

by any other name

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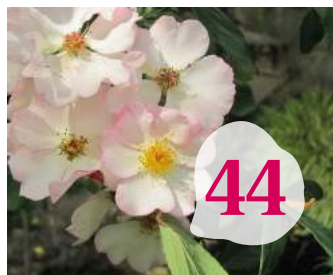
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Cover image: Martin Stott
'Madame Grégoire Staechelin' [Dot, 1927]

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Editors' note

There is much to cheer lovers of heritage roses in this edition. Ivan Hoste writes about François Crépin, the 19th-century botanist whose herbarium is attracting the attention of molecular researchers conducting rose DNA studies.

We publish enthusiastic reviews of the Viraraghavans' book about their lives and work in India, *Roses in the Fire of Spring*, and Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer's study of Bourbon roses and Noisettes at Sangerhausen. We tell of the work to save American rosarian Anne Belovich's collection of rambler roses in the USA.

We also offer a couple of tasters for next year's Regional Convention in Sweden. Central to an excellent programme of events is a lecture by Lars-Åke Gustavsson on his work to create a gene bank of the region's finest old roses.

Less cheering, Inés Díaz de Licandro tells of the plight of Uruguay's finest old rose garden. And we hear how after 100 years and three generations, Spain's greatest family of rose breeders, the Dots, lay down the secateurs. They leave some fine roses to remember them by.

You may find this publication more enjoyable to read online – you can find a page turning edition at bit.ly/BAON27

Charles Quest-Ritson and Martin Stott

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“A rose by any other name would smell so sweet.”

William Shakespeare,
Romeo and Juliet

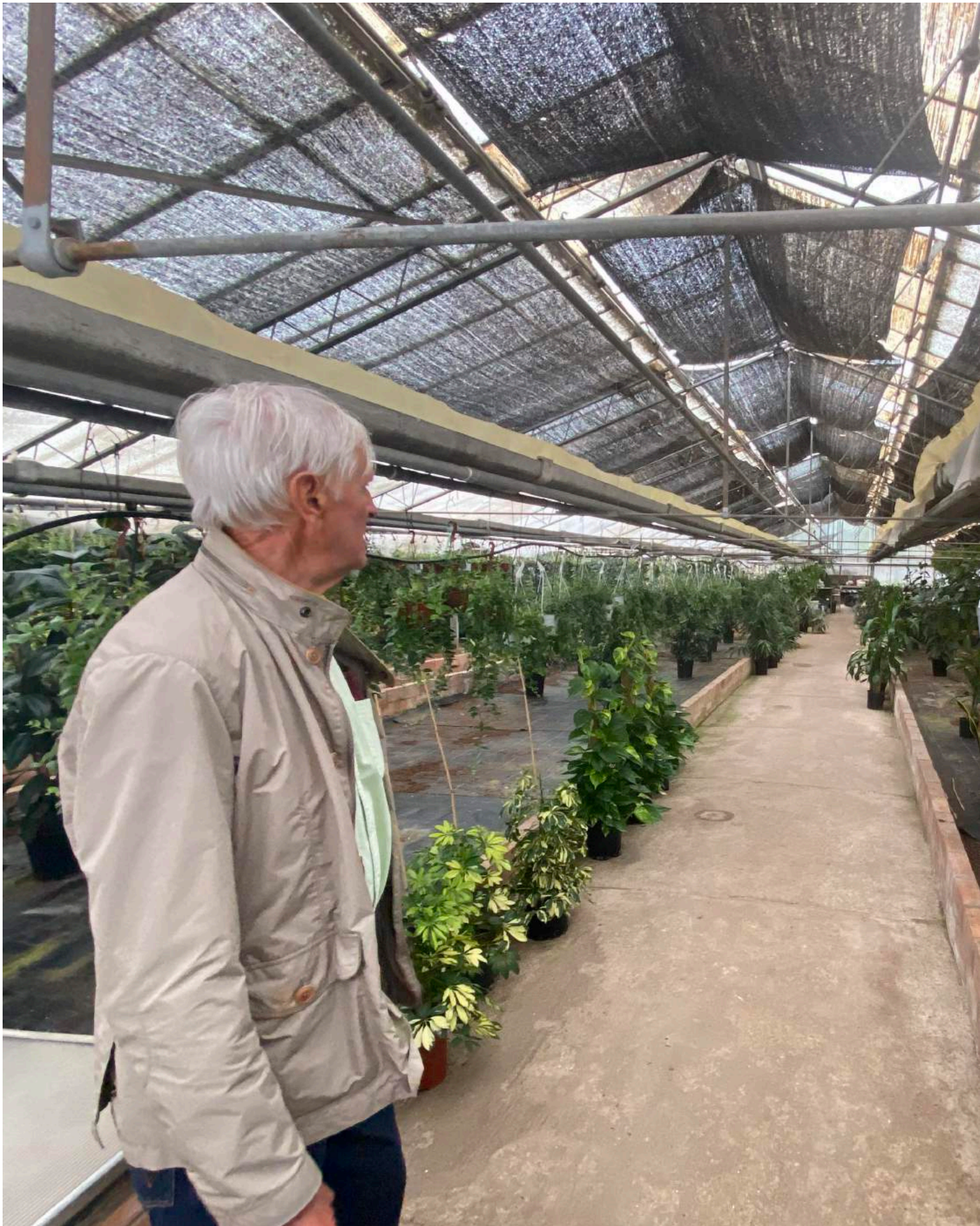
'Gentle Hermione'
[Austin, 2005]



Charles Quest-Ritson is a writer, historian and journalist, with a column in the lifestyle magazine *Country Life*. He is the author of *Climbing Roses of the World* (Timber Press, 2003) and, jointly with his wife Brigid, of an *Encyclopedia of Roses* that was first published in UK by Dorling Kindersley in 2003 and has since been translated into seven languages, including American English.



Martin Stott is a former journalist who has made programmes for the BBC World Service and Radio 4 in 21 countries and written for most of the UK's national press. Passionate about roses and garden history in general, he has also written for *Gardens Illustrated* and the *Historic Roses Journal*. He is a particular fan of Dean Reynolds Hole, the Nottinghamshire vicar who founded the National Rose Society. Martin's garden history blog can be found at www.storytellingarden.co.uk.



Dot to Dot – end of an era



Martin Stott

I am sitting in the passenger seat of a dusty old Fiat as it climbs through back roads to a rose nursery in the hills near San Feliu de Llobregat on the outskirts of Barcelona. We have just been to the 65th National Rose Festival in the small town, escaping the noisy crowds for a long celebratory lunch.

We drive in companionable silence, each unable to communicate with the other without the help of our translator, who is following in the car behind. After so much exuberance it is a poignant moment. The tall, elderly man at the wheel is Pere Dot – the third generation of Spain’s greatest family of rose breeders.

It turns out, the Catalanian is also the last. I am here to record the end of an era. Pere, who is 71, is retiring. His son has not followed the family tradition. In the coming months, after a century in business, the Dot nursery is closing.



Pere Dot, grandson and namesake of the great rose breeder, Pere Dot, in the greenhouse at the family nursery that will close soon

Image: Martin Stott

My journey to this spot began a few years earlier in my garden in central England. I cannot remember what caused me to plant ‘Mme Grégoire Staechelin’, but it was a good decision. She is one of the first roses to open each spring and a favourite.

The buds are shaped like a long pout. Looking at them you want to pucker your lips in imitation. But if the bud is a pout and the bloom a kiss, this is no polite peck on the cheek. It is a flamenco dress of a rose – a large swirl of ruffled petals in myriad shades of pink. Leave it be and in the Autumn the rose will be adorned with huge orange hips.

Looking down the spreadsheet of historic roses in my garden – mostly the products of Northern European breeders with names like Parmentier, Garçon and Nabonnand – Dot’s surname stands out starkly. Short. Punchy. Intriguing.

“I cannot remember what caused me to plant ‘Mme Gregoire Staechelin’, but it was a good decision. She is one of the first roses to open each spring and a favourite.”

This is my only Spanish rose – the country is not renowned for being at the forefront of rose- breeding. And the year of its creation – 1927 – places its breeder on the brink of a period of political upheaval that must have made the business incredibly difficult. So, who was he?

Pere Dot i Martínez – in Spanish known as Pedro – was born in 1885 on the estate of the Marqués de Monistrol near San Feliu de Llobregat. His father, Simón, was estate manager and specialised in

trees. In 1899 Simón made the bold decision to start his own general nursery.

That same year Pere left school, aged 14, but rather than join his father he was apprenticed to the Establecimiento de Sucesores de Joaquín Aldrufeu. The late Aldrufeu had been a pioneering, if not hugely successful, Spanish rose breeder. From there Pere went to Belgium and France to extend his gardening education. In Paris he learned how to hybridise roses and worked at the Bagatelle gardens, under their creator, Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier. Here he spent time in the new rose trial beds – the world’s first – seeing the latest varieties and, occasionally, the breeders who had created them.

When the First World War broke out he returned to Spain to work with his father but the two fell out when Pere said he wanted to



The father of Spanish rose breeding, Pere Dot, in the greenhouse at his original nursery

Image: Dot Family Archive

breed roses and do so exclusively. His father told him there was no money in roses. Pere decided to prove him wrong.

The rift may have widened when the Condesa de Sástago – wife of Simón’s old boss, the Marqués de Monistrol – lent Pere enough to buy a field and begin his adventure.

His first creation, in 1923 – exactly 100 years ago – was the pink Hybrid Tea, ‘Francisco Corbera’. More roses followed. In 1927 he produced ‘Mme Grégoire Staechelin’ and the Hybrid Spinossissima, ‘Nevada’.

It is ironic that these two roses – probably the most widely cultivated Dot roses today – are pink and white. As a breeder Dot was interested in strong colour, perhaps driven by the fact that the brilliant Mediterranean sun can

Mme Grégoire Staechelin

Disagreements abound over how to pronounce Staechelin. It depends, it seems, on which part of Europe you come from.

‘Mme Grégoire Staechelin’ won a gold medal at Bagatelle in 1927 and others followed. Garcia i Urpi says that Dot wrote dedicating it to the memory of his “unfortunate friend Nicolas Forestier”. As Forestier only died in October 1930 it seems likely that this dedication was a tribute – Dot offering up this rose as testimony to Forestier’s influence on his life.

French rose historian Odile Masquelier says Mme Staechelin was the wife of the Swiss ambassador in Madrid, but others suggest

the ambassador’s name was Maxime de Stoutz.

Roger Mann, in his 2008 book, *Naming the Rose*, claims the woman was Dot’s friend and this was a wedding gift to her. He tells how a Swiss friend had an uncle at the University of Basel in the early 1930s. One of the professors was Dr Grégoire Staechelin. His lectures, it is said, were boring but students crowded into them hoping for an invitation to lunch with his charming and very beautiful Spanish wife.

In the US ‘Mme Grégoire Staechelin’ goes by the name “Spanish Beauty”. If anyone has connections with the family and knows which if any story is true, we would love to know!



Rosa ‘Madame Grégoire Staechelin’, taken in the author’s garden.

Images: Martin Stott

drain life out of subtle colours, making the blooms look insipid. He built on the work of Pernet-Ducher, who bred ‘Soleil d’Or’ – the world’s first repeat-flowering orange-yellow rose. The roses in this series of Hybrid Teas are sometimes called ‘Pernetianas’.

In 1929 Dot introduced the coppery orange ‘Federico Casas’. Soon after followed ‘Condesa de Sástago’, one of the world’s first bi-coloured roses – red one side of the petal and yellow the other. It was named after the patron who helped him get started.

These vivacious Spanish roses had appeal in the US, where the entrepreneurial Pennsylvanian nurseryman, Robert Pyle, scented an opportunity. Knowing they would sell well in similar climatic conditions, Pyle agreed to sell Dot’s roses under licence. Before the introduction in America of the world’s first plant patenting legislation, in 1930, Pyle would pay Dot royalties for three years. The legislation gave the breeder patent protection for 17 years. The relationship with Pyle was to play a key role in keeping the Dot business afloat.

Civil war

Throughout the 19th and early 20th century there was political turmoil in Spain. In July 1936 civil war broke out when Nationalist generals attempted a military coup to overturn the left-leaning Republican government. Supporters from around the world came to Spain to fight for both



- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. ‘Nevada’ [Dot, 1927] – In hot climates it starts out white but its petals sometimes take on pink blotches as they age</p> <p>2. ‘Federico Casas’ [Dot, 1931] shown at</p> | <p>Palau Falguera, Sant Feliu de Llobregat, 2017</p> <p>3. ‘Condesa de Sástago’ [Dot, 1930] at Sangerhausen 2011</p> <p>4. ‘Ramón Bach’ [Dot, 1939] Català, 2011</p> |
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“During the war he released roses named after Catalan patriots killed in the fighting, like ‘Ramón Bach’.”



Below: At Spain’s National Rose Festival, roses from members of the Dot family feature strongly. Left to right front row: ‘Armor’ by Marí Dot; ‘Rosa Sant Feliu’ by Victor Dot, and ‘Profesor Pañella’ by Simó Dot



Images: Eric Timewell, CC BY-SA 3.0, Charles Quest-Ritson, Jaume Garcia i Urpi (Public domain) and Martin Stott



sides. Hitler threw his weight – and aircraft – behind the Nationalists. The violence that followed was seen as a dress rehearsal for the Second World War – aerial bombing, the destruction of cities and the deaths and murders of thousands of civilians.

Catalonia was pro-Republic. Dot's two sons Marí and Simó were conscripted to the Republican army in 1938 and, when the war ended in 1939, were detained in a concentration camp for a year.

Dot had been a member of a socialist party before the war and his political leanings are not well hidden. In 1931, he produced 'Catalònia'. That was the year his homeland received its first statute of autonomy from the Republican government, granting it significant powers of self-government. During the war he released roses named after Catalan patriots killed in the fighting, like 'Ramón Bach', as well as Republican towns

('Girona' and 'Lleida') not yet overcome by Franco's nationalists. These roses may have been commissioned by the Republican government of Barcelona.

He also received valuable support from Pyle who was still able to propagate and market Dot's roses when the breeder could get them out across the Atlantic. Nurserymen elsewhere, like Harry Wheatcroft in England, and Henri Guillot and Francis Meiland in France, were also keen buyers, though the Second World War brought a pause in their efforts.

After the war, in the 1950s, fellow Catalan breeder Cebrià Camprubí, dedicated one of his roses to Franco's wife – 'Su Excelencia Señora de Franco'. Politically astute and commercially savvy perhaps, but not something Dot ever did.

Miniatures

In 1940 Dot had begun experimenting and created one of the first miniature rose bushes, crossing Correvon's small rose, 'Rouletii', with a Hybrid Tea of his own, 'Eduardo Toda'. The result was 'Estrellita de Oro' ('Baby Gold Star' in the US). Others followed over the next 20 years, like the creamy white 'Para Ti' (1946), 'Rosina' (1951) and the pretty white rose, 'Si' (1957).

After the war his sons joined him in the business. He continued breeding miniatures. They focused mainly on Hybrid Teas, attempting to grow roses with purple and deep blue hues.



Left: In 1928 Dot started the rose festival in San Feliu de Llobregat. It began life as a small local affair and grew. It became Spain's "National Rose Festival" in 1958. Today the rose competition features many roses by Dot's sons and grandchildren, bearing testimony to their popularity among local growers.

At the age of 60, Dot decided to retire, moving to Majorca from May to October, leaving his sons and then grandsons, Pere, Jordi and Albert to carry on the work. He died in November 1976, aged 91.

Jaume Garcia i Urpi is writing a biography of the Dot family and has played a leading role in the creation of a rose garden in San Feliu de Llobregat, dedicated to Catalonia's breeders.

Pere Dot with a rose of his own creation, 'Joana Raspall i Juanola', named after the Catalan writer.

Image: Martin Stott



He says: “Pere Dot was the first in Spain to dedicate himself exclusively to the creation of new roses. He played a major part in creating a rose-growing culture here. His collection of Pernetiana roses earned him most of his national and international awards (‘Àngels Mateu’, ‘Marí Dot’, ‘Li Burés’, ‘Catalònia’, ‘Condesa de Sástago’ and ‘Duquesa de Peñaranda’, for instance). Pere Dot was also one of the first to breed miniature rose bushes and to establish the yellow colour within the moss roses (‘Golden Moss’). I particularly love his Pernetianas – their colours look spectacular in our sun.”

Today his grandson is the last of the Dots left in the business. As we stand in the glasshouses looking at the benches of remaining plants, the old man reflects on a life in roses.

He says: “It has been many years. I started helping in the greenhouses when I was 12 during the school holidays. My father and grandfather worked together and taught me how to graft. We used to propagate 25,000 roses a year, but I’m getting tired. I’m selling down the stock and once it is gone then it’s over.”

His great grandfather once argued there was no money in roses. This Pere Dot agrees. “It has been a lot of work and not much money,” he says with a wry smile. “But I have had a happy life.”

Parc del Roserar de Dot i de Camprubí

This garden was created in 1997 and dedicated to Catalonia's most notable rose breeders. It holds over 2,000 roses and more than 400 varieties.

Jaume Garcia i Urpi says: "The Dot family alone bred over 270 varieties, of which 180 were by Pere Dot. In the rose garden we have 92 rose bushes from him and 81 from his children and grandchildren. About 30 remain to be restored. The rest we believe have been lost forever. It is an important part of the town's heritage and I want to preserve these roses for the people."

No pesticides are used at the park, and some of the roses respond better than others to

the modern regime. The roses are monitored closely and, if there are any losses, attempts are made to reproduce them again.

This is the largest Dot collection in the world. It has been built with the help of collectors globally, sending cuttings which have been patiently grafted and grown on. Only this spring 'Marí Dot' arrived in the garden – export restrictions meant it took five years to get a cutting from California, where it was found. The rose was created in 1927 and dedicated to Pere Dot's son.

It has been a slow, laborious task, and faced a number of perils – from wild boars

uprooting the grafted stock offsite, to a financial crisis when in 2006 the local council withdrew funding. It took five years before it was reinstated and the garden reopened.

During that time many roses were lost and the collection had to be restored, with the help of the Dot family, who until this year have taken responsibility for reproducing roses for the garden using donated cuttings.

Below left:

Parc del Roserar de Dot i de Camprubí in St Feliu de Llobregat, Spain – the world's biggest collection of Dot roses

Below right:

Jaume Garcia i Urpi is writing a biography of the Dot family

Images: Martin Stott



Banking on roses of the past for the future

Swedish botanist Lars-Åke Gustavsson is leader of a remarkable project to identify and safeguard his country's rare plants. A keynote speaker at next year's WFRS European conference, here he and Martin Stott tell the story of the project and its rose discoveries.

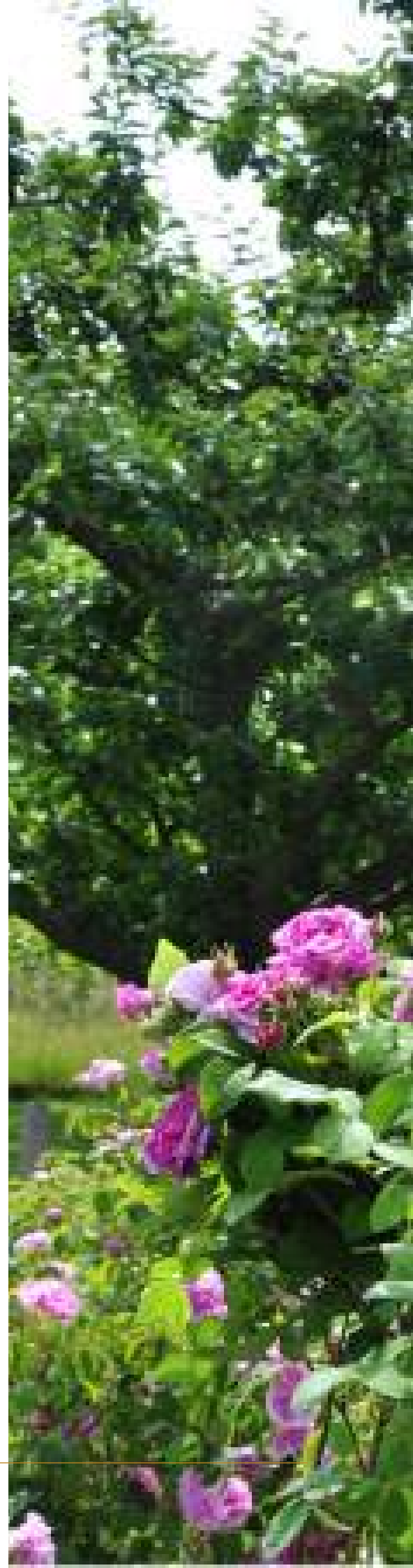
Lars-Åke Gustavsson and Martin Stott

Sweden's climate places particular demands on its cultivated plants, which need to be hardy to survive the cold winters and short, often cool, summers. The species and varieties that have adapted best to this testing environment are generally the result of a long period of cultivation and selection. They have shown their endurance, proving to be resilient to pests and easy to grow – valuable qualities in a changing climate.

In 1998 the Swedish government recognised the need to ensure the long-term survival and sustainable use of

this valuable cultivated plant heritage. It commissioned the Board of Agriculture and a range of partners, including academics, botanical gardens and growers' organisations, to develop the Program for Diversity of Cultivated Plants – POM for short.

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp – just north of Malmö – has been responsible for coordinating POM's various activities since 2000. Its work has focused on several classifications of plant: bulbs and corms; fruits and berries; perennials; trees and bushes; vegetables, potted plants and





Lars-Åke Gustavsson is the Nordic region's foremost rose expert. He is the founder of the Swedish Rose Society, leader of the POM project and author of the encyclopaedic *Roses for Nordic Gardens*.

Image: Margareta von Rosen

roses. It has sought to create a Swedish National Gene Bank for these plants.

To be included, plants had to meet one or two criteria – to be of Swedish origin, independent of age, or to be of foreign origin but with a long cultivation history dating back to before 1950. The POM roses programme began in 2005 with research of the botanical and horticultural literature.

A key figure in Swedish rose history is Olof Rudbeck the Elder (1630-1702). A polymath, Rudbeck discovered the lymphatic system. He also created an extensive botanical garden in Uppsala in which he cultivated at least 25 different roses between 1658 and his death in 1702. These included 'Alba Maxima', *Rosa canina*, *Rosa foetida*, *Rosa hemisphaerica*, *Rosa mundi* and *Rosa villosa*, known also as "the apple rose" because of its round, dark hips.

Rudbeck wrote *Campus Elysi*, a flora with standardised naming and clear illustrations that could be used to identify plants. In 1702 he suffered a terrible disaster when his *magnus opus* was destroyed in the great fire of Uppsala, just before it was due to be printed. A work that had taken him 25 years to complete and involved his entire family was destroyed in just a few hours. However, miraculously, eleven volumes of hand-coloured plant sketches could be saved. These are called *Blomboken* ("The Flower Books"). Along with planting lists from Rudbeck's botanical garden, they represent the oldest and most detailed descriptions of cultivated roses in Sweden.

“The species and varieties that have adapted best to this testing environment are generally the result of a long period of cultivation and selection.”

Nordic DNA-studies have been carried out on material from all Nordic countries and POM will deepen the DNA studies with our Norwegian colleagues. Different DNA methods will be used and tested with the aim of seeking clear relationships between collected cultivars and groups.

Photo from the left: Rolf Engström (Sweden), Unni Dahl Grue (Norway), Eva Vike (Norway) and Henrik Morin (Sweden) when evaluating roses from the Norwegian and Swedish trial fields.

Images: Lars-Åke Gustavsson



Uppsala, of course, was also later home to Carl Linnaeus, who formalised binomial nomenclature – the modern system of plant taxonomy. In fact, Rudbeck was mentor to Linnaeus, who named the North American plant, 'Rudbeckia Hirta', in his honour.

Before Linnaeus, plants were identified by a descriptive phrase, often running to several words. There was little consistency in plant naming from botanist to botanist. So, for instance, Caspard Bauhin, writing in 1623, called *Rosa canina* 'Rosa sylvestris vulgaris, flore odorato incarnato'. Rudbeck's name was 'Rosa alba sylvestris'. Cultivar names, like 'Old Blush', began to be used only in the early 19th century.

Other valuable sources of information included floras and herbarium sheets. In Sweden there are several significant herbaria, mainly in the oldest universities, that have been examined by POM.



“Häggeby”

A drawing in Rudbeck the Elder’s “Flower Book” shows an unknown Gallica rose named ‘Rosa purpurea’. It was cultivated in his botanical garden in Uppsala during the latter part of the 17th century. Though impossible on the basis of a drawing alone to say that it is “Häggeby”, it is very similar.

“Häggeby” originally comes from Komministergården in Nederhassla, which was built in the 1860s at Häggeby church. In 1988, when the land and the rose were threatened by residential developers a local parishioner, Inga-Lill Järnebro, rescued several roots. These were planted in the collection of found roses in the former Genetic Garden at Ultuna at the Swedish University of Agriculture in Uppsala. The rose was thus saved for posterity.

A shrub rose with medium to strong scent that offers a strong hint of citrus, cherry blossom and sun-warmed milk, “Häggeby” is genetically identical to ‘Linnes Hammarby’, a rose long grown in the Uppsala area. It is probably a sport of it. It differs in that the flowers are open and shallow bowl-shaped to nearly flat. The variety has fewer petals surrounding the many stamens – varying from 35 to 60. The flower shoots are thornless.

Above: “Häggeby” in the POM trial field at Fredriksdal, Helsingborg.

Below: “Rosa purpurea” in Olof Rudbeck the Elder’s Flower Book. The drawing is signed by Samuel Buschenfeldt.





Today, of the 2,210 cultivars in the gene bank, 330 are roses.

Fruit trees – 300

Berries and nuts – 120

Perennials – 460

Bulbs and tubers – 280

Roses – 330

Trees and shrubs – 300

Perennial vegetables – 200

Pot plants – 220

Perhaps the most important historical reference resource was old nursery catalogues. Researcher Irene Nettelbrants has helped POM build a database of more than 60,000 roses from these catalogues and other literature. These illustrate the rise and fall in popularity of various cultivars over time.

Between 1860 and 1890, for example, Gallicas were hugely popular in Sweden. By 1960 you could not buy a single Gallica in the country. They were re-introduced in the 1970s and today at least 56 are sold in Swedish nurseries. They may have not been sold for a long time, but Gallicas were being grown – 45 of them are now in the gene bank.

The challenge

So how do you tackle a challenge like this? Finding the roses, researching the history, distinguishing one pink climber from another, recording the data and then preserving your discoveries? The short answer is: “Methodically and scientifically”.

In practice, though, this was a complex operation. It began with training volunteers – 600 of them across all the inventories. For the roses the project had the invaluable support of 113 members of the Swedish Rose Society.

One of the most successful methods for building the inventory was to hold “Come and show days”.

Nearly 250 were arranged around the country. Rose growers brought their blooms to be identified.

“Come and Show Days”, later called “The Rose Antiques Roadshow”, proved to be very effective – 245 events were arranged around Sweden and the growers who attended displayed and told the POM experts about their old roses.

Images: Lars-Åke Gustavsson



Usually, researchers could name the rose, but where they could not it was collected for further study. Often the growers brought garden drawings, ancient, pencilled plant lists and old black and white or sepia family photos placing the rose in the context of their family history.

Classifying and naming old garden roses is difficult; sometimes impossible. The team used traditional morphologic – physical attributes – as well as genetic testing. Modern DNA techniques are effective in establishing if two similar looking roses are actually the same. The two techniques combined proved the best method of classification.

Given the complications around naming old roses, it was sometimes impossible to know with absolute conviction whether a cultivar name was correct. The team went to some lengths to trace names – often liaising with teams in Norway carrying out similar studies. Where a name could not be found POM created a new one.

Of course, different climate, humidity, light, temperature and the composition of the soil can affect how a rose grows from place to place. As can how the roses are fed and pruned. To account for this, all the collected roses were planted in a trial field at Fredriksdal Open-Air Museum in Helsingborg and given identical care.

After four to five years morphological studies were carried out on the plants, with all their essential characteristics documented

“Ammarnäs”

Ammarnäs in Lapland has long been known to hikers as one of the gateways to the mountain world. Despite its high altitude, Ammarnäs is an old agricultural area. As early as the 19th century settlers began to grow rich meadow hay crops on the fertile floodplains of the isthmus, an area long inhabited by the indigenous Sami people.

In the 1920s Blomster-Lotta created an extensive mountainside garden there with her son, Alfred. Alfred ordered seeds from different parts of the world and as the garden developed it attracted many visitors.

Both died in the 1970s. The garden became forgotten and overgrown. More recently, grandson Anders and POM experts Mariana Mattsson and Reginald Scholtz have restored parts of the unique garden, reopening it in 2014. Among the surviving plants they discovered there was a rose with an unusual bell-shaped flower. It was also found on several neighbouring farms, where it had grown as long as anyone could remember. No-one knows on which farm it might have originated, but clearly its distinctiveness and endurance were noticed, and the rose was shared among neighbours.

The rose is unique to Ammarnäs and nearby Wilhelmina. It probably originated in Ammarnäs as a spontaneous hybrid. DNA tests show that *Rosa rugosa* is one parent and that the cinnamon rose, *Rosa majalis*, is a second.



Above: “Ammarnäs” in Ammarnäs.

Below: “Ammarnäs” in the POM trial field in Fredriksdal, Helsingborg.



by photos against a 1cm mesh grid. All cultivars were pressed, too.

DNA testing was conducted at the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre, which is also in Alnarp. In the first year a reference database was established for 120 well-known rose species – key roses in the rose family tree. Next the “mystery roses” from the trial field were tested.

In all, 15,000 roses were studied. Most were known cultivars. But 1,472 unknown roses made it to the trial field. Of these 567 were found to be duplicates and 330 cultivars were accepted into the gene bank. Roses grown there are planted at least four metres apart in a field at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Alnarp. For added security, duplicates have been planted in 17 local collections around the country, including the Garden Society of Gothenburg,

“We also discovered amazing families who had lovingly preserved these plants from generation to generation, often treating them like rare family heirlooms.”

To keep cultivation conditions (humidity, light, temperature and soil composition) as similar as possible the collected roses were planted in a trial field at Fredriksdal Open-Air Museum in Helsingborg.

Images: Lars-Åke Gustavsson

which is described in the accompanying article.

This has been a 20-year project and a huge amount of work. It was a journey of discovery. As Lars-Åke says: “We thought our task was to find heritage plants and build a genetic resource bank. But this became much more than that. We also discovered amazing families who had lovingly preserved these plants from generation to generation, often treating them like rare family heirlooms. Their stories have made this journey extra special.”

Those attending the WFRS conference in Sweden next summer will get to see the gene bank in Alnarp. Some of its rare roses are also present in several of the gardens delegates will tour. For more information, visit: www.nordicroses2024.com



“Aldal”

“Aldal” is a characteristic Bourbon rose that most likely originated from abroad and has been grown in Sweden since at least the 1910s. Its original name lost, it has been named after Aldal in the coastal village of Mölle, where it was discovered in three gardens.

POM found a particularly magnificent example on a property built and still owned by a Danish family, the Møllers. Examining one old family photograph, Claus Christian Møller said: “My great grandfather, Frantz Pio (1870–1950), who built ‘Villa Pio’, is at the top right with a hat. The lady in black is his mother, Olivia, who was born in 1842 and died at Kullen in 1920. She laid out the garden. My grandmother, Nina (1906–1994), the little girl in black clothes with black hair at the bottom of the picture, continued tending it.”

Local historians say Frantz Pio came to Mölle in the 1890s to organise the first mountain hiking tours, which attracted hundreds of participants.

The rose has also been found 20km south, in Viken. Lilian Jansson told researchers: “In 1958 we moved into our newly built house in Viken, 20 metres from the sea. I brought with me one or two root shoots of a rose that had grown in our former home in Mölle. Today, the rose grows together with snowberry and other plants. It is healthy and has always bloomed willingly despite the exposed, windy environment and sea air.”

The DNA profile shows “Aldal” is most closely related to ‘Uplandsträdgården’ in the Bourbon group. But it is also related to ‘William Lobb’, ‘Fardhem’s Biskopinna’, ‘Farmor Selma’, ‘Great Western’, ‘Charles de Mills’, ‘Kvarsebo’s Beauty’ and the Portland rose ‘Mme Boll’.



Above: “Aldal” in the POM trial field at Fredriksdal, Helsingborg.

Below: The Pio family in Aldal in 1915. Claus Möller’s great grandfather, Frantz Pio, is on the back row, wearing a light hat.

Image: Photographer unknown



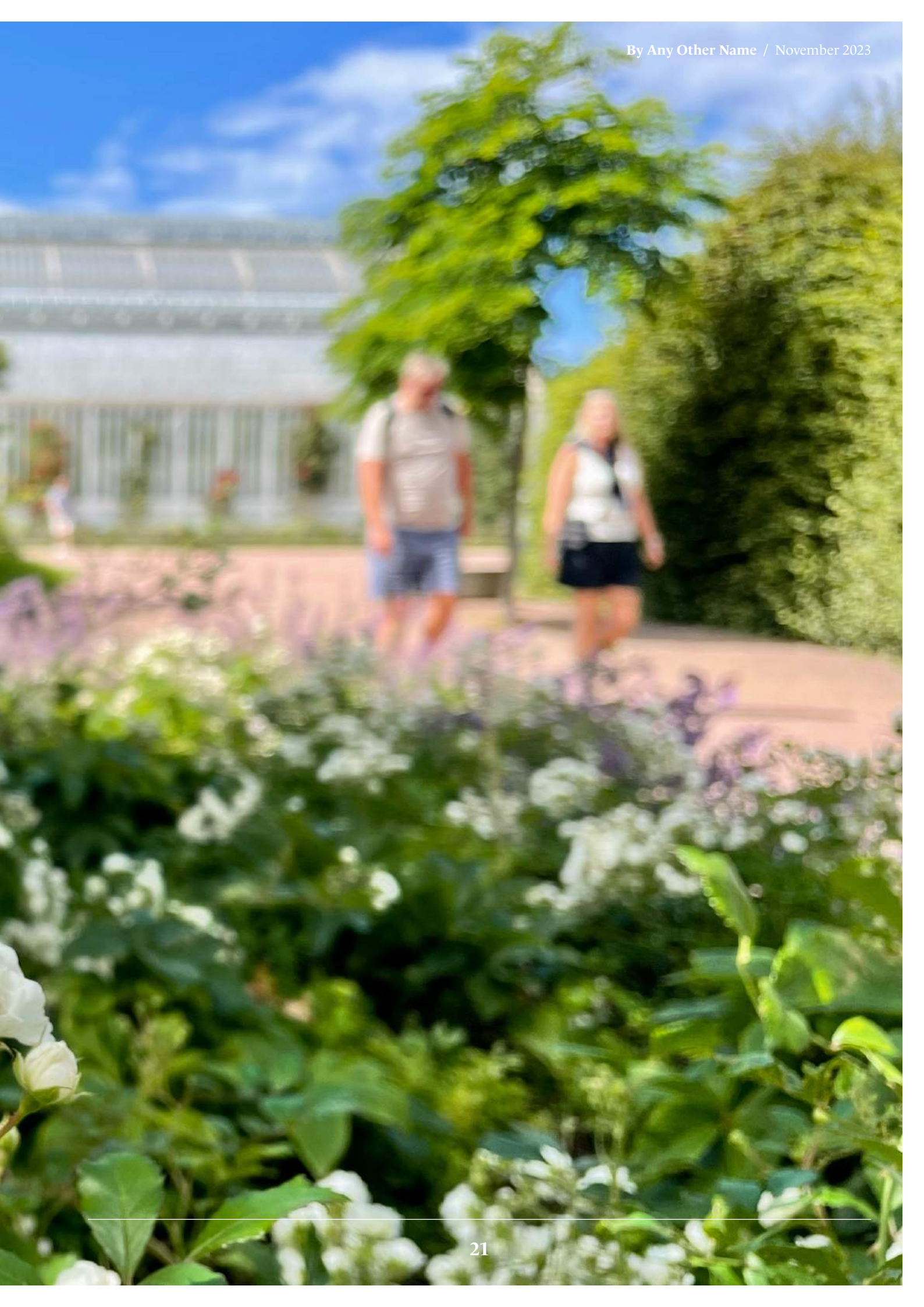
The Garden Society of Gothenburg and its rose collection



Emmelie
Georgii

'Alba Meidiland' with
Calamintha nepeta and
Helleborus orientalis

Image: Emmelie Georgii



The Garden Society of Gothenburg is one of the best-preserved 19th-century parks in Europe, a verdant oasis in the heart of the city that attracts over two million visitors each year. Undulating lawns and flower beds are filled with native and exotic plants and sit alongside historic buildings that take you back to the golden age of horticulture. With its gentle lines, the park has a very distinct 19th century atmosphere.

It is also home to the largest rosarium in Scandinavia, with a large collection of Old Garden Roses including several rare varieties identified by the Program for Diversity of Cultivated Plants project (POM) gathered in the western parts of Sweden, like Dalstorp and Sandviks (pictured).

The garden itself was the 19th century dreamchild of soldier and amateur botanist Captain Henric von Normann, who had seen other great parks and gardens in Europe on his travels. He wanted to create a botanical garden for the city as well as a horticultural society, along the lines of the Royal Horticultural Society in England (founded in 1804).

The year was 1842. The people of Gothenburg had lived for more than 150 years surrounded by imposing grey granite city walls and Captain von Normann found a receptive audience for his proposal. A 'share subscription' was set up that was widely supported by the middle classes. With funding in place, architects and landscape

“At the heart of the park stands its famous Palm House. Built in glass and wrought iron, it is a work of art.”

gardeners set about transforming what was in effect marshland.

Originally only open to subscribers or on payment of an entrance fee, the park survived through to the 1970s, helped by the sale of seeds and plants, both imported and from the garden. At the turn of the 20th century the nursery had grown to be one of the largest and most respected in the industry, and the period from the later 1800s to the First World War saw the golden age of the Garden Society of Gothenburg.

Economic hardship in Sweden during the 1930s, very cold winters in both the 1930s and 40s that killed many of the plants in both the park, the Palm House and the nursery, along with a steadily shrinking flow of visitors, radically altered the conditions. In 1975, during an economic downturn, the park's future looked precarious and it was handed over to the municipality of Gothenburg. In 1992 the garden was declared a listed historical site under the Cultural Heritage Act. Entrance to the park has been free to the public since 2012.

At the heart of the park stands its famous Palm House. Built in glass and wrought iron, it is a work of





1. "Dalstorp" – photographed by Henny Johansson, Head of the Gothenburg Rose Society
2. The glasshouse at Trädgårdsföreningen, 2006
3. Forefront: 'L'Enchanteresse' (originally 'Grande Henriette') together with nepeta, salvia and others.

Images: Henny Johansson, Charles Quest-Ritson and Emmelie Georgii



“Sandviks Olivia”

“Sandviks Olivia” is one of several POM roses. It is believed this rose may have originated with the Brown brothers in Scotland some time between 1793 and 1830. In Sweden it has been traced back to an idyllic cove called Sandvik on the island of Orust, north of Gothenburg. At least as far back as the 1790s Sandvik was used as a shipyard.

In 1886 Olivia Andersdotter moved to Sandvik and to the then abandoned shipyard with her husband, Johan, and four children. They moved into the shipyard cabin, the only house in Sandvik, consisting of one kitchen and one room. Johan supported the family by doing different odd jobs around the area, while Olivia created an orchard and kitchen garden from which she harvested and sold produce at the market in Uddevalla, almost 60 km away.

Olivia died in 1945 and most of her great garden is now gone, but a few fruit trees and the magnificent rose by the beach live on. The rose seems to survive anything. Many winters the water rises to swamp the grass in which the rose grows, drenching the roots in salt water, and yet it flowers abundantly every year. It may have been planted by Olivia near the beginning of the 20th century. But it is also possible that the rose grew in Sandvik even before Olivia and Johan moved there and was planted during the glory days of the shipyard in the 1860s or 1870s.

This story was told by the great grandchild of Olivia, Ellinor, who still lives at Sandvik during the summer months.

“Sandviks Olivia”

Image: Henny Johansson



art. Modelled on the famous Crystal Palace in London, and built in Scotland, it has been a popular place to visit since its construction in 1878. The Palm House is almost 1,000 square meters in size, divided into five sections: the Nave, the Mediterranean House, the Camellia House, the Tropical House, and the Water House.

The Gothenburg Rosarium

Roses have held a prominent position in the park ever since its inauguration, but the rosarium was only created in 1987. It owes its existence to the passion and expertise of a priest, Göte Haglund. Haglund's interest in roses took off in the early 1950s during visits to different rosariums, including Roseraie de l'Haÿ, Sangerhausen and several English gardens. He started collecting and grafting his own roses from materials he gathered from these journeys.

In 1979, now aged 71 and thinking about what to do with his collection, Haglund met Professor Wendelbo, who was head of the Botanical Garden of Gothenburg at the time. Over coffee in Haglund's garden they dreamt of a Swedish rosarium of international standard.

Soon afterwards they persuaded politicians and the head of the Garden Society of Gothenburg, Bernt Finnskog, to share their enthusiasm. The clearance of some old greenhouses in the park had created a space that was perfect. And so began the project of creating The Gothenburg Rosarium.



1. Old roses & mixed plantings at Trädgårdsföreningen, 2006
2. 'Lady Curzon' [Turner, 1901] at Trädgårdsföreningen, Göteborg, 2006
3. *Rosa majalis* (double form) at Trädgårdsföreningen, Göteborg, 2006
4. Old roses & mixed plantings at Trädgårdsföreningen, 2006

Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

Haglund wanted visitors viewing the collection to be able to enjoy the beauty of the plants but also to learn about the evolution of roses in cultivation. This was something he felt was missing in many European rosariums.

With the help of Europe's leading breeders and rose collections, as well as Scandinavian nurseries like Cedergren in Råå and Lykkes in Denmark, he was able to supplement his own extensive collection. When first laid out by designer Elvi Berggren there were about 5,000 different roses in the rosarium.

Since 2000 the Rosarium has been organically maintained. Insecticides are not permitted to harm humans or animals. Birds are encouraged in the park to help keep pests at bay. The roses are grown in borders containing perennials, annuals and bulbs to promote biological diversity and a richer soil, not to mention the aesthetic values of such combinations. The amount of bare soil is kept to a minimum and the roses prosper in the companion planting.

The central lawn of the Rose Oval, where the modern roses are grown, is being converted into a flowering lawn and decorative water features provide ample possibilities for pollinators to thrive. A special garden for pollinators has been created close to the Rose Oval. The wild roses are maintained by the Swedish Rose Society. This is the largest collection of wild roses and hybrids in the Nordic countries.

“The Gothenburg Rosarium wants to show a sustainable way of growing roses and to encourage people to plant them.”

They flower from early spring until late autumn, helping to create the best possible conditions for a rich insect life in the park.

There are three themed gardens – one by Danish garden designer Jane Schul, one by Swedish architect Gert Wingård and designer Nina Thalínsson, and one by Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf – to show how roses can be used in different ways.

Changes

A lot has happened in the Gothenburg Rosarium since the time of Göte Haglund. In the early 2000s, the Garden Society underwent a major restoration and redesign as part of the preparations for an exhibition that took place in the park in 2008. In the Rosarium, many of the modern roses had to give way to the themed gardens, and hundreds of floribundas and polyanthas were deprioritised. The part of the rosarium containing old garden roses was given a new design by Ulf Nordfjäll, resulting in a stylised rose bud layout of beds and paths.

Today the collection consists of 1200 different roses, a number that has been kept constant over the

last fifteen years. There is a balance to achieve between the historical focus of Göte Haglund's vision and the sustainable gardening policy where only roses worth growing in the Swedish climate are represented.

The sustainable gardening policy attracted criticism when it was first introduced over 20 years ago, but the result speaks for itself and shows that it is working, changing the criticism to curiosity and interest. The old garden roses do not receive any watering, with the occasional exception of the repeat flowering groups, and are fed only once a year. It is remarkable how well many of the old roses manage. It is often the more modern 20th-century roses that struggle.

The Gothenburg Rosarium wants to show a sustainable way of growing roses and to encourage people to plant them. Visitors sometimes express reluctance to have roses in their own gardens due to anxiety about pruning and the view that they need constant care and a supply of carefully balanced nutrients. Through demonstrations, tours and the gardeners inviting visitors to observe the daily work in the rosarium, that perception can be changed. Hopefully people visiting the garden are inspired – by the quality of the roses and the setting in which they grow.

Emmelie Georgii is a gardener at the Garden Society of Gothenburg and a Master's student at the Swedish Agricultural University Alnarp.

NORDIC 20 ROSES 24

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Should we preserve faded champions?

The following article was published in the London newspaper, *The Times* on 22 September 1923. It seems to me that the sentiments it expresses are as true today as they were 100 years ago.

Charles Quest-Ritson

THE NEW FASHION IN GARDEN ROSES

A glance through the pages of an old catalogue of roses shows how transient is the popularity of many garden roses. Comparatively few new varieties stand the test of time and, taking the selection list of the National Rose Society as a guide, we may search almost in vain for the champions of thirty years ago. Of 377 roses thought worthy of mention now, only 56 are more than 25 years old, and of these 22 are moss roses, sweet briars, and climbers.

New hybrid bedding roses often run an erratic course, and after a brilliant beginning on the show bench, end on the garden rubbish heap. In our climate the garden test is severe, and to emerge from it successfully a rose must be superlatively good in colour, shape, foliage, and constitution. Fashion and the ceaseless desire

for novelty no doubt account in some measure for the decline of this garden rose or that, but neither fashion nor novelty has any lasting influence on those whose love of plants and flowers is more than skin deep.

In the hands of a keen gardener few really good things are banished except by accident, and a fine rose is not discarded for some petty fault. Sentiment apart, there can be little doubt that the garden roses of today are better than of old. There is a far wider choice of colour, form and habit, and the flowering season has been prolonged till it outlasts that of many perennial plants and flowering shrubs. One exquisite quality – fragrance – is too often missing, but thirty years ago such a display of rose bloom as is now to be seen would have been impossible.

The great change in decorative roses is due to the evolution of the so-called hybrid perpetual rose, the result of the union of the French rose (*R. gallica*) and the cabbage rose (*R. centifolia*) with the rose of China (*R. indica*). Criticism is often fairly directed to the dubious colouring of many latter-day roses, the hot and streaky yellows, cloudy pinks, and reds which are neither scarlet nor crimson, to tints, in fact, of which even the rainbow is innocent. These are the inevitable result of the cross-breeding practised by the raisers of new roses, and if such things cannot be strangled at birth we may be sure their popularity will be fleeting. It is the clean, pure colours which refresh the eye again and again and stand the rigorous test of time.



As for 'the lost champions of 30 years ago', we need to ask ourselves whether any of them were worth keeping. And perhaps we should ask the same question today about roses that have passed out of fashion since, say 1990. Are they worth keeping? Should we try to preserve them? And if we say 'No', because everyone tells us that modern roses are better, are we not saying what rose-lovers have said throughout the last 200 years – which is that old roses are not worth keeping. The illustrations that accompany this article are all of roses that were introduced in 1923. Are they worth keeping? And what about roses introduced in 2023?

1. 'Le Rêve' [Pernet-Ducher, 1923]
2. 'Phyllis Bide' [Bide, 1923]
3. 'Allen Chandler' [Chandler, 1923]
4. 'Vicomtesse Pierre de Fou' [Sauvageot, 1923]

Feel free to send your responses to questriston@aol.com



Images: Charles Quest-Ritson

The plight of Montevideo's important historic rose garden



Inés Díaz de Licandro

The Rosedal Juana de Ibarbourou is located in the heart of Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. It bears the name of the most important female poet born in the country but it is usually called “Rosedal del Prado” because it was built in the Prado neighbourhood, where well-off families used to build their villas (called “quintas”) at the end of the 19th century.

The importance of Montevideo's Rose Garden is based on several facts:

A pioneer in the region

It was the pioneer “roseraie” in South America: a monovarietal garden of roses, inaugurated on 17 November 1912 and followed in 1914 by the Buenos Aires Rose Garden.

A reminder of what was once a world-leading economy

Uruguay was a wealthy new country which had experienced



'Mutabilis' in the
Rose Garden

Image: Inés Díaz de Licandro

explosive demographic growth during the second half of the 19th century. The population saw a 34-fold increase between 1800 and 1908 – growing from 30,800 to 1,043,000. Immigrants represented 17% of the population at the beginning of the 20th century.

Waves of Europeans – mainly French – arrived in the capital looking for wealth and an attractive lifestyle. This flow influenced strongly Montevideo’s elites who lived the “Belle Epoque” spirit and cherished Parisian culture. Even if Uruguay had inherited from Spain its native language, lifestyle, religion, education and neoclassical architecture, the influence of French immigrants had a strong impact on culture, arts, fashion and architectural styles.

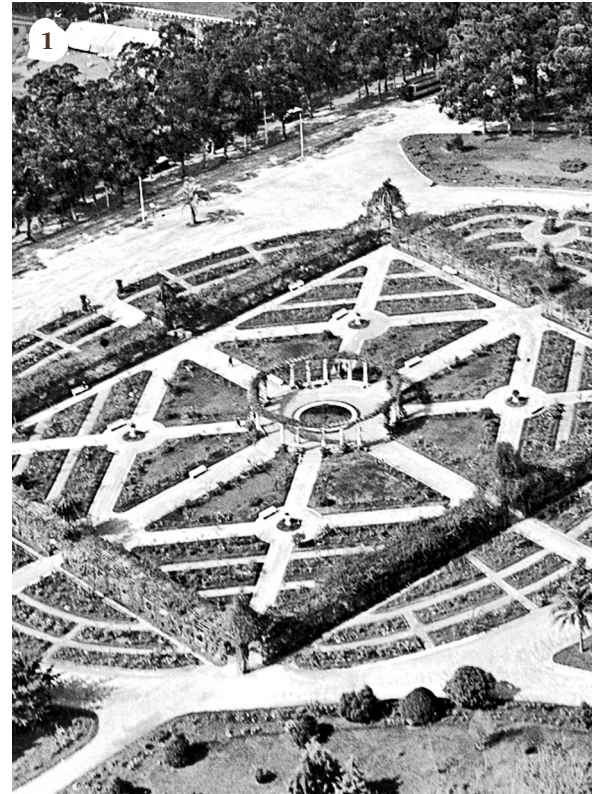
Within a wealthy region, the Uruguayan economy achieved its major growth peak between 1871 and 1895. In 1871 it was the 6th largest economy in the world as measured by gross domestic product and per capita revenue and the 10th in 1895, when Argentina was the top-ranking economy. This situation favoured a strong flow of imports from Europe among which were plants and roses.

The development of horticulture was led by pioneers like Pedro Margat’s *Établissement d’Horticulture et d’Acclimatation* and the Domingo Basso nursery established in Montevideo and with branches in Canelones, San José and in Argentina. At first, Margat imported China roses, *Centifolias* and *Gallicas* from France; some

few decades later, Domingo Basso nursery introduced rose varieties by thousands and offered them through the company’s illustrated catalogues.

The Montevideo City Administration also hired some famous Ecole de Versailles French landscape architects for the city urban design, such as Edouard André, Charles Thays and Charles Racine. Recommended to the City authorities by Adolphe Alphand, Édouard André spent a year in Montevideo and then prepared in 1891 his *Projet d’Embellissement et de Transformation de la ville de Montevideo* (published in the *Revue Horticole*, 1895). This was a project for the redesign of the whole city which, unluckily, was not executed because of its high cost. Racine was also hired by the Montevideo City Administration to work in the public areas and later to design the Rosedal de Montevideo, together with Uruguayan architect Eugenio Baroffio.

Racine’s axonometric design for the Rose Garden as well as its ornaments were influenced by André’s concept for Gravereaux’s ‘L’Hay-les-Roses’ as well as other roseariaes which had recently been inaugurated, such as Bagatelle’s (1908). The rose garden was conceived as a pergola rectangle of 90 by 70 metres, surrounded by an oval display of parterres of 150 by 100 metres. Cupolas and entrances are located at the ends and at the medians of each side of the *Art nouveau* style pergolas. A central doric roundabout with a central statue (*Feux follets*, Héctor



1. Montevideo Rose Garden circa 1919
2. Vintage postcard of ‘Fuegos Fatuos’ in the centre of the Rose Garden
3. ‘Alexandre Girault’ Hybrid Wichurana ornamenting the surrounding pergola of the Rose Garden

Images: Centro de Fotografía, Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo, 54E and Inés Díaz de Licandro

“Racine was also hired by the Montevideo City Administration to work in the public areas and later to design the Rosedal de Montevideo, together with Uruguayan architect Eugenio Baroffio.”



Guimard's copy by Victor Cadarelli) later substituted by a fountain and surrounding parterres ornaments the inside of the pergolas. Stone benches have the L'Haÿ-les-Roses style and drinking fountains were imported from the GHM Foundry in Sommevoire.

A significant rose collection

The Rosedal del Prado comprised a very important collection of different rose varieties: 12,000 shrubs and standard roses were imported for the Rosedal del Prado inauguration, which represented the taste at the turn of the century.

Later, in a list signed by Luis Guillot, then *Director General de Espacios Verdes* of the Montevideo City Administration, 1023 rose names were included of which we have been able to confirm 827 different varieties, including 29 species.

The varieties had been bred in many countries but 93% of the collection came from just six countries – France 55%, Great Britain and Ireland 17%, Germany 10% and the USA 6%. As for the French acquisitions, they came mainly from the Lyons region, and secondly from the Paris and Orléans zones. This offers an indication of the pole positions of the world's rose-producing nations at the time.

Nearly all classes of roses were present in the collection, but mainly (71%) the popular Hybrid Teas (33%), Hybrid Perpetuals

“The varieties had been obtained in many countries but 93% of the collection came from just six countries.”

(19%) and Tea roses (19%), which are especially favoured by the Uruguayan climate.

Of the Hybrid Teas, 26% were purchased from Great Britain and Ireland (e.g. Alexander Dickson II, Hugh Dickson, Samuel Mc Gredy, William Paul and Henry Bennett); 21% from France (e.g. Pernet père, Pernet-Ducher, Guillot père, Guillot fils, André Schwartz, Joseph Bonnaire), 18% from Luxemburg (e.g. Soupert & Notting, Ketten Frères); and 10% from Germany (e.g. Peter Lambert).

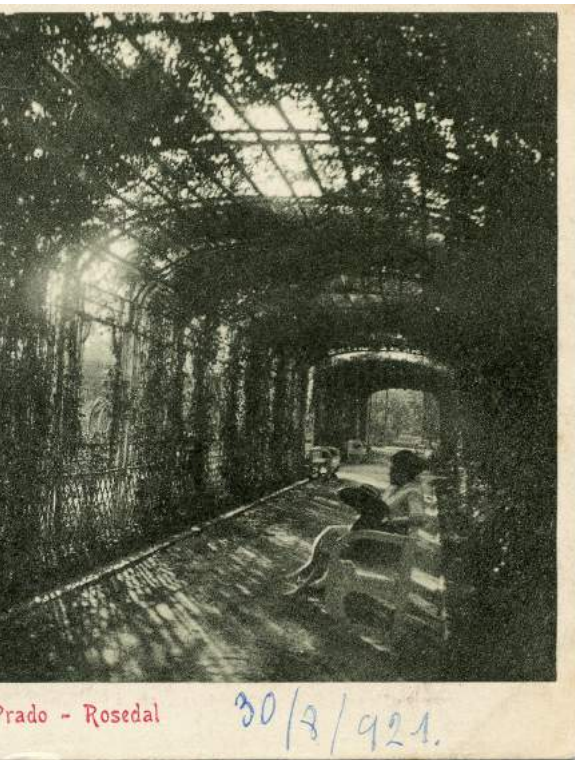
Of the Hybrid Perpetuals, 35% were bought from French growers (e.g. Eugène Verdier fils aîné, Jacques-Julien Margottin, Jean-Pierre Liabaud, Louis Lévêque fils).

Of the Tea roses, 45% came from French suppliers (e.g. Gilbert, Clément and Paul Nabonnand, Guillot père, Guillot fils) and 10% from Luxemburg (e.g. Soupert & Notting, Ketten frères).

Noisette roses and Wichurana hybrids each represented 5% of the collection. Both types of roses grow easily in the Uruguayan climate. Many of the Wichurana hybrids still decorate the pergola and have been identified by the author recently.



Images: Giancarlo Casanello private collection and Inés Díaz de Licandro



Top: Rose Garden pergolas – vintage postcard

Bottom: 'Silver Moon', Hybrid Wichurana ornamenting the pergola next to a cupola

Banksiae roses are still present in the Rosedal del Prado, climbing up the pergolas and cupolas.

According to the 1981 Florence Charter signed by the ICOMOS-IFLA (International Council on Monuments and Sites), the Rosedal is a “historic garden” – a monument consisting of an architectural and horticultural composition with historic interest concerning its origin, its past and its aesthetic and botanic values.

It consists of an arrangement of manufactured structures as well as natural vegetal elements which are living, perishable and also renewable. This character implies that its appearance is a perpetual balance between the cycle of seasons, the growth and decay of nature and the desire of intervention of people involved in its conservation.

After many years of neglect and minimal investment of financial and human resources by the City Administration, the architectural structures and rose bushes of the Rosedal have been seriously affected.

Pergola structures evidence rotten wood and rusted iron. Missing ornaments and identification tags and broken sculptures are just some of the problems. Fewer than 50 original plants are still on the site, many affected by pests and diseases.

For more than four years, I have been advising the Administration and gardeners as an honorary volunteer on the urgent need of the garden’s restoration. Hard work has been done to identify the surviving plants and to reproduce and reintroduce some of those missing.

Unfortunately, the Montevideo Administration has recently intervened, building a modern fence around the historic structures that clashes with the spirit of the site, with aesthetics and with practical aspects.

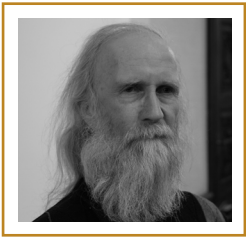
Even if the Administration is urged to organise and finance the restoration process, it must be undertaken as a scientific and continuous long-term project, taking into consideration the Rosedal “spirit”, its history, size and style as well as its fragility and specific features.

Rosarians should express their concern about this situation and also offer help and advice to the Montevideo City Administration for future conservation and preservation actions. A nice challenge!

Inés Díaz de Licandro is a board member of the Asociación Uruguaya de la Rosa. She was Vice-Chairman of the WFRS Heritage and Conservation Committee (2019-2022) and since 2022 has been Vice President of the WFRS for South America. Inés has over 700 roses in her garden in Punta del Este and has undertaken research on heritage roses in more than 50 Uruguayan cities.

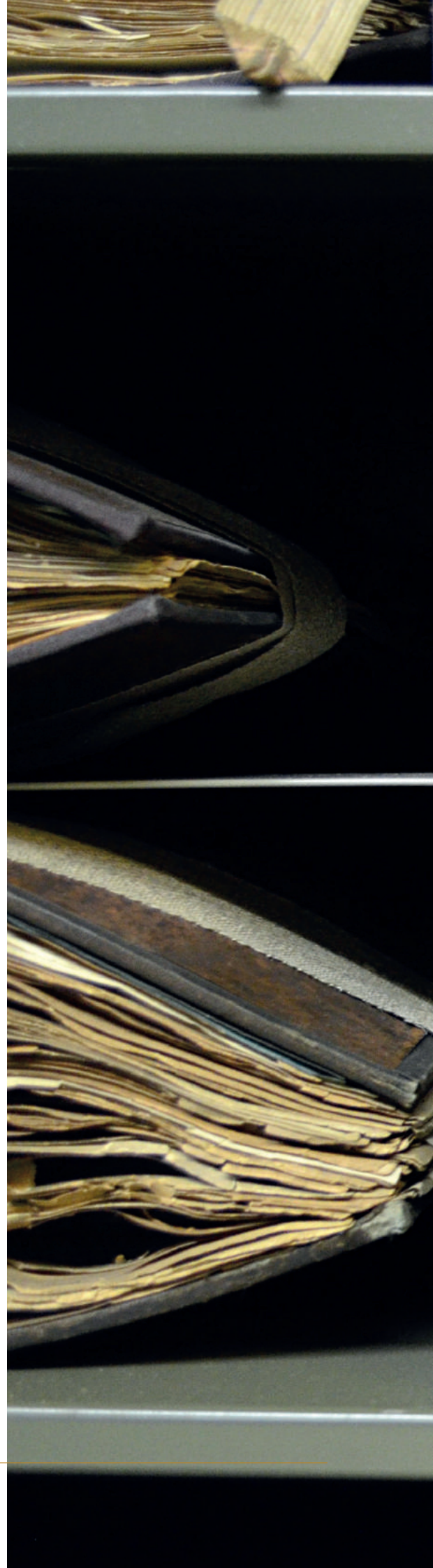


François Crépin and his world monograph of roses



Ivan Hoste

François Crépin
and his world
monograph of
roses





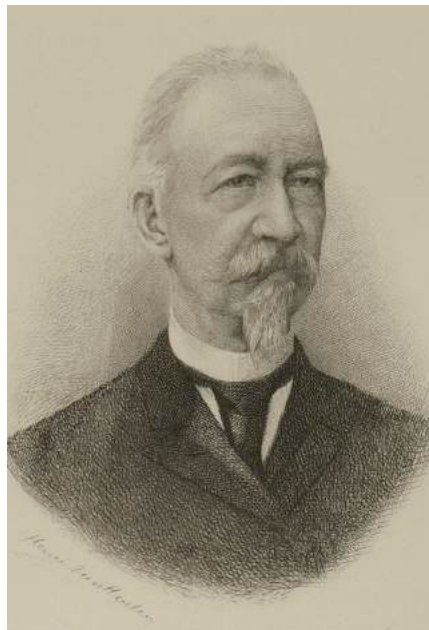
Only weeks after the September days of 1830 that led to the birth of Belgium as an independent nation, François Crépin was born in Rochefort, in the Belgian Ardennes. He grew up in a middle-class, catholic family. At school he did not perform well and his parents therefore sent François to a neighboring village where a young schoolmaster gave him private lessons. Being a knowledgeable naturalist with a small library of natural history books, the schoolmaster, Romain Beaujean, fostered the boy's interest in the local flora.

His limited schooling finished, Crépin had a few jobs, but he soon dropped out, returned to live with his parents... and decided he wanted to become a botanist. He had the good fortune to live in an area with a rich and diversified flora. Before long, he extended his botanical ramblings to include the entire territory of Belgium. He also started building a network of botanists with whom he corresponded, exchanging herbarium specimens and information.

Knowing it was considered a difficult genus and having observed a multitude of forms in his home area, the young botanist found the genus *Rosa* particularly irresistible. He made handwritten copies of important publications on roses. He also copied and partly colored Redouté's beautiful illustrations of roses. Today, this manuscript is in the collection of Meise Botanic Garden.

“He had the good fortune to live in an area with a rich and diversified flora. Before long, he extended his botanical ramblings to include the entire territory of Belgium.”

Engraving of
François Crépin
(1830-1903) by
Henri van Haelen

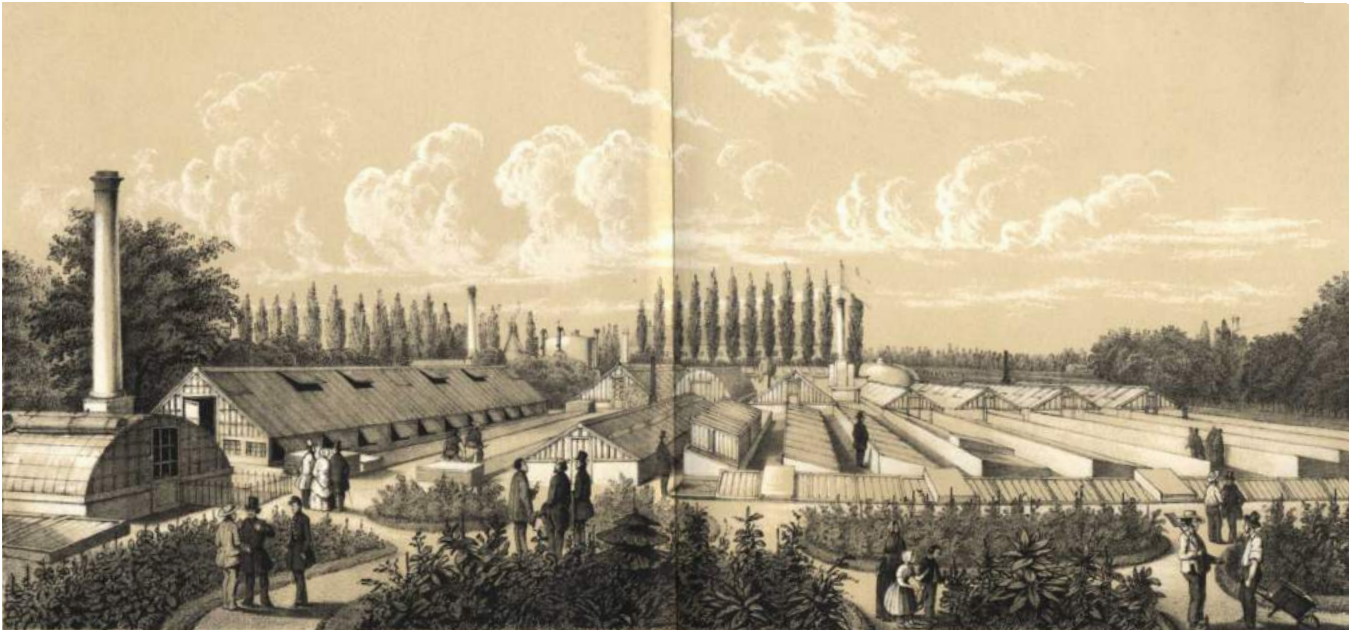


In 1858 Friedrich Schultz included dried herbarium specimens of *Rosa coronata* collected by Crépin in his exsiccatae *Herbarium normale*. The same species was also included in Philipp Wirtgen's *Herbarium Plantae Criticae*, and in 1862 Crépin wrote an extensive note on it for the second fascicle of his own *Notes sur quelques plantes rares ou critiques de la Belgique*.

Into the limelight

With the notes on rare or critical plant species, published between 1859 and 1866, Crépin emerged as a new talent. The outcome of years of botanizing, collecting herbarium specimens and fact gathering through a large network of correspondents, the publication of his *Manuel de la Flore de Belgique*, in 1860, was immediately hailed as a milestone. The *Manuel* brought interest in botany in Belgium out of a long slumber. The book went through five editions and numerous reprints, and remained the standard flora for Belgium until well after World War I.

As a consequence of its publication, Crépin at last found a job to his liking. In 1861 he was offered a position as a teacher of botany at the Ecole d'Horticulture in Gentbrugge, near Ghent. Its founder and director was Louis van Houtte, who was also the owner of a renowned plant nursery and editor of the periodical *Flore des Serres et des Jardins de l'Europe*. For Crépin, this environment offered great opportunities to extend and diversify his circle of botanical acquaintances. Van Houtte received and cultivated



numerous previously unknown and undescribed plants, collected by plant hunters on other continents.

Louis van Houtte's nursery at Gentbrugge near Ghent

In 1862 Crépin was one of the founding members the Société royale de Botanique de Belgique and remained, initially along with its president Barthélemy Dumortier, the dominant figure until shortly before his death. As publications secretary he largely determined the content of its bulletin. In it, he published numerous book reviews and papers, often packed with practical guidelines for further study of the Belgian flora. Particularly from the 1870s, the bulletin contained hundreds of pages dealing with roses.

Reading *On the Origin of Species*

Throughout his career, Crépin frequently discussed the so-called 'species problem'. How exactly do you define a species? And how

“Crépin remained a fixist throughout most of the 1860s: species do not change over time! By the end of the decade, however, he changed his mind.”

many are there? Georg Fenninger, a German friend and ardent evolutionist, lent him a copy of the second edition of *On the Origin of Species*. Crépin read the book and added a long footnote last minute to the manuscript of the *Manuel* in which he summed up his position: “However ingenious this theory may be, it is unlikely to be adopted...”

Crépin remained a fixist throughout most of the 1860s: species do not change over time! By the end of the decade, however, he changed his mind. In a paper in 1869, he wrote that he had finally come to the conclusion that evolution offered a strong framework for his research as a rhodologist, i.e. an expert on roses.

Dumortier's challenge

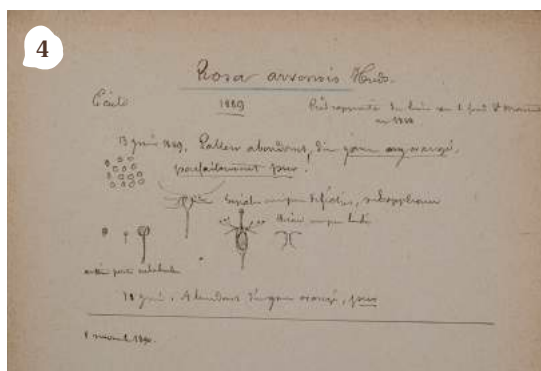
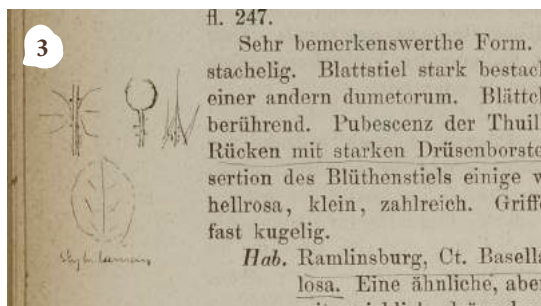
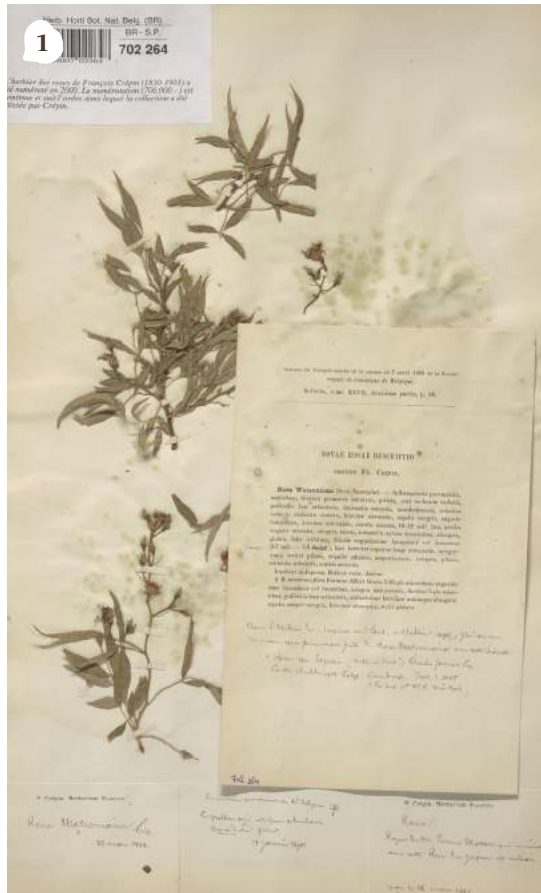
In the late 1860s, Barthélemy Dumortier, president of the

botanical society and éminence grise of Belgian botany, urged Crépin to use his skills to write monographs of difficult genera. Crépin could not resist. His conversion to evolution combined with Dumortier's flattering suggestion made him take a bold step that would define the rest of his career – and life. He was ready to attempt the production of a world monograph of *Rosa*. He estimated it would take him 10 or 12 years.

The preparation would require the combination of several different lines of research: observing living material both cultivated and in the wild, the latter especially in Belgium and, later, in the Alps; studying herbarium specimens from his personal herbarium, but also from collections on loan from institutions or private herbaria; reading and analyzing papers and books, including national and local floras; searching for the correct names and synonyms of the species he accepted; corresponding with other rhodologists; and choosing between positioning himself as a lumper or a splitter of species, in other words: choosing between a broad species concept that leaves room for a limited number of 'good' species or a narrow species concept that opens the door to countless new species.

1869-1882: Primitiae Monographiae Rosarum

Between 1869 and 1882 Crépin published a series of preliminary studies on *Rosa* in the *Bulletin de la Société royale de Botanique de Belgique*. In the meantime, his career had taken a positive turn.





1. Specimen of *R. watsoniana*, with added description as a new species by Crépin
2. Crépin (far left) and other members of the Société Royale de Botanique de Belgique on an excursion to coastal dunes near Nieuwpoort, 1891.
3. Books and reprints, often with notes and small drawings added by Crépin.
4. Drawing of *Rosa Arvensis*
5. Correspondence, notes and manuscripts, some of which were never published.

Images: Crépin Herbarium, BR



In the early 1870s, he exchanged his position as a teacher in Ghent for a job at the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences in Brussels, where he studied the collections of Belgian plant fossils.

A few years later Crépin reached the peak of his career. In 1876 he was appointed director of the botanical garden in Brussels (today's Meise Botanic Garden), a position he would hold until 1901. Over the next quarter of a century he continued work on his world monograph of roses.

Combating the “fantisistes”

Over time, Crépin gradually reduced the many hundreds or even thousands of described species of botanical – or wild – roses to well below one hundred. In that endeavor, he found an ally in the Swiss rhodologist Hermann Christ, another lumpener, with whom he exchanged letters, herbarium specimens and publications on the roses of the Alps.

Both rhodologists had a strong dislike for the work of the splitters, who kept describing new species, based on futile distinguishing characteristics and thereby only making classification more difficult. Crépin had no good word to say for, among others, the French botanist Jean Michel Gandoger, who believed that thousands of different species existed in Europe alone, and whom Crépin – in a manuscript titled *Un rhodologue fantaisiste* and most probably never published – characterized as being afflicted

from “a genuine mental aberration.” With disdain, he referred to the pointless description of thousands of new botanical rose species by Gandoger and others as “buissonnomanie,” with the eventual outcome that every rose bush – in French “buisson de rose” – would be recognized as a separate species.

In 1889, Crépin published a synoptic *Sketch of a new Classification of Roses in the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*. Why, unlike his other publications on the genus *Rosa*, he published this paper in a horticultural periodical and not in, for example, the *Bulletin de la Société royale de Botanique de Belgique* or another botanical journal, we do not know.

We do know, however, that his *Sketch* was well received both by botanists and rose growers who appreciated the clarity it brought in reducing the number of accepted botanical species. It was reprinted in several different journals and languages, including *Journal des Roses* (in 1891) and as a separate booklet. Crépin's classification remained an oft-quoted reference well into the twentieth century.

And the monograph?

But what about the long-running project of a world monograph of *Rosa*? In the 1890s Crépin increasingly showed signs of his inability to complete the major task he had set himself. A publication was announced in the mid-1890s in a leaflet with



added subscription form, yet nothing ever came of it. Throughout these years, the number of unanswered questions and new problems to be solved only seemed to increase in Crépin's head. He needed more time for more research on overlooked topics or for a re-evaluation of earlier results. Furthermore, in the final years of his career he spent a great deal of energy in heated discussions, conducted through private correspondence and published papers, with the young 'new school' plant anatomist Paul Parmentier, who minimized the merits of the traditional morphological work done by 'old school' botanists like Crépin.

In 1901, struggling with health problems, Crépin withdrew from the Société royale de Botanique and resigned as director of the State Botanic Garden in Brussels. He died two years later.

Preparation of specimens for digitization at the Botanic Garden Meise

“DNA research on a sample of specimens from the Crépin herbarium by researchers from Meise Botanic Garden has shown that a significant proportion of this collection can still be used with success today for molecular research.”

After his death, colleagues were convinced that others would finish the job and publish a landmark monograph. George Albert Boulenger, a retired zoologist, took up the challenge. Between 1924 and 1935 he published critical revisions of the roses from Europe and Asia, primarily based on Crépin's huge herbarium of roses.

Crépin's heritage at Meise Botanic Garden

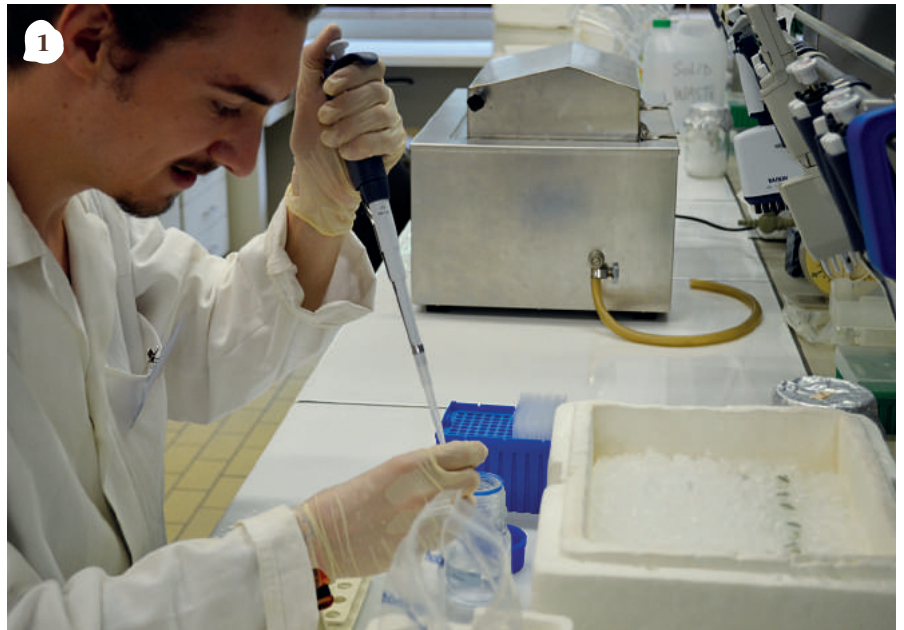
Today, the botanical legacy of François Crépin is preserved at Meise Botanic Garden. For decades, the various and often unique materials it contains were used and consulted only rather sparingly. This documentation includes thousands of letters from rhodologists from all over the world; notes and manuscripts, some of which were never published; books and reprints,

often containing in the margins notes and small drawings added by Crépin; and, above all, a herbarium of roses that contains some 43,000 specimens covering – with rare exceptions – the whole natural range of the genus *Rosa*. Apart from the specimens kept in Meise, his legacy also includes tens of thousands of specimens – often duplicates – preserved by other herbaria worldwide that were once seen, studied and annotated by Crépin.

In the 21st century researchers have shown a revived interest in Crépin's heritage, not in the least due to the development of new molecular techniques that can be used to disentangle the complex evolutionary history – and hence the classification – of the genus *Rosa*.

Recently, funding by The Piaget Fund/World Federation of Rose Societies, the Belgian Royal and National Rose Society, and the Flemish government has allowed Meise Botanic Garden to digitize the specimens from Crépin's herbarium of roses, thereby making this unique collection more easily available for researchers.

Furthermore, DNA research on a sample of specimens from the Crépin herbarium by researchers from Meise Botanic Garden has shown that a significant proportion of this collection can still be used with success today for molecular research. In the future, large-scale research will bring us closer to the construction of the long sought after natural classification of roses.



1. DNA research at Meise Botanic Garden – testing a sample of specimens from Crépin's herbarium of roses has recently yielded promising results for further large-scale research
2. One of Crépin's hand drawn illustrations to accompany his notes on roses.

Images: Library Botanic Garden Meise

Ivan Hoste studied history and later worked at Meise Botanic Garden for a quarter of a century. After his retirement, he remained active there as a volunteer, fascinated among other things by what the institution's rich archives can reveal about the history of Belgian botany in the 19th century.

Saving the Belovich ramblers



Jeff Wyckoff

“Some fortunate circumstances led me to start a small rose garden and pure chance led me to plant some ramblers.”



Lava flows of
canes in Anne
Belovich's garden,
June 2023

Anne Belovich was a remarkable woman. Her early adult life was spent “as a botanist, then with teaching, restoring old wooden sailboats and sailing long distances.” After retirement she and her husband moved to the Pacific Northwest, to a 10-acre wooded plot north of Seattle. There she started a small rose garden with all types of roses but soon became focused on ramblers, a classification that first appeared in the U.S. in *Modern Roses II* from 1940. Prior to that, varieties that were to become ramblers were listed primarily as species hybrids and occasionally as semi-climbers, and even then very few varieties were so classed. Since that time, the American Rose Society (ARS) classification system has changed (I won't say ‘evolved’) over the years and the term “ Rambler” has been in and out of favor. In 1999 the term was dropped in favor of Hybrid Wichuranas and Hybrid Multifloras; in 2019 it was reinstated.

In her book *Ramblers and Other Rose Species Hybrids* Anne relates: “Some fortunate circumstances led me to start a small rose garden and pure chance led me to plant some ramblers, which I knew absolutely nothing about. A developing love affair with ramblers caused me to want more and more of them and eventually led me to specialize in growing them. People I knew were puzzled over my passion for these seemingly outmoded roses that take up so much space and only bloom for a short time each season. My answer is always that no other type of rose will bloom so prolifically and create such spectacular displays as the ramblers.”

Whatever their classification and parentage, Anne considered almost any once-blooming



Image: Teddie Mower

rose with long canes to be a *de facto* rambler, and started her collection accordingly (the exception are those modern roses classed as Large-flowered Climbers, which she covered in a subsequent book). Building her collection involved several trips to Europe, primarily to Sangerhausen, getting cuttings through the U.S. Department of Agriculture restrictions and quarantines, as well as scouring the country's rose gardens for ramblers of American origin. The result of years of collecting was an assemblage of over 500 varieties, all of which and more are discussed and photographed in her 2016 book mentioned above, published by the ARS and available through Amazon and other sources.

A wide collection

Anne Belovich's collecting methods could be described as omnivorous. She was not looking specifically for varieties that were suitable to the Pacific Northwest, were new or not in commerce in the United States or came from specific hybridizers. She wanted them all. While the great majority of ramblers are of European origin, a number of American hybridizers have contributed roses to this family, many of which are available in nurseries throughout the European continent. Notable among these are 'Hiawatha', bred by Michael Walsh from 'Crimson Rambler' × 'Paul's Carmine Pillar', Dr. Walter van Fleet's 'American Pillar', a species hybrid from 1902, and 'Long John Silver' from Michael Horvath, a cross of a *R.*

setigera seedling × 'Sunburst', a yellow Hybrid Tea.

As she advanced in years, Anne became concerned about the future of her ramblers, as her son and daughter-in-law lived in the Midwest and had no plans to relocate. In 2012 she found a potential home for her collection – a large acreage in Texas called the Chambersville Heritage Rose Garden, 12 acres of land north of Dallas owned by nurseryman Dean Oswald. Cuttings destined for the garden were sent to Florida Southern college and propagated by horticulture students under the direction of Professor Malcolm Manners. Initially, 56 varieties of a planned 200 were sent to Chambersville for planting during the winter of 2013. After a couple years these were all well established and were trained on 15-ft steel towers on the property. Sadly, Anne passed away in 2021 at the age of 97.

Unfortunately, the Chambersville garden was to undergo some difficulties. The first of these was an epidemic of Rose Rosette Disease (RRD). Apparently little known in Europe, it is an incurable disease spread by a microscopic mite that has become the scourge of rose growers in the American eastern and southern states. It causes a reddish distortion of a plant's foliage known as witches' broom, as well as flower distortion, loss of plant vigor and eventually the death of the plant.

Fortunately, Oswald and his friend, Claude Graves, the Rose Garden



1. 'La Bonne Maison' [Masquelier, 1997], one of the roses introduced to the United States by Anne from her ramblings in Europe.
2. Example of Rose Rosette Disease.
3. 'Hiawatha' [Walsh 1904] – an example of a fine American-bred rambler included in Anne's fine collection
4. English roses on the front porch of Anne Belovich's home

Images: Malcolm Manners, CC BY-SA 3.0, Kerry Wixted, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wilrooij, CC BY-SA 4.0 and Anne Belovich

“The result of years of collecting was an assemblage of over 500 varieties.”



Curator of the Chambersville site and the man who started the ball rolling by setting up and overseeing the initial transfer of plants to Texas, anticipated the possibility of RRD infection and propagated and stored cuttings of the collection in a protected location. This was an inventory area about 1,000 ft downwind from the high infection area and protected by a line of large trees. Over the next few years they could find only 3-5 RRD infected roses in the inventory area, and these were immediately destroyed. In reaction to the RRD infection the inventory was increased to a minimum of two plants for each rose in the collection. Approximately half of the ramblers were rooted every year, and inventory plants were destroyed, typically after three to four years when they got too big to maintain economically in the inventory, and replaced with one-to two-year-old cuttings.

Further challenges

The Belovich ramblers were to undergo further trials and tribulations. In the winter of 2021 a series of below-zero Fahrenheit temperatures damaged many of the plants. The initial outlook for survival was optimistic, but soon dieback began to develop. As well, a number of larger-than-usual cuttings had been taken in the previous fall to compensate for losses from Rose Rosette Disease and many of those plants had gotten too large to be maintained in the backup inventory. Fortunately, the rooted cuttings

“In 2012 she found a potential home for her collection – a large acreage in Texas called the Chambersville Heritage Rose Garden.”

were still in the greenhouse during the freeze. Unfortunately, that spring brought heavy rains and flooding in the garden lake, which, with a plugged drain, rose by c. 10 ft and submerged many of the plants in three ft of water for three weeks before subsiding. As things turned out, the losses were minimal, and those varieties were to be replaced with cuttings taken earlier.

As things were finally settling down with the rambler inventory, another dramatic event occurred which seriously affected the Belovich Collection. Pressure from real-estate development around the Chambersville Tree Farm put the future of the garden in jeopardy, and it was decided to plan on making the American Rose Center, home of the ARS in Shreveport, Louisiana, the permanent home of the rambler collection.

In June of 2016 a meeting of the National Clean Plant Network Rose was held in Shreveport, at the American Rose Center. During the meeting ARS President Pat Shanley received a phone call from Steve Hutton, CEO of Star Roses and Plants, informing her that those attending the meeting,





1. Chambersville dedication L to R: Pamela Graves, Dean Oswald, Anne Belovich, Stephen Scaniello, Carol Oswald and Claude Graves
2. Anne planting the Anne Belovich rose hybrid by Kim Rupert at the Chambersville dedication of the Anne Belovich Rambler Garden
3. Volunteers tying in Belovich ramblers at Shreveport
4. A fine rambling rose at Shreveport

Images: American Rose Society and Anne Belovich Family



including a representative from his company, were concerned, if not disturbed, by the condition of the rose garden. He cautioned that without improvements thereto rose breeders and producers would be loath to donate plants to the garden as they had done in the past and offered to help the ARS rectify this problem.

This led to a multi-year project that came to be known as the Great Garden Restoration. However, while both modern and heritage roses were planned for the garden, ramblers were not, since there was initially no source for their collection nor garden space allocated for their planting and display. However, by the end of 2021, Great Garden Restoration Chair and ARS Past President Marilyn Wellan was to write: “We have a number of ramblers featured in the garden already; they are located on the Rambler Towers at the garden’s entrance, at McFarland Plaza, and at the newly created Claude and Pamela Graves Secret Garden, which will eventually feature a 90ft wall of ramblers.”

And so the transfer began. Since c. 300 mature plants reaching 15ft and beyond were not amenable to moving, cuttings were started well in advance. These were established in a fenced nursery area at the ARS garden for a growing period of two to three years in containers, in which they could eventually be moved to the ARS Rambler Garden. The fence not only kept the deer out but also provided an overhead

“It is estimated that just over 300 identified ramblers were sent to Chambersville and are now in the process of being transferred to Shreveport.”

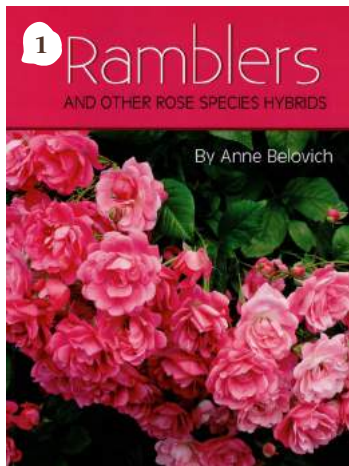
cable grid which stabilizes the 10ft growing stakes as well as supports a drip irrigation system. And the beat went on. It is estimated that just over 300 identified ramblers were sent to Chambersville and are now in the process of being transferred to Shreveport. However, Anne’s property, at its peak, was reported to contain over 500 varieties. At present her family is working with Anne’s garden maps, some of which are virtually unreadable, to find, if not positively identify, the remaining group and get cuttings off to Shreveport where the identification process can continue.

As of September of 2023 there are 19 large ramblers growing in the gardens at the American Rose Center; six varieties are growing on towers on the entry driveway, four on towers in the McFarland Plaza entrance to the new Clockworks Gardens, and nine on a 90ft long, 10ft high fence in the Secret Garden. Cuttings of all 350 ramblers are growing in two pilot gardens and an additional 12 towers have been authorized for construction this fall. However, perhaps the most important development is that the ARS has entered into a tentative

agreement with a commercial nursery in Oregon to purchase cuttings of the Rambler collection on a limited basis for propagation and resale. It is hoped to develop similar agreements with other American nurseries through a *Save the Ramblers* project so that eventually a large portion of Anne Belovich’s priceless collection can be disseminated.

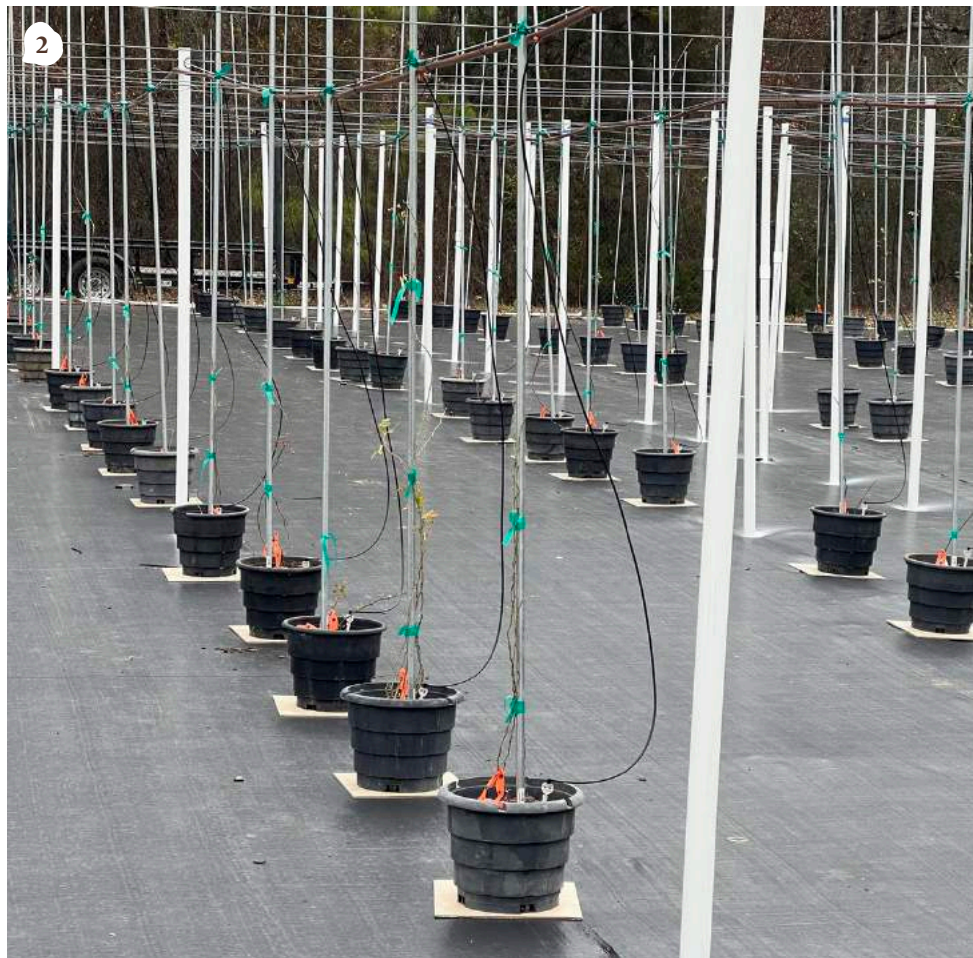
As you can see, the amount of time, effort and money that has gone into saving the Belovich ramblers over the last 10+ years has been prodigious, none more so than that of Dean Oswald and Claude Graves. While the American Rose Center property is being “massaged” to hold the additional cuttings, Mr. Graves is building a propagation facility at his home in Dallas that is capable of rooting over 400 cuttings. Not only the ARS but the entire world of roses owes a debt of gratitude to Claude Graves for his ongoing efforts in preserving the ramblers of Anne Belovich.

Jeff Wyckoff is a past president of the American Rose Society. He is author of the *Better Homes and Garden* book, *Rose Gardening*.



1. Anne's classic book on Ramblers, published in 2016.
2. Potted Belovich ramblers at Shreveport
3. Belovich ramblers beds at Shreveport

Images: American Rose Society





Anne Belovich inspecting her roses, which she observed closely

Image: Teddie Mower

Anne Belovich – a life well lived

Charles Quest-Ritson offers a personal profile
of Anne Belovich



Charles
Quest-Ritson

Anne Belovich was an energetic and knowledgeable rosarian who had an extraordinary life. She was born in 1924 and brought up on the central California coast at Morro Bay. She ran away from home to marry her first husband, who became a pilot during World War 2. His Air Commando Group was tasked with supporting America's Chindit allies, the British and Indian troops who were operating in Burma against the Japanese occupying forces. His death when returning from a successful mission left her a 19-year-old widow and the mother of a newly born son, Rick Mower, now a retired professor of microbiology.

Faced with bereavement and such responsibility at a young age, Anne realised that she had to find her own way in life. She trained as a botanist and worked as a teacher. Many years later, she married again and lived with her new husband on a 40-ft ketch called the *Narhval* in San Diego harbour. Eventually, they decided to buy an apartment, move ashore and sell the boat. Several years later, she heard that the *Narhval* had been put up for sale again in New Zealand. Anne decided to buy it and sail it back to California. She bought a used sextant, learned to navigate, got together a small, all-male crew of volunteers and flew to Auckland

to start the journey home. The story of this adventure she told in *A Voyage of Determination* (2019).

When she was already well into her sixties, Anne embarked on two very different ventures. One was to create a successful real estate design and development business, and the other was to build a house for herself on a 10-acre (5-ha) plot at Stanwood, north of Seattle in Washington. She and her husband moved there to be close to winter sports centres but her sister gave her a plant of the vigorous Hybrid Tea 'Elina', after which Anne started to plant David Austin's 'English' roses, quickly followed by heritage varieties, whose beauty she found irresistible. Then she heard about a rose festival at Heirloom Old Garden Roses in Oregon that was accompanied by a special sale of rambler roses. "The rambler roses were a really good price," she said. "I came back with a truckload of them which I put on the fences around the property." She also trained some of them to run up trees and liked the illusion they gave of making the trees come into flower.

Most rambler roses flower only once, but very profusely. Anne was so enchanted by them – and especially by the sheer abundance of their flowering – that she sought to acquire as many as possible from nurserymen in the United States. Then she began travelling to Europe to buy them from nurseries in Italy, Belgium, France, Germany and Britain, and she visited the great collections of rambling roses in old European gardens, from which she



1. The vigorous Hybrid Tea, 'Elina', which sparked Anne's rose passion
2. 'Papa Rouillard' (Turbat, 1923)
3. 'Siwa' (Geschwind, 1910), Rosenkultivarium Baden. Anne was the first to introduce 'Papa Rouillard' and 'Siwa' to the United States

Images: Etienne Bouret, Susanne Weber, Vienna and Anne Belovich Family



“Her sister gave her a plant of the vigorous Hybrid Tea 'Elina', after which Anne started to plant David Austin's 'English' roses, quickly followed by heritage varieties, whose beauty she found irresistible.”



“When she reached the age of 90, Anne realised that nothing remained for her to do except to put her enthusiasm for rambling roses at the disposal of others by writing a book about the cultivars she had collected.”

obtained budwood and cuttings. The result of her four trips to Europe was that she expanded her list of ramblers at Stanwood to some 320 cultivars – the largest collection in North America – and supplemented it with many other vigorous shrubs and climbing roses.

When she reached the age of 90, Anne realised that nothing remained for her to do except to put her enthusiasm for rambling roses at the disposal of others by writing a book about the cultivars she had collected. She gave a wide interpretation to the word “ Rambler” and included a number of vigorous shrub roses and even some truly modern roses like Viru Viraraghavan’s Hybrid Giganteas. In fact, she went further still, and added some Hybrid Persicas and even *Rosa persica* itself, which could never be described as a Rambler. Why did she incorporate so many non-ramblers in her book? Because they are wonderful, exciting roses and she wanted her readers to know about them and, perhaps, to grow them. She also noticed

that previous publications on the subject did not carry as many illustrations as their readers might expect, and so she made sure that almost every one of her ramblers was clearly described and properly illustrated with a photograph that captured its unique character. Many of those pictures were taken in such gardens as Wilhelmshöhe, Sangerhausen and Bad Langensalza in Germany, the Fineschi garden in Italy and the Royal National Rose Society’s garden, now lost, at St Albans in England. Her book *Ramblers and Other Rose Species Hybrids* was published by the American Rose Society in 2016 and is still available from Amazon.

Anne’s book about ramblers was only the first of five that she wrote about roses. The other are: *Large Flowered Climbing Roses* (2019), *Gallica Roses* (2020), *Moss Roses* (2021) and *The Little Book of Alba Roses* (2021). All were written in her 90s and all are still in print. She died secure in the knowledge that, thanks to the efforts of distinguished American rosarians Malcolm Manners and Stephen Scaniello, her legacy would live on in the Chambersville Heritage Rose Garden in Texas. Better still, as Jeff Wyckoff has told us, those roses now flourish in the American Rose Society’s newly restored garden at Shreveport, Louisiana.

Anne Belovich wrote six books all were written and published when she was in her 90s.

All books are available to purchase on Amazon.



Book review

Roses in the Fire of Spring: Better Roses for a Warming World & Other Garden Adventures

by M.S. 'Viru' Viraraghavan and Girija Viraraghavan

Review by Charles Quest-Ritson

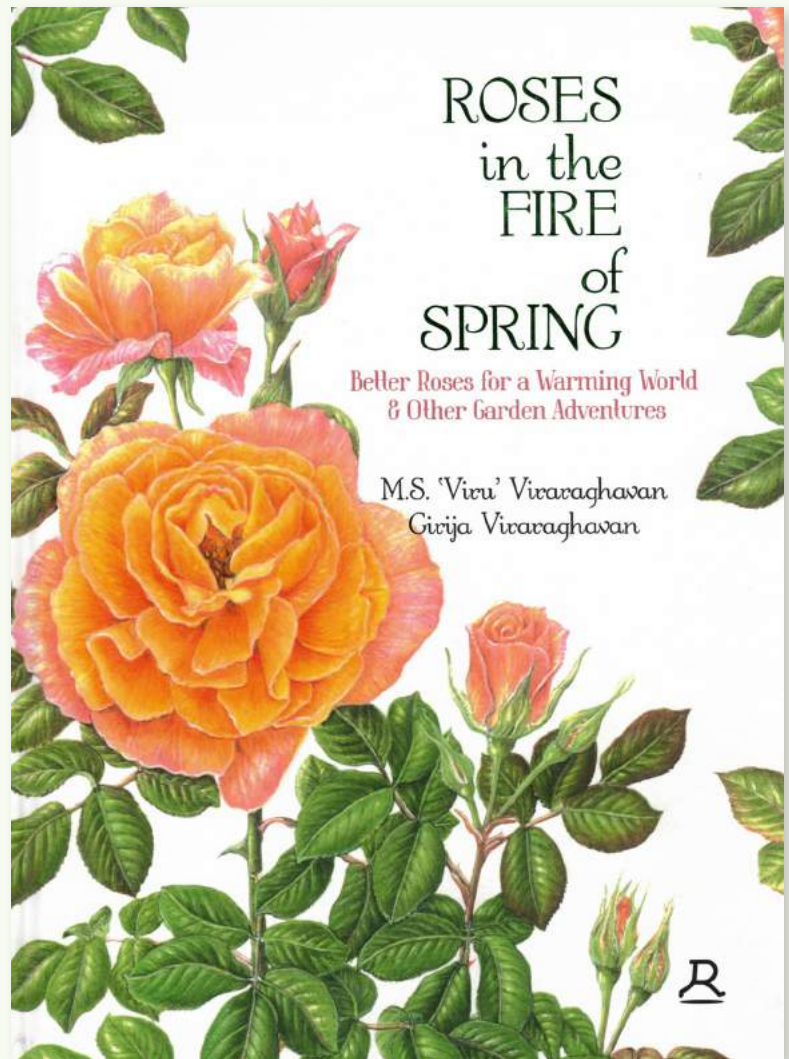
**Roses in the Fire of Spring:
Better Roses for a Warming
World & Other Garden
Adventures**

by M.S. 'Viru' Viraraghavan
and Girija Viraraghavan

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Copies are available on
www.amazon.in and directly
from the authors on
veerugij9517@gmail.com

The price is US \$45, UK £40
or Euros €40, plus postage.



Come, fill the Cup, and **in the Fire of Spring**
 Thy Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
 The Bird of Time has but a little way
 To fly - and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

[Omar Khayyam, 1048 – 1131, translated by
 Edward Fitzgerald, 1809 – 1883, and first published in 1859]

This is a magnificent book that will be of interest not just to the authors' many friends but to everyone who is involved in the history of roses and intrigued by the future direction of rose-breeding. It is also a testimony to a long and happy marriage between Viru, the shy and studious rose-breeder, and Girija, his super-intelligent, gregarious wife.

Viru Viraraghavan is one of those people who seem to have been born with a fine paintbrush in his hand for the transfer of pollen to pistils. It is clear that, from an early age, he has been a compulsive hybridiser. No matter what genus he looked at, Viru saw infinite possibilities for its improvement. Gerberas were the subject of one of his early hybridisation programmes and there are pictures of some of his hybrids in this comprehensively illustrated book. He was also happy to sow open-pollinated seed of magnolia hybrids to see how their seedlings would turn out. And he hybridised the flowers of some enormous plants of *Rhododendron arboreum* subsp. *nilagiricum* that grow wild around their house at Kodaikanal with complex hybrid pollens from the American Rhododendron Society. Then he

would return in the autumn to collect the seed.

Roses have always been his great love, ever since his father gave him a collection of China roses that he had found during his travels. Viru was influenced by the Bihari nurseryman B.S. Bhattacharji, who specialised in roses and had strong views – which he set out in his book *Rose Growing in the Tropics* – on what should be grown in India. They chimed with Viru's own observation that English and American roses, bred to withstand cold winters, were not suitable for tropical or subtropical climates. Viru's aim has always been to breed roses that flourish in climates – even in truly tropical situations – where other roses will not adapt. In his early years, he chose a mixture of Tea roses, China roses, Noisettes and modern roses for his crosses. And he had some successes among the seedlings that he carefully selected for their performance in the savannah-type climate of southern India.

As early as in 1965, Viru saw the possibilities inherent in *Rosa clinophylla*, a denizen of near-tropical swamps and marshes in

Assam and Bangladesh, but he did not receive a plant of this species until 1985. No other rose grows in water but Viru understood the enormous promise of its hybrids as roses for tropical regions with high humidity. And not until 1991 was he able to collect *Rosa gigantea* from Manipur; in the event, this was the species that brought him the most extensive and speedy results. And it is his Gigantea hybrids that offer a subtropical alternative to the swathes of modern roses introduced by breeders in the northern hemisphere. The hardiness and adaptability to different climates of these new hybrids is inevitably unknown when they are first introduced, but it is a surprise to find that they are often hardy in such climates as cool, wet England where one might have supposed them too tender.

Viru retired early, in 1980, to dedicate himself to rose-breeding. That was when he and Girija bought their present house at Kodaikanal in the Western Ghats, at an altitude of 2,000 metres, with a monsoon-influenced, subtropical highland climate – now a place of pilgrimage for the many friends and rose-lovers they have met in the course of their travels. At one point, the Viraraghavans bought a farm to test their roses near the southern town of Hosur in Tamil Nadu, which has a tropical savannah climate. But it was difficult to manage at a distance and eventually they had to sell it when the water supply failed, due to excessive

extraction by local farmers and industries. On the other hand, they recently acquired a property in Pondicherry, where the hot, humid climate will make a suitable test-ground for Viru's hybrids of *R. clinophylla*.

One extraordinary fact that emerges from this book is that India's horticultural power couple, so international in their outlook, did not leave India to travel abroad for the first time until 1991. And yet they have a deep understanding of other cultures, history, religions and food. Both of them have English as their mother tongue. Both come from families that contributed much to the service of India, whether before or after independence in 1947. Girija's grandfather Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was an Oxford don, a Professor of Philosophy who was elected Vice-President of India in 1952 and President from 1962 to 1967. In 1963, Queen Elizabeth gave him honorary membership of the British Royal Order of Merit, whose members are restricted to 24 in number.

The bigwigs of the WFRS did not know of Viru's work – and its importance – until Helga Brichet heard him speak at a local conference in Jaipur in January 2000. "Why was Viru's work with *R. gigantea* and *R. clinophylla* not better known?" she asked. Helga was, at that time, president of the WFRS, and promptly invited Viru and Girija to speak at the World Convention in Houston, Texas, four months later. Such was the success of their presentation at that convention that the Viraraghavans'

fame and renown soon echoed all through the world of roses. Now they are keen travellers, always curious, always alive to things of beauty or cultural interest. Much of the book is taken with their visits abroad after their "discovery" in 2000. They are indefatigable garden-visitors with an impressive knowledge of plants of every sort. They attend as many of the international rose conferences as possible and join in every activity; everyone knows them and loves them. And they give thanks for the friendship of rose-lovers and garden-owners that their late-flowering fame has brought them.

This is a long book, with much of interest not just to rose-lovers but to readers who dream of travelling to see plants and gardens all over the world. Readers unaccustomed to the world of Indian books may claim to recognise small but irritating faults but everyone else will know that the authors, their editors, the printers and publishers are all to be congratulated for the high standards of this publication. It is beautifully produced, with woodcuts of flowers and leaves at the page corners. It is large, heavy, and a joy to open at any page, though best read through from the beginning as a horticultural biography – the autobiography of two passionate plant-lovers. The focus is always on their roses, but Girija's acute intelligence and sense of humour bubble up at every point. She misses nothing, finds beauty in almost everything. And they have been members for many years of the Royal Horticultural Society in England, the Rhododendron, Camellia and

Magnolia Group and the International Magnolia Society, based in the United States.

"Apart from roses," Girija writes, "we are interested in all plants, and grow a variety of trees and shrubs. We have, over the years, made a collection of rare plants from across the world. Our climate is ideal for magnolias, camellias, some rhododendrons and many other subtropical trees." They have travelled to Sikkim to attend a Rhododendron conference and to see species in the wild; Viru's description of the beauty and abundance of the plants they saw is exhilarating – white forms of *Rh. ciliatum*, pink *Rh. glaucophyllum*, forests of *Rh. campanulatum* and very tall plants of the giant-leaved *Rh. grande*. Magnolias are another interest: they managed to devote a trip to Thailand to see subtropical species that are almost unknown in Western countries – if you would like to make the acquaintance of *Magnolia sirindhornae*, *M. moulmainensis*, *M. rajaniana* or red-flowered *M. garrettii*, this is the book for you.

Orchids and lilies are among their other special interests and the book mentions their encounters with rare species in these and many other genera that they have encountered in the wild. They recall the thrill of finding *Rosa hirtula* at Hakone in Japan, for example, and deciduous *Rhododendron nipponensis* on Mt Fuji. Their knowledge of plants, their botany and their cultivation is gobsmacking – and yet, they carry their learning lightly so that their conversation is always a delight.



1. 'Amber Cloud' [Viraraghavan, 2006] at Santa Maria, 2022
2. 'Ahimsa' syn. Orient Silk [Viraraghavan, 1996]
3. 'Frank Kingdon Ward' [Viraraghavan, 2012] at Magliano Sabina, 2016
4. 'Rebecca's Choice' [Viraraghavan, 2012] in Emanuele Dotti's garden at Magliano Sabina, 2022

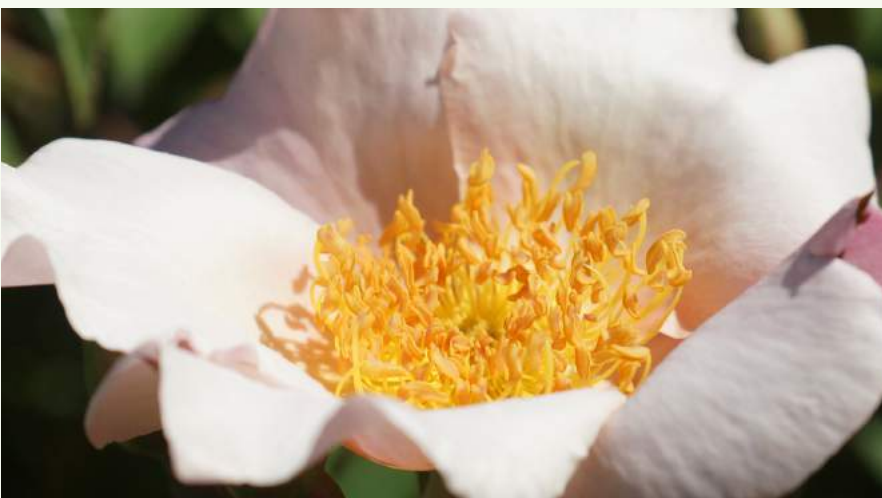
Images: Viraraghavan



And the conversational style of the book is underpinned by great knowledge.



But, of course, it is a book for rose-lovers and for all who have met or listened to Viru and Girija lecturing at international conferences. The narrative is driven by enthusiasm and enjoyment of people, places and plants. There is never an unkind word about any of them. Girija is invariably full of praise and appreciation. There is an Appendix to the book that lists all the roses they have bred and introduced. Each has a full description and many are photographed as illustrations. The Viraraghavans are most generous in the way that they name their roses for their friends and give specimens to gardens, nurserymen and institutes all over the world. And this also makes good sense because it enables them to discover how their hybrids will fare in different climates and conditions, and serves to make them better known.



There is only one way to sum up this book: buy it!

Book review

Historische Rosen im Europa Rosarium Sangerhausen: Noisette – und Bourbon-Rosen

by Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer

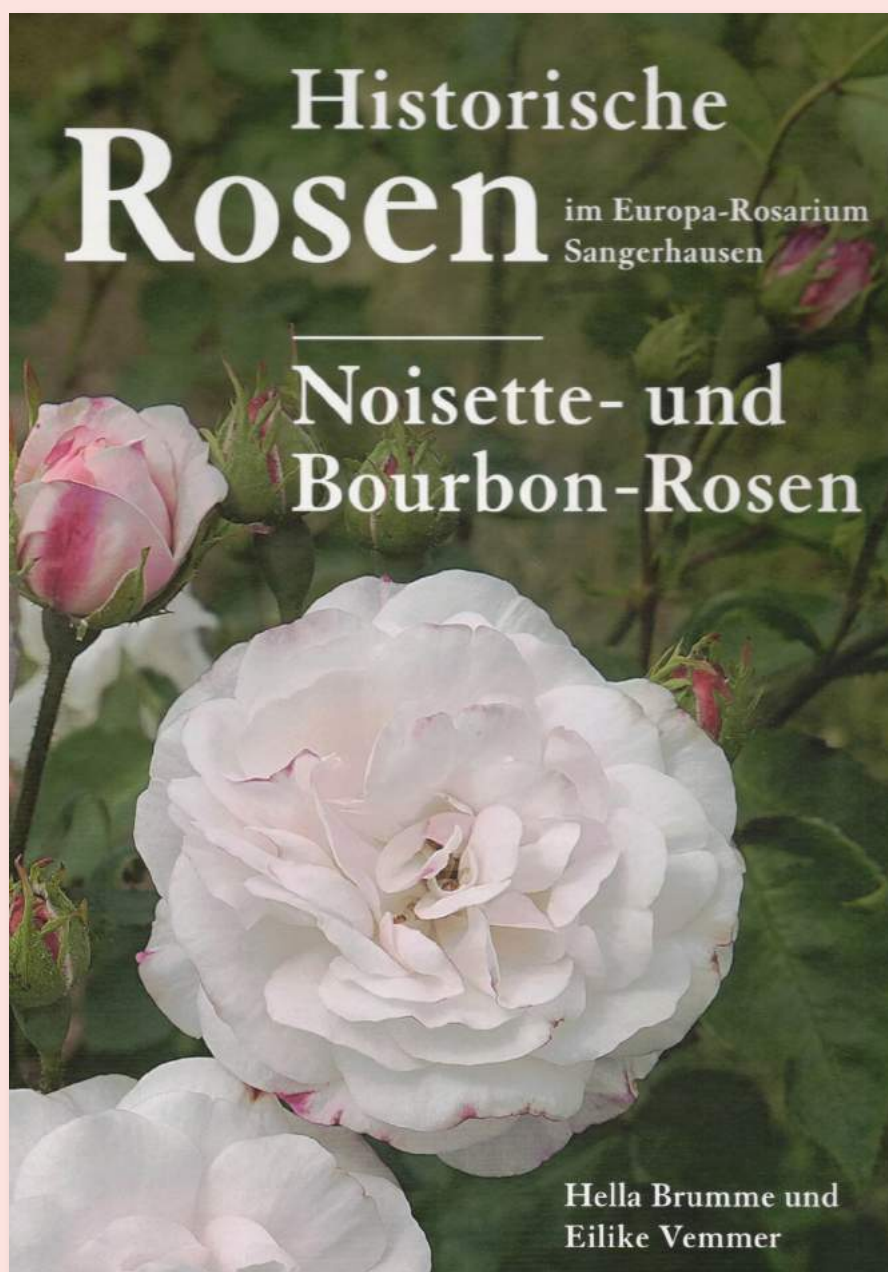
Review by Charles Quest-Ritson

This is an important book, and the publishers hope that in due course it will be translated into English. Here is how the authors introduce it:

‘At the beginning of the 19th century two new classes of roses emerged outside Europe. The first repeat-flowering climbing rose, “Rosa Noisettiana” grew in South Carolina, USA. On the other side of the world, on the Island of Réunion, the former Île de Bourbon, in the Indian Ocean, there appeared “Rosa Bourboniana”, the first truly repeat-flowering shrub rose. Both groups of roses have the Chinese rose ‘Old Blush’ as a parent. Further breeding with both groups during the 19th century took place mainly in France. With crosses between both groups, many cultivars were classified both as Noisettes and as Bourbons. We have described the rose groups, and identified them as far as possible, because many of these cultivars are threatened with extinction and are carefully conserved in the Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen.’

Hella Brumme and Eilike Vemmer are among Germany’s most distinguished rosarians. Helle was for many years director of the Rosarium at Sangerhausen and managed its transition from a Communist trophy-garden to a success story in the free economy of unified Germany. Throughout her career, she studied the roses in her collection and, later on, recorded details on a database. Eilike is the daughter of the late Dr. Wernt and Hedi Grimm who created the beautiful and extensive Island Rose Garden in the grounds of the Unesco royal Schloss Wilhelmshöhe near Kassel. She is an expert on the history of roses in cultivation.

This book follows the format of the authors’ first book on roses, [see BAON September 2020] which described and illustrated all the Gallicas, Damasks, Albas, Centifolias and Moss roses in Sangerhausen’s collection. Each of the two sections, Noisettes and Bourbons, is introduced by a history of its origins and development by 19th-century breeders. And each cultivar has a page to itself, with two or three photographs



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by Hella Brumme
and Eilike Vemmer
[Kosmos, 40,00€]

(sometimes more), almost of them taken by Hella Brumme to illustrate the bush, the buds and the flowers. Each cultivar carries a full description, with accurate and detailed accounts of its growth, leaves, flowers, colour scent and history, as well as the characteristics that distinguish it from others with which it might otherwise be confused.

The book also has useful appendices that could only have been written by studying such a comprehensive collection of roses as Sangerhausen's. The first lists and compares a group of very similar hybrids between 'Mlle Blanche Laffitte' [Pradel, 1851] and 'Sappho' [Vibert, 1847]. These are: 'Lady Emily Peel' [Lacharme, 1862], 'Baronne de Maynard' [Lacharme, 1865], 'Coquette des Blanches' [Lacharme, 1865], 'Boule de Neige' [Lacharme, 1867] and 'Perle des Blanches' [Lacharme, 1872]. Also shown, for comparison, are two seedlings of 'Mlle Blanche Laffitte' whose pollen parents is not known (but may also have been 'Sappho'): 'Mme Massot' [Lacharme, 1856] and 'Mme François Pittet' [Lacharme, 1877]. All have fully double, medium-sized, white petals with flecks of red on the buds. The authors print the descriptions of them in three old nurseries and three mid-19th-century books. Then they illustrate the roses grown under these names at Sangerhausen – 'Coquette des Blanches' is represented by two

different cultivars – and leave the reader to decide whether the descriptions and photographs match.

Duplication is often another problem that for rose-lovers face. The authors recount that there were five cultivars grown at Sangerhausen under different names which all turned out to be 'Mme Isaac Pereire' [Garçon, 1876]. So, if you grow 'Souvenir de Louis Gaudin' [Trouillard, 1864], 'Bouquet de Flore' [Bizard, 1839], 'Mme Charles Baltet' [Verdier, 1865], 'Marquis de Balbiano' [Lacharme, 1855] or 'Mme Charles Detreaux' [Vigneron, 1895], you may wish to check whether they are correctly named. And, very helpfully, Brumme and Vemmer give descriptions of what these cultivars *should* look like.

A similar appendix compares a group of Noisettes that are often confused in commerce and in gardens – 'Chromatella', 'Solfatare' and 'Rêve d'Or' – and adds a key to assist in distinguishing them.

The authors also comment on the collection of Bourbon roses made by an English farmer from Essex called Victor Lewis and donated to Sangerhausen in 2011. Without going into great detail, it is clear that a fair number of them were mis-named. It follows that one of the great achievements of this new book on Bourbons and

Noisettes is that there will be fewer nomenclatural mistakes in future.

Finally, and very usefully, the authors have found the answer to a puzzle that has bemused rose-lovers for more than 100 years. In 1916, the French breeder Rémi Tanne launched a gorgeous, sweet-scented striped rose that he had acquired and to which he gave the working name of "Honorine de Brabant". Its true name has eluded rosarians ever since, but Brumme and Vemmer show that it can now be firmly identified as 'Gros Provins Panaché', introduced in 1855 by the prolific French breeder François Fontaine.

Whether or not it is eventually translated into English, this will remain the standard monograph for many years. And for readers who do not read German, the book is worth buying for its pictures alone.

1. 'Coquette des Blanches' [Lacharme, 1871] at Cavriglia, 2021
2. 'Gros Provins Panachée' [Fontaine, 1866] syn. "Honorine de Brabant" at L'Haj-les-Roses
3. 'Mme Isaac Pereire' [Garçon, 1881] at Englefield, 2009
4. 'Perle des Blanches' [Lacharme, 1872] at Cavriglia, 2009

Images: Viraraghavan





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Charles and Brigid Quest-Ritson, authors of the RHS Encyclopaedia of Roses