

Canadian Bred Roses

By Todd Boland, Research Horticulturist, MUNBG



Rosa 'Champlain'

Today's modern hybrid roses stem from complex breeding that utilizes species primarily native to the old world. Traditionally, rose growers in Newfoundland and Labrador had to select from grafted roses, which include the floribundas, grandifloras and hybrid teas. These hybrid roses are among the most troublesome roses for northern rose growers due to their susceptibility to black spot disease and their general lack of hardiness. This is especially true for plants that are breed/grafted in warmer climates like the SE USA and California. To grow these roses you need to provide special care in winter to help them survive.

As it happens, there are now a number of hardy shrub roses that are tough enough to survive Newfoundland and Labrador climates with very little extra work. As a bonus, many of them are resistant to black spot. These tough hybrids were actually developed in Canada for Canadians (although they are now grown world-wide). There are two hybrid series that are especially recommended; the Explorer roses and the Parkland roses.

The Explorer roses were developed by the Agriculture Canada research stations in Ottawa, Ontario and L'Assomption, Quebec. However, the breeding program is now at an end, but thankfully a number of excellent rose variations were released during the life of the program. The Explorer roses range in size from under 3 feet; to large shrubs over 6 feet; to climbers up to 9 feet. Most of these hybrids have semi-double blooms and are commonly found in shades of pink or red. Some, especially those that utilize *Rosa rugosa* in their breeding, are highly fragrant. However, others have no fragrance at all. Most are repeat bloomers and exhibit good disease-resistance.



Rosa 'Henry Hudson'

Among the lower-growing hybrids are 'Henry Hudson', 'Champlain', 'Frontenac', 'George Vancouver', 'John Franklin', 'Lambert Close', 'Nicolas', 'Royal Albert', 'Charles Albanel' and 'Simon Fraser' varieties. For those with adequate space try the larger 'Alexander MacKenzie', 'David Thompson', 'De Montarville', 'Jens Munk', 'J. P. Connell', 'Marie-Victorin' or 'Martin Frobisher'. Among the climbing Explorers are the famous 'John Cabot' along with 'Captain Samuel Holland', 'Henry Kelsey', 'John Davis', 'Louise Jolliet', 'William Baffin'



Rosa 'John Cabot'

and 'William Booth'. If fragrance is your desire, then stick with 'David Thompson', 'Henry Kelsey', 'Jens Munk', 'John Cabot', 'John Davis', 'Louise Jolliet' and 'Martin Frobisher'. The Parkland Roses were developed at the Morden Research Station in Manitoba. Their goal was to develop roses that could survive the deep cold of the Prairie Provinces and states where the standard floribunda, grandiflora and hybrid teas are grown essentially as annuals! The Parkland roses are generally of lower stature than the Explorers, available in a wider range of colours and are perhaps a little more refined with regards to flower shape. Many are resistant to black spot and powdery mildew. However, there are no climbers within this series and none are strongly fragrant.

Among those hybrids less than 3 feet in height are 'Hope for Humanity', 'Morden Amorette', 'Morden Belle', 'Morden Blush', 'Morden Cardinette', 'Morden Fireglow' and 'Winnipeg Parks'

varieties. The taller growers (although still mostly under 4.5 feet) are 'Adelaide Hoodless', 'Cuthbert Grant', 'Morden Centennial', 'Morden Ruby', 'Morden Snowbeauty', 'Morden Sunrise', 'Prairie Dawn', 'Prairie Joy' and 'Rheinaupark'. Those that exhibit a light fragrance are 'Morden Cardinette', 'Morden Fireglow', 'Morden Centennial', 'Morden Snowbeauty', 'Winnipeg Parks' and the most fragrant of all these hybrids is 'Cuthbert Grant'.



Rosa 'Winnipeg Parks'

The last group of Canadian-bred roses that should be mentioned is the up and coming 'Canadian Artist' rose series. Now that the research stations in Ottawa and L'Assomption are closed and the Morden station has been seriously cut-back, it has been left to independent rose breeders in Canada to carry the torch. A group of breeders have started the Canadian Artist roses, named in honour of famous Canadian artists. So far only two have been released; 'Emily Carr' and 'Felix Leclerc'. So if you are a rose fancier in a cold zone why not try the Canadian-bred roses!