

# FRIENDS *of the* Central Experimental Farm

Summer 2022 Newsletter | Volume 34 No. 3

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## Explorer Roses:

HARDY & REBLOOMING

by Linda McLaren

People often ask gardening experts “How do I grow roses successfully in Ottawa?” They may hear details about how one must cover them for the winter and then wake them up in the spring. It’s possible they might not want to make all that effort if the return is only one blooming period in the summer. But there is no need to avoid roses, because there is a winter-hardy variety that comes back every year with a profusion of blooms. Developed right here at the Central Experimental Farm (CEF), we invite you to consider the Explorer series of roses.

### DR. SVEJDA ACCEPTS A CHALLENGE

By the time that Dr. Felicitas Svejda arrived at the CEF in the 1950s to work on cereals, research on flowers and shrubs was well-established. In 1961, Dr. Svejda was asked to develop ever-blooming roses hardy to Zone 2. Ottawa was then about Zone 4. Although this was not her area of expertise, she, dare we say, rose to the occasion.

Beginning by observing an old rose garden at the CEF which received minimal care, she took note of which roses seemed to survive winter best. These were rugosas, originating in Japan. They thrived despite difficult conditions and were repeat bloomers. She collected seeds from all these plants, learning along the way how to germinate them.

She had 2,000 seedlings planted in open fields with no winter protection

for the first trial, which lasted three years. Only two plants survived winter and bloomed well. One of the two survivors, a very attractive rose, had been derived from open pollination of the German ‘Schneezwerg’, a hybrid of rugosa, and a polyantha. ‘Schneezwerg’ is resistant to blackspot and mildew and accepts pollen from many other types of roses. The new rose was named ‘Martin Frobisher’, and after being tested in various locations across Canada and the US, was released as the first Explorer rose in 1968. Four more varieties of rugosas were released after ‘Martin Frobisher’: ‘Jens Munk’ (1974), ‘Henry Hudson’ (1977), ‘David Thompson’ (1979), and ‘Charles Albanel’ (1982). These roses are sturdy, mostly resistant to blackspot and powdery mildew, and bloom at least twice in the summer with intermittent blooms in between. Their colours

*Continued on page 4...*



#### PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM:

1: ‘Martin Frobisher’, the first Explorer rose.  
2: Dr Svejda with her ‘Champlain’ rose, one of the most popular Explorers, readily found in most retail garden centres. *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 5, 1983



# UPCOMING EVENTS 2022



"Flowers in the Arboretum" tour with Zoe Panchen, May 8, 2022.  
(See Page 6) Patricia Jasen

## ORNAMENTAL GARDEN TOURS

Check the website for tours of the peonies, perennial border, irises, roses, Macoun Memorial Garden, daylilies. Although the tours are free and open to the public, you must register in advance on our website. Space is limited to 30 people per tour. Donations to the Friends of the Farm are gratefully accepted during the tours.

## ARBORETUM TOURS

Check the website for upcoming tours of the Arboretum. Guided by local experts, they are typically offered every month from May to November. Although the tours are free and open to the public, you must register in advance on our website. Space is limited so please register early. Donations to the Friends of the Farm are gratefully accepted during the tours.



## USED BOOK SALE

Building 72, Saturday, September 24 and Sunday, September 25, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

## USED BOOK DROP-OFF

Building 72 garage, date to be announced.

## STAY TUNED!

For more details, use the QR codes below to stay tuned:

2022 Events



Facebook



## MASTER GARDENER LECTURES (VIRTUAL)

### Another Gardening Year Behind Us

September 13, with Mary Shearman Reid.

FOR DETAILS SCAN THE QR CODE TO THE RIGHT & ACCESS THE **MASTER GARDENER LECTURES** PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE.



Photo by Joan Butcher

## A WONDERFUL BABYSITTER

"We were very frequent Farm goers in my daughter's young years," writes Joan Butcher. "We would sit on a bench that provided a full view of the sweep of trees along Prince of Wales, point to a far tree, and say 'Bet you can't run all the way to that one' and off she would go. The Farm was a wonderful babysitter. (She still likes to climb trees)."



# The Value of Trees

Many books and articles have been written on the value of trees. They document the ways that trees benefit health, energy use, water conservation, climate change, wildlife habitat, property values, and recreation.

Beyond these factors, people have strong personal attachments to trees and treed areas. They congregate in shady parks, prefer to live on streets shaded by mature trees and mourn the loss of venerable trees in their neighbourhoods. Many are affected by the result of the May windstorm that tore through Ontario and Quebec, taking down many trees including a few at the Farm.

Yet trees are frequently neglected in cities. They're often planted on sites with inadequate soil or fertility, watered too little, abused by weed whackers, and subject to collisions and other stresses that shorten

their lives. Trees that get in the way of progress are simply removed.

This has led some advocates to try to quantify the value of trees, to help justify resources that are needed to grow and take care of trees. For example, a Canadian study found that urban forests added a value between \$2 and \$12 for every dollar spent on maintaining them, depending on the city (Alexander & McDonald, 2014). Unfortunately, these numbers don't appear on financial spreadsheets and tend to get ignored.

Our ability to quantify these values is limited by our understanding of how the ecology of a city works. Where trees are located may be just as important as how many there are. Areas that don't have enough space for trees are becoming tree deserts. As the city's population becomes more dense, such as in the vicinity of the Farm, these deserts will grow in size.

Simply put, we know trees are valuable. The Dominion Arboretum is a demonstration of not just individual specimens, but of a landscape of trees within a city. We enjoy its benefits now because years ago, its founders recognized that investing in trees was essential if its population was to survive and flourish in this land. Now this investment is even more essential if we want to live sustainably in cities.

## La valeur des arbres

Bon nombre de publications et d'articles de presse ont été écrits sur la valeur des arbres. Ces articles décrivent les bienfaits des arbres pour la santé, la consommation d'énergie, la conservation des eaux, les changements climatique, l'habitat de la faune, et comme source de loisirs.

De plus, les gens ressentent un attachement bien personnel à l'égard des arbres et de superficies arborées. Ils aiment se rassembler à l'abri du soleil dans les parcs, privilégient des rues ombragées de grands arbres pour y habiter et pleurent la perte d'espèces vulnérables dans leur voisinage. Parmi nous, un bon nombre de personnes ont subi les effets de la violente tempête de vent qui s'est abattue en mai en Ontario et au Québec, arrachant ou déracinant un grand nombre d'arbres, dont quelques-uns ici même à la Ferme.

Encore, les arbres souffrent fréquemment de négligence dans les villes. Plantés en des endroits où le sol est inadéquat ou non fertile, ils ne reçoivent que peu d'arrosage, subissent les coups des coupe-



**Eric Jones**

*President, Friends of the Farm*

Arboretum. R. Hinchcliff



herbe et font l'objet de collisions ou d'autres types de traumatisme ou stress qui raccourcissent leur vie. S'ils représentent une entrave au progrès, on les enlève tout simplement.

Cet état de choses a mené certains défenseurs à vouloir exprimer en argent la valeur des arbres afin de justifier les ressources nécessaires à leur croissance et leur entretien. Par exemple, une étude canadienne (Alexander & McDonald, 2014) démontre que des forêts en milieu urbain ajoutent une valeur allant de deux à douze dollars pour chaque dollar affecté à leur maintien, mais qui peut varier d'une ville à l'autre. Malheureusement, ces statistiques ne paraissent pas sur les

feuilles de calcul des états financiers et risquent donc de passer inaperçues.

Lorsqu'il s'agit de chiffrer ces valeurs, notre habileté se trouve limitée selon notre connaissance ou compréhension du fonctionnement de l'écologie d'une ville. Si le terrain aménagé pour la croissance des arbres est important, ainsi en est-il de leur nombre. Certains endroits n'ont pas d'espace suffisant pour assurer leur croissance et deviennent éventuellement dépouillés d'arbres. Avec une densité de population croissante dans la ville, comme cela se produit dans la vicinity de la Ferme, ces déserts ou endroits dénués d'arbres prendront de l'expansion.

Bref ou tout simplement, nous accordons de la valeur aux arbres. L'Arboretum du Dominion exhibe non seulement des espèces particulières, mais un paysage ou « bouquet d'arbres » au centre de la ville. Nous jouissons de ses bienfaits actuellement, car bien des années auparavant les fondateurs ont reconnu l'importance d'investir dans les arbres si sa population devait survivre et prospérer sur ce territoire. À présent, cet investissement est essentiel, voire indispensable, si nous désirons vivre dans des villes durables.

*Eric Jones*  
*Président, Amis de la Ferme*

## EXPLORER ROSES: HARDY & REBLOOMING *(Continued from page 1)*

include a range of pinks, and the 'Henry Hudson' is white.

Parallel with the work on the rugosas, Dr. Svejda received some hybrids that had been sent to a colleague by Robert Simonet of Alberta. Simonet came to Canada at the age of 16 from France. In a little over a decade, he had established a market garden in Alberta and over the years developed many ornamental plants, including petunias, lilies and roses, that could survive on the Prairies.

The roses provided by Simonet were "tetraploid", i.e., they contained four sets of chromosomes, two from each parent. These roses survived Ottawa winters with no protection, and Dr Svejda collected seeds from them to use as pollen parents with a Kordesii variety. This variety only survived with protection but was used because it produced viable seeds with many different pollen parents. The results of this union formed the basis of the remaining Explorers.

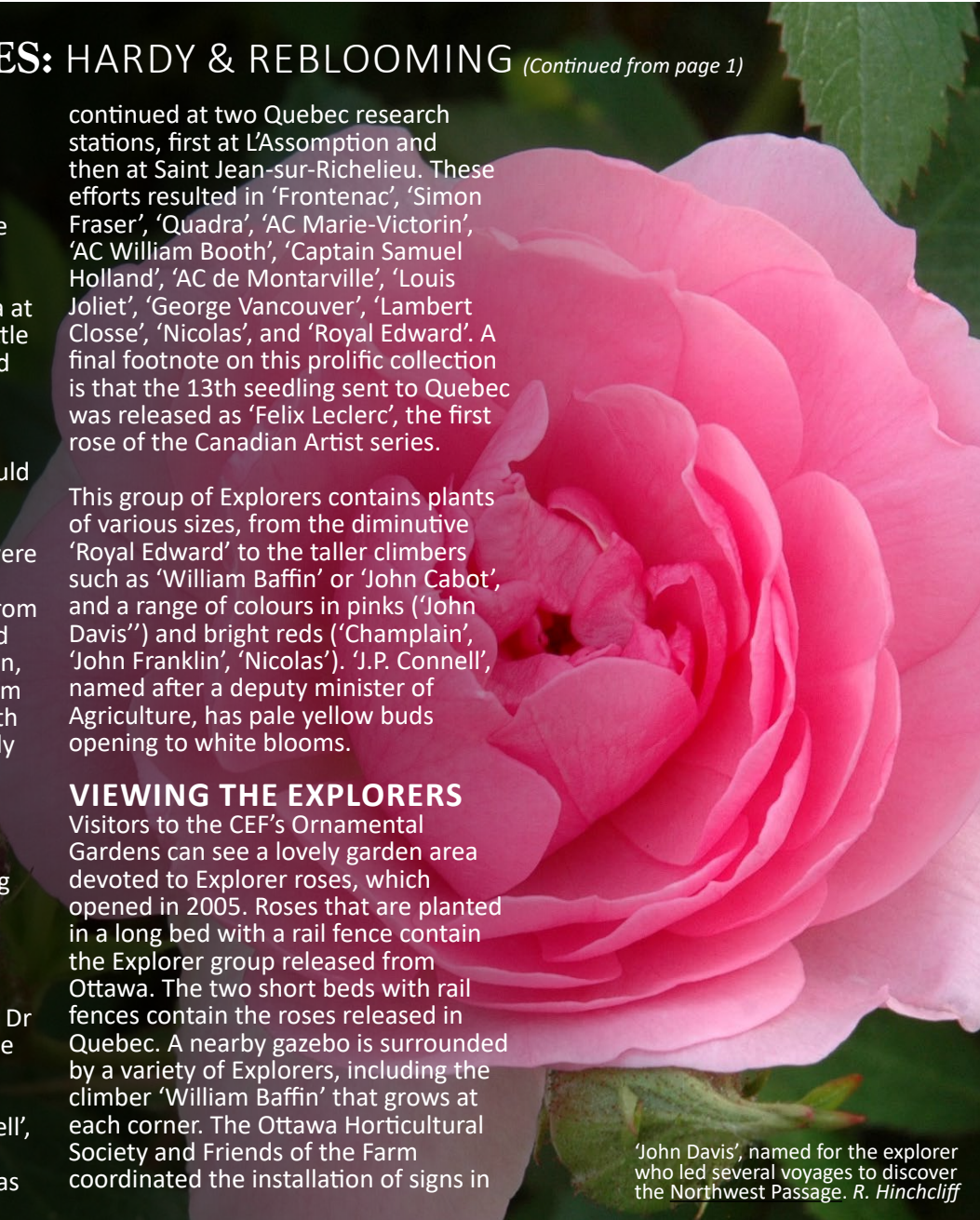
Eight of the tetraploid Explorers were released from the CEF between 1977 and 1986, prior to Dr Svejda's retirement in 1986. These were 'Champlain', 'John Cabot', 'John Franklin', 'William Baffin', 'Alexander Mackenzie', 'J.P. Connell', 'Henry Kelsey', and 'John Davis'. After her retirement, the work was

continued at two Quebec research stations, first at L'Assomption and then at Saint Jean-sur-Richelieu. These efforts resulted in 'Frontenac', 'Simon Fraser', 'Quadra', 'AC Marie-Victorin', 'AC William Booth', 'Captain Samuel Holland', 'AC de Montarville', 'Louis Joliet', 'George Vancouver', 'Lambert Crosse', 'Nicolas', and 'Royal Edward'. A final footnote on this prolific collection is that the 13th seedling sent to Quebec was released as 'Felix Leclerc', the first rose of the Canadian Artist series.

This group of Explorers contains plants of various sizes, from the diminutive 'Royal Edward' to the taller climbers such as 'William Baffin' or 'John Cabot', and a range of colours in pinks ('John Davis') and bright reds ('Champlain', 'John Franklin', 'Nicolas'). 'J.P. Connell', named after a deputy minister of Agriculture, has pale yellow buds opening to white blooms.

### VIEWING THE EXPLORERS

Visitors to the CEF's Ornamental Gardens can see a lovely garden area devoted to Explorer roses, which opened in 2005. Roses that are planted in a long bed with a rail fence contain the Explorer group released from Ottawa. The two short beds with rail fences contain the roses released in Quebec. A nearby gazebo is surrounded by a variety of Explorers, including the climber 'William Baffin' that grows at each corner. The Ottawa Horticultural Society and Friends of the Farm coordinated the installation of signs in



'John Davis', named for the explorer who led several voyages to discover the Northwest Passage. R. Hinchcliff



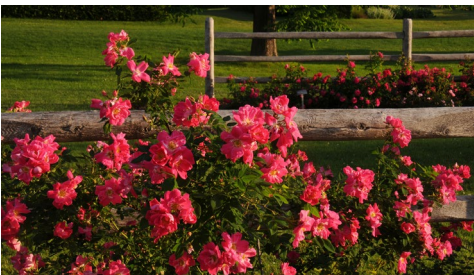
the gazebo commemorating Dr. Svejda, Isabella Preston (CEF ornamental hybridizer), and A.P. (Percy) Saunders, the foremost 20th century breeder of peonies.

## ROSE CARE

The Explorers are very easy to care for, requiring no winter cover. Depending on the severity of the winter and availability of snow cover, there may be some winter kill of branches, which are removed in the spring. At the organic CEF, only composted sheep manure is needed for feeding. The first bloom is early to mid June, and with dead-heading to promote re-bloom, the second major bloom occurs in August.

The major pests that affect these roses are Japanese beetles and stem borer. The beetles, which hatch in mid-June to early July, are best dealt with by removing and then drowning them in soapy water. This has become the ritual prior to starting work in the rose gardens at the Farm. It is best done in the early morning or late evening as the bugs are sluggish in cooler temperatures. The stem borer attacks the rugosas by lodging itself in the stem, and gradually results in destruction of the leaves. The best method is to cut off the stem as low as possible to prevent the pest from entering the crown of the bush. Some plants may have blackspot, easily dealt with by removing and discarding the leaves.

Explorers are beautiful roses that are easy to care for and can survive the Canadian winter. They continue to prove themselves in many a Canadian garden.



*Linda McLaren is a retired federal employee, who has been a volunteer with and member of the Friends since 2010. She leads the Explorer rose garden volunteer team.*

### SOURCES:

Dr. Felicitas Svejda, *The Canadian Explorer Roses*, National Roses-Canada, 2008; Richard Hinchcliff, *Blooms: An Illustrated History of the Ornamental Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm*, Friends of the CEF and Sanderling Press, 2016; Julianne Labreche, "Invasive Species at the Farm", FCEF Newsletter, Spring 2021.

### PHOTOS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:

1. 'William Baffin' is the climber and several 'Nicolas' bushes are in the foreground. The gazebo also has several varieties of clematis growing on it. *Linda McLaren* 2. 'David Thompson' is in the foreground of this photo of the long fence, 'John Davis' is on the opposite side of the fence, and 'Henry Kelsey' is in the background. *Linda McLaren* 3. 'J.P. Connell', named for a deputy minister of Agriculture. *R. Hinchcliff* 4. Explorer rose garden volunteers. *R. Hinchcliff* 5. 'William Baffin', a tetraploid Explorer rose, was released from the CEF before Dr. Svejda retired. *R. Hinchcliff* 6. Dr Svejda at the opening of the Explorer Rose Garden, 2005. *Richard Conway*

## HELP THE HERBARIUM FROM HOME



The National Collection of Vascular Plants (DAO) is the largest collection of its kind in Canada, with 1.5 million irreplaceable specimens protected in a climate-controlled environment. This herbarium is a tremendous resource that allows identification of plants from anywhere in Canada and supports research on plant classification worldwide.

The DAO herbarium has posted several thousand specimen images online and is seeking help from volunteers at home to transcribe the data. It's part of a citizen science project to digitize biological collections in Canada.

This "Notes from Nature" project is part of the Zooniverse, a "platform for people-powered research." Over 300 volunteers from around the world have already participated, at the time of writing.

Instructions are available online [HERE](#) or scan the QR code for access.



'Marquis' wheat specimen in the herbarium collection. AAFC, National Collection of Vascular Plants (DAO)



# PERFECT TIMING FOR Flowering Trees Tour

by Zoe Panchen

**W**hen planning a spring flowering trees tour in the Arboretum months in advance, one never knows quite what to expect on the day – it can be hit or miss. Will the magnolias, the stars of the tour, be in flower? Will it be warm and sunny? This year's tour hit all the right buttons – a lovely sunny day, a spectacular display from trees and shrubs including the all-important magnolias, and an engaged group of tour participants with lots of great questions. It also happened to be Mother's Day, so it was a perfect time for a tour of woody plants in flower.

We began in the maple area of the Arboretum, and although the Sugar, Silver and Red Maples had finished flowering, the Norway Maples (*Acer platanoides*) were in full flower. These yellowy-green flowers make one of the showiest displays among the maples as they cover the branches all the way up to the top of these large trees. As with most maples, the flowers open before the leaves appear. Did you know that maple syrup sap stops running when the flowers start to open?

We caught the tail end of the Cornelian Cherry Dogwood's (*Cornus mas*) bright yellow flowers. This is another woody species that flowers before leafing out. The berries of this dogwood are bright red, hence the name. As with many understory shrubs, these dogwoods flower and leaf out early before they're shaded by taller trees.

Stops were made at several fragrant flowering shrubs, including the pink-flowered Fragrant Viburnum (*Viburnum farreri*) located in the circle opposite the maples area. It is an early spring-flowering shrub, which will occasionally flower in late autumn.



Zoe Panchen Patricia Jasen

Some harsh winter weather had killed off quite a number of the flower buds this past winter, so this large shrub was not as impressive as in former years. In contrast, the Korean Forsythia (*Abeliophyllum distichum*) near Building 72 was covered in white flowers and had a beautiful honey fragrance. The Korean Forsythia flowers earlier than its more well-known yellow-flowering Forsythia cousin.

Another star of the flowering trees tour is the Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). This shrub is native to north-eastern North America but the shrubs in the Arboretum are well beyond their native range. It is a member of the pea family but early in the evolution of that family, as seen by the flowers that form directly on the main stems. Alas, the

Redbuds were not quite in flower for the tour but the shrubs were covered in purple-pink buds.

Next stop was a group of Serviceberries (*Amalanchier*), also native to north-eastern North America. These small trees provide year-round interest with white spikes of flowers in spring, red berries in late summer and autumn, and smooth grey bark in winter.

On the way down to the magnolias, we paused to look at a weeping willow (*Salix caprea* 'Pendula') and a Camperdown Elm (*Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii') that illustrate different types of flowers. Flowering plant species either have flowers with both male and female parts in the same flower or separate male and female





flowers on the same plant, or plants with male flowers only and plants with female flowers only. Willow species are in the latter group and this particular weeping willow is a male plant with male catkins covered in yellow pollen. The Camperdown Elm has male and female flowers on the same plant. Most of its flowering was over but we could still find a few flowers with clusters on stamens (male) and clusters of ripening fruits (female).

The tour concluded in the magnolia area of the Arboretum, close to Dow's Lake. It has a mild microclimate where many species that otherwise wouldn't survive in the harsh winter climate of Ottawa actually thrive. The white-pink flowered magnolias of Asian origin including the Saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangeana*) and Koboshi

Magnolia (*Magnolia kobus*) were spectacular and in full flower. The word koboshi is Japanese for fist, which aptly describes the shape of the flower buds. There are two types of buds on magnolias. Flower buds are large and plump, while leaf buds are smaller, long, and thin. The North American magnolias with either white (Umbrella Magnolia, *Magnolia tripetala*) or yellow-green (Cucumber Magnolia, *Magnolia acuminata*) flowers were not quite in bloom.

The flowers were a little later coming out this year than last. The timing of spring flowering is very much related to temperature. A warm spring will generally mean earlier flowering and, as the climate warms, trees are typically flowering sooner than in decades past. However, plant species

tend to flower in the same order through the growing season. Just as the crocuses flower before the daffodils, which flower before the tulips, the maples flower before the magnolias, which flower before the lilacs. There is always something to see in flower in the Arboretum, but the timing was just perfect for the flowering trees tour this year!

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*Zoe Panchen is a botanist and ecologist, who has led several Arboretum tours. On this one, she was assisted by Friends of the Farm tree tours organiser, Eric Jones.*

**ABOVE PHOTOS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:**  
 1. Umbrella Magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*), Arboretum, May 29, 2020. *Zoe Panchen*  
 2. Tree Flower Tour, Arboretum, May 8, 2022, led by *Zoe Panchen*. *Eric Jones*  
 3. By the magnolias. *Patricia Jasen*



## POPULAR PLANT SALE RETURNS

Enthusiastic gardeners flocked to the Friends' Plant Sale on May 15, keen to get the growing season underway as a surprise heatwave followed our chilly spring. The efficient setup crew was on the job by 6:15 am, and board member Randy Taylor directed vendors to their assigned spots in the Neatby parking lot before the crowds streamed in.

Due to COVID-19, this popular event had not been held during the past two summers, and there was an air of festivity even as the odd cloudburst doused shoppers, children, and dogs. Volunteers stationed at the promotion, refreshment, used book, and plant check tables enjoyed catching up with each other's news, greeting shoppers, and answering their

questions about what the Friends do and how they might participate.

As activities wound down towards 1 pm, the takedown crew arrived and did a great job in the muggy weather. As always, much preparation on the part of dedicated volunteers made this successful event possible. **A big thanks to all those who took part, and a special shoutout to master gardener and new volunteer Jeanne Currie for her terrific work coordinating the sale with Donna Pape.**

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**PHOTOS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:**  
 1. *Photo by Heather Webster*  
 2. Volunteers *Donna Pape, Randy Taylor, and Deborah Higdun-LeBlond*. *Heather Webster*



Volunteers in the peony garden, May 2022. Deborah Higdon-LeBlond.

# TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS & A Renowned Guest Speaker

At the Friends of the Farm Annual General Meeting on May 11, 2022, President Eric Jones reported that the Friends were back to work in the Ornamental Gardens, Arboretum, and Merivale Shelterbelt and he thanked all the team leaders, board members, and volunteers.

In 2021, the Friends had a limited gardening year so there will be lots of catch-up. He mentioned that the book published last year—*Building Canada's Farm*—was selling well. Four more benches were purchased and placed in the Arboretum, and a new event, Autumn in the Arboretum, was a great success.

Looking forward to 2022, Eric discussed other non-garden programs. Our public education activity includes book writing, garden and tree tours, lectures, brochures, cards, and pictures. Beyond that, there are ambitious potential projects such as making the gardens more accessible to visitors. There are plenty of opportunities, he said, for new Friends of the Farm volunteers.

Treasurer Randy Taylor presented a summary of the Financial Review carried out by Baker Tilly. He reported that fundraising increased in 2021, despite the lack of events, because we received a number of significant donations. Membership also increased.

Board members elected for 2022 are as follows: Dell Durnin, Shirley Ewen, Deborah Higdon-LeBlond, Richard Hinchcliff, Eric Jones, Blaine Marchand, Rob Stuart, Randy Taylor, and Heather Webster.

## Long-serving Volunteers

The following volunteers were recognized for their dedicated long service to the Friends: (Five years) Lynn Culhane, Sherry Eliot, Nancy Finn, Joanne Hicks, Joanne Kingsley, Julie Lalonde, Julianne LaBreche, Christine

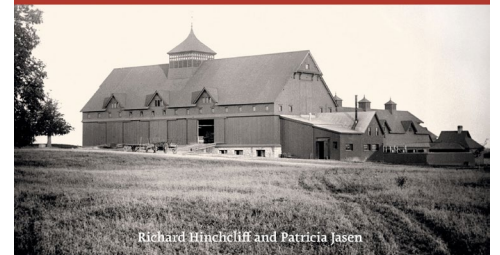
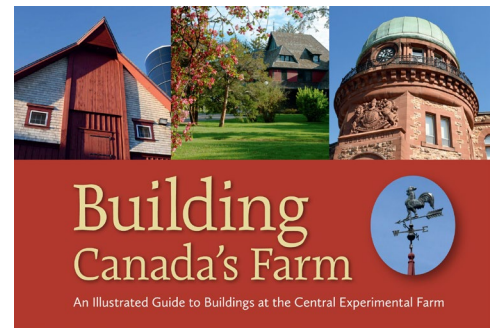
Ljungkull, Gloria Murdock, Randy Taylor; (10 years) Kate Hadden, Lise Anne James, Jeannine Lewis, Blaine Marchand, Nancy Wasserman; (15 years) Eric Jones, Denise Kennedy, Linda Lewis; (20 years) Jean Currie, Deepak Shah.

## THANKS TO THE FRIENDS

Riley Brockington, Ottawa City Councillor for River Ward, thanked the Friends of the Farm volunteers and board members for their work in making the Central Experimental Farm a beautiful place to visit. The parking structure for the new hospital is proceeding and he will monitor and make every effort to mitigate the traffic issues during the construction phases. He noted that Yasir Naqvi, MP for Ottawa Centre, had expressed the intent to protect the Farm from future development and that he and Riley would continue to push this issue with the Heritage Minister.

## GUEST SPEAKER

The guest speaker was Alexander Reford, director of Les Jardins de Métis (Reford Gardens) in Grand-Métis, Quebec. He spoke about three inspirational women who made significant contributions to horticulture in Canada – Elsie Reford (great-grandmother of Alexander), creator of the Reford Gardens, Evelyn Byng, avid gardener and plant collector, and Isabella Preston, brilliant hybridizer and plant researcher. He outlined the contributions of each and described how they had associated and encouraged each other over the years.



“The story of the buildings is brought to life by fascinating tales of the people who worked and, in some cases, lived in them.” (Heritage Ottawa) The book is available from [friendsofthefarm.ca](http://friendsofthefarm.ca) and local bookstores.



Isabella Preston and her lilies. In 1939, Elsie Reford sent Preston a Christmas card with a photo of some of her lilies at Grand-Métis.



# A BOUQUET OF Blooms

by Joan Butcher

When the 2019 growing season drew to a close, Fiona Cowell, the team leader for the Heritage Rose Garden volunteers, was awaiting the next spring with high hopes. Working with her team, which she describes as hardworking, self-directing, and collegial, she planned to accomplish some major pruning work in 2020 in this rose garden, which is separate from the Explorer Rose Garden (described in the page 1 article). Alas, 2020 was not a year when anyone's plans worked out. COVID-related restrictions kept the volunteers from the Farm gardens that year, and the 2021 gardening season was also delayed.

Thankfully, this strong team was back this spring, daring to hope for a full season of prime gardening days. The roses survived a cold winter with not much snow cover, and now the team is experiencing the incredible variety of gorgeous blooms, their fragrance in the fresh air, as well as the satisfactions that come from working with fellow rose fanciers and chatting with appreciative visitors to the garden.

## ROSES RE-BORN

After years of neglect, the Heritage Rose Garden was brought back to full beauty in 1999 through the dedicated effort of Friends of the Farm volunteers and Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada staff. In homage to the illustrious and colourful history of roses at the Farm, over 150 carefully selected rose roots were planted. Hybrids bred at the Farm that had been significant horticultural success stories, as well as many roses that had been featured in Farm gardens of the past, were re-introduced.

## ROSES TO WATCH FOR

Old roses tend to be single bloomers, but after the renovation, the garden included modern, recurrent-blooming plants, and the beds are vibrant throughout the growing season. First to bloom is 'Prairie Peace', a very hardy modern rose bred by Robert Erskine in Alberta. It is followed soon after by many others. As Fiona notes, "in mid-

June from one week to the next, the Garden goes from a small number of blooms to a full bouquet of them. Every bed is colourful and fragrant."

When asked to name some favourite varieties, Fiona mentioned 'Topaz Jewel', a scented, pale yellow rugosa hybrid, and 'Prairie Joy', developed at the Morden Research Centre in Manitoba. It is a bright pink, double-shrub rose, featuring heavy and repeat blooms. She also noted the 'Chapeau de Napoleon', a very old Moss rose that pre-dates 1820. This variety is so named because of its large sepals, which before the bloom opens form a shape reminiscent of the crested hat made famous by the French Emperor.

## A LABOUR OF LOVE

In any normal year, the dedicated team of volunteers who help maintain this delightful rose garden keep very busy from May to October. They clear the beds of winter protection, pull the weeds, fertilize the soil, dead-head the blooms, and prune the plants. There's never enough time to get ahead of these tasks when you're also trying to keep the dreaded Japanese beetle at bay. You also need to make sure your tetanus shots are up to date, because those thorns can bite. Rose care can be demanding, but clearly worth the effort!

*Continued on next page...*



PHOTOS ABOVE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM  
1. 'Topaz Jewel', a favourite of Fiona Cowell.  
2. 'Prairie Peace'  
Photos by R. Hinchcliff



## LOOKING AHEAD

Fiona is considering showcasing some of the hardy, disease-resistant roses that have been released in new, successful series such as the Canadian Artists. Each rose in this collection bears the name of a renowned artist such as Oscar Peterson and Emily Carr. The collection was developed by a consortium of Canadian rose growers and breeders. The 49th Parallel Collection, bred at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, is another series of note, featuring low-maintenance, award-winning roses such as 'Aurora Borealis'.

Although the roses are at their blooming best near the end of June, you can enjoy the Garden throughout the season. To get the most from your visit, you may care to check out the excellent guide to the garden's roses, found on-line at <https://friendsofthefarm.ca/roses/rosebed1.htm>. (Please note that the collection changes and the catalogue may not be always up to date.) An accompanying map is at <https://friendsofthefarm.ca/roses/pictures/map-hrg.pdf>.



'Prairie Peace' is the first to bloom.

# Preston Roses

ON DISPLAY

by Richard Hinchcliff

As well as a world-renowned ornamental plant hybridizer, Isabella Preston was a passionate gardener, devoted to the Ornamental Gardens at the Farm. She planned, planted, and tended, creating an inviting destination for visitors.

For the benefit of gardeners, Preston and her colleagues experimented with garden arrangements and tested plant varieties, both new and old, to see how well they did in Ottawa. Locals could see for themselves what appealed for their own gardens and learn the best ways to plant and care for them.

Some of the new plants were bred by Preston. She demonstrated in the Ornamental Gardens how well her new hybrid lilies, lilacs, Siberian irises, and crabapples performed.

Hybrid roses turned out to be more of a challenge. Her goal in breeding them had been to find shrub roses that would be hardy in Prairie climates. She was successful, but as she wrote, they did not look good in the formal rose gardens of the time. They just could not compete with the new and dazzling hybrid teas and floribundas that were dominating the rose world.

Her roses needed their own separate space. So, while she made sure there was always a fine display of the popular rose types, she planned a garden that would display hardy roses to good effect.

Among the hardiest climbing roses, Preston singled out 'Chatillon Rambler' seen here, and 'Goldfinch', both of which have performed well in the Heritage Rose Garden. *R. Hinchcliff*



## A SHOWCASE FOR HARDY ROSES

The first rose garden at the Farm was established in 1890 when William Saunders planted beds on the Main Lawn. That garden was removed in 1911, and Dominion Horticulturist William T. Macoun built a new one, situated in the area that now features the peony display.

In the spring of 1926, a new garden of popular rose types was started. Each bed had only one kind of rose, unlike the previous one where beds were planted with different varieties. This made for an attractive display, as attested by the Ottawa Citizen on July 12, 1928:

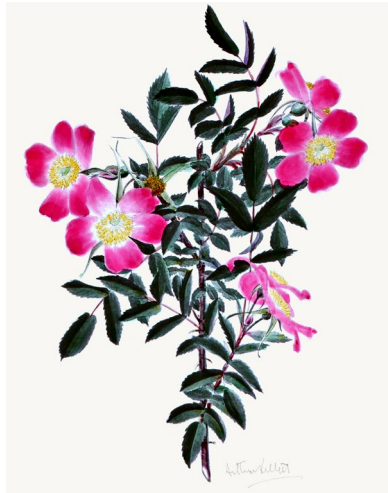
**“Many hundreds of people have visited the Experimental Farm rose gardens during the past ten days, and many hundreds more will visit them this week. The weather has been a little severe on the roses, but after each rain there is a new crop of blossoms that seem better and fresher than the last.”**

A major change occurred in the mid 1930s, when the rose gardens were redesigned and replanted. By this time, Isabella Preston’s bush roses such as ‘Carmenetta’ and ‘Orinda’ were well-tested. Under her supervision, a new rose garden (a third one) was built as a showcase for both old-fashioned and hardy roses. The garden brought together old roses, such as damask, gallica, and moss, and new hybrid bush roses “infrequently found in gardens today,” such as those bred by Preston.

‘Agnes’ and ‘Grace’ roses, bred by William Saunders were featured in the new garden. The latter no longer exists, but ‘Agnes’ can be seen in today’s Heritage Rose Garden with its pale amber flowers and attractive buds.

Also featured were hardy climbers, including Preston’s ‘Patricia Macoun’ and ‘Langford’. The climbing roses were trained to form pillars on two rows of three by three-inch stakes about five feet high down the centre of the garden.

**IMAGE ON RIGHT:** Isabella Preston’s ‘Carmenetta’ rose, by Arthur Kellett, botanical artist in the horticulture division in the 1930s and ‘40s. *CSTM Archives AGR605*



## BEST OF BOTH HARDY AND TENDER ROSES

Preston noted in 1944 that *R. rugosa* hybrids ‘Rosaie de l’Hay’ and ‘F. J. Grootendorst’ were among the hardiest roses that had performed well in the garden. They can be seen in the present-day Heritage Rose Garden.

Among the old roses, Preston praised the gallica rose ‘Cardinal Richelieu’ (from 1840), the moss rose ‘Blanch Moreau’ (1880), and the hybrid perpetual ‘Stanwell Perpetual’ (1838). Each of these roses have performed well in recent years in the Heritage Rose Garden.

The other two rose gardens of the 1930s provided “a more open though still formal arrangement of beds so that the different classes and varieties could be displayed to better advantage.” They contained hybrid teas, hybrid polyanthas (floribundas), and polyantha pompoms. The hybrid polyanthas, according to Preston, were the best for a brilliant display. All the plants in these gardens, however, had to be carefully covered for the winter and even so, she reported, there were losses each year.

By the time Preston retired in 1946, she had established rose gardens that displayed the best of both hardy and tender roses. Whatever appealed to rose lovers, fine examples could be seen in the Ornamental Gardens at the Central Experimental Farm.



## Working for the Farm

**“Hi, my name is Margaret Payne. My great uncle, Lawrence Eldred Kirk, was dominion agrostologist at the Central Experimental Farm, and my father was Frank Payne, who was director general of the Livestock Division.”**

Lawrence Kirk bred a new variety of crested wheat grass named ‘Fairway’, which was introduced in 1932 and used to re-seed dried out rangeland on the prairies after the 1930s Dust Bowl. He taught at Moose Jaw Collegiate and the University of Saskatchewan before joining the Experimental Farms Service as dominion agrostologist in Ottawa in 1931, encouraging the introduction of the best forage plants into all parts of Canada.

Frank Payne worked in the Poultry and Livestock Divisions at the Farm, becoming a director general of the latter in 1967. Born in Saskatchewan, he served in World War II and was part of the First Canadian Army that liberated Holland. He met and married Margaret’s mother in England and they were together for the next 67 years. He worked downtown near the Parliament Buildings in the Poultry Division until the Sir John Carling Building was opened in 1967.

Lawrence E. Kirk. *From A. S. Morton’s “History of the University of Saskatchewan’s First 25 Years.”*





## The Rose: A Top Ornamental Plant

"In England, it was found that the vitamin C content of rose hips increases towards the north, with four times as much in plants grown in Scotland compared to those in southern England." This is one of the "curiosities of science and technology" in Ernie Small's article on the rose in The Canadian Botanical Association Bulletin, volume 45(1), 2012.

The rose article is the first of 31 (to date) in a series by Ernie on Canada's top ornamental plants. He wrote about the lily, for example, in September 2013, the lilac in December 2014, the peony in September 2015, and his latest article in March 2022 is about the Hippeastrum (Amaryllis). Each article includes a wealth of information on the plant species and varieties, history of its ornamental use, symbolism, and its "curiosities."

Ernie Small is Principal Research Scientist at AAFC's Ottawa Research and Development Centre at the Central Experimental Farm. He is the author of a long list of books and other publications, including the award-winning Top 100 Food Plants.

Ernie Small became a member in the Order of Canada in September, 2018.  
*Sgt Johanie Maheu, Rideau Hall*

The bulletins are at <https://www.cba-abc.ca/resources/bulletin/>.



## Volunteer Opportunities!

Are you interested in protecting the green and blooming spaces at the Central Experimental Farm? Do you love gardening, or would like to give it a try? Are you looking for other volunteer opportunities?

We are looking for new volunteers for our Garden, Shelterbelt, and Arboretum teams, as well as volunteers to assist with Communications, Office Support, and Fundraising Events. **FOR MORE INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE CONTACT VOLUNTEER@FRIENDSOFTHEFARM.CA.**

**DONNA PAPE** | Director, Volunteers



The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm is a volunteer organization committed to the maintenance and protection of the Ornamental Gardens and the Arboretum of the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

The Friends of the Central Experimental Farm publish the *Newsletter* (ISSN 1702 2762) four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). All members receive the newsletter and it is sent by regular mail or e-mail.

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## Consider joining us!

Find our membership form on the website by using the QR code to the right: <https://friendsofthefarm.ca/become-a-member/> and pay by PayPal, or send in a cheque.



Benefits include discounts on Master Gardener lectures, one free admission per group per visit to the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, quarterly printed newsletters by post, and monthly *Farm Notes* e-newsletter.

We also accept donations to support our activities and events, which also support the garden teams that maintain the cherished Ornamental Gardens.

A variety of donations can be made through our webpage: [www.friendsofthefarm.ca/donations/](http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca/donations/).

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