

ROSE LETTER



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ROSE LETTER

The Heritage Roses Group

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The Species Rose Issue

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Understanding Rose Species	2
Bouquet of Wild Roses for a Bicentennial	4
Chinese Wilson and his Species Roses	8
A Rosa by Any Other Name	21
Women Who Bred with Rose Species	24
Joyce Demits, Obituary	27
Growing Roses from Seed	28
A Gallery of Species Roses	29
Barbara Worl, Obituary	31
<i>Rainbow: A Book Review</i>	32
The Rose on Our Cover	33

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING ROSE SPECIES



This is a special issue devoted primarily to species roses. We hope you are intrigued by its information.

The story behind species roses has an important historic place in the creation of heritage roses. Though much of that rose history remains hidden to date, knowing and understanding the influence of many of them may induce us to use them in the future. We know that most Old Garden western roses contain the genes of the *Rosas indicae*, that is, *R. chinensis* and *R. odorata*. (*Rosa gigantea* hovers in the background.) To a small degree a few earlier breeders have used the Banksiae varieties and those of *R. rugosa*, *R. laevigata* and *R. bracteata*.

In the 1970s Jack Harkness in England began breeding with *Hulthemia persica*, (erstwhile *R. berberifolia*) a maverick wild rose with simple leaves (i.e., not split into leaflets), no stipules, and yellow flowers with a large red central eye. Herb Swim in the U.S. began experimenting with *R. soulieana*. But thirty or more years have passed since any breeders followed suit; fortunately, in the last decade or so, a couple of breeders have taken on the mantle of Harkness and have been breeding with *Hulthemia persica*. But there remain scores of rose species untouched by breeders' hands. These many species offer a possible future I know I will not see in my lifetime.

What is meant by a species or wild rose? The terms are more or less interchangeable. If self-pollinated, that is, if the stamen's pollen grains of the rose are shed onto the same flower's stigma, the rose will produce an identical plant; it is how species propagate themselves.

Slight variations, given differences in climate and soil, may occur. Species are single-flowered, i.e., they produce flowers of mostly five petals, though a very few four-petaled species occur. Most species roses flower only once a year.

In written nomenclature usage, a species rose name is written in italics. By contrast, a known cultivated garden rose shows single quotation marks around the rose name; the study name of a found or mystery rose, on the other hand, shows double quotation marks around the name. *Rosa acicularis* is a wild rose; ‘Baronne Prevost’ is a known garden rose; “Angel’s Camp Tea” is a found rose whose real name has not yet been ascertained.

Those interested in species roses and their hybrids and forms should familiarize themselves with the following five variations of species names:

An unitalicized name or its abbreviation after the italicized name, *Rosa hugonis* Hemsl., for example, indicates that the botanist Hemsley was the first to publish a description of this species.

When var. follows the species name, that abbreviation refers to a variety or subspecies of that rose. *R. sericea* Lindl. var. *morrisonensis* indicates that Morrisonensis is a variety—a slightly different version—of the same species. Often today the var. is omitted.

R. x centifolia informs us that the rose is a wild hybrid, that is, this fully petaled rose is the result of a rose in the wild that had sported or otherwise created a fuller rose. The x indicates the more-than-five petaled rose has been hybridized or altered by nature.

If the letter f is included in the name, it stands for *forma*, a form of that rose; for instance, *R. brunonii* f. *plena*, is the full rather than the single form of the rose. Lay people often omit the f.

A name in single quotation marks and unitalicized following a species name indicates a cultivated rose bred from that species. *R. brunonii* ‘La Mortola’ means the generally used name is ‘La Mortola’, a rose derived from *R. brunonii*.

I hope this issue of *Rose Letter* will give readers a deeper appreciation of species roses.



Bouquet of Wild Roses for a Bicentennial Birthday

Don Gers

There are four species of *Rosa* native to Middlesex County, Concord, Massachusetts where Henry David Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817. These are *Rosas carolina*, *nitida*, *palustris* and *virginiana*. Thoreau knew them by different Latin names but in his writing called them by the common names of the time. Carolina/Virginiana he knew as the "Early Rose" for its season of bloom, and Palustris was the "Late Rose," while Nitida was known as the "Moss Rose" because in winter its canes were indistinguishable from *Rosa centifolia muscosa*, the Old Pink Moss. And there were other introduced species, the Dog Rose, Sweetbrier and *R. multiflora*.



Rosas carolina and *virginiana* bloom together at the beginning of the rose season and are not easily distinguishable at a glance. Each must be scrutinized closely for those features separating them. Details like wider stipules, glossy leaves and stouter prickles,

along with wetter habitat, favor a Virginia identification while Carolina strays to higher, dryer ground with needlelike prickles, duller leaf surface and narrow stipules at the base of each leaf.

Thoreau likely encountered Early roses at the edge of woodlands and on hill slopes such as are found around Walden or Flint's pond. At age twenty, he spent his graduation summer at Flint's pond sharing a shanty he likely built together with Charles Stearns Wheeler, his best friend and Harvard College roommate.

He wrote in his journal, "Me thinks roses oftenest display their high colors, colors which invariably attract all eyes and betray them, against a dark ground, as the dark green or the shady recesses of the bushes and copses, where they show to best advantage...their buds are most beautiful. They promise of perfect and dazzling beauty...beauty which they can hardly contain—as in most youths.... The season when wild roses are in bloom should have some preeminence...."

Thoreau's friend Wheeler suddenly died in 1843 while studying in Germany. And just a year earlier Thoreau lost his dear brother John.

But now entering his life was Edward Sherman Hoar to share Thoreau's walks and interest in botany. Hoar was an intrepid youth. Just four years earlier he ran off to California with another boy named Worthington. Worthless in the eyes of Hoar's disapproving parents. It was a daring escapade for a sixteen year old; traveling to California in 1839 was certainly no easy jaunt. But unfortunately it didn't work out, and Edward returned alone to his family and home in Concord. (Been there, done that, except I stayed in California and he went back home to Ohio).

Thoreau and Edward Hoar set off on a river trip by boat.

Surveying the riverbanks they likely saw the wild Moss rose, *Rosa nitida*. Also known as the Shining Rose for its glossy leaves, that and red prickles to the very



R. Nitida

cane tips readily identify it. Another time, on the bank of the Sudbury river overlooking a secluded and popular swimming hole known as Hubbard's Bathing Place, Thoreau observed the "bristly reddish stems" of *Nitida* and also noted the pleasing flesh color of the boys swimming below.

Now Thoreau was looking for a place to "live deliberately" and quietly away from the crowded boarding house his mother ran.

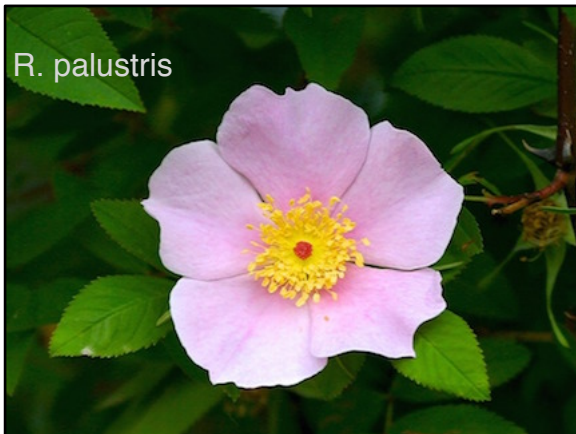
Remembering the happy time he had with Wheeler at Flint's pond, he asked permission of the owner to build a cabin but was refused. Very disappointed, Thoreau got revenge spearing farmer Flint with his pen in the pages of his book *Walden*.

The siren call of California drew Edward Hoar back again.

Thoreau wrote in his journal, nature is nothing without a friend. But his was not an easy friendship and few succeeded. He was attracted to the marginal, so-called ne'er-do-wells, and Ellery Channing was undoubtedly the most notorious of the lot. Channing abandoned his wife and family, wandering from New York to Europe. The Transcendentalist, Amos Bronson Alcott once said, "Whim, thy name is Channing." Eventually returning to Concord, he moved alone into a house across the street from the Thoreau boarding house. He quickly became an intimate friend of Thoreau and begged Thoreau to move in with him. They shared common interests in poetry and nature and explored the local waterways on what Thoreau called "fluvial walks." "I wonder if any Roman emperor ever indulged in such a luxury as this—of walking up and down a river in torrid weather with only a hat to

shade the head," he wrote. "What were the baths of Caracalla to this?"

The riverbanks and adjacent swamps were the habitat of *Rosa palustris*, the Late Rose of Thoreau. "The late, or river, rose spots the corpses over the water—a



great ornament to the rivers brink now." *Rosa palustris* is a species admirably adapted to its water world. The bright red hips last on the bush all winter. One February on a windy day when sprays of water froze to plant stems along the shore he saw " corymbs of the late rose hips...completely encased in an icicle...their bright scarlet reflected through the ice in an exaggerated manner." Later with the coming of spring thaw he floated in his boat over flooded meadows where he saw the bright red hips still attached to the bushes underwater. But it's at this time the hips begin to disintegrate and release their tiny seeds to float on the floodwaters far and wide, a unique seed dispersal stratagem like coconuts spreading to other islands over the ocean.

Thoreau's nature companions, like his native roses, could be prickly and charming, too. But mattering most, they were authentic and graced his path like the wild roses he loved.

IMAGE CREDITS

Courtesy Arnold Arboretum: page 8

Cass Bernstein: pages 15 and 30H

Raymond Booth, artist: page 26

Curtis's Botanical Magazine 1916: p. 2 and from 1913: p.13

Andre Eve: page 12

Alice Flores: page 27

Don Gers: pages 21, 23, and 30D

Bill Grant: pages 2 (top & bottom) and p. 29A

Malcolm Manners: page 6

Darrell Schramm: pages 5, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18?, 24, 25, 29B,
30C, 30E, 30F, and 30G

Sally & Andy Warsowski: page 22

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CHINESE WILSON AND HIS SPECIES ROSES

Darrell g.h. Schramm

He was a remarkable man. Ardent, bold, curious, determined, enthusiastic, Ernest H. Wilson proved himself an adventurous and spirited plantsman and explorer, introducing to the West hundreds of plants from Asia, including about two dozen species roses. “There are no happier folk than plant lovers,” he wrote, “and none more generous than those that garden.” Referred to as E. H. Wilson or even Chinese Wilson by those knowledgeable of his work, he now seems nearly forgotten. Yet plants were named for him, such as *Rhododendron wilsonii*, *Rosa sinowilsonii*, and *R. x involuta wilsonii*, ensuring that his name and contributions to horticulture live on.

Born in the Cotswold town of Chipping Camden in 1876, he became early interested in plants, working first as an apprentice gardener, then at the Birmingham Botanic Gardens; by 1897 he was employed at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. When the nursery firm of Veitch & Sons offered him a position as plant collector in China, he accepted, and in June 1899 he found himself in Hong Kong. Moving on, he headquartered himself in Ichang from which he explored the countryside for nearly three years and sent to England numerous plants,

not least *Davidia involucrata*, the lovely Dove Tree, and *Actinidia deliciosa*, the kiwi fruit (not native to New Zealand as is generally assumed).

In China he came across *R. hugonis* on a narrow arm of the Min Valley, a rose recently sent to England in 1899 by Father Hugo Scallon, the only non-fading yellow rose Wilson saw there. (It produces black hips that drop early.) In 1900 he collected *R. helenae*, which was not introduced until 1907. In 1901 he re-introduced Maurice de Vilmorin's 1895 *R. setipoda*, a purplish-rose species with whitish centers, distinctive for its gland-tipped bristles on long pedicels and its numerous foliaceous bracts.



Wilson also re-introduced *R. chinensis spontanea*, which Augustine Henry saw first in 1884 but beyond a description in 1902 had not submitted a plant specimen. Wilson collected specimens of its fruits but seems not to have observed it in flower. Not until 1983 was it seen in flower by Mikinori Ogisu. The variable habit of this rose can display itself as a climber or as an arching, rambling shrub, with light pink, buff or cream-colored flowers, the pink darkening to strong red with age. In some specimens the plant produces only three leaflets to a leaf, in others both three and five. Its prickles are

red to brown and recurved, its leaves distinctly serrate, its sepals on the inner surface dressed in silky hairs. *R. chinensis spontanea* appears to prefer banks of rivers and rocky slopes of shale and limestone. It blooms from March into May.

Wilson returned to England in 1902. The Veitch nursery, however, excited by his finds, sponsored him on another journey to China the following year. In June 1903, on a plateau of Mr. Wa Shan at 8,500 feet, he encountered “a mass of lovely white.” Thriving among rhododendron, honeysuckle, and primroses, was *R. sericea* (meaning silky rose). This seems to have been the same form of the rose he came upon four months later on sacred Mt. Omei at 11,000 feet, dispersed among rhododendron, spirea, dwarf bamboo, willow, barberry, and birch. It

was “common on the windswept mountain sides.” Wilson sent seeds of the plant to Veitch (and again in 1910 to the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard, having also seen it near the summit of Mt. Wan-Tiao Shan). It was named *R. omeiensis* f. *pteracantha*. Today it is called *R. sericea* var. *pteracantha*.

It is only fair to add that Wilson was not the first Westerner to discover this rose. French missionary Delavay had sent seeds of it to Maurice de Vilmorin in 1890. Incidentally, the huge wing-like, wine-red prickles are a random trait of the plant. Aside from the large prickles, the distinctive feature of this rose is its flowers, usually of only four petals. *Usually* is the key word here, as botanist H. L. Bean pointed out. In 1992 Miriam Wilkins in El Cerrito, California, counted seven petals on the first bloom of her *R. sericea*.

In July of 1903 at the extreme western part of Sichuan, Wilson came across the intensely dark red *R. moyesii*. A common species in mountain thickets, the plant’s flowers vary in color. Vilmorin had described it in 1894, calling it *R. macrophylla* var. *rubrostaminen*—*rubro* referring to red, and dark red is the way most knowledgeable people think of the blossom. But Wilson also chanced across a “pink to rose”

form, *R. moyesii* var. *rosea*, “very distinct from the type,” also known as *R. moyesii fargesii*. The leaves are also larger than those of the red. In fact, when grown from seed, the flowers most often are pink. A shrub six to ten feet in height, it grows abundantly in thickets and on the edges of woods. It was named for Reverend J. Moyes, a missionary in Western China. The cultivated roses ‘Geranium’ (red) and



‘Highdownensis’ (vivid pink) are *R. moyesii* seedlings. The Spanish breeder Pedro Dot used *Moyesii* to breed his famous rose ‘Nevada’.

Somewhat similar in form to *R. moyesii* is *R. sweginzowii*, which Wilson introduced to England that same year. Triangular prickles mix with bristles on the stems, though occasionally some canes are “thornless.” (That calls to mind that wonderful lilac-pink Bourbon rose ‘Charles Lawson’, which also often exhibits both “thornless” and prickled canes on the same bush.) The bright pink flowers with cream-colored stamens are small, two inches in diameter or less, growing solitary, in twos or threes, at times in clusters of about six. Leaflets range from seven to eleven, the foliage similar—according to Wilson—to that of *R. moyesii*. An attractively ostentatious plant, *R. sweginzowii* can form an eight to ten foot impenetrable hedge. Wilson found this species “closely related to *R. setipoda*” and probably merely a geographical variation of the latter.

Rosa prattii, which Wilson found in 1903, is a rose he saw repeatedly during his several expeditions to China. Commonly found in thickets of western Sichuan, four to eight feet high, it grows at altitudes of 7,000 to 11,000 feet. Like so many species, “this pretty little rose” is pink and produces very small leaves. Wilson surmised it to be “a distinct variety.” First found by A. E. Pratt, it was introduced by Wilson.

Another distinct species he observed in July 1903 and both July and October 1904 on this second Veitch expedition is *R. murielae*. Although the rose is usually pink, those found along the borders of China and Tibet generate white flowers and grey-green leaves. Closely related to *R. davidii* (see page 2 for an image), it is a much branched plant bearing clusters in corymbs. Wilson observed *R. murielae* also in 1908 and 1910 during his treks for the Arnold Arboretum. He named it for his daughter.

On Mt. Omei in 1904, Wilson discovered a species closely related to *R. longicuspis* (1861), namely *R. sinowilsonii*. With its large shiny



leaves, sometimes a foot long, it produces huge self-made bouquets of large white flowers whose petals on the reverse are quite silky. It has been known to climb 45 feet high. A gigantic sample of this species thrives rampantly at my favorite English garden, Hinton Ampner. To put it mildly, the species in bloom makes a spectacular display. A seedling of this rose introduced in 1950 was named ‘Wedding Day’, a huge climber with small leaves and single white flowers huddled in close clusters.

From late 1906 to 1909, financed by Harvard’s Arnold Arboretum, Wilson again scoured China for plants. Roses he had seen and collected in 1900 and 1901, such as *R. gentiliana*, *R. helenae*, *R. giraldii* var. *venulosa*, and *R. sertata*, he introduced in 1907 or shortly thereafter. (Roses grown from seed generally take at least three years to grow [but see page 28]; furthermore, a rose is not considered introduced until a detailed description of it has been published.)

Wilson’s *R. gentiliana* is not the same as Léveillé & Vaniot’s *R. gentiliana*; today Wilson’s discovery is considered a synonym of *R. henryi*. Often seen as tangled masses in rocky places, the plant’s glabrous shoots age to a pale grey, rather like the underside grey of its shiny green leaves. The white flowers of this climbing shrub exhibit a large boss of golden yellow and exude a strong but pleasant fragrance. It is very sensitive to frost.

Rosa helenae was named for E. H. Wilson’s wife, who died with him in a car accident in 1930. This is another white, scented species rose exhibiting large clusters on very prickly stems. Found from Shensi province, south through eastern Sichuan and



western Hupeh, its tangled proliferation grows along wayside thickets and stream-side masses, and rambles vigorously over small trees at the edges of woods. When he first saw this musk rose, Wilson wrote that it “filled the air with its soft fragrance.” The seeds collected in 1907 flowered at the Arnold Arboretum in 1913, proving the species “perfectly hardy.” *R. helenae* is closely related to the Himalayan *R. brunonii* and a parent of the 1930 Danish rose ‘Lykkefund’, which I also witnessed as a tree-climbing marvel at Hinton Ampner.

Wilson chanced across two varieties of *R. giraldii*, which Belgian botanist Francois Crepin had described in 1897, the year G. Giraldi had discovered it in Shensi province of China. The *glabruiscula* form shows

small, rosy-pink flowers and glabrous leaves; the *venulosa* form is differentiated from the principle variety and the latter by its distinctive reticulation—a network of veins—on the underside of its leaves. The flowers are pink. According to Jack Harkness, given its decumbent canes, it is “a bush pretending to be a weeping willow.”



Like a number of the roses already mentioned, *R. sertata* is a species Wilson met with several times, from 1901 to 1910 during his four trips to China. Pink or rose in color, its petals are emarginate (a notch in the petals). The flowers bloom in small clusters, and the reddish canes boast a few straight

prickles. Upright and arching, this China rose may be an extreme form of *R. webbiana* found in Tibet, Afghanistan, and the Himalayas.

Wilson’s explorations had other consequences than the discovery of plants new to the West and their introduction. One story alone is exemplary of this adventurous and courageous man. Because the Chinese at that time viewed a man in a sedan chair as a superior human

being, Wilson was astute enough to have one brought on his several treks. Too energetic to make much use of it, in 1907 while collecting the Regal Lily which he subsequently introduced and named, he allowed himself to be carried in the chair as he and his helpers proceeded single file along a narrow ledge above a precipice. Suddenly rocks began crashing down from above. Wilson jumped from the sedan chair a second before a huge boulder crushed and sent it into the gorge. Wilson's right leg was fractured in two places. Using his camera tripod, he and a guide made splints. But before they could do more, a mule caravan approached on the narrow trail. While his men pressed themselves against the wall of the cliff, Wilson lay prone as 40 sure-footed mules stepped over him and continued on their way. They did not so much as brush against his clothing.

Three days later the exploration group reached a Presbyterian mission. By then Wilson's leg was infected, and he was seriously ill. A full year passed before he could walk unhampered again.

This remarkable plantsman often came across *R. multiflora* and its varieties. He noted that frequently it grew in the same areas as *R. moschata* and *R. banksiae lutea*, that is, on crags and cliffs of canyons and glens as well as along rivers and streams. In 1908 in western Sichuan and Hupeh, he saw several garden varieties of *R. multiflora* var. *carnea* f. *platyphylla*, a long name for the double, cultivated rose known in the West as 'Seven Sisters'. The well-known 'Turner's Crimson Rambler' sent from Japan in 1878 "was doubtless introduced from China to Japan" and appeared to Wilson to be a form of 'Seven Sisters'. *R. multiflora* var. *cathayensis*, "always pink," grew commonly everywhere beside streams. The canes are often prostrate, though sometimes erect. The leaves and leaflets vary considerably in size and shape. Wilson believed it to be a parent of the double *carnea* form, which Thomas Evans had sent from China to England in 1804.

Three times in 1908 Wilson chanced across *R. davidii* var. *elongata* growing its rose-pink flowers among thickets at elevations over 6000 feet. It differs from the main type *R. davidii* Crep. by producing fewer blossoms, and larger and more elongated hips of scarlet or orange-red, and generally larger leaves. It appears closely related to *R. macrophylla* of the western Himalayas.



The white *R. filipes* rarely ornaments gardens today. Its size alone is a daunting factor. Its fragrant flowers grow in huge clustered cymes and panicles on canes able to climb over fifty feet high and 100 feet wide. The long, lanceolate leaves exhibit glands underneath. A rather famous sport of *R. filipes* was discovered in England at Kiftsgate Court, Gloucestershire, and was introduced in 1954 by botanist, environmental activist, and nurserywoman Hilda Murrell—who was abducted and murdered in 1984 just prior to presenting an anti-nuclear paper on radioactive waste management. In 2003 ‘Kiftsgate’ had grown 85 feet into a copper beech tree at the estate where its seedling was first found. According to Wilson, this species has “a rather local distribution” in western Sichuan though it is rather common in the dry regions.

Not to be overlooked is *R. soulieana*, which Wilson encountered in the summer of 1908, quite abundant in arid river valleys across the China-Tibet border. There on the borderland, “many kinds of roses occure [*sic*],” he wrote, “but often the species are local.” *R. soulieana* was the most common, its fragrant sulphur-yellow flowers fading to white, its branches of grey-green foliage tall and arching. Wilson also saw it growing in profusion in the “Wokji” area of Tibet. (I think he meant the Rewoqê [also Rewochê, pronounced “re-WOE-chay”] region bordering China.) He had seen the rose also earlier in his 1904 Veitch expedition, then saw it again in August of 1910 in the valley of the

Yalung River. Botanist W. J. Bean claimed it was “one of the most robust of all roses.” ‘Kew Rambler’ is a hybrid of *R. soulieana*.



Similarly, *R. willmottiae* flourishes in the drier riparian areas of western Sichuan; however, it has also been found in Yunnan province. A tall, somewhat spindly yet elegant bush with stiletto-like prickles, its springtime dress is of flowers in lilac-pink or

mauve, mostly solitary, pinned along the sleeves of branches. The stamens display a cream color. The prickles when young are reddish, when mature the color of straw. Smooth, ovoid hips late in the year decorate the plant in orangish red. The species seems to prefer stream sides and river banks. Its various traits bear a strong likeness to the American *R. gymnocarpa*. Wilson, who introduced it in 1904 and again in 1910, thought it “a very pleasing plant” and named it for horticulturist Ellen Willmott who helped finance one of his expeditions.

In dense growth of shrubbery and woodlands, along roadsides, on Mt. Omei, and on the banks of the Yangtze, Wilson in each of his Chinese expeditions to the Hupeh and eastern Sichuan provinces witnessed the common *R. rubus*. Though Augustine Henry had discovered it first in 1886, that of Wilson tended to vary in form. A climber from eight to 25 feet, it produces “densely hairy shoots and leaves,” fragrant white flowers, and dark scarlet hips. Called by some the “Blackberry Rose,” it is a kind of musk (*R. moschata*). *R. mulliganii* seems also closely related.

From the high mountains of northwestern Hupeh comes the rather distinct, uncommon species *R. caudata*. A smaller rambler compared to many of the other Chinese wild roses, its flowers and leaves vary in size, the flowers rose-red growing in convex corymbs, the hips red-orange, the canes rather sparsely punctuated with straight prickles

wide at the base. The sepals are tail-shaped, whence its Latin name (*cauda* = tail or tail end). Wilson sent seeds of the rose to the Arnold Arboretum during his exploration of 1907-08.

Also from the Hupeh province and from Shensi, *R. corymbulosa* is a species Wilson introduced in 1907. Nearly spineless, it puts forth small, deep lilac-pink blossoms that are paler near the center and leaves that are glaucous and downy underneath until autumn when they become wine-purple. The canes are smooth, the stipules and receptacles are glandular, the latter turning coral-red as hips. Jack Harkness classified it as a true *R. cinnamomea*, and related to *R. davidii*. The Latin name refers, of course, to the flat-topped cluster of flowers whose pedicels each emerge from various points of the peduncle or main stem, an arrangement known as a corymb.

Related to *R. longicuspis* is *R. glomerata*, which Wilson found growing among underbrush of the Tung River Valley of western Sichuan in 1908 and again in 1910. Its name refers to its round flower

heads. The large leaflets show strongly reticulate veins. The densely packed corymbs of fragrant white flowers sit on short peduncles. Like *R. helenae* and *R. filipes*, this unrestrained species belongs in the taxonomy section of Synstylae (its styles protruding and fused into a column). After other Synstylae species have spent their bloom, *R. glomerata* sends out its flowers in late June or even July.



R. roxburghii plena

Rosa roxburghii var. *plena*, the one with the full, mottled pink flowers, seems to be an ancient garden variety. It is not a species rose but was named as such at first by

Western botanists. In the Calcutta Botanic Gardens of the English, it thrived as early as 1814 and was eventually sent to England around 1820. But it was Wilson who discovered the actual species, now named

R. roxburghii f. *normalis*. He had observed it as early as 1903 and saw it again and again in his several Chinese expeditions. The bush grew abundantly along trails and roads in semi-arid riparian places of western Sichuan. Like the thickly double variety, the single species bears seed purses that imitate the husks of chestnuts. Unlike other roses, its bark is flaky, and its number of leaflets may be as many as fifteen “arranged in a brushed and combed style,” writes Harkness, “not easily forgotten.” Either form becomes a decoration in the garden.



But for brief intervals in England and the U. S., by the end of 1910, Wilson had spent nearly eleven years in China. That year in the Red Basin regions of north-central Sichuan, he several times came across *R. indica*, the Tea rose. The first he saw were “spontaneous plants . . . in fruit” above a ravine along cliff tops in “a rocky defile.” He continued to find these shrubs commonly on waysides, streamsides, and cliffs, but also in drier areas where trees were scarce but where *abelia*, privet, honeysuckle, and spirea grew and beyond Songpan above 3000 feet. These varied locations suggest the versatility and durance of Tea roses.

The flowers that Wilson identified as *R. odorata* var. *gigantea* “vary from white to yellow or pale buff or to pale pink.” In thickets and woodland edges, the plants become tall, rampant climbers, while on open plateaus they become arching bushes about six feet high. Wilson predicted in 1917 that *odorata*’s yellow and buff-colored forms would become the most valuable “in the evolution of yellow roses.” The flowers of *R. odorata* var. *gigantea* f. *erubescens*, produces smaller, pale pink flowers. Wilson also came across cultivated forms of semi-double and double flowers in western Yunnan. There, forms were of white, pastel

yellow, blush, or combinations of those colors, apparently not unlike so many cultivated Tea roses today.

In the northwest mountains of Shansi province, Wilson found *R. bella*, a low-growing, dense and compact plant of two and a half to four feet. Though in *Plantae Wilsoniana* he describes the flower color as pale rose, in the *American Rose Annual 1916* after it bloomed under cultivation in 1915, he describes it as “a blaze of rich red flowers.” The species seems to be related to *R. webbiana*.

Rosa multibracteata, an “odd-looking species,” according to Wilson’s observations, seemed limited to the upper stretches of the Min Valley and the Tung Valley near the China-Tibet border. Telltale of this “pretty pink” rose are the many crowded bracts (those small, pale green modified leaflets beneath the flowers) and the numerous, small leaflets on twiggy stems. Harkness described these dainty roses as “small stars of pink with yellow stamens.” They appear both solitary and in terminal clusters. Their hips are orange-red. A late bloomer, the plant grows into a pleasingly rounded shrub about six feet high and about twice as wide.

Certainly *R. multibracteata* is a useful shrub. As a parent, it has given birth to ‘Cerise Bouquet’, a still popular Kordes rose. Among its other descendants we find the famed ‘Tropicana’, and ‘Sheila’s Perfume’, ‘Sexy Remy’, ‘Marilyn Monroe’, ‘Firefighter’, ‘Fourth of July’, ‘All That Jazz’, ‘Aloha’, and ‘Alexander’, the latter by Harkness, widely popular abroad.

During these years of plant exploration, Wilson sent or brought back to England and the United States hundreds of bulbs, corms, rhizomes, tubers, more than 900 dried specimens, 300-plus plant seeds, and more than 1000 camera images. His favorite find, his personal triumph, was the Regal Lily. Wilson asserted that central Chinese flora was more closely akin to the flora of the Atlantic United States than to Europe. Nonetheless, he enormously enriched the botany and horticulture of both.

In between and after his sojourns, Wilson wrote articles, a monograph, and at least four books. On the death of C. S. Sargent in 1927, Wilson became the director of the Arnold Arboretum. Before Wilson’s untimely death at age 54, he had written that “a congenial

companion doubles the pleasure and halves the discomfort of travel and so it is with the brotherhood who loves plants.” And among them, perhaps, none more so than those who love antique and species roses. Yet, like Wilson, these lovers of old garden roses favor a landscape or garden with a variety of plants—iris, lilies, larkspur, rosemary, trees—glad or even excited to see how roses harmonize or highlight and define the garden as a whole.

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A Rosa by Any Other Name ...

Don Gers

... could now be reduced to anonymous synonymity. Probably, like me, you're not pleased when botanical names are changed. This often happens with new publications, and now a major treatment of Rosa in North America by authors Walter H. Lewis, Barbara Ertter and Anne Bruneau was just published in Volume 9 of *Flora of North America North of Mexico* series in 2014. Using new tools of research they've brought into sharper focus the genetic composition and ancestral relationships of North American Rosa.

As stated in the introductory pages, "The Flora includes accepted names, selected synonyms, literature citations, identification keys, descriptions, phenological information, summaries of habitats and geographic ranges, and other biological observations." And a fine job they've done of it, too.

Thirty-three species are recognized, nineteen native and fourteen introduced. We're familiar with most of them; the change happens at levels below species.

But thanks to this publication I was able to identify a delightful

but misnamed *Rosa* growing in the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in an article I wrote for *Gold Coast Roses*, January 2016. It's the only native North American rose with white flowers, *Rosa foliolosa* Nuttall. The deep red flowered "*R. foliolosa*" common in the trade I believe is a *R. palustris* hybrid because it has curled stipules and sharply pointed leaflets while *foliolosa* Nuttall stipules are flat and its leaflets are rounded at the tips.



In the *FNA*, the entries for *Rosas carolina* and *virginiana* illustrate some of the changes wrought by recent research. *Rosa carolina* spans the U. S. from Canada to Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Great Plains while *R. virginiana* is along the coastal northeastern U. S. The authors' DNA studies show both these genetically complex tetraploid roses have evolved from genetically simpler eastern North America diploid species and not once but multiple times: *Rosa virginiana* from *Rosas nitida* and *palustris*, and *Rosa carolina* from *Rosas blanda* and *palustris*.

In the region from New Jersey to Massachusetts, hybrids of Virginia with Carolina are found, and Lewis has named these *R. X novae-angliae*, the New England rose. Morphologically they're a blend of both parent species.

But Carolina with a greater range also shows geographic variation. Once these were recognized as varieties, but now they're called subspecies, saving variety for scattered populations within the geographic groups. *Rosa carolina* has three subspecies: *carolina*, *mexicoensis* and *subserrulata*.

Rosa carolina subsp. *subserrulata* is commonly found west of the Mississippi, from Texas to Missouri. Years ago Virginia Hopper shared with me a curious little rose she was given from Missouri. She called it "Pearl's Little Missouri Rose." I eventually identified it as *Rosa rudiuscula* Greene. I've also determined the Latin epithet *Rosa rudiuscula* means



"Ruddy Little Rose" for its short height and green leaves extensively splotted with red. The name was possibly proposed by amateur botanist Benjamin Franklin Bush who found the rose in 1896 on the Little Blue River in Jackson County, Missouri. But it was

described and published by Edward L. Greene in 1911, hence the botanical name *Rosa rudiuscula* Greene.

The thirty-eight-year-old Bush was a self-taught amateur botanist who already had published a Flora of Jackson County, Missouri, where he lived. Now he was co-collecting and traveling all over Missouri with a young nineteen-year-old protege named Kenneth Kent Mackenzie. Mackenzie was a precocious young man. He received a law degree in Kansas City when only twelve years old and under Bush's tutelage went on to become a preeminent amateur botanist himself. Bush named *Rosa Mackenzii* Bush for his friend.



By coincidence *subserrulata* Rydberg was also found by B. F. Bush in 1899 on Blue Creek in Taney County, Missouri, further south. Lewis has determined both *rudiuscula* and *subserrulata* are the same. But why he passes over the 1911 name *rudiuscula* for the 1918 name *subserrulata* mystifies me. In botanical nomenclature, priority rules. *Subserrulata* is a clunky name; *rudiuscula* is musical and best describes the rose, too.

Botanists are like preachers. You're free to choose whose light and faith to follow. It's still OK to call a rose by a name now reduced to synonymy as long as you also include the author's name. But to assuage any ruffled feathers, you might include the latest name as "aka" so's to show you're not ignorant.

Volume 9 of *Flora of North America* is available in print and online. The *Rosa* section begins on page 75 to 119.



What follows are two excerpts on women who used species roses in their hybridizing, taken from my much longer article “The Female Few.”

WOMEN WHO BRED WITH ROSE SPECIES

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Two women have been prominent in breeding new roses from rose species. **Isabella Preston** was English-born in 1881. When about 30 years old, she immigrated to Ontario, Canada, and four years later in 1916 she made a reputation for herself as the first professional female hybridist of Canada. Joining the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa in 1920, she became the head of ornamental plant breeding and research. Though women were not much favored in this work, her supervisor clearly recognized her abilities and created a position for her as Specialist in Ornamental Horticulture. In this position she originated many hybrid plants, including roses.

Preston sought to breed roses that could endure Canadian winters, Climbers and Hybrid Teas that also would keep their color in hot, dry Canadian summers. The hardy, unflappable *Rosa rugosa* was

one of her cross-breeding preferences.

Among her approximately thirty different roses, a number were named for First Nation peoples: ‘Agassiz’, ‘Algonquin’, ‘Caribou’, ‘Chippewa’, ‘Conestoga’, ‘Cree’, ‘Huron’, ‘Iroquois’, ‘Micmac’, ‘Mohawk’ and ‘Nascopee’, but others were given somewhat more conventional names like ‘Langford’, ‘Millicent’, ‘Patricia Macoun’, ‘Silvander’, etc.

At least five of her roses, though no longer sold, can be found in gardens: ‘Longford’ at Sangerhausen, Germany, and ‘Langford’ in the Oberland Rose Garden of Thuringia, Germany; ‘Ardella’ grows in the Devonian Botanic Garden at the University of Alberta, in the public rose garden of the Central Experimental Station, Ontario, and in L’Assomption public gardens of

Quebec; ‘Conestoga’ can be found in Brooks Rose Garden of Alberta, and ‘Mohawk’, a low-growing hybrid of *R. rugosa* and *R. rubrifolia* is still in a Quebec garden and in a Stanwood, Washington garden.

Fortunately ‘Carmenetta’, a light pink *R. glauca* hybrid, and ‘Patricia Macoun’, a white rambler of 1945 named for the wife or other relation of Preston’s supervisor W.T. Macoun, are both still commercially available.



Isabella Preston died in 1965.

...

Perhaps the most enduring name among women hybridists is Dr. **Felicita Svejda**. Not only did she breed many hardy roses and other plants, but she also developed the insect-resistant rose Germplasm L83. Born in 1920 in Austria, Svejda earned her PhD at the University for Agriculture and Forestry in 1948. For one year she worked at a Plant Breeding Research Station in Sweden but a year later moved to

Canada in 1953. Employed first as a statistician at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm, she transferred to the Genetics and Plant Breeding Institute in 1961, becoming chief of the rose breeding program. The program, which had been suspended after the death of Isabella Preston was now resuscitated under Svejda's directorship.



Here Felicitas Svejda created the Explorer Series of winter hardy roses, about 25 of which were named for early Canadian explorers. Aiming to create durable, everblooming roses, she crossed hardy Hybrid Teas and shrubs with *Rosa acicularis* (the Arctic Rose), *R. rugosa*, and *R. kordesii*, and sometimes a few other species as well. Many of the *R. kordesii* crosses function well as Climbers and pillar roses and are particularly hardy in Canada, Scandanavia, Iceland, and Russia.

At least 26 of her nearly fifty roses are still available. Pink 'John Davis', rose-colored 'William Baffin', primrose-hued 'J.P. Connell', and crimson 'Champlain' are all shrubs. The rose-colored 'Charles Albanal', the cerise 'David Thompson', the white 'Henry Hudson', the pink 'Jens Munk', and the paler pink 'Martin Frobisher' are all Hybrid Rugosas, the first and the last named exuding a strong perfume. 'Henry Kelsey' and 'John Cabot' are Climbers. And while the mauve 'Alexander McKenzie' is called a modern shrub, it can grow fourteen feet high and even wider—it's a huge plant. Some of the roses released after Dr. Svejda's retirement are named after Canadian artists.

Using cuttings from her original roses, an Explorer Rose Garden was inaugurated in Ottawa in 2005; two years later an Explorer Rose Garden was established at Government House in Victoria, British Columbia. If we consider cold hardiness, vigor, disease resistance, and abundant blooms, Svejda's roses are among the best and most enduring modern roses today. Dr. Svejda died on January 18, 2016.

JOYCE DEMITS, OBITUARY

I first met Joyce briefly at the Celebration of Old Roses in El Cerrito in 2011 or 2012. I met her more formally again in June 2013 at an HRG Rose Symposium organized by Alice Flores, held in Ft. Bragg, both in town and on Joyce's property. Was it a year later when she opened her garden to Old Rose lovers, asking them to take cuttings so that those roses would not be lost? I was among the dozen or so people taking cuttings for preservation. What a generous soul!



For more than forty years Joyce and her sister Virginia Hopper scoured the countryside of Northern California, especially Mendocino County, searching for and finding abandoned known or mystery roses, some of which they were able to identify. According to Gregg Lowery, it was their efforts that brought mystery roses to the awareness of many Californian rosarians. "Their attention," he wrote, "to provenance, recording, and publishing where their roses came from was groundbreaking." The sisters founded Heritage Rose Gardens nursery, then went on to establish the old rose garden section of the Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden in Ft. Bragg. When the sisters' joint business venture ended, Joyce opened Tanglewood Farms to continue selling old and mystery roses. Joyce was an early member of the Heritage Rose Group. She died, following a stroke, on July 25, 2017.

The Editor

Growing Roses From Seed

Michael Tallman

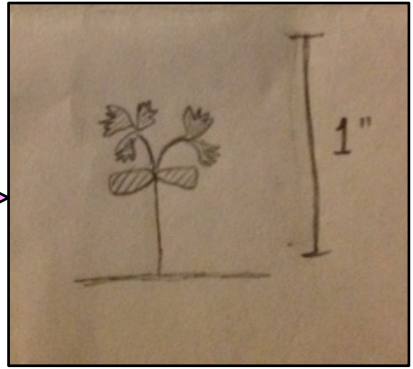
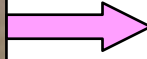
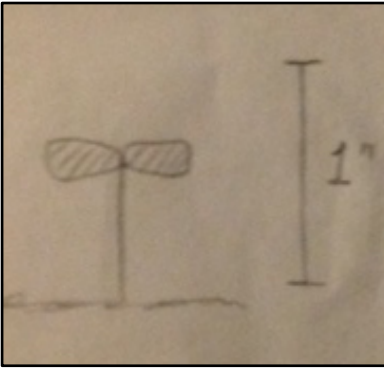
Why grow roses from seed? In the case of rare species roses, that may be the only way to get a plant: order a packet of seeds. Anyway, it's just plain fun to start seeds of other roses and see what you get. I'm always on the lookout for that rare hip from a bush that seldom sets any. What amazing progeny could come of those seeds? I'm reminded of the Rev. Pemberton who waited thirty years for a rare hip on a rose bush, the seedlings of which gave the world a new line of hybrids. [The so-called Hybrid Musks—Ed.]

Harvest the hips in late summer or fall when ripe. Most rose seeds are coated with a water repellent wax. This is slowly worn down by nature and is nature's way of ensuring all the seeds don't sprout at once, if it be an unfavorable year. But for us, we want them to sprout, so rub the seeds under your shoe or palm onto a rough concrete surface to wear the waxy coating off. This also simulates the abrasion as the seeds pass through a bird's gravel-filled gizzard. Don't worry about hurting the seeds--they are as hard as rocks.

It has been found beneficial to have the seeds go through a winter or stratification. So sow in pots of good soil and keep outdoors for the rainy season. If the rains are scant, be sure to hand water between them. Hopefully in spring you will see your results. Do cover the pots with screen. Hungry mice will dig up the seeds and eat them. In spring, keep the screens on, as young rose seedlings are devoured by snails and slugs, earwigs and other pests. Even birds can attack. The Golden Crown sparrow, a winter resident, is a vegetation eater, snipping off all kinds of young succulent grasses and seedlings at ground level. I suspect the Brown Towhee is another culprit.

To differentiate from weeds, the young rose seedlings will look somewhat like this (first drawing):

(continued on next page)



and (second drawing) showing first true leaves.

They may be separated and potted up after several sets of true leaves have formed.

Once I decided to harvest hips of the variegated *R. wichurana* just to see what the seedlings looked like. Of the hundred or so that came up, two or three started showing variegation on the first true leaves.

Another time I found a couple hips on the sterile *R. odorata* rootstock. One seedling came up and was raised to flowering size. But it had not the vigor of its parent, nor much of a flower. "The best laid plans of mice and men" often give nothing of value. However, your babies will be your babies and you may take pride in them as any parent would. Happy germinating!

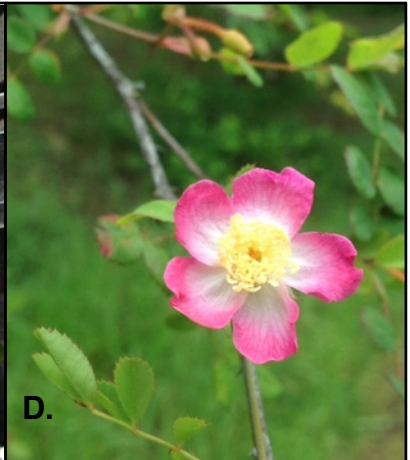
A GALLERY OF SPECIES ROSES



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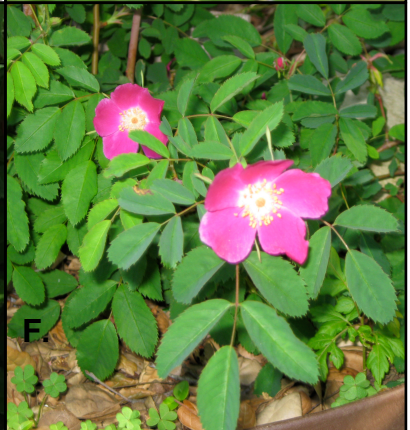
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H.

A. *R. cinnamomea* **B.** *R. clinophylla* **C.** *R. forrestiana*
D. *R. gymnocarpa* **E.** *R. longicuspis* **F.** *R. pendulina*
G. *R. sericea/omniensis* hips **H.** *R. sweginzowii* hips



BARBARA WORL, OBITUARY

Barbara Worl died on September 12th of this year. A Quaker, a gardener, a photographer, a publisher, and an Old Rose lover, she hailed from Indiana shortly after WWII, settling in Menlo Park, California. Having graduated

from Stanford University, she began working at Bell's Bookstore where she developed its garden section, soon establishing Sweetbriar Press. She published *A Portfolio of Rose Hips: 12 Watercolors by Jessie Chizu-Baer*, re-issued Henry Curtis's *Beauties of the Rose*, and printed postcards, calendars, and photographs.

Barbara was among the early founders of the Heritage Roses Group. The second Celebration of Old Roses (in 1979) took place not in El Cerrito but in Barbara's garden on Cowper Street and in the church across the street. Old Rose authority Leonie Bell was one of the guest speakers. The Heritage Rose Group, Bay Area chapter, often met in her garden among the roses to plan the Celebration.

Over the years, Barbara created three different gardens, lush with roses but other plants as well. Shunning formality in favor of simplicity, her not-so-tidy gardens were cascading and redolent with flowers, especially her enormous collection of old and species roses. One of her favorites was 'Lady Penzance'.

Once she took cuttings of an unidentified rose from a garden of an old Palo Alto house on Bryant Street. That rose became known as "Barbara Worl" but now most often called "Grandmother's Hat", a satiny pink rose, probably a Hybrid Perpetual. She was a quietly generous woman. As long as "Grandmother's Hat" remains alive in gardens, so does Barbara Worl.

The Editor

RAINBOW: A BOOK REVIEW

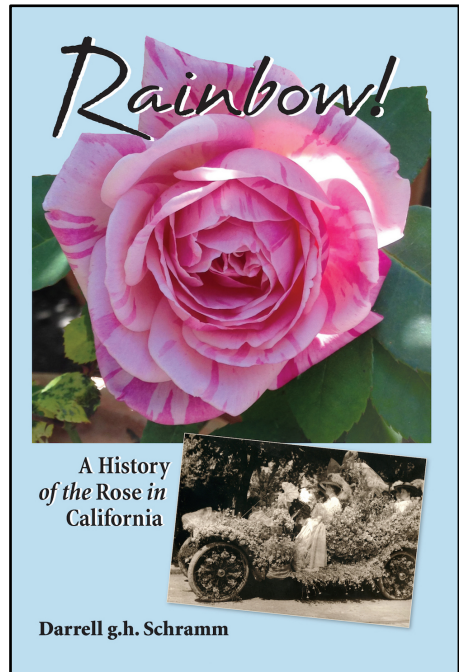
Dario Marsch

What a pleasure, what an education to learn so much about the roses and horticulturists of early California! For years I've wanted to know more about our rose heritage beyond what I learned in that fine monograph of articles *California's Rose Heritage* published in 2005. And now, at last, we can read an author whose own passion for old roses has in a way created its sequel. This new book, *Rainbow: A History of the Rose in California* by Darrell g.h. Schramm, is the very first such history. It begins with the early explorers and missionaries, then delves into the Gold Rush era through the first 75 years of statehood.

The first chapter commences with the Rose of Castile, that rose which seemed to be growing everywhere between San Diego and San Francisco when Gaspar de Portola, Fathers Crespi and Junipero Serra, and others traversed the coastal areas of very early California. But was it the true Rosa de Castilla, or was the term a generic one used by all Hispanic missionaries and explorers alike?

That section segues into a chapter of the nine identified wild roses growing in California. By the time of the Gold Rush, cultivated roses were quickly establishing themselves. The book discusses the first 42 roses propagated by various nurserymen in the new state, ten of which are still available today.

We learn that the first nursery to sell cultivated garden roses was William C. Walker's Golden Gate Nursery established in 1849.



Obviously some early California immigrants came not for gold but for what gold could buy. Schramm addresses the numerous nurserymen who took part in the great horticultural advance of the new state. Some of these were John Bidwell, John Rock, Edward Gill, Luther Burbank, Kate Sessions, Francesco Fenzi, and George Roeding, not to mention many others.

The book is a fine mine of condensed information. At one point readers are informed by an early rose authority of how best to grow healthy roses in the Bay Area. This history allows us to see the gradual progress of the rose industry. It also includes six appendices, not least one that presents the chronological timeline of both 19th and early 20th century founding of nurseries known for selling and sometimes breeding roses. The book also includes a glossary of rose terms and an extensive bibliography. The nearly eight years of research to produce this book is obvious and commendable.

Rainbow will appeal to rose lovers, gardeners, historians, and especially those interested in Californiana. The book can be purchased for \$24.99 directly from Createspace at

<https://www.createspace.com/7229975>.

THE ROSE ON OUR COVER

Rosa foetida 'Bicolor' is a rose of coppery red petals inside and yellow on the reverse. It has been known in the Arab world since at least the 12th century. Speculation has it that the rose reached Europe via Turkey in the late 16th century. Some of the flowers on the shrub often appear completely deep yellow, suggesting it is a sport of *R. foetida* J. Herrm., also known as the Austrian Briar. (The watercolor is by Edward Step, 1897.)

'Bicolor', also called Austrian Copper Briar, grows from three to eight feet high with both arching and erect dark brown canes, later turning grey, and furnished with prickles. Its parsley-green leaves contain three to nine leaflets. The plant resents pruning, tolerates most poor soils, and, like the other two Foetidias, species and form, tends to host blackspot fungus.

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Rosa canina



Pl.106. Rosier des chiens. Rosa canina L.