage from last month.

This is a good reference picture book. It's easy to read, the information is easy to find. Though, while spot checking the descriptions of roses, in particular the disease resistance of roses, I can tell that the contributors do not live in Oxnard and they don't suffer many foggy, cloudy days. ■

Mildew

Depending on the weather in May and bearing in mind the inevitability of 'June Gloom,' consider that only preventive measures are effective when the weather conditions (warm days and cool nights) are hospitable to powdery mildew. One organically approved fungicide is Serenade, available in most nurseries now. Another is to spray your roses on a weekly basis with a diluted skim milk mixture (roughly 1 part skim milk to 9 parts water). **Jack Lin in Thousand Oaks** has used this method and reports that it is effective in preventing mildew, but that it may leave an unattractive residue. Another technique is to spray your rose foliage with plain water, as **Dawn-Marie Johnson in Moorpark does**, but avoid spraying after the mid-morning hours. Eco-Erase can be utilized in a pinch to remove mildew from foliage (if you have the time and initiative), but it is only really effective with foliage that has a fair amount of substance to begin with, which would militate against its getting powdery mildew in the first place.

Deadheading

May is a month of maximum rose production which necessitates deadheading the roses as a response. **Jack Christensen in the Los Angeles Daily News** notes the traditional method is to cut the stems back to a spot just above the lowest five-leaflet leaf. This is the method that will most likely produce the most typical rose blooms for Hybrid Tea roses. Studies at the St. Alban's Rose Garden in the United Kingdom found that cutting back the roses with a chain saw or hedge clippers produced more roses albeit of lesser exhibition quality. **Mel Hulse of the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden** believed that the best method of deadheading was to twist off the rose at the abscission point, about an inch below the bloom—at the point at which the rose would die

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back if left to its own devices. Deadheading is basically a scam on the rose bush; the elimination of the blooms before it sets hips encourages the rose to think that it had failed in its essential task of producing hips and seeds for regeneration. So it focuses its energy on producing more blooms (in about six weeks) since no hips were formed. If you do not deadhead some varieties, they will form hips and shut down bloom production. If you were to check out the Hybrid Musks at Descanso Gardens in August, you might find that not deadheading has produced a magnificent set of hips and a shutdown of the rosebush for the rest of the season. **Dawn-Marie Johnson** also uses the deadheading to improve air circulation in the center of the rose bushes in order to deter diseases.

Watering

Jeri Jennings in Camarillo reminds us that when high temperatures approach or return, it will be necessary to remember that roses (and all plants) in containers will require more careful monitoring and that some container plants may require daily watering in order to survive. Unlike other plants, when roses wilt from heat, they rarely come back without damage. **Dan Bifano and Bud Jones in Santa Barbara** caution that given the relatively hard water available in the tri-county area, alkali salts can build up in the root zone to interfere with the plant's utilization of soil nutrients like iron. Rain leaches the salts from the root zone and deep watering in the drought months is a necessity. If you wonder whether your water is hard, consider this: Los Angeles water contains more mineral content than Perrier. Water is the gardener's friend in another respect—to remedy insect invasions. Aphids can be washed off of plants with a hard stream of water. The mite cycle of reproduction can be interrupted by washing the undersides of leaves and creating an environment in which they cannot reproduce.

Pests

Aphids can also be reduced by the presence of hummingbirds. **Jeri Jennings** suggests encouraging hummingbirds to come to your

garden by setting up a feeder. Discourage ants from purloining material from your feeder by applying a coating of oil—olive, walnut, sesame, canola, or vegetable—to the feeder hanger. Be sure to replace the oil periodically to maintain it as an effective ant deterrent. May also brings thrips and rose slugs. Thrips (always used in the plural) attack opening buds, particularly on lighter colored roses; while rose slugs are little green worms (larvae of the sawfly wasp) that make lacework of rose foliage. **Dan Bifano and Bud Jones** suggest Safer Insecticidal Soap and/or products containing Spinosad; both sprays are effective in controlling thrips and rose slugs. Miticides are generally very expensive; miticides listed on www.rosemania.com generally run from \$174 to \$295 a quart (although only small amounts are used at a time). It is significantly cheaper to use water as a deterrent and spray the undersides of leaves every three days and as generously as possible. Another alternative is the long-legged fly. **Robert Rippetoe in Palm Desert** reports that mites are at a low ebb in his garden because the long-legged flies appear to gobble the mites up. Long-legged flies are medium to small slender flies with metallic colored bodies and long legs. They are considered a beneficial insect because they prey on arthropods; (actually the larva do the heavy work). Below is a picture of the beneficial long-legged fly.



Photo Credit: Muhammad Mahdi Karim

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Miscellaneous

One of the best ways to conserve water, even though the drought is officially over per the Governor's proclamation, is to use mulches; these not only protect moisture in the soil, but also deter the growth of weeds. The California Ag Extension suggests that mulches be applied in a four inch layer on a yearly basis; mulches not replenished yearly become a source of nutrition for weeds that escape through the barrier. And lightly feeding roses now is a good idea, particularly if you have access to kelp or seaweed in either granular or liquid form, or have the space to create various therapeutic 'teas' of alfalfa, worm castings, or some other organic product.

Reminder

No one grows roses in order to create work to do, tasks to perform, or as a beneficiary of IRA accounts. Roses are grown because they provide pleasure and beauty in a world too often bereft of either quality. We grow roses to replenish our souls when they are in need of sustenance. Do not forget to smell the roses, drink the coffee, and enjoy life in all of its variety and substance.■

Editor's note: This feature was started last January. If you think it should be continued through the summer months through the monthly email, please drop a line to the editor before June 1st. Otherwise, we will renew the series when the newsletter returns in September. Happy rose-ing in the interval. JD



SLUGGISH?
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Meeting Our Consulting Rosarians: Sandy Gaal

Paddy Ruzella

Visiting Sandy Gaal in her garden is always a true delight. When Sandy and her husband, Peter, bought their "cottage" on an acre of ground between Ventura and Santa Paula some 30 years ago, the "garden" was primarily an orchard of orange and avocado trees with one rose bed in the front. Today the cottage is covered with roses and its surrounding acre has become a magical mix of English cottage garden and the more formal French style garden.

Sandy is a native Californian, born and raised in the West Los Angeles area. She grew up in a traditional family with a brother a couple of years her junior. She went to college in San Francisco and then returned to the LA area where she practiced her nursing skills at UCLA for three years and then at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica as an ICU nurse for another seven years.

Sandy had little firsthand experience with gardening while growing up. Neither of her parents was a gardener and she remembers the two climbing roses they had in their garden simply as "a pink one and a yellow one." She also remembers a kind gardener named Sam. Although it was before Sandy was born, she says that her "maternal grandmother had a bountiful vegetable garden...I took after her in several ways." So although she had no early mentor, Sandy's ability to create lovely gardens is partially genetic and partially self-taught, born of a determination to do the job right once she got started. The first place Sandy stopped after she got her driver's license at the age of 16 was a garden shop!

Up until the time of her marriage Sandy's gardening efforts were confined to pots on her patio. With marriage, however, came a home

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with a real garden, and Sandy had the opportunity to start wielding shovels and rakes. She joined a garden club in the Pacific Palisades where she was the “baby of the group” and became the beneficiary of much good advice and interest. She read. She visited other peoples’ gardens and haunted nurseries and garden shops. She tried it all and quickly found out what worked for her and made her happy. Friends began to ask her advice and she eventually created and ran a garden design business of her own.



Sandy Gaal
Photo credit: Paddy Ruzella

Along the way Sandy met a Horticultural Consultant, Joe Seals, who became her go-to person and teacher and remains her friend 35 years later. He invited her to sit in on an informal meeting of other horticultural folks in Santa Monica and it was here that Sandy was introduced to an Old Garden Rose with a fabulous fragrance – ‘Honorine de Brabant.’ Sandy had discovered roses! She began with the OGRs and although she eventually included many other varieties into her garden the old garden roses are still her favorites with

“Madame Ernst Calvat” holding the number one spot in her heart.

When the Gaals moved to Ventura County, Sandy began with the one rose bed in front and the large orchard. First she planted a big vegetable garden then figured out that by removing some of the trees she could have more roses! Twenty seven years later only a double row of fruit trees remains along the western boundary of the property and the rest of the property has been converted into a garden of traditionally English and French design. Sandy planted a lovely allée behind the tall hedge that separates the garden from the road. Walk through this pretty “tunnel” of roses climbing over graceful arches and you get long views between the arches of the garden stretching out to the back of the lot. You see formal beds planted not only with roses but also with many companion plants, a central wooden trellis and arbor with an inviting sitting spot with yet more tantalizing views of the garden beyond it.

The single rose bed in front of the house has been augmented by additional trees, bushes and, of course, roses so that the house is virtually invisible as you enter from the roadway. Behind the house a stone patio area is bordered by a generous lawn with more gardens beyond. To one side of the lawn is a special raised bed that is home to Peter’s outdoor miniature railway. Within the main garden are many smaller gardens each with its own theme. There is a secret garden which has a small gateway and is basically hidden by the tall roses around its perimeter. There is a meditation garden with a small pond and an inviting bench; a healing garden in a gap between the trees where one will find solace and rest. Sandy and three of her eight grandchildren have planted a children’s garden that features one large “Flower Girl” rose on a pillar trellis with brightly colored annuals and many garden statues ranging from Mr. Toad of Toad Hall to Winnie the Pooh beneath it. There is a funky 1960s garden which includes vestiges of the Peace Movement and roses of

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that era. There is a spiritual garden where all the roses represent some form of life beyond the norm. A friend has said that Sandy's interests are "gardens and God." Whether you are a religious person or not it would be difficult to wander through Sandy's garden and not experience the quiet peacefulness of burgeoning life that abounds there and for which Sandy will tell you she takes only a small part of the credit.

Sandy says that she "met a lot of roses" at events she attended such as the Celebration of Roses put on by Mariam Wilkins in El Cerritos and the Heritage Rose Society. These visitations became the inspiration for her own Rose Shows. For many years she opened her garden for a weekend during the spring and had literally thousands of people visit. She had a boutique of rosy things and garden goodies, vendors and a catered lunch plus well known rosarians as formal speakers. Over the years Sandy and her garden have attracted a number of well known rosarians, including Jean-Pierre and Martine Guillot, head of the oldest family of rose growers in France; Michael Marriott who traveled to gardens all over the world for David Austin Roses; Clair Martin, curator of the Huntington Rose Collection in Pasadena; Syl Arena who owned a rose company then turned photographer; and Bob Edberg, a master rosarian and rose historian.

Beyond the many, many roses of all varieties that grow happily in Sandy's garden today there are generous sprinklings of unusual trees, half a dozen unique topiary plants such as Dumbo, a teddy bear and a welcoming monkey, interesting shrubs and lots of herbs and flowers. There are edible plants intermingled with spikes of foxgloves together with trellises of sweet peas and berry canes. Bird houses, unique and whimsical garden statuary and art quietly blend in as though they grew with the plants. This is all done as close to nature as possible with no use of spraying with chemicals. The garden is totally organic and the roses are fed with an organic fertilizer after pruning and then again in the summer.

A couple of years after moving to the Ventura area, Sandy discovered the Ventura County Rose Society and quickly became a member. At one time she exhibited her roses and enjoyed the camaraderie of the folks she met. However, when she began to see the "Q-tip stuffers" at the shows and found herself becoming extremely judgmental of the natural beauty of the roses she felt she was moving in the wrong direction and decided that "roses belong in the garden." She is also a member of the Santa Barbara Rose Society and totally supports the idea of sharing her love of roses with others. She became a Consulting Rosarian mainly because she wanted the formal recognition of what she was already doing.

In keeping with who this remarkable lady is, Sandy is currently writing a book which she says is a "spiritual garden book – a history of this garden." When asked for a single piece of advice to pass on to the novice gardener or someone who is just becoming interested in growing roses she responded generously by saying: "Educate yourself. Read books and magazines and become knowledgeable about plants - names, requirements, how they grow. Right plant, right place. Visit gardens and nurseries. Figure out what delights you and then plan your garden. Sketch out your garden plans on paper. Remember the importance of colors. Use climbers and arbors, statues, signs and water features if possible. Prepare your ground well, amending where needed. Garden organically. Follow your heart. Spend time caring for your garden every day." That sounds like a wonderful description of a book that this writer for one cannot wait to read!■



Rambling Roses?

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Five Observations on Pruning Roses

Jim Delahanty

More people exhibit angst about pruning roses than growing them. And, otherwise sensible people invest more time, trouble and research into pruning roses than in seeking a mate. Demonstrations on pruning roses are so popular and valued that some groups charge fees for attending such events. The distress and anxiety with which many people approach pruning is not inexplicable. The problem is not with the rose, but the pruner. Below are a few considerations to tame the psychological pruning beast, at least over the next few months.

Firstly. Roses are tough. The angst and anxiety over pruning is a confession of personal inadequacy, not one of any inadequacy of the rose. Roy Hennessey, plantsman extraordinaire of the middle of the 20th century, headed his newspaper columns with the observation that you could do ANYTHING to a rose, except grub it up out of the ground and leave it there, and it would thrive. This is pretty much true. Pruning roses within an inch of their lives does not prevent them from recovering and blooming; a famous award winning rosarian in southern California never pruned his roses at all. A prominent Bay area rosarian spends five seconds on each rose with his chainsaw. Roses have been in existence for over 35 million years and in most of that time, no one pruned anything unless the forest were burned to a crisp, nature's rather non-specific pruning method.

Secondo. Much of our pruning has evolved because of human concerns, not because of the need of the rose per se. While some roses need to have pruning utilized to stimulate growth—particularly root growth, others are yearlong bloomers and resent interference in their bloom cycle. 'Secret Garden Musk Climber' blooms twelve months out of the year

in my garden; any pruning is a matter of confining it to the space allotted to it, and it certainly doesn't need rejuvenation.

Sometimes we prune our roses in a particular way in order to promote a congruity between peak bloom time and particular rose shows, like district rose shows in April, particularly if the roses are modern ones like Hybrid teas, floribundas or miniatures. Or we may prune because we have misplaced a rose when planting it and have to keep cutting it back lest it completely and fatally block a path and injure someone, or worse yet, scratch the paint job on a new car. Sometimes we prune for aesthetic or artistic reasons; there is a rose, Santa Catalina, planted on a grey fieldstone wall at the Roseraie de l'Hay in the Val de Marne, south of Paris, that blooms in increments of about six inches—a tribute to the pruner's art, since it involves encouraging and suppressing bud eyes all along the canes in question. In another section, the rose bush is contorted into the shape of a shamrock. Since no one has yet filed a suit on behalf of the rose in any known court of law, presumably the rose does not care in either case. But we do. It is the fact of our concerns that elicits much of the drive to prune roses.

Thirdly. The only constant in pruning is to remove dead wood and criss-crossing branches. Once you have accomplished that task, you have completed your pruning chores for many roses. You are done. Stop. Do no more. Many chinas and polyanthas require no more. You may choose to do more for any of the reasons listed above, or for idiosyncratic reasons of your own, but the rose doesn't care.

Fourthly. Pruning time in mild climate Southern California is traditionally between Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day. It is the time of the year when the roses are least productive, when many of them shed their leaves, and succumb to the vicissitudes of dead and dying foliage (rust, mildew, and general miasma). But, in fact, pruning takes place all across the calendar in the fullest sense of the word, with

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the removal of spent blooms, blind shoots, and/or dieback of canes. As E.B. Le Grice pointed out in 'Rose Growing Complete,' in a mild climate, roses may be pruned at any time of the year. Given that it normally takes about six weeks between flushes of bloom, a second flush of blooms appropriate for a rose show requires pruning in the first month of the year here in southern California as opposed to some other choice. But if you are not going to exhibit in rose shows, you can pretty well pick a time available to you. Once again, you are free to choose—unless you have some pressing concern like a wedding that requires roses at a particular time. But if you do, be aware that your pruning concerns are driven by exogenous concerns, not those of the rose.

Fifthly. Roses resemble individuals in being difficult to squeeze in a box (either those of a physical sort like some of the 'body bags' found in the supers or intellectual ones for convenience in consideration). And when you consider that a half dozen species may have contributed to the development of a particular rose, it is no wonder that individual roses have individual cachets. 'Brandy,' for example, dislikes being hard pruned and will sulk if treated that way. 'Niles Cochet,'—or whatever is the identification of a rose purchased as 'Mme Jules Graveraux'—is a climbing tea rose that negates the normal rule that tea roses pout if hard pruned. If I didn't hard prune it, it would strangle several neighborhood dogs, not to mention the postman. And it continues to pump out hundreds of blooms most every month. The person pruning a rose has an obligation to find out what particular characteristics define the individual rose in the garden.



'Rosette Delizy'
Photo credit: Ingrid Wapelhorst

At the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden there are four different clones of the same 'Rosette Delizy.' Although each one is clearly 'Rosette Delizy,' the differences are also clear; some are more vigorous than others, while the color is more pronounced—even gaudy—in others. Finding out the personal characteristics of your roses is not a matter of consulting books, or even reading VCRS newsletters. It is a question of observation and assessment while working in the garden. It also dictates what kind of advice might be given to others.



'Dupuy Jamain'
Photo credit: Jeri Jennings

I once waited five years for 'Dupuy Jamain' to bloom and never pruned it in that time span. For that reason I never recommend it to anyone for a home garden unless the individual someone wants a rare and unusual rose of great beauty, powerful fragrance, and relentless vigor. The rose is comfortable with itself. The trouble begins and ends with the gardener. So, take your valium or Xanax, reserve the Demerol for post-operative pain, and let the pruning begin.■

Editors note: This article is a reprint of an article that first appeared in the 'Ventura Rose' in December of 2008.

The Many Meanings of the 'Checkmark'

Jim Delahanty

Were you to tear your eyes from the trophy table at any rose show and direct them to the ancillary tables holding the also-rans, you would discover two things of some moment. One is that the difference between the trophy winner and other recipients of blue ribbons is not as great as might be anticipated. The other is the presence of a 'checkmark' among the blue, red, yellow or white ribbons corresponding respectively to a first, second, third and Honorable Mention rating. (Increasingly, however, the ribbons are being replaced by glue-on dots, but the basic assessment remains the same.) Articulating the differences between blue ribbon roses and ascertaining the trophy winner is the task and the test of a great versus a merely adequate judge and need not be addressed here.

But what about the checkmark? What does it mean to the various participants in the rose show, including the casual visitor who encounters it without any prior experience? At some very basic level, the presence of a checkmark in the midst of that sea of blue, red, yellow and white ribbons indicates to a casual viewer that the rose is not of the same quality as the others. And that is a very fair and sensible assessment. But the checkmark can convey other administrative and evocative meanings. Certainly, to the extent that the checkmark appears to be savagely inscribed, anger or furious rejection could be attributed to the marker. But that would be a relatively rare phenomenon.

For the Chair of judges or the administrators of a rose show, the checkmark performs the necessary function of informing them that all the roses in a particular class have been judged. There have obviously been instances in which an entire class of roses has somehow been omitted in the judging process. There was

even an instance in which the judges had already been spirited away for lunch before the discovery of an unjudged class emerged; in that instance, the class was judged by a highly vocal and assertive non-member and non-judge of the American Rose Society, since other remedies were deemed impractical. An unjudged class is most likely to occur where there is a tradition of not issuing any awards other than the trophy—as occasionally happens in the fragrance classes or in classes such as bowls with floating roses, pictures, or English boxes. The presence of an unmarked tag indicates to the show administrators that either the entry or the class might not have been judged. Thus, the checkmark guards against an incomplete in the judging process.

For the individual judge, the checkmark is a message that the exhibitor's entry has been judged and deemed unworthy of a ribbon. The foregoing statement is the most neutral position and is characteristic of the responses of judges to a question as to what the checkmark means. Almost any judge can specify what are the individual merits or demerits of a particular entry if called upon to do so, but the checkmark tells the exhibitor that their effort has not gone unnoticed.

Sometimes the message is more complicated than the neutral prose would suggest. The mechanics of judging do not permit more than one blue, red, or yellow ribbon to be given to a particular group of cultivars in a class. Thus, if there were five or six 'Hot Princess' entries in the basic Hybrid Tea class, three of them could be ribboned; the remaining three could be awarded multiple white ribbons at the discretion of the judges were all three of equal merit, or one or more could receive a checkmark. The differences between the fourth, fifth, and sixth rated entries might well be minute, but the logic of awarding ribbons in the first place assures that, barring equality of entry at the Honorable Mention level, one or more of the six entries will not be be-ribboned. The message to the exhibitor is less one of demerit than of judging limitations. Since

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normally only four can be honored with ribbons, the lack of ribbons is less a statement of merit than a statement of abundance of entries of high quality. To put it another way, where there is an large number of a particular cultivar entered into a class, the checkmark may indicate less of a statement of lack of quality and more of a statement of an embarrassment of riches. Or, a disinclination on the part of the judge to award multiple white entries.*



*The novices dreaded checkmark!
Photo credit: Jim Delahanty*

The checkmark can also be less straightforward in its message from the judge to the exhibitor. For example, when a polyantha is entered in a singles class (permissible per the show schedule), the checkmark might carry the underlying message that the entry really belonged in another class. Or, the entry of a Romantica rose in the Hybrid Tea class might receive a checkmark as an indication that the rose really belonged in the decorative class as opposed to where it was placed. There is no point in discussing those instances where the judge indicates by a checkmark that she despises the color of the rose because those instances are as indefensible as they are relatively rare.

For the experienced exhibitor the checkmark is a valuable indicator. The checkmark can indicate the progress of a particular cultivar in its rise or fall in a particular class. And it can also be utilized as information on the utility of continuing to grow a rose for a particular class. While it can be demonstrated that a particular rose like 'Petite Francoise' produces an incredible amount of bloom during the Fall rose show season, it remains a difficult rose to stage for a show and a collection of checkmarks can motivate a dedicated exhibitor to consign the rose to a garden collection rather than among an exhibitor's bankers.

For the experienced exhibitor the lack of a checkmark represents a void in information to be used for future endeavors. It is not uncommon for the serious exhibitor to view the lack of checkmarks as a dereliction on the part of judges, no matter how pressed for time the judge might be. If the exhibitor does not know that the entry has been judged and found wanting, important information is being kept from the exhibitor.

For the novice exhibitor the checkmark can be a dreaded experience in which the message from the judge is the equivalent of: "Go away. Do not return with this rose. Do not pass go as your rose has the rosarian equivalent of halitosis." (Note: This reaction is possibly enhanced if the novice exhibitor is a collector of a particular line of roses such as Pernetianas, or Lambertianas, or Noisettes. The unusual and beautiful to a collector may be in the mere appearance of a bloom as opposed to excellence in a particular entry.) But for the novice exhibitor there is valuable information in a checkmark in the Old Garden Rose classes—namely that certain groups of roses such as Chinas, or Noisettes are unlikely to be competitive entries. A succession of checkmarks over time is also useful for the acquisition of a harder skin surface to thwart the pain of repeated rejection of roses favored by the collector, but not by the judges. The absence of a checkmark limits the novice in acquiring knowledge needed to become a

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more informed exhibitor, or at least a more efficient one.

For the casual viewer at a rose show, the subtexts and emotive meanings of the checkmark may be lost in expanse of scent and beauty. It may well be that the meanings of the checkmark will be lost soon to exhibitors as well. The newer tags sent out by the American Rose Society now have a new punch hole in the line previously occupied by a box for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mention; the new slot for the judge's punch is labeled: 'Judged.' The placement of the punch hole for 'Judged' will eliminate guesstimates of the meaning of the intensity and size of the checkmark, undermine messages about placing the rose in another class and rarify the message about 'judged but not worthy of a ribbon' to its finest abstraction. The importance of the administrative value of the non-ribboned designation to the rose show organizers will be enhanced as will be the records of the experienced and organized exhibitors. The feelings of the novice exhibitor may well be assuaged in the purity of a punch hole.

Odd, though, how the improvement in communication of the message that the rose has been judged but deemed unworthy of a ribbon results in less actual communication between the judges and the exhibitors through the agency of a paper punch.

When all of the current tags have been eliminated through use, another set of meanings, both administrative and emotive, will arise to plague and pleasure exhibitors. The rose, of course, will continue to bloom in an advanced state of indifference to the maunderings and meanings of rose judges or exhibitors.

And, of course, the decision of the rose is final.

* There is some confusion, even among judges, about the rule regarding single ribbons only for cultivars within a class. Some judges believe that only one ribbon for each color may be awarded to a cultivar within a grouping. Others believe that the 'one only' rule applies

only to blue ribbons and that secondary ribbons may be liberally awarded. The 'official' rule is that first, second, and third place ribbons may only be awarded once within a cultivar grouping, but that multiple Honorable Mention awards are possible at the discretion of the judge(s). There are variations on this meme, so that if there is no blue ribbon, two or more red ribbons may be awarded, or two yellows if not red, but this practice is implicit rather than explicit in the rules.■

Note: I am indebted to Suzanne Horn and Bud Jones for their conversations and insights into these matters, but they are not responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation. JD

A Survey of Polyantha Seed and Pollen Parents

Jim Delahanty

Sometimes articles arise by virtue of chance questions or comments. This article found its impetus in a casual inquiry about the most prolific seed parents among polyanthas. The difference between the seed and pollen parents in rose breeding is a question of applying the pollen of one rose variety to the pistils of another thus presenting conditions for the development of seeds (aha! seed parent!) that may or may not germinate and produce a new plant bearing some relationship to the roses involved in the transaction. Of course, most of these interactions occur in nature over the millennia with the active intervention of human beings in the process most likely restricted to the last two and half centuries.

In any case, www.helpmefind.com/roses provides a wonderful resource for obtaining information about the relationship between seed parents and pollen parents. To be sure, not all of the desired information is available and the available information is not always reliable. Sometimes rose hybridizers conceal the information by using a breeding tool

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restricted to their own personal use such as the breeding rose, 'Zee,' by Ralph Moore. The House of Kordes currently does not reveal any information about the rose parents involved in its breeding program. This stance reflects a widely held belief that release of that information will enable competitors to take advantage of the talents and resources of the breeder who shares such data.) There are allegations as well that some breeding information disseminated by breeders in the 19th century information involved disinformation. And, finally, there are honest errors in conflicting reports about the parentage of the same rose by the same person over the course of a lifetime. Whether 'Rena' was a product of 'Etoile Luisante' crossed with 'Sierra Snowstorm' or a product of a self-cross of 'Etoile Luisante' may someday be determined by the use of DNA evidence; in the meantime we can only compare the assertions of Ralph Moore in his thirties with the memories of Ralph Moore in his nineties.

And sometimes the information is simply not available. A number of entries will list the rose as a seedling of another rose. In rose breeding as in pre-20th century laws of illegitimacy, the only sure thing is motherhood. (Of course, in both law and roses the indeterminacy of fatherhood may disappear in the harsh light of scientific advances in DNA identifications.) Of the some 666 roses registered (of a total of 871) polyanthas in the International Cultivar Registration Authority--Roses, only about 120 have produced registered cultivars. (I note in passing that climbing polyanthas—especially climbing sports—have been even less prolific.)

Polyanthas as Seed Parents:

	Number of 1st Generation Roses
The Fairy (1932)	39
Orleans Rose (1909)	30
Mignonette (1880)	26
Mme Norbert Levavasseur (1903)	21
Mlle Cecile Brunner (1880)	17
Ellen Poulsen (1911)	17
Orange Triumph (1937)	17

Bolyaiak (1980)	16
Yesterday (1974)	14
Eblouissant (1918)	9
Perle D'Or (1884)	8
Etoile Luisante (1918)	7
Katharina Zeimet (1901)	7
Mevrouw Nathalie Nypels (1919)	7
Signal Red (1949)	7
R. multiflora 'nana' (1875)	6
Etoile de Mai (1893)	5
Tip-Top (1909)	4

Polyanthas as Pollen Parents:

Bolyaiak (1980)	15
The Fairy (1932)	15
Yesterday (1974)	14
Mme Norbert Levavasseur(1903)	13
Tip-Top (1909)	12
Katharina Zeimet (1901)	11
Gloria Mundi (1929)	10
Orange Triumph (1937)	9
R. multiflora 'nana' (1875)	9
Mlle Cecile Brunner (1880)	7
Orleans Rose (1909)	7
Marie Pavie (1888)	6
China Doll (1946)	5
Eblouissant (1918)	5
Kleiner Alfred (1904)	5
Mrs. W. H. Cutbush (1904)	5

For the purposes of this survey, only polyanthas with at least five seed parents or pollen parents were included in the chart above; a total of 18 roses identified as seed parents and another 16 as pollen parents share eleven roses on both lists. The years of introduction for the parent roses range from 1875 to 1980 with the median year being 1910 for the seed parents and 1909 for the pollen parents. In terms of the traditional 'families,' the line of polyanthas developed from 'Mme Norbert Levavasseur' and the 'Orleans Rose' provided the greatest number of seed and pollen parents largely in the decade of their introduction and the succeeding one. A late starter in that group would be 'Bolyaiak,' a

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1980 polyantha cross by Gergely Mark of Hungary with 'Gloire du Midi' as the seed parent and 'Geranium Red' as the pollen parent. The polyantha cross served to produce some 18 subsequent roses, more than two-thirds of them crosses of 'Bolyaiak' with itself. Unfortunately, none of these roses appears to have crossed the Atlantic at this writing or to have entered general commerce according to the information available on helpmefind.com/roses. Otherwise, such roses as 'Mme Norbert Levavasseur,' 'Orleans Rose,' are represented on both the seed and pollen parent lists, while their descendants 'Ellen Poulsen' and 'Gloria Mundi' appear on the seed and pollen lists, respectively.

The tea poly roses on both lists are 'Mlle Cecile Brunner,' 'Katharina Zeimet,' and 'Tip-Top.' 'Perle D'Or,' 'Mevrouw Nathalie Nypels,' and 'Etoile de Mai' appear as seed parents while 'Marie Pavie,' and 'China Doll' are on the pollen list as representatives of the tea poly group.

None of the Koster roses is present on either list.

'The Fairy' has produced the largest number of progeny by virtue of 39 uses as seed parent and 15 uses as pollen parent. This record is augmented to some extent by the ten crosses of 'The Fairy' and 'Yesterday' in the latter part of the 1970's and early 1980's. Of course, the many sports of 'The Fairy' are not included in the list. Surprisingly none of the roses descended from either those crosses or others of 'The Fairy' has been very prolific or of much use in creating new roses. Even more surprisingly, unlike most roses which produce the bulk of their descendants within two decades of their introduction, it took 'The Fairy' nearly three decades before there would be any cross of the rose introduced into commerce ('Pride of Newark' 1966 Dr. Dennison Morey). In fact, the largest number of crosses with this rose would not appear until the last two decades of the 20th century.

'Mignonette,' one of the first two original

polyanthas, produced some 26 roses as a seed parent in the two decades prior to the 20th century. And the productivity of its crosses can be indicated by the fact that as of this writing nearly 9800 descendants have been ascribed to it. Some of its first generation descendants represent the very best of the tea poly roses, including 'Clothilde Soupert' and 'Gloire des Polyanthas.' 'Mme Norbert Levavasseur' was a cross involving 'Gloire des Polyanthas' and 'Crimson Rambler;' it produced some 21 cultivars as a seed parent and another dozen as a pollen parent. Not only was it the progenitor of 'Orleans Rose,' but it also produced the first Poulsen floribunda, 'Rodhatte,' a cross between 'Mme Norbert Levavasseur' and 'Liberty,' a red Hybrid Tea from Dickson. 'Orleans Rose' was a seedling of 'Mme Norbert Levavasseur' and produced either directly or indirectly some 44 sports eventually yielding both salmon and vermilion roses. All of the roses mentioned in this paragraph shared the characteristic of being widely used for approximately two decades after their introduction, but not thereafter otherwise.

The last 'Mignonette' cross occurred in the first decade of the 20th century; all but one of the 'Mme Norbert Levavasseur' crosses occurred before the end of the 1920's; and while 'Orleans Rose' was still being used in the 1940's, only a few crosses have been registered since then.

Many of the roses that appear on the seed and pollen parent lists are there primarily because they were used by one or more breeders repeatedly. Thus, Peter Lambert of Germany created 'Kleiner Alfred' in 1904 and used it as a pollen parent in that decade, but never again in the ensuing quarter century of Lambert's life. "Mevrouw Nathalie Nypels" was used repeatedly by Mathias Leenders of the Netherlands as a seed parent, but rarely by anyone else. 'Signal Red,' a 1949 introduction by de Ruiter, was used exclusively by that firm in the 1950's and 1960's but not by anyone else or ever again. Ralph Moore used 'Etoile

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Luisante' in the mid-century decades, but it was otherwise unused then or since. He also used 'Eblouissant' in the 1950's although the Burbage Nursery had utilized the rose as a seed parent prior to that. And Moore utilized 'Ellen Poulsen' in the last half of the 20th century, while Jan de Vink of the Netherlands used it the same number of times (8) in the middle of the century. Over half of the crosses of 'Tip-Top,' were by Peter Lambert in the first third of the 20th century, although there have been a half dozen crosses, mostly as a pollen parent, since then.

'Yesterday' was the pollen parent with 'The Fairy' in the case of ten introductions by Harkness in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Peter IIsink registered another half dozen crosses of 'Yesterday' as well, but the use of the rose in either capacity has apparently dwindled to a trickle over the last twenty years. Once one of the most popular roses in the world and widely planted in veteran cemeteries after World War II, the 1937 Kordes 'Orange Triumph' was widely used for rose breeding in France and Australia up until the 1960's. Oddly enough it was not used by any German breeders in its breeding life span.

Finally, there are some roses that seem to be intermittently popular as rose parents. 'Mlle Cecile Brunner' was not used at all for breeding in the first thirty years after its introduction. In the course of the ensuing century, it has attracted the attention of such varied breeders as Ralph Moore, Jan de Vink, Alfred Krebs and Dr. Dennison Morey. Other roses whose use has spread across many decades include 'China Doll' and 'Marie Pavie,' both used by John Bagnasco in his recent 'Little Rascal' series of roses as well as 'Perle D'Or' and 'Katharina Zeimet,' both in recent usage by Robert Neil Rippetoe in his breeding for hot weather roses in Palms Springs. Finally, there is the case of R. multiflora 'Nana.' This rose is attributed to an unknown French breeder with a guestimate of 1875 as the appropriate date. Aside from a solitary cross registered in 1915, it languished in breeding obscurity until the 1990's when Louis Lens and the Poulsens

started using it in breeding programs.

This survey, of course, is just a preliminary investigation into the subject of the use of polyanthas as seed and pollen parents. For one thing, there has not been a systematic investigation of whether the progeny of the most prolific of the polyantha parents produced offspring worth the time and trouble. While it is clear that 'Katharina Zeimet' was a notable offspring of the relatively few progeny of 'Etoile de Mai,' it is by no means clear that the numerous offspring of 'Gloria Mundi' were worth the effort to make the crosses in the first place. In short, a comprehensive assessment of the outcomes of the crosses has yet to be made.

And, of course, there is always more data to be reported and made public. While the registration of 'Ole,' 'Sven,' and 'Lena' did not indicate the parentage, in fact two of the roses were a cross of a volunteer polyantha seedling and 'Mevrouw Nathalie Nypels,' and the third was a cross of the same volunteer seedling and "La Marne.' And breeder Kathy Zuzuek reported that the roses were tough enough to be pruned with lawn mowers each spring. I haven't tried that yet, either.

And so it goes.■

Author's note: The information supplied on crosses and descendants was largely taken from information available on www.helpmefind.com/roses; this absolutely invaluable resource deserves support by anyone interested in maintaining and preserving the information it has compiled.



Desiderata

Desiderata.... Nobody knows this Little Rose

It might a pilgrim be
Did I not take it from the ways
and lift it up to thee.
Only a Bee will miss it--
Only a Butterfly,
Hastening from the journey--
On it's breast to lie--
Only a Bird will wonder--
Only a Breeze will sigh--
Oh little Rose--how easy
for such as thee to die!

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Celebrations:

May 10, 1899. Fred Astaire. Birthday
May 16. Nell August. Birthday
May 18. Kathy Ayers. Birthday
May 21. Britt McKelvey. Birthday
June 9, 1981. Natalie Portman. Birthday
July 4, 1776. United States of America. Birth-
day
August 8. Ted Hermsen. Birthday
August 22. Jane Delahanty. Birthday
August 22, 1964. Jim & Jane Delahanty
Anniversary
August 24. Barbara Osterberg. Birthday

Summer Social.

Jim Delahanty reports that the Board of Directors has canceled the traditional Summer Social in light of the anticipated demands on the members with regard to the September Celebration and the ARS National Convention in Studio City in October.

'Rose Days' at Otto & Sons:

Dawn-Marie Johnson headed up the team that represented the VCRS at the Otto & Sons Roses Days the last week in April.



Participating VCRS Members included Earl & Arden Holst, Connie Estes, Nell August and Dawn-Marie Johnson.

Having difficulty propagating a particular variety?



Got a rose that refuses to be propagated by cuttings or other means? You may want to try this approach.

I have a number of plants that have proven very difficult, if not impossible, to propagate by softwood cuttings during the growing season. A number of roses either lose their leaves immediately when cuttings are placed in the misting bed, or the stem turns black the moment it comes in contact with the rooting media. I've played around with alternative methods and found one very effective for most any rose: layering.

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Well, it's a kind of layering. I take any cane of a rose that can be bent to reach the soil surface (plants in pots or in the ground, either works) and bury a section of the cane under the soil, leaving a few inches of the growing tip exposed. I do not injure the cane in any way, nor do I use rooting hormones of any kind.



In fact, the whole procedure is a rather lazy one; I just grab a cane when I happen to be near a plant I want to propagate, paddle out a bit of a hole in the soil surface and shove the cane in and pat it down. Nothing could be easier. In most cases, I found that these cane were

rooted enough to remove the shoot and pot it up in four to six weeks. Shown here is a shoot of the Spinosissima 'Suzanne', five weeks after pushing the cane into the soil. In the top photo, note the red arrow in the photo which is pointing at the original cane that was pushed under the surface, at just about the point that it enters the soil.

You can see that it has not only produced a significant root system of its own, it has pushed up new shoots from below the soil surface to start forming a brand new mini-thicket of its own. The shoot was cut from its parent cane and potted up in a gallon can, as you can see here. It did not suffer any transplant shock at all (bear in mind I dug it on a cool, cloudy day) and appears ready to make a go of it. What could be easier?!

(This item was adapted from the blog of Paul Barden dated October 9, 2010 and reprinted with permission.)

Wrapping Cuttings

If you haven't already discovered it, The Rose Hybridizers Association and its Forum are great places to learn about many things concerning roses. The site is populated by a very nice group of people from across the globe and all have great imagination and experiences. One very interesting "discovery"

I've gleaned from the RHA and from Paul Barden's Rose Blog concerns wrapping cuttings to callus. I formerly lived in a hotter, more arid climate, and I had figured out how to root roses there with little difficulty. I have since moved to a more humid, a bit less hot, area and I have sacrificed MANY cuttings to rot before hitting on this wonderful advance. The initial introduction was made by Simon Voorwinde, an Australian member sharing what George, another Australian member had shared with him. <http://www.rosehybridizers.org/forum/message.php?topid=24944#24955> Photographic instruction and mention of the method was further shared by Paul Barden on his great Rose Blog. <http://paulbarden.blogspot.com/2010/02/hardwood-cuttings-of-roses.html> . It looked and sounded simple enough! I'd discovered part of my problem was it is too humid here to enclose rose cuttings in anything. The air is sufficiently "close" for them to root without rotting as long as they are protected from extreme wind and too hot sunlight. Using this wrapping method further increased my chances of success by keeping them moist while they callus and begin forming roots, greatly shortening the time required for them to actually become plants. I "streamlined" the procedure shared on the other two sources and found it worked! I took cuttings as I would normally, removed all the foliage and processed them with my rooting hormone of choice.

Several sheets of plain old newspaper were thoroughly soaked then wrung out as dry as I could get them. Here is your first chance of failure. There should be NO dripping wet paper. Wring out as much water as you possibly can. The cuttings are going to be securely wrapped in this paper. Soggy paper WILL cause them to grow mold and turn into slime. You want moisture, dampness, not soggy, so squeeze out as much water as you possibly can so the paper no longer drips when squeezed. I placed the pile of cuttings all together in the center of the paper, then wrapped them as you would to make a burrito. It looks something like these, though the longer ones shown are actually longer than traditional cuttings. More about those, later.

(Continued on page 22)



Instead of wrapping the "burritos" in Saran Wrap and rubber banding them as Simon's method suggests, I found simply wrapping them in plastic shopping bags then tying them tightly, kept them sufficiently damp for the callusing period. As long as the bags are sealed to prevent the loss of the dampness, it will work. I placed the bags in a drawer in a chest in the garage where they remained cool and dark for the required two weeks.

At the end of the two weeks, this is what I found in the "burritos".



I removed them from the "burritos" and potted them individually in 16 oz. foam cups with drainage holes poked through the bottoms and placed them where they would receive half day, morning sun, surrounded by other plants where the humidity remains fairly high. I deliberately planted them deeply, as deep as possible in the cups, to provide them more protection from moisture loss until they rooted.

I kept them watered so the soil remained damp and within a few weeks, new sprouts were growing from most of the cuttings. I had gone from 100% failure, to over 80% success with 135 cuttings. This was with a variety of different rose types, from polyanthas, climbers, species crosses, HTs and floribundas, not just a few varieties which root fairly easily. I am certain pre-callusing the cuttings in the dark, damp, cool newspaper before planting them was more than half the key. This was accomplished during our rainy period, so temperatures were lower than "normal" and there was higher humidity, so everything stacked the deck in my favor. ■

(The above item was adapted from a post by Kim Rupert and reprinted with permission.)

Publication Note

This newsletter is the last newsletter until after Labor Day. There will still be monthly reminders of varying length, but the newsletter will not resume until September.



Are your roses plagued by
MUGGLERS?

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Ventura County Rose Society

c/o Paddy Ruzella
1405 Church Street
Ventura, CA 93001

Upcoming Events...

**This Month's VCRS Meeting is Thursday, May 26th
Featuring: Dr. James Downer
"What's Bugging Your Garden?"**

Upcoming VCRS Monthly Meetings

All events are at the
Ventura County Educational Conference Center,
5100 Adolfo Rd, Camarillo, CA

All VCRS events start at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

May 26, 2011

Dr. Jim Downer
*What's Bugging
Your Garden?*

June 28, 2011

Ron Whitehurst
*Bees and Other
Garden Pollinators*

September 22, 2011

Jill Morganelli
*The Arboretum Rose
Garden Conversion to
Organics*

September 24, 2011

September Celebration!
Ventura Educational
Conference Center
Contact: Dawn-Marie Johnson
dawn-marie03@dslextreme.com

October 27, 2011

Jeri Jennings
Rose Photography Workshop

November 17, 2011

Tom Carruth
New Roses of 2011 & Beyond

December, 2011

Holiday Party
TBA

June 4, 2011

South Coast R S Rose Show
South Coast Botanical Gardens
12:30 to 4:00

Contact:
www.southcoastbotanicalgardens.org

October 13-16, 2011

LARS Tinseltown R S
ARS Fall National Convention
Universal Hilton
Studio City, CA
Contact: www.RoseStars.com

