

Explorer Roses

Agriculture Canada began a rose breeding program in the 1960s under the direction of breeder Felicitas Svejda. Her objective was to use roses from earlier efforts and cross them with newly developed roses from Europe to create a series of roses that would be hardy, disease resistant, repeat blooming and easy to propagate from cuttings. A key component in this program was a new hybrid, *Rosa kordessii*, developed by the firm of Kordes in Germany. This rose was a relatively hardy pillar rose with long, vigorous shoots and exceedingly healthy foliage. Dr. Svejda also used several repeat blooming and compact *Rosa rugosa* varieties such as 'Fru Dagmar Hastrup' and 'Schneezwerg'. The results of this ambitious program have forever changed northern rose gardens.

(Bob Osborne, Corn Hill Nursery, Petitcodiac, NB)

Alexander MacKenzie

Alexander MacKenzie is a tall, upright, vigorous shrub introduced in 1985. The plant reaches a height of 1.5 - 2.0 m and has a diameter of 1.2 - 1.5 m in Ottawa. It is winter-hardy, flowers recurrently, and is highly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The deep red, cup-shaped flowers, produced in clusters of 6 - 12, have an average diameter of 6 - 7 cm and 40 - 50 petals. The flowers closely resemble those of a grandiflora or hybrid tea rose, but the plant has the distinct advantage of being much hardier. The rose propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa since 1972 and at other test locations in Canada, since 1978. It survives the winters in zone 3b without protection, but needs some pruning of deadwood in the spring. However, REPLOQ test results showed that this rose can survive in zone 2b but cane dieback in zones 2b to 5b, can be to snow or soil level depending upon the hardness of the winter. Spring pruning is necessary.

Alexander MacKenzie was obtained from a cross between the grandiflora Queen Elizabeth and a hardy seedling descended from a cross between the shrubs Red Dawn and Suzanne.

Captain Samuel Holland

Captain Samuel Holland introduced in 1990, is a winter-hardy pillar-type rose with a trailing growth habit and branches that grow to 1.8 m in L'Assomption. The plant flowers freely and recurrently when in full sun and is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot.



The medium red flowers average 7 cm in diameter and have 23 petals. They are produced in clusters of 1-10. The plant propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested for 5 years at Ottawa and a further 5 years at L'Assomption. It has also been tested by a number of commercial nurseries in various parts of Canada. Only slight winter injury was observed and minimal pruning was required in Ottawa and L'Assomption. It is generally hardy in zone 3.

Captain Samuel Holland originated from a cross between two breeding lines, both of which are derived from *R. kordesii*, Red Dawn and Suzanne.

Champlain

This hardy rose, introduced in 1982, is outstanding for its free and continuous flowering habit throughout the summer and fall. Champlain has good field resistance to powdery mildew and moderate resistance to blackspot. This shrub reaches a height and diameter of 1m in Ottawa.



Flowers are a velvety dark red and slightly fragrant; they are 6 - 7 cm across and have 30 petals. Softwood stem cuttings root easily.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa and at other locations in Canada and the northern United States since 1974. In Ottawa, it survives winters without protection but requires regular pruning of deadwood in the spring. It is generally hardy in zone 3.

Champlain is a complex hybrid originating from a cross between *R. kordesii* and Max Graf, and a hardy seedling originating from a cross between Red Dawn and Suzanne.

Charles Albanel

Charles Albanel, introduced in 1982, is another very hardy rose. It forms a vigorous, low shrub, which makes it suitable as a ground cover. At Ottawa, this shrub reaches a height of 0.5 m and a diameter of 1.0 m. Flowering is repeated and free in early summer and then only sporadically throughout the rest of the season. Plants are highly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The fragrant, medium red flowers are 7 - 9 cm across and have an average of 20 petals. Many attractive large fruits are formed. This plant propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa since 1972 and at other locations across Canada and in the northern United States since 1980. It has shown no winter damage in Ottawa and very little at locations with more severe climates. This cultivar is fully hardy in zone 2.

Charles Albanel was selected from three cycles of open pollination from the cultivar Souvenir de Philmon Cochet.

David Thompson

David Thompson, introduced in 1979, is a medium-sized shrub that reaches a height and diameter of 1.2 m at Ottawa. This rose is very hardy and flowers freely throughout the summer. It is highly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The plant produces fragrant, medium red flowers 7 cm in diameter that have an average of 25 petals, but forms no fruits. The rose propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This cultivar has been tested in Ottawa since 1971 and at other locations across Canada since 1977. No winter kill has been observed at Ottawa and only slight injury in areas with severe winters in northern Ontario and western Canada. It is hardy in zone 2.

David Thompson was obtained from open pollination of a hybrid between the cultivars Schneezweg and Frau Dagmar Hartopp.

De Montarville

De Montarville is a winter-hardy shrub rose which will be introduced in 1997. The plant has an upright type growth habit and reaches 1.0 m in height and width at L'Assomption. The plants flowers repeatedly from June to September and is resistant to powdery mildew and tolerant to blackspot. This rose is superior in floral production to most hardy roses and is in a similar range to Champlain and Frontenac in total length of blooming season.



The dark red unopened bud of De Montarville changes to a medium pink at the blossom stage and later fades to a medium mottled pink when fully opened. The flowers average 7 cm in diameter, have 26 petals and are borne in clusters of 1 - 4. The plant propagates easily from softwood cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. Little pruning is required in spring and it is hardy in zone 3.

De Montarville originated from a cross between a breeding line derived from Queen Elizabeth and Arthur Bell and a line derived from *R. kordesii*, Masquerade, Red Pinocchio, Joanna Hill and *R. spinosissima*.

Frontenac

Frontenac, is a winter-hardy shrub rose with an upright growth habit of about 1.0 m at L'Assomption. It was introduced in 1992. The plant is extremely floriferous; it is almost completely covered with blossoms during peak bloom in June and continues to flower until the end of September. The plant is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot



The deep pink flowers, produced in clusters of up to 8, are 8 cm in diameter and have an average of 20 petals. The plant propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested for 5 years at Ottawa and a further 5 years at L'Assomption. The rose has survived winters with natural snow cover and requires only minimal pruning of deadwood in spring. It is hardy in zone 3.

Frontenac originated from a cross between a breeding line derived from Queen Elizabeth, Arthur Bell and Von Scharnhorst, and a line derived from R. kordesii, Red Dawn and Suzanne.

George Vancouver

George Vancouver is a winter-hardy shrub rose which was introduced in 1994. The plant has an upright shrub type growth habit and is 0.9 m high with a spread of 1.0 m at L'Assomption. The plant flowers repeatedly from June to September and is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot. Although this shrub resembles the Explorer Champlain rose in colour and foliage, it is hardier, more fertile, and more resistant to mildew.



The deep-red unopened bud of George Vancouver changes to medium red at the blossom stage and later fades to pink in the fully opened flower. Flowers average 6 cm in diameter, have an average of 24 petals, and are borne in clusters of 1 - 6. The plant propagates easily from softwood cuttings.

This rose has been tested at Ottawa, for 2 years and an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. Only slight winter injury has been observed and therefore minimal pruning is required in spring. This rose is hardy in zone 3.

George Vancouver was derived from a cross between L83, a line derived from *R. kordesii*, and a complex line originating from Champlain, *R. kordesii*, Red Dawn, Suzanne, New Dawn, *R. laxa* and *R. spinosissima*.

Henry Hudson

Henry Hudson, a rugosa hybrid introduced in 1976, is a semi-dwarf shrub that grows 0.5 - 0.7 m in height and has a diameter of 1.0 m at Ottawa. The plant is very hardy, flowers repeatedly and freely, and is highly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



Flowers are white with a pink tinge resembling apple blossoms, are fragrant, and have 20 petals. Softwood cuttings are easily rooted.

Henry Hudson has been tested at Ottawa since 1967 and at other locations across Canada since 1973. Only slight winter kill was observed in Ottawa during severe winters. This rose is generally hardy in zone 2.

This cultivar was obtained from open pollination of the cultivar Schneezwerg.

Henry Kelsey

Henry Kelsey, introduced in 1984, is another hardy climbing rose, which flowers freely and repeatedly. It has a trailing growth habit, with branches that reach 2.0 - 2.5 m at Ottawa. This rose is resistant to powdery mildew and moderately resistant to blackspot.



Flowers are medium red, with a spicy fragrance, are 6 - 8 cm across, and have 25 petals, This plant produces clusters of 9 - 18 flowers. Propagation is easily obtained with softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa since 1972 and at other locations across Canada and in the northern United States since 1981. In Ottawa, its branches can be left on the trellis through the winter but require slight pruning is required in spring. It is hardy in zone 3.

Henry Kelsey was obtained from a cross of *R. kordesii*, and a hardy seedling originating from Red Pinocchio, Joanna Hill and *R. spinosissima*.

Jens Munk

Jens Munk, introduced in 1974, is free flowering, very hardy, and resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew. This vigorous and somewhat thorny shrub reaches a height of 1.5 - 2.0 m and a diameter of 1.5 m at Ottawa.



The plant produces fragrant, medium pink flowers 6 - 7 cm in diameter with 25 petals. Flowering is abundant in June, July and August. Attractive red fruits and a few flowers are evident in the fall. The cultivar propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

Jens Munk has been tested at Ottawa since 1965 and at other locations across Canada since 1971. Little or no winter kill has been observed over the years, and this rose is fully hardy in zone 2.

This cultivar was obtained from a cross between the rugosa hybrids Schneezwerg and Frau Dagmar Hartopp

John Cabot

John Cabot was the first climbing rose of the Explorer series released in 1978. The plant has strong arching canes of 2.5 - 3.0 m and blooms freely in June and July and sporadically in August and September. It has good field resistance to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The fragrant flowers are medium red, 7 cm across, with an average of 40 petals. The plant propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa since 1970 and at other locations across Canada since 1976. In Ottawa it requires pruning of deadwood in certain years. When grown in locations with more severe winters, it will need more spring pruning and can be grown as a shrub rose. The plant is generally hardy in zone 3. It was chosen as PLANT D'OR in 1996.

John Cabot originated from a cross of *R. kordesii*, and a hardy seedling originating from Masquerade and *R. laxa*.

John Davis

John Davis, introduced in 1986, has a trailing growth habit and branches that grow from 2.0 to 2.5 m at Ottawa. The plant flowers freely, is very winter-hardy, and shows high resistance to backspot and powdery mildew.



The medium pink flowers have a light spicy perfume, a diameter of 8 - 9 cm and an average of 40 petals. The blooms are often of quartered form similar to many old-fashioned roses, and have many as 17 flowers occur in a cluster. The plant roots easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa since 1978 and also at a number of locations across Canada. Little or no spring pruning is required in Ottawa, and the plant is hardy in zone 3.

John Davis originated from the open pollination of a seedling from a cross between *R. kordesii* and a line originating from a cross between Red Dawn and Suzanne.

John Franklin

John Franklin is a hardy and vigorous shrub that reaches a height and diameter of 1.2 m in Ottawa. It was introduced in 1980. The plant flowers freely throughout the summer and has moderate resistance to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The medium red, slightly fragrant flowers are 6 cm across and have 25 petals, which are fringed like a carnation. The flowers are borne in clusters of up to 30 blooms. The plant propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This cultivar has been tested at Ottawa since 1971 and at other test locations across Canada since 1978. In Ottawa, it survives winters without protection but needs pruning of deadwood in the spring. It is hardy in zone 3.

John Franklin originated from a cross between the floribunda Lilli Marlene and a hardy seedling originating from Red Pinocchio, Joanna Hill and *R. spinosissima*.

Lambert Closse

Lambert Closse, introduced in 1995, is a winter-hardy shrub rose with an upright bush type growth habit reaching a height and width of 0.85 m at L'Assomption. Although this rose has a flower form similar to Alexander Mackenzie, it has many more petals, is more floriferous with hybrid tea-like buds of a unique pink blend colour. It flowers from June to September and is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot.



The deep pink unopened buds of Lambert Closse change to a medium pink-blend at the blossom stage later fading to a pale pink when fully opened. Flowers average 8 cm in diameter, have an average of 53 petals, and are borne in clusters of 1 to 3. This rose is easily propagated when softwood cuttings are taken at the bud stage.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. Only slight winter injury has been observed thus requiring minimal spring pruning. It is hardy in zone 3.

Lambert Closse was derived from a cross between the floribunda Arthur Bell and the hardy shrub John Davis.

Louis Jolliet

Louis Jolliet was introduced in 1990. It is a winter-hardy climbing rose with a trailing growth habit and branches reaching to about 1.2 m in L'Assomption. The plant flowers almost continuously from June to the end of September when grown in full sun and is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot.



The medium pink flowers are produced in clusters of 3 - 10, have a spicy fragrance, average 7 cm in diameter, and have 38 petals. Softwood stem cuttings from this plant root readily.

This selection has been tested for 2 years at Ottawa and a further 3 years at L'Assomption. The rose has survived winters with no protection other than natural snow cover and has shown little or no winter injury. It is hardy in zone 3.

Louis Jolliet originated from a cross between L83, a line derived from *R. kordesii*, and a hardy seedling derived from *R. kordesii*, Red Dawn, Suzanne and Champlain.

Marie-Victorin

Marie-Victorin is a hardy shrub rose which will be introduced in 1998. The plant reaches a height of 1.40 m and 1.25 m in width at L'Assomption. It is winter-hardy, flowers abundantly and repeatedly, and is highly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The unopened bud which is a deep peach colour changes to a pale peach at the blossom stage and later fades to a pink in the fully opened flower. The flowers average 9 cm in diameter, have 38 petals and are borne in clusters of 1 - 7 blooms. It will be released because of its unique peach colour rarely found in hardy roses, its excellent hardiness and its disease resistance. The rose propagates easily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and for an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. It is hardy in zone 3 without winter protection but may require pruning of deadwood in the spring.

Marie Victorin originated from a cross between the floribunda Arthur Bell and a breeding line derived from a cross between *R. kordesii* and Applejack.

Martin Frobisher

The first Explorer rose, Martin Frobisher, was introduced in 1968. This hardy rugosa, which flowers freely throughout the summer at Ottawa, is vigorous, well proportioned, and grows to a height of 1.5 to 2.0 m with a diameter of 1.5 m. The bark is reddish brown and the upper parts of the branches are spineless. The plant is highly resistant to powdery mildew but may occasionally show some blackspot.



Flowers are soft pink and fragrant, measure 5 - 6 cm across, and have an average of 40 petals. Propagation is by softwood stem cuttings.

Martin Frobisher has been tested at Ottawa since 1962 and at other locations across Canada including the northern United States since 1968. Only minor top kill was observed in Ottawa and other locations, and some spring pruning is required. This plant is hardy in zone 2.

This rose cultivar was obtained from an open pollination of the rugosa shrub Schneezweg

Nicolas

Nicolas is winter-hardy shrub rose which will be introduced in 1996. The plant has a compact hardy growth habit and reaches 0.75 m in height and width at L'Assomption. The plant flowers repeatedly from June to September and is resistant to powdery mildew and tolerant to blackspot.



The plant is very floriferous and produces flowers medium red in colour which average 6 cm in diameter, have 18 - 20 petals and are borne in clusters of 1 - 3. The plant propagates easily from softwood cuttings taken at the bud stage.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and for an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. It is hardy in zone 3 without winter protection and has shown only slight winter injury. Only a light pruning is required in spring.

Nicolas was derived from a cross between a breeding line originating from Queen Elizabeth, Arthur Bell, a double red unnamed clone from Robert Simonet and Von Scharnhorst and a line derived from R. kordesii and Applejack

Quadra

Quadra is a winter-hardy climbing rose introduced in 1994. The plant has a spreading type growth habit which reaches 1.8 m in height and has a spread of 1.0 m at L'Assomption. Although this climber resembles John Davis and William Baffin, the many petalled deep red flowers it produces makes it unique among hardy climbers. The red tinge which develops in newly opened leaves adds to the attractiveness of this climber. This rose is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot.



The dark red unopened bud of Quadra changes to a deep red at the blossom stage and later fades to light red in the fully opened flower. The flowers average 8 cm in diameter, have an average of 66 petals and are borne in clusters of 1 - 4. This rose is easily propagated when softwood cuttings are taken at the bud stage.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and for an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. It is hardy in zone 3 without winter protection and has shown only slight tip kill of younger shoots.

Quadra was derived from a cross between a breeding line originating from Queen Elizabeth, Arthur Bell, and a double red unnamed clone from Robert Simonet and a line derived from R. kordesii, Red Dawn and Suzanne

Royal Edward

Royal Edward, a semi-miniature low spreading rose was introduced in 1995. The plant reaches a height of 0.45 m with a spread of 0.55 m at L'Assomption. The plant flowers repeatedly from June to September and is resistant to powdery mildew and blackspot.



The deep pink unopened bud of Royal Edward changes to a medium pink at the blossom stage, and later fades to a pale pink. Flowers average 5.5 cm in diameter, have an average of 18 petals and are borne in clusters of 1 - 7 with a yellow-green spot each base. This rose has fewer petals than Louis Joliet but it is the first semi-miniature ground-cover type trailing winter-hardy rose, suitable for rock garden or small space plantings. This rose is easily propagated when softwood cuttings are taken at the bud stage.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and for an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. It is hardy in zone 3 without winter protection and has shown only slight winter injury. Only a light pruning is required in spring.

Royal Edward was derived from a cross between *R. kordesii* and a breeding line derived from *R. kordesii*, Red Dawn and Suzanne and the climber Zeus.

Simon Fraser

Simon Fraser was introduced in 1992 and is a winter-hardy, low shrub rose with an upright growth habit. The plant grows to about 0.6 m in height at L'Assomption and blooms continuously from June until the end of September when grown in full sun.



The medium pink flowers have a diameter of 5 cm and are produced in clusters of 1 - 4. Single flowers with 5 petals are first produced on the plant but later flowers are semi double with about 22 petals. The plant roots readily from softwood stem cuttings.

This selection was tested for 5 years at L'Assomption and, during that time, needed little or no pruning of deadwood. The rose is hardy in zone 3.

Simon Fraser originated from a cross of a breeding line derived from Bonanza, Arthur Bell, Red Dawn and Suzanne, and a line derived from *R. kordesii*, Red Dawn, Suzanne and Champlain.

William Baffin

William Baffin was introduced in 1983. It is a hardy climbing rose that flowers freely and repeatedly and has strong arching canes that reach 2.5 - 3.0 m at Ottawa. This climber is highly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew.



Flowers are medium red, slightly fragrant, 6 - 7 cm across and have an average of 20 petals. Clusters of up to 30 flowers can be found on this plant. Propagation is from softwood stem cuttings.

This climber has been tested at Ottawa since 1975 and at other locations across Canada since 1982. In Ottawa, its branches require no pruning and can be left on the trellis through the winter. It survives in locations with more severe winters in northern Ontario and western Canada and is hardy in zone 2a according to the results of the REPLOQ.

William Baffin was obtained from open pollination of a hardy seedling derived from *R. kordesii* and a pollen parent originating from Red Dawn and Suzanne.

William Booth

William Booth, which was introduced in 1999, is a winter-hardy shrub rose that has a spreading to trailing type growth and reaches a height of 1.5 m and a spread of 3.0 m at L'Assomption. The plant flowers repeatedly from June to September and has excellent resistance to blackspot and powdery mildew.



The deep red unopened bud of William Booth changes to a medium red at the blossom stage and later fades to a light red in the fully opened flower. The flowers average 5 cm in diameter, have 5 petals and are borne in clusters of 8 - 10 blooms. Softwood stem cuttings root easily.

This selection has been tested at Ottawa for 2 years and an additional 3 years at L'Assomption. It requires little to no pruning in the spring and is hardy to zone 3.

William Booth originated from a cross between L83, a line derived from *R. kordesii*, and a breeding line which originated from the floribunda Arthur Bell and the shrub rose Applejack.

J. P. Connell

J.P. Connell, introduced in 1973, is a shrub rose that can grow to 150 cm in height and up to 120cm wide. Its medium yellow double flowers begin with a hybrid tea form and then open to expose the stamens. Repeat blooming during the summer and into the fall, it is generally hardy to zone 2b but does have some susceptibility to blackspot.



Photo: Richard Hinchcliff - Friends of Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa

J.P. Connell is part of the Canadian Explorer series but is not named for an explorer. J.P. Connell (1926 - 2012) was a noted Canadian public servant who served as Deputy Minister of Agriculture in the 1980's.

J.P. Connell originated from a cross between Arthur Bell with a seedling of Von Scharnhorst.