

# ROSE LETTER



MAY 2016

Vol. 40, No.2

# Rose Letter

## The Heritage Roses Groups

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101 Benson Avenue, Vallejo, CA 94590

Publishers: Jeri & Clay Jennings

Vol. 40, No. 2

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**We welcome letters to the editor and feedback on articles.**



## DAMASK ROSES: AN UNTOLD STORY

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Back in 2008 I wrote an article on Damask roses entitled "The Scented Garden." In it I updated some outdated information that writers, not having done their homework, continued to repeat.

The outdated information was this: 'Autumn Damask' is a hybrid of *Rosa gallica* and *Rosa moschata*; summer damasks are hybrids of *R. gallica* and *R. phoenicia*. This information was theory only, put forth by the botanist Dr. C.C. Hurst in 1941, a theory to which a few other botanists objected. Even Graham Thomas declared that the supposed *R. moschata* to which Hurst referred was not a true *Moschata*. Rose authority Charles Quest-Ritson doubts that any accession of *R. moschata* is a parent of the Damask; not only do their chromosomes differ, *Moschata* a



Rosa moschata Herm.

diploid and Damask a tetraploid, but also scarcely a trait shows any similarity with the Damask. Nonetheless, this dubious parentage was repeated as fact for sixty years and more, even as recently as late 2014

by a speaker at the World Regional Conference of the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS) held in Hyderabad, India.

But in the year 2000, a team of Japanese and Californian botanists, Hikaru Iwata, *et al.*, announced they had used DNA testing in 1998-99 on the re-flowering 'Autumn Damask' and other *Rosas damascena*: 'Trigintapetala' (AKA 'Kazanlik'), 'Quatre Saisons Blanc Mousseux', and 'York and Lancaster'. The DNA results show that, yes, *R. moschata* and *R. gallica* were parents to these roses, but so was *R. fedtschenkoana*! A *ménage à trois* parentage! This latter species repeats its bloom. In warm climates, I must add, so occasionally does *R. moschata*. Iwata's team reasoned that the original hybrid stemmed from *R. moschata* as seed parent and *R. gallica* as pollen parent. That hybrid was then crossed with *R. fedtschenkoana*, that is (*R. moschata* x *R. gallica*) x *R. fedtschenkoana*, giving rise to Damask roses, but the gene for recurrent bloom expressing itself only in 'Autumn Damask'.

As far as we know, there were at least four Autumn Damask roses, a blush, a pink, a scarlet, and a white. Today only the pink survives. The first mention of 'Autumn Damask' seems to have been made by Richard Hakluyt in 1582, stating that it arrived in England from Italy in the early 1520s. One wonders how it reached Italy and from where, especially given

Fedtschenkoana in its make up, for *R. fedtschenkoana* is found in the wilds of Turkestan, China, and other parts of central Asia. Perhaps by trade on the ancient Silk Road? We do know of various much older historical references to a rose or roses that bloomed more than once. In fact, the roots of the Damask recedes even deeper into history to the fourth century. In October of 331, Alexander the Great wrote in his diary that upon entering the city of Babylon, he was showered with rose petals. As far as we know, only an autumnal Damask and *R.*

*fedtschenkoana* bloomed in the fall of the year in that part of the world. (*R. moschata* is indigenous to Africa and southeastern Europe.) To be “showered” with rose petals implies a profusion, and while Fedtschenkoana has but five petals to a flower, the Damask has considerably more. It or both may have been used to flutter down upon the conqueror. It may be also because of



this connection in honor of Alexander the Great that the ‘Autumn Damask’ has also been called “The Alexander Rose.”

But recently some doubt has been cast onto the results of the 2000 DNA testing announcement. Turkish-Swiss professor of Eastern Studies and a rosarian, Behcet Ciragan at the 2014 WFRS Conference challenged the thoroughness of this study. Where, he asks, would the crossing of *R. moschata* x *R. gallica* with *R. fedtschenkoana* have taken place, given that neither of the first two roses are of central Asia? *R. webbiana* and *R. beggeriana*, he asserts, are also common in the general region of Fedtschenkoana and

can repeat their bloom. Indeed, according to some botanists, *R. webbiana* is virtually the same species as the latter. Why were these not analyzed?

Furthermore, Professor Ciragan believes the selection of roses to have been too small for a valid analysis. All four Damask roses came from the Peter Beales nursery. (And Beales, like many nurserymen with the best intentions, has made a very occasional identification error in the past. However, given these particular well-known four, I doubt that he was wrong.) In addition, the team used only three samples of *R. phoenicia*, two of *R. moschata* Herm., two *R. moschata nepalensis*, and one *R. moschata plena*. Such a selection, claims Ciragan, is too narrow a sampling, both for source of Damasks and of closely related species.

Ciragan also faults the team for making no distinction



between *R. moschata* and *R. brunonii*, the latter being the species found in Afghanistan, the Himalayas, and Kashmir, closer to the regions of *R. fedtschenkoana* and very similar to *R. moschata*. Although Johann Herrmann, who discovered *R. moschata* Herm.,

described it as *the* type, it has never been proven that *R. moschata* is, in fact, a species. Indeed, there are a number of closely related Moschata-type roses found in the wild: *R. abyssinica*, *R. beggeriana*, *R. brunonii*, *R. freytagii*, *R. godefroyae*, *R. phoenicia*, *R. ruscinonesis*, *R. sambucina*, and one or two others.

Belgian rose botanist and breeder Ivan Louette postulates that *R. abyssinica* is far nearer in traits to *R. damascena* than is the tentative *R. moschata*. The same is true for *R. phoenicia* and for the

double pink *R. pissardii*, also known as ‘Nastarana’ and the Persian Musk Rose. And while three Phoenicia roses were used in the Iwata study, none of the other similar types were. Again, the samples in that study were too few to be valid.

To complicate matters, the same seems to be true for the number of Damask roses selected. In 2007 A. Babaei and six other geneticists published the first study to have found genetic diversity within *R. damascena*. Forty different Damask varieties were collected from 28 Iranian provinces, some used extensively for the rose oil trade. This team discovered nine different genotypes (roses having a different genetic constitution within their class). And this was a sampling of only forty production fields of Damask roses in one country. This genetic diversity study further suggests that the Iwata *et al.* analysis may have been too limited.

Finally, Behcet Ciragan tells of an Old Garden Rose found in Eastern Turkey, its name translated as ‘Rose of Kashmir’ and

‘Rose of Tabris’, depending on location, described in 2001 as a double form of *R. beggeriana*. Two cuttings from it produced two different roses of Old Garden Rose ilk. Likewise, Dominique and Edith Lanvin of France have collected at least five Old Garden Roses from Eastern Turkey, some of them Damasks or Damask Perpetuals. Many found roses of the Middle East may be hybrid, cultivars from ancient gardens.



Because of the wide distribution of *R. moschata*-related forms and of different genotypes of *R. damascena* in Turkey, Iran, and probably throughout much of the Islamic world, Ciragan suggests there be a more thorough analysis for the origin of the Damask rose. Perhaps few or none of the Moschata-type roses with specie names is a species. Perhaps they are naturalized double forms of the wild or of cultivars, garden relics from an ancient time. Perhaps *R. damascena*'s parentage is as mysterious as theirs. The search for the parents of 'Autumn Damask' at least, if not all Damasks, appears far from complete.

## PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover: Rose 'Eduouard de Ory', Jamain & Forney

Pages 2, 5 (*R. brunonii*), 24, 25, 30 & 32: Darrell g.h. Schramm

Pages 3, 18, & 23 ('*R. Portlandica*'): Karl King

Page 4: by Alfred Parsons

Page 6: by Redoute

Page 9: Ron Robertson

Page 10: from H. McFarland's *Roses of the World in Color*

Page 11: Patricia Routley

Page 12: Milton Nurse

Page 13: Margaret Nelson

Pages 14, 23 (top & bottom), & 27: Bill Grant

Page 16: Don Gers

Page 17: Yan Ma

Page 22: Mary Lawrance 1799

Back cover: 'Bella Donna': Darrell g.h. Schramm



## A FAVORITE QUEEN OF FLOWERS

*As Editor, I asked a number of people to select a favorite rose and to write briefly about that queen of flowers. What follows are some of the responses.*

### **Marbrée** by **Ron Robertson**

Due to the number of moves I've made over the last few years, I'm going to have to define my favorite rose by the one(s) I miss the most. Those would be the Damask Perpetuals (aka Portland roses). Their biggest weakness, as far as I can say about this group of roses, is that there are just so few of them. I've grown most of them, and without exception they have been wonderful roses and plants in my gardens.

As a class, they have so many of the attributes I admire: fragrance, remontancy, health, beauty, and something else that appeals to me in particular, foliage that has an old-fashioned look to it. They tend to have a matte, Gallica-like look to them. While I enjoy the glossy foliage on many of the more modern roses, I'm drawn to that look that is so apparent in Albas, Damasks, Gallicas, and Centifolias. One reason the foliage is important to me, is that I grow roses with lots of companions, not just other roses. This old-fashioned foliage helps the rose look right with the myriad perennials, shrubs, bulbs and annuals they must accompany. Another bonus is that they can go for years with only the most minimal of pruning and still make a nice shape in a garden setting. Some of them do sucker freely, though in my experience it was more in the line of moderately suckering Gallicas, and not the mad scramble I've encountered with Rugosa roses on their own roots (yes, I'm thinking of you, *Blanc Double de Coubert*).

They vary in height from a couple of feet or so, to about four or more for some of the larger ones, such as *Duchesse de Rohan*, which also creates a fairly sizable spread in a few years. The fragrance between them is all pretty similar to my nose, that powerful scent I associate with the true Damask roses. Happily, that is my favorite rose fragrance, though I do like them all, even *R. foetida*, which to my senses is oddly

pleasing and not smelly as the name might suggest.

So, after all these moves, and back to starting a new garden from scratch, which is the one I'm thinking of and missing now? *Marbrée*. I



first encountered this rose about 15 years ago, at the sorely missed Vintage Gardens nursery. The cherry pink color spotted noticeably with near white drew me in. It was promptly purchased and planted in my Fresno garden, where it regularly produced those beautiful and striking flowers. For me, this was one of the smallest of the class, and only achieved 2½ feet during the years I had it, with very minimal spreading. It was not in the best location, and often found itself swamped by annual poppies in the spring, but nevertheless persevered. If I am able to find it again, I will give it a more favored location, and I am confident it will do its best.

*Ron Robertson, a rose authority, has at different times owned at least three nurseries.*

## **The Rose That Started It All** by **Connie Hilker**

Whenever I am asked to name my favorite rose, my immediate answer is ‘Dr. W. Van Fleet’, a Hybrid wichurana rambler introduced in 1910. With its fragrant, shell pink flowers in spring, and its glossy, almost disease-proof

foliage, it is a rose that deserves to be more widely grown.

My favorite roses tend to be ones with interesting stories. Such is the case with my plant of ‘Dr. W. Van Fleet’, which grows in a very prominent spot in my garden—greeting visitors and draping gracefully along more than twenty feet of fence beside our driveway. This exact plant holds the distinction of being the first rose that I ever rustled. It grew beside a small, vacant, brick

ranch house that was demolished shortly after I took my cuttings.

‘Dr. W. Van Fleet’ was a very popular rose from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Many a gardener planted it beside the back door, at the corner of the porch, or, as I grow it, on a fence. Garden visitors have told stories to me about people in their families who grew this rose in a garden that they remember from their childhood. A few related painful encounters with the thorns, which are substantial and plentiful. (Good gloves are a must when handling it.)

Walter Van Fleet, the man, was a physician who retired from his medical practice to pursue botany, lived for a time in an experimental community in Tennessee, and

spent his later years breeding plants at the US Department of Agriculture. (Many women have favorite designers. I have favorite hybridizers. Walter Van Fleet is at the top of my list.) The rose that bears his name was the result of his experiments to produce disease resistant, vigorous, carefree “dooryard roses,” as he called them.

‘Dr. W. Van Fleet’, the rose, is often overlooked in favor of its repeat-flowering sport, ‘New Dawn’. For me, the parent rose is a far superior plant. Its long, flexible canes are very easy to train, and it is a much more graceful presence in the garden.



I can clearly point to my discovery of this rose in the garden of that little brick house, and my success with rooting the cuttings that I took that day, as the beginning of my desire to find and preserve other roses wherever I go—and to educate others and inspire them to do the same.

*Connie Hilker used to own Hartwood Rose Nursery. She now works on preserving the roses in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, and is the convener of Old Dominion Group of Heritage Roses.*

## **Pippie's Pottery Pink** by **Patricia Routley**

One of my favourite early HT's, "Pippie's Pottery Pink", came into my garden six times from various locations and it always struck well for me. It has been found all over Australia. It is such a beautiful survivor in hot dry climates, and gardeners don't dig up and discard roses that give such beauty. They pass them on to friends and family, and the family keeps them for the memory. I don't really know what it is, but we're all calling it 'Lady Ursula'.

The distinguishing characteristic of this rose is its tall 5-6 feet habit with the long strong canes gently arching over and falling towards the horizontal with age. It looks like a great big pink chinese-decorated fan. The loose blooms are a soft and even pink, opening with a large center ball of petals, which then finely roll back at the edges. The weight of the bloom causes the pedicel to bend, but the bloom wants to look you in the face, so the pedicel usually has an S-bend. It rarely sets hips and so the big beautiful thing just keeps



churning out these 'La France', 'Caroline Testout' lookalikes in generous flushes all summer.

*Patricia Routley is an avid rosarian who volunteers at HelpMeFind/[roses.com](http://roses.com). She lives in Northcliffe, Western Australia.*

## **My Favourite Rose** by **Emma Massey**



I was asked what my favourite rose is one lunch-break by a rose-loving friend, which was a lovely question, but I soon realised it was going to be difficult to answer quickly. In my own garden I've planted six historic roses, and my head gardener Andy Eddy has planted many beautiful roses at Osterley Park & House, so it was a hard choice.

The rose I have always loved is *Rosa* 'Blanche Double de Coubert', a Rugosa Hybrid, which is the first rose I remember from my childhood and has remained a firm favourite of mine. It's a really beautiful rose with pure white, semi-double flowers, which are strongly scented, against the bright green foliage, which always looks wonderful whatever the weather. It also gives you autumn interest with the foliage turning yellow, and if you are lucky, some red hips too. I have found it a robust and easy rose to grow, even in my clay soil, and it does not require staking. It's always exciting to see the first rose buds appearing, knowing I will be able to enjoy it for a number of weeks.

I've planted it in my front garden, so it's the rose I see as I start my day, and it greets me at the end of the day, and always makes me smile.

*Emma Massey is a trainee in the Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme at Osterley Park & House, England.*



### **My Favorite Rose: Souvenir de St. Anne's by Margaret Nelson**

Think “which rose would I dig out and move with me if I could take only one?”

We live near Puget Sound in western Washington with a Mediterranean climate: wet winters and dry summers. Our soil is glacial till, so it is very lean. Any rose that grows well here from the get-go has to be a proven winner.

We have many nice roses. If I had to choose only one to take with me, it would have to be disease resistant, pretty, have a wonderful fragrance and constantly re-bloom from early spring until the hard frost. Fortunately, I have such a rose, and it is ‘Souvenir de St. Anne’s’. It will bloom despite the hot, dry summers and wet, cool springs and falls.

This is a very light pink, semi-double Bourbon with a nice, strong fragrance that was found growing in a Dublin garden sometime before 1916. It is a sport of ‘Souvenir de la Malmaison’, also a lovely rose but one that tends to ball in our Pacific Northwest rain showers. ‘Souvenir de St. Anne’s’ has fewer petals so it doesn’t seem to ball.

This rose grows on its own roots on the northwest corner of our home. It does not produce runners and performs like a champion in an organic garden. It may get aphids which do not seem to bother it, and the birds remove them. It makes a medium-sized, reasonably disease-free shrub. I recommend it to you!

*Margaret Nelson heads Heritage Roses Northwest, a group with members in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Canada.*

## The Mermaid Rose by Frank La Rosa

‘Mermaid’, a hybrid of *Rosa bracteata* native to China, is relatively easy to grow in most American climates. I got my first plant as a root cutting brought to me by my father-in-law from the hot Dallas-Fort Worth-Denton area of Texas. It has grown very well here in my coastal San Diego garden. It has required little special care aside from the usual rose fertilizer and watering during especially hot, dry periods.

Its innate vigor has caused it to grow up beyond the second story of our home, and it has produced two or three root shoots, each one about twelve feet away from the parent plant. One shades my greenhouse. ‘Mermaid’ produces very strong canes with sharp backward growing thorns that enable it to grasp onto the greenhouse roof and the stucco wall of my house where I have helped it with trellises. I also wired it to the wall, and it took over from there. It requires minimal pruning, only to clear away dead branches.

‘Mermaid’ blossoms are quintessential. They are three inches or more across and of a creamy white accentuated with subtle yellow tints



at the center and sometimes at the petal edges. The center is a furry glory of orange yellow stamens in which the bees love to tumble. And, to top it off, the scent is fruity and of a traditional rose essence.

The species name “bracteata” means golden in Latin, referring to the golden new leaves that are appearing now in spring, sometimes tinged with red highlights. [Might it also refer to the pale gilded color of the flower? Ed.]

Far too much has been written about the invasive, rampant growth of ‘Mermaid’, probably because of the lack of watchful care on the part of some gardener. Nevertheless, if you want an impenetrable barrier or a rambling groundcover for a hillside, ‘Mermaid’ is the correct choice!

I have come to think of my ‘Mermaid’ as a special feminine entity of vigor and beauty, as I suppose all of us do when dwelling on our favorite roses. For me, ‘Mermaid’ is the central rose spirit of my garden. She is extremely vigorous, earthy, of leafy excellence, and the blossoms are chalices of lovely color and scent.

*Frank La Rosa Mazza is a gardener of sixty-plus years. Under the title of “The Italian Gardener” he wrote for many years a column for L’Italo-Americano, the oldest Italian newspaper on the West Coast. The columns were compiled into a book entitled The Spirit of Gardening.*

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## Roses Rejuvenate Life

### Don Gers



Yan Ma with Michael Tallman (L) and Don Gers

In 1991, Miriam Wilkins received a surprise letter from the People's Republic of China. It was from a graduate student in the Department of Landscape Architecture of Beijing Forestry University, seeking an exchange of information and reference material on roses, wild and cultivated. Miriam was touched by the sincerity of the request and the challenge it presented. In a stroke of genius, she mustered a team response, passing the letter around to likely co-respondents. I don't know how many became involved besides Virginia Hopper, Marion McKinsey, myself and possibly Bill Grant.

I gathered from the letter, the goal was "rejuvenation" of Chinese roses. Miriam mailed a copy of Phillip & Rix's *Roses* and all the "Rose Letters" she still had copies of and "Old Rose Digests". I sent a couple dozen xeroxed articles on

rose breeding and related topics along with seeds of many North American rose species. And so a letter exchange began with the student, a young woman named Yan Ma.

Soon Yan Ma was traveling by train to the far reaches of China to collect roses. In villages she visited, curiously only a single rose might be cultivated there, like an emblem by which the village was identified. It was impossible for her to deal with living plant material, so she collected seeds wherever available. She collected species roses from the famous mountains Taibai Shan, Changbai Shan (Long White Mountain), and E. H. Wilson's Mt. Omei as well as old Chinese cultivars with names

like "Yu Zhong Shaoyao" (Peony Under Rain), "Zhusha Mei" and "Qiushui Furong". Yan Ma shared these wild collected seeds among her correspondents. I sprouted the form of *Rosa omeiensis* called *chrysoarpa* with glossy yellow gumdrop hips and a fragrant foliated *Rosa primula* called the "Incense Rose". Others I grew were *Rosa bella* from Shanxi Province, *Rosa maximowicziana* collected on the border of Sichuan and Shaanxi Provinces on Taibai mountain and an unusual *Rosa acicularis* from Jilin on Changbai Mountain. It has reddish, pendulous, flagon-shaped hips and distinctive leaves. And the "Qiushui Furong."

According to Yan Ma's research coworker, Junyu Chen at Beijing Forestry University, "Qiushui Furong" is "an old Chinese monthly rose which has a history in cultivation of about 1000 years" and "has been freely used in our interspecific cross-breeding experiments." [A] "good tetraploid parent...its offspring show a wide range of variations in their ornamental characteristics."

And in the book *Yuejie Huapu* dating from the Sung Dynasty 960-1279 AD, Yan quoted this description of "Qiushui Furong": "The fragrant flower is white as twilight, on the reverse



Qiushui Furong

surface the petals are suffused with vermillion dots turning to light red under sunshine. Flowers in full bloom are like lotus." Junyu Chen translates the name "Qiushui Furong" as "Lotus in Autumn Water".

Indeed, the flowers on my seedling are lotus shape and have a creamy yellow center with deep pink splotches on the tips of white petals.

Chinese flower names are full of symbolism. In the word music of his poem "Chanson d'automne," the French poet Paul Verlaine captures autumn's sadness and sense of loss, prodding my imagination to find meaning in the name "Lotus in autumn water". White Lotus flowers represent the pure spirit emergent from life's muddy, troubled waters,

vermillion the mark of love won but now lost, as aged petals faded to twilight sink beneath life's autumn tears.

In 1993, the now Doctor Yan Ma came to America for post-doctoral research at Texas A. & M. Miriam and her husband Richard Wilkins were the hosts when Dr. Ma arrived in San Francisco. She had some time before reporting for her new post in Texas, so Dr. Ma arranged to visit each of her correspondents in the Bay Area. We instantly took a liking to her and offered to acquaint her with California, taking her to Disneyland and a visit with Rose people at the Huntington. They invited her to come to the next Huntington Symposium in 1994.

Now that we were on a first-name basis with her, Yan wrote to us often from Texas A & M, describing her research and encouraging us to visit, especially to meet Dr. Basye whose Rose Chair endowment supported her work, and also Dr. David Bryne, head of the Department. We made the trip the following year, visiting the Texas panhandle, Big Bend, and surveying the flora and Roses along the way.

Dr. Basye invited us to his home. I was especially thrilled to hold his copy of Ellen Willmott's original *Genus Rosa*. Of the roses Dr. Basye



Basye's Purple

created, I think the most unique is his *Rosa foliolosa* x *R. rugosa* named 'Basye's Purple Rose'. If I had painted Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, I would have expanded the painting to include 'Basye's Purple Rose' reposing on a white picket fence. From its ashen leaves to the purple

flower petals like funeral velvet, it truly is Gothic in appearance.

We brought several roses for their research at Texas A & M, the principal being *Hulthemia persica* which we had grown from seed. In the meantime Yan had attended the 1994 Huntington Symposium and

begun, with collaborators, to publish papers detailing their research.

While working in the laboratory of one of her coauthors, Charles Crane, in the Soil and Crop Department, a romance developed. They were married in 1995. Not long afterward, funding became tighter so Charles decided to leave the academic field for a better paying, private sector job, and Yan went with him, so ending her Rosa research.

When we first met her and became friends, Yan confided to us a private suffering in her life. Her mother was a dentist and her father was a Professor of Botany. During the disruption of life by the Red Guard in China, they were persecuted along with other members of the intelligentsia. The family was deprived of food, and Yan suffered physically from malnutrition, hence her small stature. So we were very pleased she successfully had her first child, a healthy daughter in 1997, who has become the delight of her parents. And we are very happy she finally found happiness here in America. *Rosa* was the touchstone here. Far more than roses got rejuvenated.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 1: **Plein Air Festival at San Jose Heritage Rose Garden**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Artists of all levels invited to paint in the rose garden. Free. GPS address: 412 Seymour St., San Jose, CA 95110. For more info: [www.paintingwithtara.com](http://www.paintingwithtara.com).

May 15: **Celebration of Old Roses**, 11:00 -3:30, El Cerrito Community Center, at Moeser and Ashbury Streets, El Cerrito, CA. See [www.celebrationofoldroses.org](http://www.celebrationofoldroses.org).

June 10-11: **Great Rosarian of the World**. Dr. Guoliang Wang to be honored at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, CA. \$25 registration fee includes welcoming reception in the Chinese Garden, Friday evening, June 10th and Saturday lectures. Reservations are required. Google "Great Rosarians of the World XV" for more information.



Page from Robert Furber's Catalogue

## CATALOGUES AND ROSES, OLD AND NEW: A HISTORY

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

With the demise of many a nursery in the past decade, those of us given to dwelling on and dreaming over various roses pictured in catalogues may feel deprived. We feed our dreams through description if not depiction, and dreams often direct our reality. I may read of or see a photo of a lovely rose and desire it for my garden. If wise, I research it, and if all is well, I order it or wend my way to the nursery to buy it. How fortunate we are to have some nurseries and their catalogues still.

While the nursery of Lawrence Vyncent and John Gaddisly of Kingston-on-Thames in the 1530s, surely one of the earliest English nurseries, provides evidence of purchasing accounts that included roses, no broadsides of their plant lists seem to exist. The oldest surviving nursery catalogue in the Western Hemisphere is likely Emmanuel

Sweerts' *Florilegium* of 1612. Published about twenty years before the tulip craze descended on Holland, this Dutch compendium of plants includes 560 bulbs and flowers. Sweerts' nursery is certainly among the earliest known in the West.

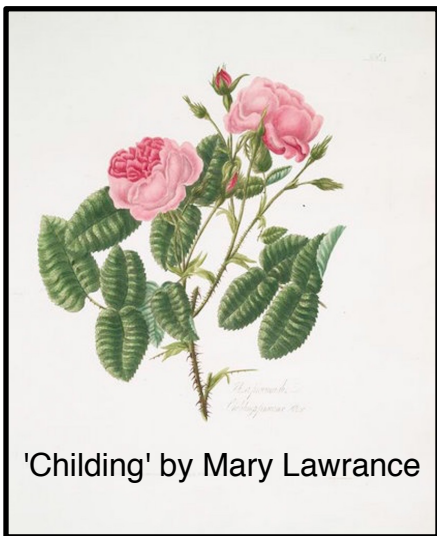
Rene Morin of Paris published a plant catalogue in 1621. Just when the Thuilleaux Nursery outside Paris, founded in 1650, began to publish its catalogues, I have been unable to discover. And though certain documents provide evidence of other nurserymen in London during the early 1500s, one of the first English plant lists found so far is that of the nurseryman John Rose, gardener to King Charles II, who includes a "Musk-Rose." In 1677 a written catalogue penned by William Lucas at The Naked Boy nursery in London provides perhaps the first entire stock of plants and seeds published. It, however, lists no roses. A partnership nursery of four or five men that began in 1681 in Brompton Park became London & Wise in 1689, likely the first huge nursery in England. In their 1706 "transcript of the standard seedman's catalogue of the time," they mention offering over 10 million plants. However, what catalogues were published then were generally handwritten; printed catalogues were not common before 1800. Furthermore, farmers and citizens exchanged their own plants and seeds, while merchants traded but locally at first, so by and large catalogues were not required.

The nursery of which the famous English rosarian Thomas Rivers was later to become proprietor opened its doors in 1725, but no catalogue seems to have outlasted that time. Two years later, however, in 1727, the Kensington Nursery of London, owned by Robert Furber since around 1700, printed a catalogue of its seeds and plants. More to the point here, in 1730 he published *the first commercial, illustrated garden seed catalogue in England's horticultural history*. The catalogue made his name. Entitled *Twelve Months of Flowers*, it included twelve colored engravings depicting mixed bouquets of thirty or more flowers each. At least three of the illustrations include roses, among them 'Blush Belgic', 'Frankfort Rose', 'Moss Provence', 'White Monthly' and "Red Austrian Rose", the latter probably referring to 'Austrian Copper'. At least two sets of these colored plates are still extant.

An order form for "50 Roses several sorts" was placed with

Henry Woodman at Gateshead about 1730, but did he put out a catalogue?

Christopher Gray, who took over his father's nursery at Fulham about 1713, published "A Catalogue of American Trees and Shrubs," in 1737, but if those shrubs included roses, I do not know. His 1740 catalogue is considered the first plant list in actual print rather than in handwriting. When Gray died in 1764, however, his successor William Burchell promptly published an inventory of the nursery's plants, which did name 39 roses, among them one called 'Large Purple' and another 'Double Virgin Rose'.



Sometime in the 1730s, John Williamson opened a nursery in Kensington. In 1756, he took over Furber's nursery. That year he was selling at least 21 different varieties of roses, among them 'Sweet Bryar', 'Belgic', 'Childing', 'Damask', 'Maiden's Blush', 'Monthly', 'Province', 'Virgin', 'Double White', 'York and Lancaster', and 'Rosa Mundi' (I use his spelling). The latter two have often been confused with each other, but the former is a damask and the latter a gallica.

Aside from Furber's elaborate publication, most early nursery catalogues were merely broadsides of plant lists. Whether Dicksons & Co. of Edinburgh, founded in 1729—not to be confused with the later Dickson Nursery of Ireland—printed a broadside catalogue is not clear. It did, however, sell Scots roses (*Rosa spinosissima*). But by 1745, quite a number of nurseries were set up on both sides of Mare Street in London. Did they sell roses? A certain Mr. Clark did, advertising them in 1750. In addition to some of those already mentioned, he also sold 'Austrian Yellow', 'Belgic Red', 'Burnet-leaved Blush', 'Burnet-leaved Dutch', 'Marbled Double', 'Provence Blush', 'Provence Moss', 'Red Double', 'Royal Great', 'Velvet Semi-Double', and 'Yellow Double'. While we can determine what a few of these are—the 'Yellow Double' is

probably *Rosa foetida persiana* or the Sulphur Rose, *Rosa hemispherica*—several others are left to guesswork. In 1754, a Mr. Joyce, whose son Stanley took over the nursery later, sold some of the above roses, adding ‘Double Cinamons’, ‘White Cluster or Musk’, ‘Velvet Single’ (‘Violacea?’), and ‘Yellow Single’ (probably *R. foetida*).

John Webb’s Acorn Nursery of Westminster Bridge published an early catalogue in the 1750s on seeds and roots; his 1760 “A Catalogue of Seeds and Hardy Plants” named forty varieties of roses. The numbers of rose varieties were gradually increasing with the years.

An order form of the John Nickson nursery of Knutsford in Cheshire, dated 1760, shows a request for two plants each of 38 different varieties of roses, including ‘Garnet’, ‘Lisbon’, ‘King’, ‘Portland’, and ‘Double Dwarf Pennsylvanian’. ‘Portland’ may well be ‘The Portland Rose’ (*Rosa Portlandica*) whose date is variously given as 1750, 1775, and 1782; if that is the case, then the first date is most likely, given its listing in 1760. Furthermore, this would suggest the rose was not named, as is often stated, for the second or third Duchess of Portland.

The Cant Nursery, which 202 years later was to become Cants of Colchester, producer of the rose



*R. hemisphaerica*, *Rosa Portlandica*, and Great Maiden's Blush



'Just Joey', was begun in 1765. I have discovered no clue to an early catalogue. But a catalogue published in 1766 by John Whittingham of Coventry lists 44 different roses.

The well-known firm of John Gordon's Mile End produced a catalogue in 1770. In it, among six other roses ('Double Apple-bearing', 'Double Dwarf Pennsylvanian', 'Double Spanish', 'Red Monthly Cluster', 'Royal Maiden's Blush' and 'Stebon') 'Rose de Meaux' is listed, probably for the first time in publication. In the following year William Malcolm brought out his list of 55 roses, most importantly including 'Evergreen Chine' and "a new Chine." *Rosa indica* had arrived in England, and hybridizing with it to create recurrently blooming roses was soon to begin. Incidentally, Malcolm's catalogue contained an illustration of his greenhouses in its frontispiece, supposedly the first catalogue illustration since Furber.

Burbage Nurseries, initially owned by Benjamin Hurst, great-great-grandfather of the geneticist C.C. Hurst, date back to 1773. Did they publish a catalogue? If not, Rona Hurst maintains they did sell 22 rose varieties in the 1770s. Around 1745 James Lee and Lewis Kennedy formed a nursery partnership called The Vineyard at Hammersmith. In 1774 they issued "Catalogue of Plants and Seeds." A letter of 30 October 1780 from an earlier customer to Lee & Kennedy requests an order for "24 roses, 12 Best Sorts 2 of each." These twelve



Rosa Mundi

roses are spelled (or misspelled) out: 'Double Yellow', 'Great Maiden's Blush', 'Cluster Maiden's Blush', 'Duch Hunderleavd' ['Dutch Hundred-leaved'], 'White Monthly', 'Marbl'd' ['Marbled Double'], 'Mundy' [*Rosa Mundi*], 'York and Lancaster', 'Rose de Meaux', 'Rose de Pomponne' [Pompon],

‘Caroline Rose’ [*R. carolina?*], and ‘Double Bramble’. In 1786 Thomas Jefferson, who had stopped at The Vineyard earlier, carried its seed catalogue with him to Paris where he was to live for several years. The Vineyard, it will be recalled, was the nursery from which the Empress Josephine ordered many plants.

Robert Anderson of Broughton-Park, Edinburgh, printed a catalogue in 1775, which may be the first one to provide prices for its stock. ‘Pompom Rose’ finds its apparently first mention here; several other roses named were ostensibly here and gone with the wind.

Another early general nursery catalogue, published in 1777 by Brunton & Co. of 83 High Street in Birmingham, England, bore the loquacious title *Catalogue of Plants Botanically Arranged According to System of Linnaeus*. Shortly thereafter, J.A. Forbes became a partner, and in 1782 Brunton & Forbes Nursery published a 22-page *Catalogue of Forest-Trees, Fruit-Trees, and Evergreen and Flowering Shrubs*. Among the roses listed are the ‘Portland Rose’ and the “new” roses ‘Tall Burgundy’ and ‘Dwarf Burgundy’, both at five shillings each.

In 1769 and again in 1777 William and John Perfect of Pontefract, West Yorkshire, published a catalogue of trees and flowering shrubs, the first in manuscript, the latter in



Thornless (*Rosa pendulina*)

print and recording seven Scots roses they had sold since 1755. An additional 41 roses listed in this 1777 catalogue include ‘Blush Cluster’, ‘Late White Cluster, or Double Musk’, ‘Double Cinnamon’, ‘Single Cinnamon’, ‘Childing, or Red Provence’, ‘Thornless’, ‘Pensilvanian’ ‘Great Royal’, and ‘Virgia’. Is that last named rose a typed error for ‘Virgin’, the rose mentioned by John Williamson? The Perfects updated the lists in 1788 and 1793.

Like the Perfects, John and George Telford of York were one of

the two great nurseries of northern England. Their 1775 catalogue is among the first to list prices. In addition to 200 other shrubs, it catalogued 37 different roses, including various forms of Scots roses, such as a white, a red, and a marbled *spinossissima*.

Christopher Thompson of Pickhill, Yorkshire, published a catalogue in 1783 that included the new rose 'La Royal'. And Barnes and Callender of Leeds came out with a list around 1787, which added 'Singleton's Hundred-leaved' rose. As nurseries began to proliferate in Great Britain, catalogues began to keep pace, each adding the latest rose discovered or bred. The increased importation of exotic plants from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> fostered a proliferation of nurseries and catalogues. The 19<sup>th</sup> century can be considered the heyday of the rose in all its varieties and classes, a phenomenon that led to catalogues focused on roses.

The French seem to have been the first to feature rose catalogues. Monsieur Francois, gardener of the King at Faubourg Saint-Antoine in Paris, named about 200 varieties and species roses, some still using their Dutch names, like 'Fluwell Roos' and 'Groote Purper Roode', both gallicas; he also named others, like 'Le Rosier Eveque', 'Lustre d'Eglise', and 'Bizarre Triomphe' which are still sold today. Other early French rose growers with their own rose catalogues were Filassier in 1785, Descemet in 1803 who named eighty roses, many of them gallicas, Du Pont in 1809 (his 1813 rose list includes 218 species and varieties), Vibert in 1819, Calvert, an Englishman who owned a nursery in Rouen, in 1821 (his catalogue listed about 900 roses, some of them his own, including one named 'Rose Lee' which seems to have been a Damask Perpetual), and so on.

In Germany the August Shelhase Nursery in Kassel offered 105 varieties of roses in 1808. (His 1825 catalogue offered 270, and his 1831, 352 varieties.) In 1811 at Napoleonshohe (so renamed from Wilhlemshohe while Jerome Bonaparte and his wife Catherine of Wurttemberg lived there) the nursery catalogue listed 151 roses, among them 'Perle von Weissenstein', Germany's oldest surviving rose, as well as 'Aimable Rouge', *Rosa holoserica regalis* and *R. papaverina major*.

Perhaps the oldest catalogue on record featuring roses in England



Moss Provence

was printed in 1759 by Richard North of Lambeth, “where Gentlemen etc. may be supplied with Plants, Seeds, etc. chiefly of his own Raising; or from his Seed-shop in Westminster Hall.” Though he lists a few other plants but provides no prices, North names forty roses, grouping them under three

headings: Doubles, Singles, and Sweet Briars.

Of the 24 double roses (those with more than sixteen petals), he includes the following still in existence today: ‘Red Damask’ (this could be the ‘Apothecary Rose’, which was often mistakenly called by that name but is probably the rose-pink ‘Autumn Damask’), ‘Blush Damask’, ‘White Damask’ (‘Quatre Saisons Blanc’), “Moss Provence” (*Rosa centifolia muscosa*), “Dutch hundred-leaved” (*R. centifolia*), “White hundred-leaved” (*R. centifolia alba*), ‘Rosa Mundi’, and “Velvet” (“Old Velvet Rose”, probably ‘Violacea’ or ‘Tuscany’).

Of single roses listed by North (those with eight petals or fewer), we still grow “Musk cluster, white” (*R. moschata*), “Apple-bearing red” (*R. pomifera*), the Austrian Copper and the Austrian Yellow, “White Burnet” (likely *R. spinosissima*, also known as the Burnet Rose), and the “dwarf Burnet,” which no doubt equates to ‘Nana’ (*R. spinosissima nana*). The “Virginia Red” would be *R. virginiana*, a single rich pink species of North America first described by Parkinson in 1640 and which plantsman John Tradescant Sr. was growing in his Lambeth garden in 1634.

Of the five briars that North names, we know the “Common Sweet Brier” as *R. eglanteria*.

And what of catalogues in the New World, early America? Though Pennsylvania farmer and amateur botanist John Bartram supplied rose seeds and specimens for others in England between the 1730s and 1770s, mostly through an exchange with his friend Peter Collinson (and in the colonies, even with George Washington, who

visited his home nursery at least three times), he seems to have produced no catalogue that included roses. His catalogue of the second quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is devoted primarily to herbaceous plants and trees.

One American nursery that did include roses was that of William Prince, his Linnaean Nursery in Flushing, Long Island, established in 1737. Its first catalogue seems to have been printed in 1771. His catalogue of 1790 named eleven varieties of roses and “American wild roses, many sorts.” In 1791 Thomas Jefferson requested some plants from Prince, who responded by sending him a catalogue. Jefferson then ordered three roses each of “Moss Provence; Yellow; Rosa Mundi; Large Provence; the Monthly; the White Damask; the primrose [an early American name for the Scotch hedge rose, *R. spinosissima*]; the Musk rose; the Cinnamon rose; the Thornless rose [*R. pendulina*].” The only one of the eleven Jefferson did not order was the Red Damask. Prince sent him but two of each.

Fifty-five years later, on the eve of the California Gold Rush, William Robert Prince, prominent nurseryman and grandson of the founder—as well as plagiarist of Thomas Rivers’ book on roses—published the 35<sup>th</sup> edition of the company’s catalogue. This is an extraordinary list. Subtracting his lists of rejected and inferior roses and a few repeated names, this 1846 catalogue lists about 1460 rose varieties. In addition to the *banksiae* roses and the various species he lists, Prince catalogues at least 150 other roses that can still be bought today.

The Prince nursery appears to have been the first to distribute America’s



**Queen of the Prairies**

first roses. These are ‘Champneys’ Pink Cluster’ (c.1810); ‘Harison’s Yellow (1830); ‘American White’ (c. 1840), a *R. rubiginosa* hybrid; five *R. setigera* hybrids by Samuel Feast: ‘Baltimore Belle’, ‘Beauty [sometimes Queen] of the Prairies’, ‘Elegans’, ‘Pallida’, and Superba’, all of 1843; three by the same breeder, hybridized with *R. arvensis*: ‘Feast’s Pink’ (1845), ‘Feast’s New White’, and ‘Feast’s Purple’ (no dates for either); and ‘American Roseate’ (c.1845), another hybrid of *R. rubiginosa*. ‘Champneys’ Pink’, ‘Harison’s Yellow’, ‘Baltimore Belle’, and ‘Queen of the Prairies’ are still in commerce today.

Colonel James Lloyd Lafayette Warren, before moving to Gold Rush country, produced catalogues in 1844 and 1845 for his nursery Warren’s Floral Saloon in Boston. He advertised chinas, teas, bourbons, noisettes, and a few hybrid perpetual roses—in other words, the popular roses of the day. The same is true for nurseries owned by Charles M. Hovey, Henry Crapo, Ellwanger & Barry, and others. But no nursery was as extensive in its selection of both current and old roses as was that of William Robert Prince.

We rose lovers have come a long way since those early catalogues. After World War II and for the next sixty years or so, we became perhaps rather spoiled with ever-increasing quality of color photographs accompanying the often-exaggerated descriptions of beautiful roses. Only recently have various American nurseries begun to omit photos, some reducing their catalogues to mere lists—not unlike some of the earliest catalogues. Nonetheless, come winter, visions of not sugar plums but of a garden “rose beautiful” dancing in our heads, many of us pore over the reduced catalogues and lists. Fortunately, the world wide web shows catalogued color photos of roses from most nurseries, all vying for our attention in these difficult times—Angel Gardens, Antique Rose Emporium, Burlington Nursery, Hortico, Greenmantle Nursery, Rogue Valley Roses, Russian River Roses, to name a few survivors. To make of our rose dreams a reality, to ensure that more nurseries do not close and that we do not grow stale, we must revamp our gardens by ordering other roses. We must bring a portion of those catalogues into reality on our home ground. We must renew our lives.



## **A BLACK ROSE**

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

In 1933 a Mrs. Charles C. Derby of San Jose, California, spent most of August through November in England with the particular agenda of viewing autumn rose shows. Earlier a black rose had made the news, but Mrs. Derby was unable to locate it at any show or garden. Fortunately, when in October she inquired of Mr. Courtney Page, the esteemed and knowledgeable secretary of England's National Rose Society, he arranged for her to view the trial grounds of Haywards Heath. There she saw three plants of the black rose in bloom.

"I didn't believe it possible," she wrote in the *American Rose Annual* of 1934, "that anything in the rose family could be so wholly unattractive as I found this 'Black Rose'. It is a dull black, like crepe, without any luster or sheen, and the base of the petals is tinged with dark blue.... There seemed to be no fragrance, the blooms have poor form, and the foliage is thin and inclined to mildew." She was convinced no real "rose-lover" would grow it in a garden.

Apparently she was right. For it is a rose, though a hybrid tea, that very very few people grow. I confess, however, that I do grow it—but not for love or beauty, merely as a curiosity.

The name of this rose is ‘Nigrette’. Also dubbed “The Black Rose of Sangerhausen” by the press, it was released for the market by Max Krause in 1934. To my eye it is a velvety blackish maroon, rather dull and without shading—though I do grow mine in part shade. It is a short plant, one to two feet high at most, with small flowers perhaps two inches in diameter, best grown in a container and fed generously. It exhales a mild scent. ‘Nigrette’ invites fungus; while mine has not entertained mildew, it has hosted rust lavishly. The plant is definitely a novelty, an oddity.

Less an oddity was a hybrid perpetual of 1849 bred by Oudin and described as “Amaranth with blackish reflections” and as “bishop’s violet” or ‘bishop’s violet, with scarlet reflections and nuanced black violet.” Named ‘Genie de Chateaubriand’, it was a very large, double, remonant rose whose leaves were comprised of nearly always seven oval leaflets. Even the stipules were red (carmine) and ciliated with purplish bristles. It bore canes both upright and decumbent. Ellwanger mentions it in his rose list of 1914, declaring it “a bad-colored rose.” Apparently, blackness was not appreciated in roses. But that rose has long all but vanished.

Another rose, a hybrid perpetual of 1865, at its best is nearly as dark as ‘Nigrette’ but with luster and shadings of its nearly black crimson-maroon color. Certainly it is more beautiful. And it emits a strong Damask fragrance. This rose is the fabulous ‘Souvenir du Dr. Jamain’. I have two such plants, one growing on my upper hillside in sun where it is sometimes inclined to burn, and the other at the bottom of the hill beside a wall, growing in almost complete shade where it displays perfect blooms.

It was named for Dr. Jean-Alexandre Jamain, the son of a horticulturist, probably Dupuy Jamain who founded one of the oldest nurseries in Paris. As a medical doctor and later a surgeon, he was a prolific writer on medical topics. He wrote some fifty articles for the *Medical Dictionary*, a *Manual of Minor Surgery*, a longer work on the blood of the scrotum, and several other books. He died in 1862. In 1865, the famous breeder Lacharme named his new rose ‘Souvenir du Dr. Jamain’ in his honor.



## From Notes & Letters to the Editor

I just completed reading the latest issue of the *Rose Letter* and am impressed with your rose scholarship. You're a brilliant researcher and writer. I was also pleased with the illustrations for my article. Thanks so much, Darrell!!! ---Don Gers, CA

What struck me most of your latest editorship is the wonderful, professional substance it has. Most of these articles and layouts are first-rate. You get better and better. I relished the Damascus Pioneer Cemetery the most as I have been there twice. I wallowed in those memories. ---Bill Grant, CA

Just to say, I've only just opened the February issue of the *Rose Letter* —it's very beautiful—bravo! Looking forward to a great read . . . [and on the back of her envelope:] Thanking you for the historical pieces, 'Roses of Damascus' and more! ---Judy Rock, PA

The article on Centifolias is pure poetry. ---Jeri Jennings, CA

I just read my first newsletter from your group, and I was so impressed. Thank you! (There is very little discussion about heirloom roses in Indiana. Just wish we had your climate, and your no-slugs, and your no-Japanese beetles . . .) ---Judith Sylvester, IN

Thank you for your dedication, efforts, and true passion for writing articles. You inspire people to learn more about heritage roses and to try growing them in their gardens. ---Marcia Nelson, CA



Souvenir du Dr. Jamain



## **Celebration of Old Roses!**

**Sunday, May 15, 2016 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

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**Talks and demonstrations are scheduled.**

**Activities for children.**

**Children will receive a free rose plant**  
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**The Damask 'Bella Donna' as seen at Bush Pasture Park in Oregon**