

# *by any other name*

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The Heritage Rose Journal of the World Federation of Rose Societies

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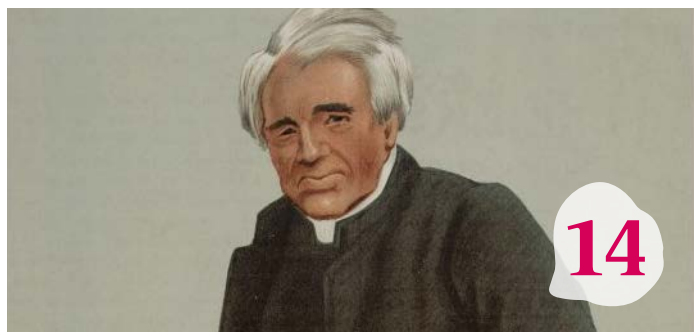
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**Cover image:**

Damask roses in Charles Quest-Ritson’s garden

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# Editors' note

We have a bumper edition of *By Any Other Name* for you, covering the usual wide range of topics and regions.

My co-editor, Charles Quest-Ritson, makes a plea for rose conservation. In China, where plans are now well underway for the exciting heritage rose conference taking place there next April, we learn of the discovery of previously unidentified roses species.

From Australia, Di Durston shares her story of finding and naming an unidentified old rose, involving detective work across three continents.

Inés Díaz de Licandro, reports from Uruguay on the reintroduction to Spain of a superb 19th century rose, 'E. Veyrat Hermanos'. Andreas Meier-Dinkel tells the story of the rose collection at Kassel Wilhelmshöhe in Germany. Erich Unmuth introduces the 'Volksgarten' in Vienna. Richard Rix explores the portrayal of Alba roses in art. Dr Inna Koval describes the plight of rare species roses in the war zones of Ukraine. Perhaps, next to the human tragedy unfolding in her homeland, this seems a minor problem. But it underlines some of the wider, less seen, impacts of this terrible war.

In more uplifting news we highlight several books you may wish to buy. And I celebrate the coming 150th anniversary of the UK Rose Society – the world's oldest specialist plant society. That's a tale of boom, bust and slow recovery. It's also a story of resilience and determination – characteristics common among all of us who love old roses and refuse to let them fade without a struggle.

I hope you will join us in China where we can share more stories and our passion for what the great Victorian rosarian, Samuel Reynolds Hole, called the "Queen of Flowers". Hole was often introduced as the "Rose King", so he should know!

You can share this magazine with other rose lovers – view the digital version [here](#) in your web browser. Enjoy!

**Martin Stott**

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**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 journalist who has made programmes for the BBC World Service and Radio 4 in 21 countries. Passionate about roses and garden history, he has also written for *Gardens Illustrated* and *Hortus* magazine and lectured on rose history internationally. Martin's garden history blog can be found at [www.storytelligarden.co.uk](http://www.storytelligarden.co.uk) and his YouTube channel at [@thestorytelligarden](https://youtube.com/@thestorytelligarden)

# *The Need for Conservation*

Charles Quest-Ritson

Roses may be beautiful, but we all know that they may present us with problems. The worst is that they die. And not just the roses, but so do the rose-plants, rose-gardens, rose-nurseries and important rose collections too; they all die. Fashions change, and the roses we love are superseded by better ones. The fact is that roses are always improving. We may love the old Gallica roses, but modern roses are better. They have many more colours, better shapes, stronger scent, resistance to disease and the blessing of flowering repeatedly, even continuously.

The years bring us all to oblivion. Yesterday's roses – all those Damasks, Albas and Tea roses that we so admire – were saved from extinction thanks to the great collections of historic roses in Germany and

France. One hundred years ago, they had no commercial value and seldom appeared in the lists of nurserymen. Now, however, they are valued as 'heritage' or 'historic' roses.

Some have yet to be rediscovered. All over the world, from California to Melbourne and from Sweden to Argentina, people are finding forgotten roses in abandoned gardens and public places. These 'rose rustlers' discover that the world is full of nameless pink Gallicas and Hybrid Teas. Their rule is this: if you do not recognise a rose, propagate it. It may be rare or it may not be but, if you do not know it, you must give it a provisional name. You can investigate its correct name later. The Italian rose expert Vicky Ducrot listed nearly fifty Found Roses in his garden near Orvieto.

Rose-lovers do not realise how many of the roses in our gardens already have provisional names. "Fantin Latour" is a



Image: Phil S, Unsplash



provisional name. That is what the double quotes indicate. The International Convention on the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants is quite clear about this – provisional names carry double quotes. “Fantin Latour” was a founding, given to an English nurseryman called Graham Stuart Thomas who wanted to introduce it commercially. Thomas gave the rose a temporary name and, seventy years later, we still do not know the original name. So we continue to use the provisional name. Graham Thomas also launched “Charles de Mills” and “Empress Josephine”. They, too, came to him as unidentified old roses, so he gave them provisional names. And they are still popular and widely grown. It would be interesting to know their original names, but now they will never be lost.

Old roses are widely grown in northern Europe. There are many old rose gardens with five hundred or one thousand varieties – think of the larger collections at L’Haÿ-les-Roses in Paris and Sangerhausen in Germany. These old French roses like Gallicas and Albas are resistant to the cold climate of north and central Europe. However, roses that cannot survive in England, or Germany, or in northern France, are in greater danger, not least the many Tea roses and Noisettes that are such a feature of gardens in Mediterranean climates.

There are collectors and collections of these delicate roses in countries such as Italy and regions such as Provence, but they are few. One important collector is an Italian



Vicky Ducrot found this Damask at Gulmit in Pakistan

*Image: Charles Quest-Ritson*

**“Rose-lovers do not realise how many of the roses in our gardens already have provisional names.”**

nurseryman, who was also a university professor of music, called Walter Branchi. Branchi has reintroduced some of the Tea and Noisettes roses that he has collected in Italy and given them provisional names. Among the best are “Philippa Pirette”, “Dussi” and “Andreola Vettori”, but there are two problems with their future conservation. The first problem is that the market for old Tea roses in Italy is very small. And the second is that Prof. Branchi has now retired.<sup>1</sup> In the last five years, we have also lost the other two leading nurseries in Europe that specialised in Teas and Noisettes: the Canadian-owned Roseraie du Désert in the French department of the Gers, and the Sardinian Sergio Scudu’s S’Orrosa

nursery near Rome, both of which sold some 800 varieties. Italian rose-lovers did not have the means to save Sergio Scudi’s collection but, on the plus side, it is worth recording that Helga Brichet has a very fine collection of Teas and Noisettes in her garden in Umbria.

I should add a few words about my own experience of growing extinct roses. I planted my first rose garden when I was 21. Over the years we have grown at least 2,000 cultivars, probably more. One that I bought in 1977 was called ‘Pink Brocade’; it was introduced by an English firm called Bees, whose better-known introductions include ‘Independence Day’ [1919], ‘Josephine Bruce’ [1949] and ‘Amanda’ [1979]. I liked ‘Pink Brocade’ because the flowers tended to open out to an ‘old-fashioned’ shape and the plant was more strongly remontant than the David Austin roses available at the time. But Bees closed down in 1984. Some years later, we moved to France, but we could not take all our roses with us. ‘Pink Brocade’ was left behind and, shortly thereafter, it was lost completely when our garden in England was turned into a housing estate. Today it is extinct.

Small-time rose-breeders have smaller markets and sell fewer roses. I also remember a sport of the Floribunda ‘Tip-Top’ [Tantau, 1963], that was introduced by a rose-nursery called Rearsby Roses in 1986 and given the name ‘Halley’s Comet’ to commemorate the return of the well-known comet to our part of the solar system. Today it is probably extinct. Someone will look for it when the comet returns in 2061, and



1. Walter Branchi introduced this foundling as “Andreola Vettori”. It has now been tentatively identified as ‘Grand Duc Pierre de Russie’, [Perny, 1885]. 2. ‘Pink Brocade’ [Bees, 1977]

Image: Charles Quest-Ritson

they will be disappointed. All roses that have been named and introduced commercially have played a role in the history of our gardens. Each one should have been preserved. Many have been lost.

I am often asked to help people to find roses that are no longer in cultivation. The enquirers may have a personal connection to a particular rose or be charged with restoring a historic collection of roses or a rose-garden. Often it is possible to refer them to one of the great European collections like Sangerhausen or Fineschi. But many have been lost because they were superseded by introductions that were considered better. Many were indeed better, but I believe that all roses, whenever and wherever introduced, need to be preserved for their historical importance and their genetic individuality.

The best way to conserve roses is in large dedicated gardens, publicly supported and managed by qualified horticulturists. Sangerhausen is an

**“‘Pink Brocade’ was left behind and, shortly thereafter, it was lost completely when our garden in England was turned into a housing estate. Today it is extinct.”**

**Below:** ‘Halley’s Comet’ was introduced in 1986 but is probably already extinct

Image: Charles Quest-Ritson



outstanding example, but I believe that every country and every breeder should maintain an individual collection of its own heritage of roses. At Gerlev, north of Copenhagen, the Poulsen family maintains a complete collection of all the roses they have ever introduced, back to the early years of the 20th century. As a place to study the evolution of our earliest Floribunda roses, it cannot be bettered. But will it still exist in 20 years time? Or 50? Will a Danish rose society or a foundation or a governmental organisation continue to display this monument to the best of Danish horticulture?

Do not forget that modern roses – today’s roses – will become the lost roses of tomorrow. They will be thought elegant and mysterious, so very evocative of the romantic early years of the 21st century. The roses bred by David Austin in England have dominated a distinct sector of the market for many years. The firm maintains a National Collection of his roses, but it is not complete. Richard Austin told me recently





3. Part of the historic Poulsen collection at Gerlev.
4. Rambling roses in the National Collection of Luxemburg roses at Munsbach

*Images: Charles Quest-Ritson*

that some of his grandfather's earlier roses – superseded because they were overtaken by better introductions – are missing from the collection. How has this happened and what can we do to help? And can we rely on the family to maintain this collection in perpetuity? I remember the excitement of David Austin's early years when he released as many as five or six new roses every year. How many are now lost to the rose trade but still lingering in your gardens?



The national collection of Luxemburg roses at Munsbach is a good example of what can be achieved. Its remit is to grow and conserve all the roses ever bred by Luxemburg nurseries, with Ketten Frères and Soupert & Notting to the fore. I think it is an example that should be followed by other countries and regions associated with rose-breeding. It seems to me (perhaps I should first explain that I have Irish nationality), fairly shocking that the Northern Irish have not set up an organisation and established a garden to conserve all the roses bred by members of the Dickson and McGredy families who managed, at times, to dominate the world of roses for much of the 20th century. But in Spain, where Pere (Pedro) Dot and others were associated with breeding roses as an expression of Catalan nationalism, there is a series of gardens and





activities in towns around Barcelona that celebrate this chapter of their history. Visit the collection in the ‘Roserar de Dot i de Camprubí’ in Sant Feliu de Llobregat in May or early November for an introduction to the Catalan tradition of rose-breeding. Quite apart from its cultural value, it acts as a rich reservoir for propagation material whenever a specific rose is required today for a historic restoration project or a new planting of local varieties. There are hundreds of cultivars that few of us have seen before – excellent roses bred for the Mediterranean climate.

Not every country produces rose-breeders, but unnamed foundlings turn up in old gardens everywhere and inspire their finders to propagate them and wonder what their original names might be. The answer is to research the history of roses imported into your own country and offered by local nurseries or planted in gardens for which a list of varieties still exists. Two fine examples of cataloguing ‘our’ roses have been completed in New Zealand and Uruguay, while Rafael Maino is



**“Unnamed foundlings turn up in old gardens everywhere and inspire their finders to propagate them and wonder what their original names might be.”**

5. ‘Aribau’ [Dot, 1936] was issued just as the Spanish Civil War broke out and commemorates the 19th-century Catalan nationalist Carles Aribau
6. ‘Canterbury’ [Austin, 1969]; sometimes it is difficult to remember how different David Austin’s early roses were from his later introductions

*Images: Charles Quest-Ritson*

working on a similar listing for Argentina. Inés de Licandro, now Chairman of the Conservation & Heritage Committee of the World Federation of Rose Societies, has compiled a list of the varieties that Uruguayan nurseries have sold in the past. Murray Radka is the leading proponent of compiling the New Zealand National Register of Heritage Roses project, whose aim was ‘to record all the old roses

brought to New Zealand and to locate and propagate the lost and rare roses no longer commercially available in this country’.

This sort of research makes an important foundation for conservation and is often accompanied by a system whereby their members propagate rare roses and distribute them to other members. But often we find that these initiatives depend largely upon the knowledge, energy and enthusiasm of just one person. The problem which then arises is how to create a national movement for the conservation of roses and, indeed, of other garden plants.

We need to found conservation organisations that will flourish far into the future. In many countries it should be possible to assemble a national rose collection in a purpose-built national rose garden, like the Luxemburg roses at Munsbach. This might be difficult to achieve in a country like the United States or the United Kingdom, where so many roses have been bred over the centuries, but it should remain an ambition



– thought should be given to how it might be accomplished.

There are three main requirements for conservation. First comes Knowledge, which includes the history of roses, their cultivation and propagation; technical skills; the desire to learn, persist and achieve. It is virtually impossible for any one person to possess all the necessary knowledge and skills, so the second requirement is Management – you need to build a working team of members who cover all the necessary skills; you need a legal structure, which most Rose Societies already have, and to be constituted as a non-profit foundation And you need publicity to attract support of all kinds. And the third essential requirement for success is Money. Without money, you cannot succeed.

I think this means owning a garden and the funds to maintain it. The famous Sacramento Rose Garden, in California, failed because the civic owners changed their policies. Probus garden in England was lost because it was built on leased land and the owner refused to renew the lease. Ten years ago, I obtained budwood from Sangerhausen to propagate 200 British roses that were lost to cultivation in England but still grown in Germany, and I arranged for them all to be propagated. I never imagined that the Royal National Rose Society would go bankrupt and all the

**Below:** The Royal National Rose Society of Great Britain's garden shortly before the society was liquidated.

*Image: Charles Quest-Ritson*



roses would be lost – and I hope that the time will soon come when the full story of that disgraceful disaster can be told.

Many of our finest rose collections are in danger. The Roseto Fineschi in Italy, is a private garden with 6,000 varieties, the second largest in the world, but it needs substantial funding. David Ruston's collection in South Australia was the largest in the southern hemisphere. David was a bachelor and gave the garden to his niece, the daughter of his identical twin brother. For reasons connected with her career, she decided, with much regret, that she should sell it. It proved impossible to find a buyer who would maintain the collection in the way that her uncle had.

Individual rose-lovers were able to propagate and save some of the rarer roses but I asked the president of the Australian Rose Society why the society had not tried to save more of them. The reply, in so many words, was 'because they were old, and modern roses are better'. That may be true, but please do not forget that they will be superseded by yet better roses, and that today's Hybrid Teas and Floribundas will disappear from nurseries and garden centres. Eventually they will be immensely valued, sought and collected by our grandchildren as quaint but exquisite mementos of old-fashioned gardening, back in the 2020s.

1. See John Hook's excellent April 2014 article in *By Any Other Name* <https://tinyurl.com/BAON2014> pp.18-21

# ***Finding new roses in China***

**Shiwei Zhao** gives us a glimpse into the exciting discoveries scientists in China have been making in recent years – which we'll hear much more about at the upcoming heritage rose conference.





Globally, there are about 200 species in Genus *Rosa*, with China hosting approximately half of them. Genus *Rosa* are of significant importance in both botany and horticulture. China is one of the most important sources of roses. Over 200 years ago, *Rosa chinensis* (the China rose) was introduced to Europe and was used in hybridization with other roses, giving rise to the birth and breakthrough of modern roses worldwide.

In the 1980s, Professor Chen Junyu from the Beijing Forestry University (BFU) led students, such as Ma Yan and Bao Zhiyi, in extensive field surveys and the collection of cold-resistant rose germplasm resources in northeastern, northern, and northwestern China. They used it in their breeding work and obtained excellent rose varieties like ‘Xueshan Jiaoxia,’ known for its strong cold resistance, vigorous growth and excellent ornamental traits.

Starting in 2000, Professor Zhang Qixiang spearheaded a nationwide survey of wild rose resources in Yunnan, Sichuan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, involving nearly 100 researchers from BFU and other institutions. Participants included Luo Le, Pan Huitang, Bai Jinrong, Yu Chao, and other doctoral and

**“Starting in 2000, Professor Zhang Qixiang spearheaded a nationwide survey of wild rose resources in Yunnan, Sichuan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, involving nearly 100 researchers from BFU and other institutions.”**

master’s students at the time. Collaborative efforts with Xinjiang Vocational & Technical College of Applied Technology led to the discovery of wild resources and the breeding of varieties like ‘Tianshan Xiangyun,’ suitable for open-field cultivation in cold, arid northwestern regions. In 2011, Luo Le joined BFU as a faculty member, continuing research on rose resource surveys, taxonomy, and breeding.

Meanwhile, Yang Yuyong, founder of Kunming YYY Gardening Co., Ltd. and a breeder with over 30 years’ experience, collaborated with BFU researchers under Professor Chen’s guidance. Since 2000, Yang has conducted extensive surveys, evaluations, and introductions of species roses. His company’s nursery in Yangzonghai, Kunming, now houses China’s largest *Rosa* germplasm repository, with nearly 200 species (including subspecies and forms) and over 1,700 cultivars. This site also serves as an off-campus

research base for BFU students, where germplasm is continuously cultivated, observed, and documented. Around 2016, the team decided to compile their findings into a book.

After eight years of data compilation, literature review, material supplementation, and over 20 rounds of proofreading, the book *Genus Rosa in China* was completed. It is reviewed in this publication by Helga Brichet.

### **New species roses found**

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the research that underpins this book is the identification of new species of roses.

Due to its wide distribution and rich phenotypic variation, *Rosa* taxonomy has long been challenging, leading to issues like misidentification and naming conflicts. “The goal of plant taxonomy is not to complicate but to clarify,” Dr. Luo Le explains.

Using multi-omics sequencing, the book presents the most comprehensive and stable phylogenetic tree of *Rosa* to date, offering new insights into its origin and evolution. It updates distribution data, illustrates key taxonomic traits and habitats, verifies historical literature, and adds chromosomal information. Common aliases are also included to address regional naming differences.

**Opposite:** *Rosa tomurensis*, a notable discovery, which is cold-resistant, tolerating temperatures as low as -30°C.

## New “Eye” Roses

Professor Zhang Qixiang’s extensive survey programme uncovered multiple new species, four of which have been reported on internationally. The rest are first disclosed in the book.

Notable discoveries include the cold-resistant *Rosa tomurensis* (tolerating -30°C) and the color-changing *Rosa yangii*. Another breakthrough was the discovery of *R. forrestiana* var. *maculata*, a stable purple-spotted variety found in Yunnan’s high-altitude regions. Unlike the previously known single-petal spotted *Rosa persica* (used for decades to breed the “Eye” roses), this new rose opens fresh avenues for rose breeding.

“China’s new *Rosa* species will greatly help advance rose breeding,” Dr. Luo Le emphasized. The

publication of the *Genus Rosa in China* and its underlying research provide invaluable resources for future studies and breeding.

Dr Luo Le is a keynote speaker at April’s heritage rose conference in China. He will explain in much greater detail about his exciting discoveries.

The programme is a strong one with speakers from all corners of the world and we are looking forward to hosting our international rose friends for this important event as well as showing you some amazing gardens.

**Below:** *R. forrestiana* var. *maculata*, a stable purple-spotted variety found in Yunnan’s high-altitude regions.



## Speakers at the 17th International Heritage Rose Conference, Nanyang & Shanghai, China

**Dr. Luo Le, China**  
‘New Discoveries of Genus *Rosa* in China’

**Yuki Mikanagi, Japan**  
‘Wild Roses from Japan’

**Clément Cherreyron, France**  
‘Roses from a different rose, the contribution of rose species in breeding, from yesterday to tomorrow’

**Martin Stott, England**  
‘Heading west – the journey of China’s roses to Europe and their impact’

**Dr. Jian, Hongying, China**  
‘Phylogeography and conservation genetics of *R. chinensis* var. *spontanea* and *R. lucidissima* complex’

**Hella Brumme, Germany**  
‘Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen – The World’s Largest Rose Collection’

**Shiwei Zhao, China**  
‘The history of the rose in China based on the ancient paintings’

**Mike Shoup, USA**  
‘Preserving the legacy: safeguarding heirloom roses from a Texas Rose rustler.’

**Dr. Chao Yu, China**  
‘Phenotypic and genomic signatures across wild *Rosa* species open new horizons for modern rose breeding’

**Pat Toolan, Australia**  
‘Why Australians love heritage roses’

**Dr. David Comyn, South Africa**  
‘The South African Heritage Rose Trust’s contribution to the conservation of Old Roses’

**William McNamara, USA**  
‘The Profound Influence of Wild Chinese Roses on the Development of Modern Roses’



# 17th International Heritage Rose Conference

China Roses:  
Past, Present  
& Future



Nanyang  
& Shanghai,  
China

April 24-28, 2026

The 17th International Heritage Rose Conference will start in Nanyang, the city of rose in Central China, and end in Shanghai, the oriental pearl in Eastern China. This includes a world-class lecture programme of 12 speakers from around the world who will talk about species roses and heritage roses. There will be garden and nursery tours, social events and a tour and lunch at the Shanghai Botanical Garden. We look forward to seeing you in China in 2026.

Pre-convention tour – “A journey of wild roses and pandas in Western China”  
Chengdu, Sichuan Province, 19th April – 24th April 2026

Main tour – The 17th International Heritage Rose Conference  
Starts in Nanyang and ends in Shanghai, 24th April – 28th April 2026

Post-convention tour – “A journey to roses in classical gardens”  
Shanghai, 29th April – 2nd May 2026

For more information, visit: [www.rose2026.com](http://www.rose2026.com)

# *A vicar walked into a bar...*

**Martin Stott**





As he tells it, it all started with an English vicar walking into a bar. It's the early 1850s. Samuel Reynolds Hole, a vicar – or Anglican parish priest – in the village of Cauntton in central England, receives a telegram from nearby Nottingham inviting him to judge an Easter rose show.

He thinks it is an April Fool's joke. No-one grows roses in April. But, intrigued, he climbs aboard the train to Nottingham, footwarmer and blanket in hand.

At the General Cathcart Inn he is greeted by a mob of horny-handed labourers and told the roses are ready for him to judge upstairs. What follows is a Damascene experience. "A prettier sight, a more complete surprise of beauty, could not have presented itself on that cold and cloudy morning," he later wrote in his incredibly popular *A Book about Roses*.

He was transfixed. At the end of the day Hole was sent home clutching a bouquet. Within a week he had placed his first order of a dozen roses and before long, well, you probably know the feeling.

"Year by year my enthusiasm increased... my roses multiplied from a dozen to a score, from a score to a hundred from a hundred to a thousand, from one to five thousand trees. They came into my garden a very small band of settlers, and speedily, after the example of other colonists, they civilised all the former inhabitants from off the face of the earth... They routed the rhubarb, they carried the asparagus with resistless force,

**"At the General Cathcart Inn he is greeted by a mob of horny-handed labourers and told the roses are ready for him to judge upstairs."**

**Previous page:** Caricature of Samuel Reynolds Hole, Dean of Rochester, by Frederick Thomas Dalton for *Vanity Fair*, 1895

**Below left:** From 1879 to 1902 *The Rosarian's Year Book* was published by Rev Henry Honeywood D'Ombraim – an unofficial publication.

In 1907 the official Rose Society Annual was launched as a small paper cover publication (which is why the first three editions are so rare). The first hardback cloth editions started from 1910.

**Below right:** The Reynolds Hole rose – rare to find today

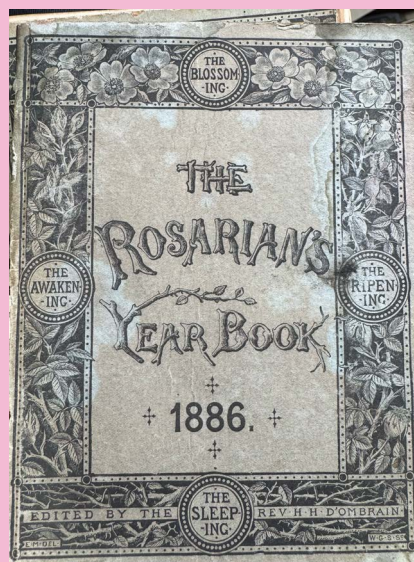
Images: Public Domain and Martin Stott

they cut down the raspberries to a cane. They annexed that vegetable kingdom, and they retain it still."

In truth, Hole was just telling the story for effect. It certainly helped him sell lots of copies of his book – by the time of his death in 1904 *A Book about Roses* had run to 19 editions and been published in the US and Germany. And it helped make rose growing and showing popular in Britain.

But subsequent writings reveal Hole, the raconteur, had actually been growing roses for 20 years when that Nottingham show took place. Newspaper cuttings reveal that it was held in 1860 – two years after a much more important show took place (and explains why he was invited to judge).

In April 1857 Hole had suggested in *The Florist, Fruitist and Garden Miscellany* magazine the idea of a GRAND NATIONAL ROSE SHOW.





## “In 1963 the Royal National Rose Society Trial grounds opened in St. Albans”

The Royal National Rose Society Gardens, St Albans, in 2013

*Image: RNRS Rose Society, CC BY-SA 3.0*

He waited with bated breath for a response. When none came he wrote to the country’s leading rosarians – Rivers, Paul and Turner – to ask if they would help him. To Hole’s delight, all three wrote back quickly in assent. “I remember that in the exuberance of my joy I attempted foolishly a perilous experiment, which quickly ended in bloodshed – I began to whistle in the act of shaving.”

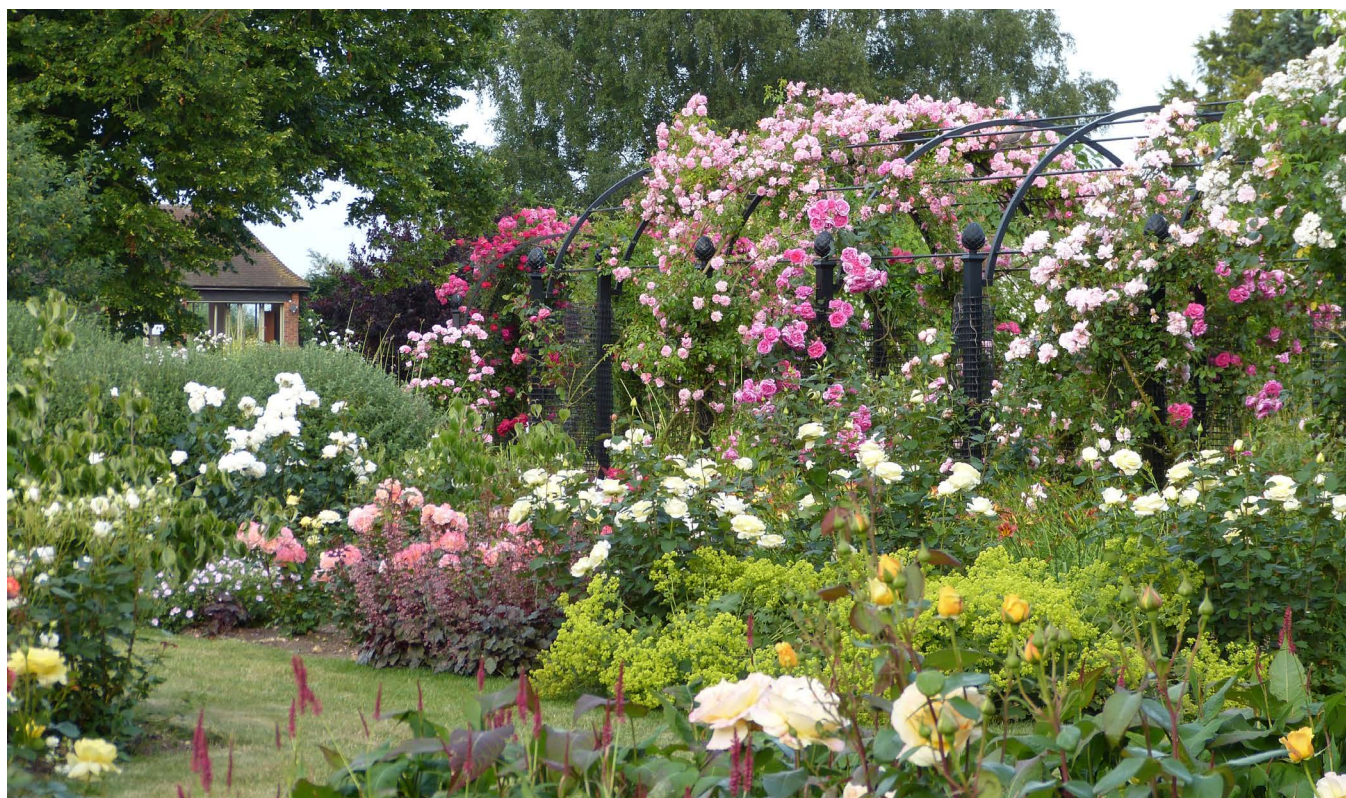
I once gave a talk on Hole in Caunton and afterwards someone presented me with his shaving soap dish and razor blade tray. They are among my most prized possessions!

Standing at the entrance on the day of the exhibition, Hole was understandably nervous. “Would the public endorse our experiment?

Would the public appreciate our Show? There was a deficiency of £100 in our funds for the expenses of the exhibition were £300; and as a matter both of feeling and finance I stood by the entrance as the clock struck two, anxiously to watch the issue.”

More than 2,000 “shillings” came. The event was a success, but that high-wire finance act was to become a recurring motif in this story.

By 1876, the show had become a two-day event and standards had slipped, with exhibitors focused on quantity over quality. Enter another vicar. Under the auspices of the Rev Henry Honeywood D’Ombrain (1818-1905), the National Rose Society was established, taking over the running of the National Rose Show.





The first meeting of the Society took place “on a murky December day in 1876”. Hole, by now Dean of Rochester, was there and agreed to become its founder President. So were three more vicars (if I could be reincarnated backwards, I’d like to be a Victorian vicar with a healthy stipend and a big garden, please). The meeting was graced with the company of some of the great nurserymen of the time – Rivers, Paul, Cant, Laing and Turner.

The first show they organised was a financial disaster. Only members of the Society and their friends came. Writing up the account in the Rose Annual of 1926, the Society’s then Deputy President Haywood Radcliffe Darlington, wrote: “What was to be done? Was the whole scheme to be abandoned? The universal cry was in the negative, the prize-winners consented to take a portion of their money, and to wait for better times for the balance.”

With the chief prize in the Amateur Division being a 50-guinea cup (worth about £5,000/US\$6,700 in today’s money), it is perhaps not surprising they found themselves in debt.

In recognition of the fact that this was a *National* Rose Society the first metropolitan show was organised, in Manchester in the Northwest. More regional shows followed.

For many years the roses were shown in rigid boxes “tightly upheld by wires or other supports and staged in serried lines”. People complained that the rose was not being shown to best advantage. And it meant the focus was all on the size of the flower.



**Above left:** John Anthony, Chairman of the Rose Society UK with its Secretary Ray Martin. **Above right:** Ray and Pauline Martin of the Rose Society UK.

*Images: Martin Stott*

**“The Society became more focused on using the shows to encourage people to grow roses and not just compete with them.”**

Innovations were to come. After heated debate it was agreed in 1892 that exhibitors be grouped by how many roses they grew, so as not to pit amateurs with modest gardens against someone like gentleman farmer H. V. Machin who grew 50,000 roses just for showing and had several staff (see BAON30). Classes were introduced for a “display of roses” and more attention was paid to garden roses.

The Society became more focused on using the shows to encourage people to grow roses and not just compete with them.

These innovations meant that by 1925 35,000 visitors attended the



show in London. The Society’s membership grew, too – to 4,500 by the outbreak of war in 1914 and 13,000 by 1926.

The Society inspired rose growers around the world to form similar organisations. The adjoining table gives dates as far as I can find them.

In 1963 the Rose Society Trial grounds opened in St. Albans – a fine garden that Charles Quest-Ritson alludes to in his piece. In 1965 the organisation became the Royal National Rose Society with the Queen as its patron. At that point the society had nearly 105,000 members. It peaked with 118,450 in 1968 when membership was doubled – from 10s6d to £1. That decision cost the society 15,000 members in one year. It was downhill from there.

By the early 2000s the garden at St Albans had become rather antiquated and neglected. After a fundraising effort it was closed to the public in 2005, razed and completely redesigned. It was

reopened in 2007 with a more contemporary design, featuring 20,000 rose bushes with mixed companion planting.

This is not the place or time to analyse what went wrong next – it should be a celebration, not an inquest! But in brief, insufficient attention was paid to keeping costs down, understanding pension liabilities and in engaging effectively with members. The Society had a staff and even its own wine club.

In May 2017 the Royal National Rose Society was declared insolvent. Bailiffs moved in and the garden was permanently closed. The world's oldest specialist plant society seemed dead.

That it found a new life, was largely down to the efforts of three people – Ray and Pauline Martin and John Anthony. John was recently awarded the Dean Hole Medal – the Society's highest award. Ray's efforts were recognised by the World Federation of Rose Societies (WFRS) at the conference in Japan with the World Rose Award. Pauline's contribution has yet to be appropriately acknowledged.

The organisation was resurrected just a few days after its downfall as the "Rose Society UK" and recognised by the WFRS. In an era when member organisations all struggle for numbers, today's new Society has grown steadily to approaching 1,000 members. Subscription is just £10 (US\$13), meaning it attracts members from around the world.

That £10 offers you free access to a winter webinar series, publications



The Rose Society UK has found a new life, steadily growing in membership with well-attended shows and competitions throughout the year. Above is a selection of prize-winning entries from 2025 with winners Neil Duncan (above) being presented the Dean Hole cup – his 12th year winning it – as the 2025 national champion, and Matthew Pitt (overleaf) with the Bank of England Cup, awarded to him at Newby Hall at the 2025 Rose Society Autumn show.

*Images: Neil Duncan, Matthew Pitt and Martin Stott*



## Founding of Rose Societies across the world

**Great Britain**  
Rose Society UK  
est. 1876

**Germany**  
Deutsche  
Rosengesellschaft  
est. 1883

**USA**  
The American Rose  
Society  
est. 1892

**France**  
Société Française des  
Roses  
est. 1896

**Canada**  
Canadian Rose Society  
est. 1913

**Belgium**  
Société Royale Nationale  
'Les Amis de la Rose'  
est. 1926

**New Zealand**  
New Zealand Rose  
Society Inc  
est. 1931

**Japan**  
The Japan Rose Society  
est. 1948

**Argentina**  
The Rose Society of  
Argentina  
est. 1951

**Bermuda**  
Bermuda Rose Society  
est. 1954

**Switzerland**  
Gesellschaft Schweizerischer  
Rosenfreunde  
est. 1959

**Italy**  
Associazione Italiana della  
Rosa  
est. 1963

**Northern Ireland**  
The Rose Society of  
Northern Ireland  
est. 1964

**Netherlands**  
Nederlandse Rozenvereniging  
est. 1966

**Czech Republic**  
Czech Rosa Club  
est. 1968

**Australia**  
National Rose Society of  
Australia Inc  
est. 1972\*





#### Israel

Wohl Rose Park of  
Jerusalem  
est. 1975

#### India

Indian Rose Federation  
est. 1978

#### Luxembourg

Luxembourg Rose Society  
est. 1980

#### Norway

Norwegian Rose Society  
est. 1982

#### South Africa

Federation of Rose  
Societies of South  
Africa (ROSA)  
est. 1982

#### Uruguay

Asociación Uruguaya de  
la Rosa  
est. 1983

#### China

Chinese Rose Society  
est. 1986

#### Sweden

Svenska  
Rosensällskapet  
est. 1987

#### Pakistan

Pakistan National Rose  
Society  
est. 1988

#### Finland

Suomen Ruususeura  
est. 1989

#### Romania

Asociația Amicii Rozelor  
din România  
est. 1990

#### Greece

Hellenic Rose Society  
est. 1996

#### Spain

Asociación Española de  
la Rosa  
est. 1996

#### Chile

Asociación Chilena de  
la Rosa  
est. 1999

#### Iceland

Icelandic Rose Society  
est. 2002

#### Slovenia

Društvo Ljubiteljev  
Vrtnic Slovenije  
est. 2003

#### Russia

Russian Association  
of Rosarians  
est. 2007

#### Hungary

Hungarian Rose-Friends  
Society  
est. 2008

#### South Korea

South Korea Rose Society  
est. 2009

#### Austria

Österreichische  
Rosenfreunde  
est. 2021

#### Poland

Polskie Towarzystwo  
Rozane (PTR)  
est. 1958\*\*

#### Slovakia

Rose Society Maria  
Henrieta Chotek  
est. 1997\*\*\*

#### Monaco

Société des Roses de  
Monaco  
Unknown

(the committee are currently looking at ways to enhance the approach to content), a couple of events each year, special garden tours and pruning workshops, free entry to shows for exhibitors and also discounts from rose suppliers. The Society is a valuable source of expert advice and support to all rose growers.

It is a battle to keep organisations alive in a digital age when people are so busy. The UK Rose Society is unlikely to ever see 100,000 member subscriptions again, but it has re-rooted, and, thanks to the good guidance of a small number of enthusiasts, is growing healthily – an attractive shrub rather than a virulent climber! Happy 150th birthday!



For more information about the  
Rose Society UK visit:  
[www.therosesociety.org.uk](http://www.therosesociety.org.uk) or for  
more information about other  
member organisations visit:  
[www.worldrose.org/wfrs-members](http://www.worldrose.org/wfrs-members)

\*The Victoria Rose Society was formed in 1899; South Australia in 1908; New South Wales in 1913; Queensland in 1930 and Western Australia in 1932

\*\*The Polish Rose Lovers' Society ran from 1958 to 2000 and the Polish Rose Society was formed in 2016

\*\*\*The Slovak Rose Society ran from 1997 to 2000 and the Rose Society Maria Henrieta Chotek since 2023

# “Ferguson Valley A”

## The story of finding and naming an unidentified old rose.

Di Durston

Back in 2011, I received an invitation to pay a visit to the site of four unidentified old roses. They were Tea Roses, growing in the side garden of a wooden cottage that had been built around 1920 in the Ferguson Valley, some 180 kms south of Perth in Western Australia. I needed to act quickly, because the local government had put a demolition order on the old cottage. I gathered together three ‘Tea Bags’ – friends who joined me in finding and saving old Tea Roses – Jenny Jones, Billy West and Hillary Merrifield. Another rose friend, Gay Dutton, also joined us for the drive, one very wet and windy day. The long-time owners of the old cottage had said that they did not want any interruption to their quiet country life or their privacy, which meant that we could not publicise widely the reason for our visit.

We gave working names to the four Tea Roses rescued that day – “Ferguson Valley A”, “B”, “C”, and “D”. We ‘quickly identified “Ferguson Valley B” as ‘White Maman Cochet’ [Cook, 1896] and “Ferguson Valley D” as ‘Mrs. B.R.Cant’ [Cant, 1901]. Both are still in commerce today. A kind member of Heritage Roses in Australia Inc., the late Ross Mandry from the South Western Branch, propagated the roses for me to grow and to study. They have been growing in my garden ever since but it is only quite recently that I tried try to identify the two unknowns.

“Ferguson Valley C” is a mixture of pink, mauve and red that I have not yet been able to identify. However, I think I may have succeeded in finding the correct name of “Ferguson Valley A”, which is cream-and-apricot in colour. Scrolling through the Velvet Rose website I noticed a photograph that looked like my rose and I began to research it with considerable excitement. Then I checked the HelpMeFind website and found photographs of the same rose. The lady who had posted the photograph on Velvet Rose was Inés Díaz de Licandro from Uruguay and I was amazed that we had each found the same old Tea Rose but lived half a world apart on different continents. My task was to try and discover its real name. Inés had already researched many entries from old nursery catalogues and she kindly allowed me to read her work. My research was clouded, for a while, by the description of a rose called ‘Fanny Dupuis’ (of which, more later).

I then turned to our register of old Australian rose catalogues, looking for Tea Roses, and one rose in particular seemed close in its description: ‘Abricotée’, introduced in 1843 by Dupuis in France. The register was compiled by Billy West when we were writing our book *Tea Roses, Old Roses for Warm Gardens* [Rosener, 2008]. It was when we were writing this book that we acquired the nickname ‘Tea Bags’. I also noted that ‘Abricotée’ had been



“The late Ross Mandry from the South Western Branch, propagated the roses for me to grow and to study. They have been growing in my garden ever since but it is only quite recently that I tried try to identify the two unknowns.”

“Ferguson Valley A” growing in Di Durston’s garden

*Image: Di Durston*



"w Valley C" which may be 'Souvenir de François Gaulain' [Guillot, 1889]

Image: Di Durston

sold locally, by C.F. Newman and Son of Perth in 1905, whether within a short drive from the Ferguson Valley or delivered by mail order. This was getting interesting, and so I went on researching.

Checking further, I found that 'Abricotée' was listed on a recent catalogue of the website for La Roseraie du Désert in the south of France, with the name 'Abricotée' (Mottisfont) next to the listing. I felt that I must deepen my researches: my old mentor and close friend, the late David Ruston, who knew my personality well, nicknamed me 'Miss Marple', to commemorate Agatha Christie's tireless investigator.

Next, I found that the 'Abricotée' rose was growing in Italy at the nursery of the late Sergio Scudu near Rome. After checking, I found that it had also come originally from La Roseraie du Désert, which was owned by my friends John and

Becky Hook. I also discovered that the rose known as 'Abricotée' at Mottisfont in England was the same as my rose – and thus the same as the rose that Inés found growing in Uruguay. I needed more information about the rose growing in that beautiful walled garden which houses the collection of old roses made by the famous rosarian Graham Thomas for the National Trust. Graham Thomas was invited not just to assemble a collection of old roses at Mottisfont but also to design the garden. He considered it his personal masterpiece.

My next step was to contact Charles and Brigid Quest-Ritson in England. Brigid was Chair of the WFRS Committee for Conservation and Heritage Roses. I had noticed a photograph of 'Abricotée' at Mottisfont posted by Charles on HelpMeFind and, once again, this was 'our' rose. My early inquiries had suggested that 'Abricotée' was listed only in the Trädgårdsföreningen

rose garden at Gothenburg in Sweden, one of the largest in Northern Europe. This listing dated back to a database compiled by the WFRS in 2000 – incidentally, without including the collection at Mottisfont. This had been rather a setback to my early efforts because 'Abricotée' was not at that time listed at Europa-Rosarium Sangerhausen – nor the Fineschi garden in Tuscany, nor the famous French garden at L'Hay-les-Roses.

Then came a breakthrough, Brigid emailed me with some positive news. The Mottisfont archival records show that the original budwood for 'Abricotée' came from the gardens of Sangerhausen. James Russell of Castle Howard had collected the budwood from Sangerhausen and 'Abricotée' had been added to the garden at Mottisfont in 1983. James Russell was an excellent rosarian and his family once owned Sunningdale Nursery, where Graham Thomas was employed as the nursery manager. James Russell was a knowledgeable all-round gardener and in 1988 was given the Royal Horticultural Society's highest award, the Victoria Medal of Honour.

I have a copy of a letter from L. Arthur Wyatt regarding his small specialist nursery whose roses were sold as 'Lost and Found Roses'. It confirms the link between him and Mottisfont. Here is a short excerpt: 'James Russell, who was formerly director of Sunningdale Nurseries which had a connection with Graham Thomas, re-assembled my collection by writing to all my old customers for budwood. He has



also added several more from Sangerhausen which I and my associate never had. Brigid kindly checked the history of 'Abricotée' with David Stone, the Head Gardener of Mottisfont who worked closely with Graham Thomas for many years. David confirmed that 'Abricotée' came from James Russell who had collected the budwood from Sangerhausen.

Over the years the name 'Abricotée' has been spelt with 'ee' or 'e'. Graham Thomas preferred 'é' because Europeans usually put an acute accent on the last letter. 'Abricoté' is how it was actually spelt by the original breeder in France. I have also discovered that the rose was sometimes distributed with the name of 'Fanny Dupuis'. This was confirmed in Rudolf Geschwind's book *Die Teerose und ihre Bastarde* [1884] – Brigid checked this in her copy of the book and translated the entry for me. It states: 'Abricotée' – also distributed as 'Fanny Dupuis'. Flower apricot colour, flesh coloured at edges; large and double, rounded shape; growth vigorous, a lovely rose.

Helpmefind records that the rose was first introduced in Australia as 'Abricoté' by the Melbourne nursery of Law, Somner Pty. Ltd. in 1886. It adds that 'the rose in commerce ex Mottisfont is probably mislabelled'. I accept that the identification of any old Tea Rose can be difficult to know for certain because of the passing of time, especially when the rose has not been constantly available commercially. Whether or not my rose is the original 'Abricotée' remains an open question, though

**“Whether or not my rose is the original ‘Abricoté’ remains an open question, though I will continue to call it ‘Abricotee Mottisfont’.”**

I will continue to call it 'Abricotee Mottisfont'. It gives me great pleasure to know that the found rose "Ferguson Valley A" that is growing in my garden is a very rare old rose that survived for over 100 years in the garden of an old pioneer mill cottage. Plans are in place to bud the rose and to plant it at Araluen Botanical Park, a historic public garden in Roleystone, Western Australia.



**Di Durston** is Western Australia's leading heritage-rosarian and co-author of *Tea Roses: Old Roses for Warm Gardens*, [2008].

'Abricotée' at Mottisfont Abbey

Image: Charles Quest-Ritson





# ***‘E. Veyrat Hermanos’ reintroduced in Spain***

Inés Díaz de Licandro







Roberto Duato Veyrat delivering 'E. Veyrat Hermanos' to the city of Valencia during a ceremony at the Monforte Historic Rose Garden in March 2025

*Image: Roberto Duto Veyrat and Malcolm Manners, CC 2.0*

“‘E. Veyrat Hermanos’ can still be found on several continents, but it has become scarce. It is part of the rich horticultural heritage of the Spanish region of Valencia, where the Veyrat family lived and worked. Bequeathed from past generations, it generates a sense of belonging – not only for individuals but also for the community.”



Last October, the rose ‘E. Veyrat Hermanos’, bred in 1894 by Lyon’s renowned Alexandre Bernaix, was reintroduced to Spain, one hundred and thirty years after its creation.

It was presented at the Asfplant Stand (Asociación Profesional de Flores, Plantas y Tecnología Hortícola de la Comunidad Valenciana) at the Iberflora fair in Valencia.

This fact is remarkable since, over time, numerous rose varieties have disappeared or become extinct. There are many reasons for this – human ignorance or unawareness of their beauty and historical importance, urban growth and decrease of green areas, or

**“From the moment it was bred, this glorious yellow/carmine-pink climbing Tea rose quickly spread to and conquered various corners of the world.”**

‘E. Veyrat Hermanos’  
[Bernaix, 1894]

*Image: Malcolm Manners, CC 2.0*

inheritance laws that lead to the division of properties and gardens passing into the hands of new owners, sometimes with no interest in growing plants. Despite this, the rose ‘E. Veyrat Hermanos’ was proudly exhibited by the Veyrat family at this fair, with the support and appreciation of the Valencia City Council.

The rose had disappeared in Spain and was reintroduced into Spain from France and exhibited at the event thanks to the landscape architect Roberto Duato Veyrat, a member of the prestigious Veyrat lineage of horticulturists and landscapers. I had the honour of conducting with him joint research that culminated in the writing of an







Roberto Duato Veyrat (third from right) with Antonio García Celda (second from right), Director General of the European Green Capital during the presentation of 'E. Veyrat Hermanos' at the Iberflora fair in Valencia

Images: Les Johnson and Pamela Temple

article on both the family's history and that of the rose in the March 2019 issue of *By Any Other Name*.

This beautiful variety pays homage to the Valencian company Veyrat, which began operating as a nursery on Calle del Mar ("Patio de las Plantas") in Valencia in 1875. Frenchman Étienne Veyrat established the business. Since then, the family's horticultural achievements and landscape creations have received numerous awards at exhibitions, publications and events, both in Spain and around the world.

From the moment it was bred, this glorious yellow/carmine-pink climbing Tea rose quickly spread to and conquered various corners of the world. Exhibited as part of the Veyrat rose collection at the 1900 Paris World's Fair, it was also offered by nurseries in France and as far away as Australia, Argentina

and Uruguay, where it is still cultivated.

'E. Veyrat Hermanos' can still be found on several continents, but it has become scarce. It is part of the rich horticultural heritage of the Spanish region of Valencia, where the Veyrat family lived and worked. Bequeathed from past generations, it generates a sense of belonging – not only for individuals but also for the community. This social appreciation of a natural asset – fragile and perishable by nature – generates an imperative need to ensure its conservation and preservation throughout the contexts of each era, for the benefits of present and future generations.

Following the Iberflora fair, the 'E. Veyrat Hermanos' rose was donated by the Veyrat family to the Valencian Municipality and later planted in the Monforte Historic Garden ('Hort de Romero') in

Valencia. This re-establishment will enable its future reproduction and cultivation in other sites and gardens of the city, known as the 2024 "European Green Capital".

Roberto Duato Veyrat said: "The ceremony was been emotional, harmonious and elegant; gentle in its feelings. It was more than an ornamental act, but a gift of memory, beauty and intimacy that represents a link between the past and present and between the private sphere and government. The rose now has the capacity to flourish not only in gardens but also in the cultural consciousness of the Valencian community."

This achievement constitutes a fair and well-deserved recognition of an element of Valencian heritage and at the same time, an exemplary initiative for other communities pursuing the preservation of plant species with historical or botanical significance.

Congratulations to the Veyrat family and to Valencia!



**Inés Díaz de Licandro** is Vice-President for South America at the World Federation of Rose Societies and Chair of the Federation's Conservation & Heritage Committee.





# *Under threat: The genetic heritage of Ukraine's wild roses*

Ukraine is home to as many as 95 wild rose species, but botanist **Inna Koval** explains how a combination of factors, including war, climate change and international differences in the way plants are classified, is putting this valuable resource at risk.





*R. donetzica* Dubovik – native to Ukraine, generally near the eastern Black Sea, is regarded as endangered.

Image: Olga Tkachuk, O.V.Fomin  
Botanical Garden, Kyiv.



*Rosa czackiana*  
Besser, listed in the  
Red Data Book of  
Ukraine 2010-2025 and  
its distribution across  
the country.

Images: Red Data Book  
of Ukraine



In an era defined by climate instability and the search for sustainable resources, wild flora represents a strategic genetic asset vital for every nation to successfully address numerous existential issues. The genus *Rosa* L. (Rosaceae) constitutes one of the most taxonomically complex plant groups in Eurasia, due to widespread hybridization, polyploidy, and phenotypic plasticity. Ukrainian wild roses are not only a unique component of the national biodiversity but also an untapped genetic reserve for the global rose industry. Today, they face a confluence of natural and anthropogenic threats – from natural succession and agricultural intensification to the destructive consequences of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

### **Taxonomic ambiguity and its consequences**

The Ukrainian botanical tradition, shaped by the work of V.Khrzhanovskyi, O.Dubovik,

V.Ostapko, M.Fedoronchuk and other 20th-century scientists, established a localised classification of wild roses that is still widely used in domestic floras, botanical gardens, and herbaria.

Concurrently the modern global reference is the World Flora Online (WFO), which systematises species names and their synonyms according to a unified scheme, consolidating information from various sources – herbarium specimens, scientific research, field observations – to create a complete and reliable overview of the plant world.

This divergence has serious practical implications. Taxa recognized as distinct species in Ukrainian practice are frequently recognised to synonyms of broader species complexes in WFO. Conversely, some names accepted in WFO have no direct counterparts in Ukrainian catalogues.

### **Natural challenges for populations**

Ukraine’s wild roses face a range of ecological problems. Their habitats – chalk slopes, granite outcrops, and steppe ecosystems – are often extremely fragile. Ecological succession naturally allows forests to encroach upon the open, sunny areas necessary for roses to thrive. Many species grow in transitional biotopes – forest edges, ravines, and old meadows – which are increasingly subject to transformation.

This process is accelerated by human activity, including the





abandonment of traditional land management practices. Agricultural expansion, particularly large-scale monoculture, destroys the mosaic landscapes of *Rosa* taxa. Overgrazing in some regions and the cessation of traditional grazing in others speed up succession, reducing the areas of open biotopes where most rose species grow. Invasive plants alter the competitive environment, displacing roses from their ranges.

Climate change only exacerbates the pressure: prolonged summer droughts and extreme winter conditions decrease reproductive success and increase plant mortality. Pollen viability, fruit set, and seed germination in many *Rosa* taxa are sensitive to such climate extremes, threatening the long-term stability of populations. These problems are common in many parts of the world but in Ukraine there is another issue to contend with – war.

### Ecological impacts of war

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has transformed landscapes into arenas of destruction. Entire biotopes have been destroyed by shelling, the construction of military infrastructure, or arson. Mines and trench systems dissect steppe and forest zones, fragmenting populations to a critical level.

No less serious an obstacle is the stalling of scientific research. Expeditions to eastern and southern Ukraine, home to many rose species, have become impossible due to shelling and mining. Herbaria and living collections in botanical gardens have lost access to typical

localities for replenishing genetic material. Long-term monitoring plots have been abandoned, destroying valuable data on population dynamics.

Furthermore, the war also leaves a toxic legacy. Heavy metals from ammunition, oil spills, and persistent soil contaminants alter micro-biotopes for decades. Even after peace is restored, the demilitarisation of territories will require long-term and costly mine clearance, delaying conservation action. In this sense, the war is not only a geopolitical but also an ecological crisis.

### Conservation status: national and international recognition

Two rose species are included in the Red Data Book of Ukraine: *Rosa donetzica* Dubovik and *Rosa czackiana* Besser. Additionally, regionally rare species are locally included in Regional Red Lists (*R. bugensis* Chrshan., *R. dipodonta* Dubovik, *R. donetzica*).

*Rosa donetzica*  
Dubovik and its  
distribution across the  
Donetsk-Azov regions  
of Ukraine.

Images: Olga Tkachuk.  
Distribution map from  
Red Data Book of Ukraine.



It is important to note that a species recognised and protected under Ukrainian law may only be listed in the WFO database as a synonym or a regional variant of a more widespread species. For example, *Rosa czackiana*, which has a protected status in the Red Data Book of Ukraine, is often internationally considered a variant of the more common *Rosa gallica* L., while *Rosa donetzica* is listed in the European Red List.

The gap between national and international frameworks also extends to conservation status. Species listed as “Endangered”, “Vulnerable”, “Rare” or “Unassessed” in Ukraine do not automatically receive status in the IUCN Red List – the global benchmark for extinction risk. This qualifies species as “Critically Endangered (CR)”, “Endangered (EN)”, “Vulnerable (VU)”, “Near Threatened (NT)”, “Least Concern (LC)”, “Data Deficient (DD)”, or “Not Evaluated (NE).” This discrepancy is partially a result of the aforementioned taxonomic issues but is also a product of bureaucratic inertia and the enormous difficulty in conducting the thorough assessments required for IUCN listing – a task now complicated by the war.

International funding programs, such as IUCN or European biodiversity initiatives, rely on consistency with WFO. Ukraine risks losing modern means and opportunities for nature protection if this taxonomic divergence is not urgently bridged. Without official recognition, rare species of Ukraine’s natural flora, including wild roses, remain invisible on the global agenda.



Roses on the terrace in front of the laboratory in the O.V.Fomin Botanical Garden, Kyiv. Founded in 1839, it is one of the oldest botanical gardens in Ukraine.

Covering 22.5 hectares, the garden holds many species that are recorded in the Red Data Book of Ukraine.

The war has impacted funding for the garden’s plant protection work. Its glasshouses have also been hit by Russian shells and have suffered from power outages.

Image: Olga Tkachuk

“The preservation of the genetic floral heritage determines ecological stability and the more successful development of society.”



## Why it matters

Wild roses are an inexhaustible source of adaptive traits. Ukrainian wild roses, hardened by millennia of steppe winters and continental droughts, preserve genetic codes for resilience and represent significant potential for application in both breeding and the pharmaceutical industry.

The loss of wild populations leads to genetic erosion – the disappearance of unique alleles that cannot be recovered. While the rose market is growing, its long-term viability depends on the genetic contribution of wild relatives. Ukrainian wild roses are, in this sense, a global public good. Their disappearance is not just a Ukrainian problem but a risk of impoverishing global floral biodiversity.

## Proposed conservation strategy

The following five-point strategy attempts to offer a path to addressing some of the problems I have outlined here. Obviously, this cannot be implemented until the war is over. We all hope that will be soon.

1. Collect and document data on the range of wild rose populations. Integrate data from herbaria, botanical garden collections, and field surveys to create an updated, reliable information database of *Rosa* distribution in Ukraine.
2. Genetically identify the taxa listed in the scientific works of Ukrainian botanists.

3. Establish cooperation between Ukrainian botanists and international structures to reconcile national nomenclature with the global standard, and to defend the status of endemics where scientifically justified.
4. Assess the conservation status of each confirmed taxon according to the IUCN Red List categories and criteria.
5. Recommend the representation of rare species in botanical gardens and seed banks, both in Ukraine and abroad. Consistency with global databases opens the path to international seed bank networks, grants, and breeding programs.

## Conclusion

The preservation of the genetic floral heritage determines ecological stability and the more successful development of society. Anthropogenic impact and current natural challenges urge the conscious community to take urgent action in this direction.

If this issue is not adequately supported, many taxa may disappear before their true value is realised. In that case, humanity will lose not only a part of biodiversity but also the resilience encoded in their genes – a resilience that may prove vital for future generations.

## Acknowledgements

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**Dr Inna Koval** is a Senior Research Fellow at the M.M.Hryshko National Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Trained as a plant physiologist and botanist with additional expertise in pharmacognosy, she holds a PhD in Botany with a dissertation on the bioecological traits of *Rosa* species introduced to the steppe region of the Dnipro basin. Dr Koval is the author of more than 100 scientific publications and has presented her work at national conferences and international conventions.









# *The rose collection at Kassel– Wilhelmshöhe*

**Andreas Meier-Dinkel**

A look at one of the best collections  
of 18th century roses in the world.

The rose collection is located  
below Wilhelmshöhe Palace.  
In front: Floribunda rose  
'Westzeit' [Noack, 2010]

*Image: A. Meier-Dinkel*

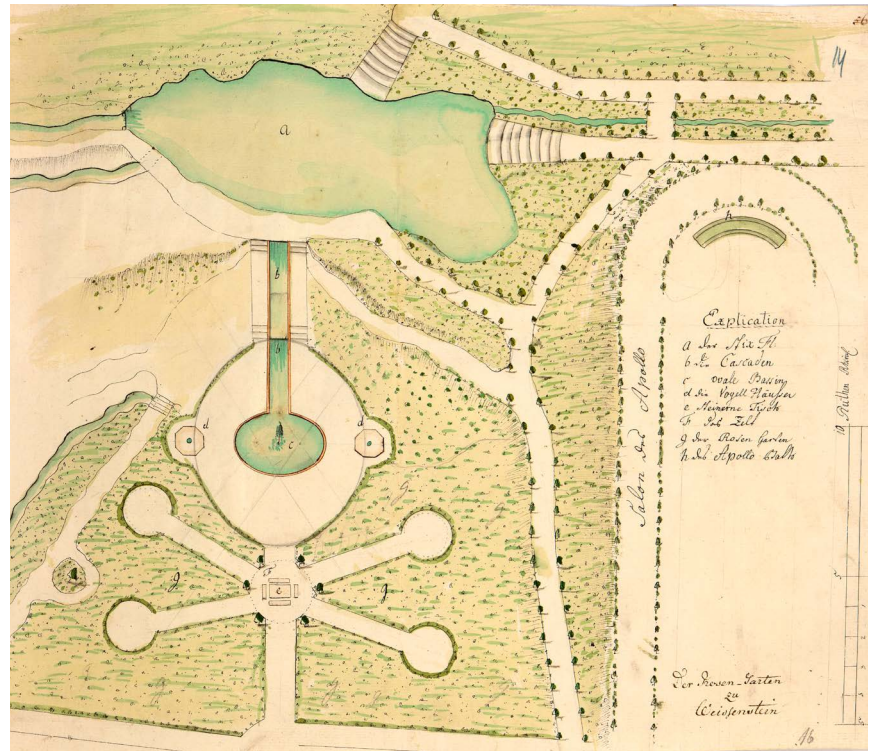
The tradition of planting roses in Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe Landscape Park dates back more than 500 years to the time when it was called Park Weissenstein and was a hunting lodge.

The lodge was built between 1606 and 1610 by Landgrave Moritz von Hessen-Kassel. Moritz's father, Landgrave Wilhelm IV, was an enthusiastic botanist. In 1569, he succeeded in acquiring 13 different varieties of roses from Count Hermann von Neuenahr the Younger for his pleasure garden on an island in the Fulda river.

He also exchanged ‘musk roses’ (fragrant garden roses of that period, such as Damask roses and Centifolias) with other collectors, but we do not know exactly which cultivars he possessed. It is quite likely that Landgrave Moritz, who had inherited his father’s interest in botany, also had the roses that were in the pleasure garden at that time planted in his Renaissance garden in Weissenstein Park.

Almost 100 years later, Landgrave Carl (1670–1730), Moritz's great-grandson, created the magnificent Baroque park with an imposing statue of Hercules on a huge octagonal castle, at the height of the Habichtswald forest, with water features including cascades and fountains and magnificent avenues.

There were no roses in the Baroque park. These were only rediscovered as garden plants in the first half of the 18th century. Around the middle of the 18th



The rose garden at  
Weissenstein, around 1780

Image: Stiftung Preussische Schlösser  
und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg

“Around 1870, the tree nursery was closed, destroying the basis for the continuous renewal of the park’s rose collection. Over the years, [many] roses were lost.”

century, there is mention of a rose arbour at Weissenstein Castle, which was probably planted with the 'Tapetenrose' (wallpaper rose) (*Rosa*  $\times$  *francofurtana*), a hybrid of *Rosa gallica*.

Landgrave Friedrich II (1760-1785), a regent during the Age of Enlightenment, planned to convert his Weissenstein hunting lodge into a summer residence in keeping with the tastes of the time.

The austere architecture of the Baroque period was replaced by a completely different concept of garden design.

## English landscape

The idea of “Back to Nature” found its expression first in



English landscape gardening. This new development in garden design was referred to as an 'English' landscape park. Due to its varied hillside location and abundant water supply, Weissenstein Park offered a wide range of possibilities for the creation of a landscape park with collections of trees and shrubs from all over the world.

The anglicisation of the park began around 1770. Friedrich II engaged the gardener Daniel August Schwarzkopf who was very familiar with the new 'English' landscape parks, to design this park. On his appointment, Schwarzkopf pointed out how important a financially viable tree nursery was for the maintenance of a landscape park. Immediately after Schwarzkopf's appointment in 1766, a large selection of plants was ordered, including roses. Both the prince and his court gardener were particularly fond of roses. Compared to the 17th century, the number of roses and their varieties had increased considerably.

### 18th century rose collection

It should not be imagined that the rose collection in Weissenstein Park was laid out as a separate rose garden. The roses stood in small groups together with other shrubs and trees in the park and in the nursery for further propagation or sale. In addition to the roses planted in the landscape park, however, a rose garden had already been laid out in 1767. It was a large rose "bosket" – an enclosed space – densely



**Above:** A watercolour painting of 'Perle de Weissenstein' by Salomon Pinhas.

*Image: Hessen Kassel Heritage, Graphic Collection*

**Below:** 'Perle von Weißenstein' [Schwarzkopf, before 1798], this famous variety survived in the park and was rediscovered by Hedi Grimm

*Image: A. Meier-Dinkel*



planted with garden roses of the time. These were mainly tall shrub roses.

In his inventory of foreign trees and shrubs at Weissenstein Castle, Mönch (1785) lists 38 species and cultivars, but also mentions that new varieties of Centifolia, Damask and Gallica roses are produced almost every year and that there are at least 150 different varieties in the rose-garden and in the nursery.

In his book *Rosen, Rosen, Rosen* (Roses, Roses, Roses), published in 1974, botanist Dr Gerd Krüssmann drew on several sources to conclude that:

**“The first person to name a rose in Germany and apparently also ‘breed’ it was Schwarzkopf, the court gardener of Landgrave Friedrich II of Hesse at Weissenstein Castle near Kassel. His rose was called ‘Perle von Weißenstein’ (‘Pearl of Weissenstein’). Schwarzkopf had been court gardener there since 1766 and also created the rose garden, which was probably the first one in Germany.”**

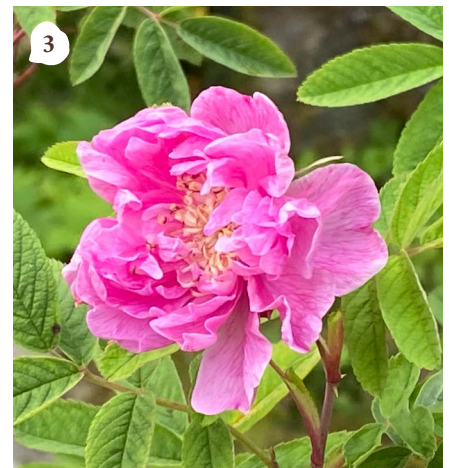
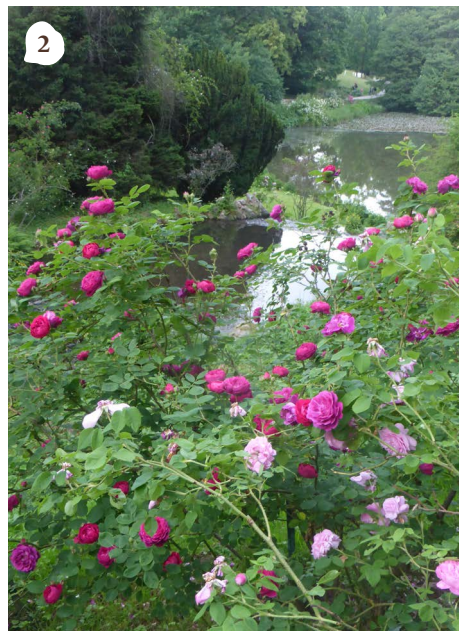
Sadly, it has not yet been possible to determine the exact date of origin of this oldest German rose variety. It is assumed that it originated sometime between 1773 and 1785. The rose first appeared in various German and French directories and sales catalogues after 1808.

Schwarzkopf bred a whole series of other roses in Weissenstein/Wilhelmshöhe, which unfortunately have all disappeared. According to the nursery catalogues from 1811, 1819 and 1851, Schwarzkopf probably also bred the roses ‘Belle de Weissenstein’, ‘Pourprée de Weissenstein’, ‘Rose Petite Hessoise’ and ‘Rose Centifolie de Hesse’.

### Another redesign

When Landgrave William IX – who was known as Prince-Elector William I from 1803 onwards – took over the reins of government in 1785, Weissenstein Park was completely redesigned as a pure landscape park, and Weissenstein Castle was replaced by Wilhelmshöhe Castle, named after the Landgrave (William is Wilhelm in German). It was completed in 1798. Thanks to the tree nursery, the rose collection was not only preserved but even expanded. Roses were planted in long rows on the ‘Rose Island’, which had been created in 1789 at the end of the ‘Lac’ (castle pond) from the rubble of the demolished Weissenstein Castle.

In 1866, Kassel became part of Prussia, whereupon Wilhelmshöhe Palace became the summer residence of the Hohenzollern family. Around 1870, the tree nursery was closed, destroying the basis for the continuous renewal of the park’s rose collection. Over the years, the roses were lost, except for a very small number that survived scattered throughout the park (i.e. *Rosa majalis* var. *foecundissima*, ‘Perle von Weissenstein’).



1. Lac (castle pond) with Rose Island, Johann Heinrich Bleuler, 1816
2. Centifolias and Moss Roses above the Lac (castle pond)
3. *Rosa majalis* var. *foecundissima*, a double variety of the May Rose, has survived since the late 18th century in Wilhelmshöhe Park

Images: Hessen Kassel Heritage, Schlossmuseen – Weißensteinflügel, S. Kalok and A. Meier-Dinkel

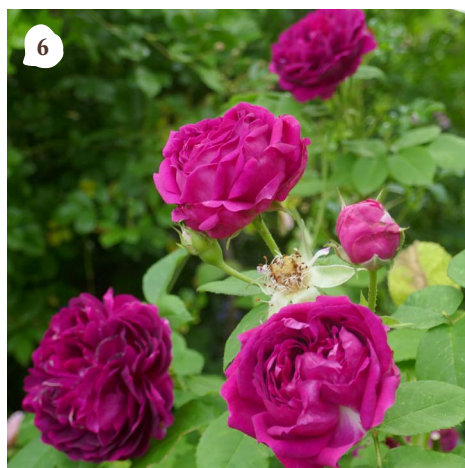
“Roses were exchanged between Wilhelmshöhe and Empress Joséphine’s famous rose collection in Malmaison.”





4. 'Andersonii' (chance seedling before 1912, introduced by Hillier 1912), natural hybrid between *Rosa canina* or *Rosa arvensis* with *Rosa gallica*
5. 'Stanwell Perpetual' [Lee, 1834], hybrid *Spinossissima*
6. 'Zigeunerknabe' or 'Gipsy Boy' [Geschwind, 1909], hybrid Bourbon, hybrid Multiflora

Images: A. Meier-Dinkel



**“In 1977, rose lovers in Kassel set themselves the task of collecting and planting the old roses from the 18th century that once stood in Wilhelmshöhe Park”**

During the reign of Jérôme Bonaparte, Napoleon's youngest brother, who was King of Westphalia in Kassel from 1807 to 1813, historical sources indicate that roses were exchanged between Wilhelmshöhe and Empress Joséphine's famous rose collection in Malmaison. This also explains the occurrence of otherwise uncommon roses with the same name in Wilhelmshöhe and Malmaison. Just like the rose collection in Wilhelmshöhe, the rose collection in Malmaison was also lost.

### **New collection of shrub roses**

Anyone familiar with the eventful history of Kassel's roses and the picturesque backdrop of Wilhelmshöhe Park will understand that reviving the rose tradition was an important concern for the Kassel branch of the German Rose Society.

In 1977, rose lovers in Kassel set themselves the task of collecting and planting the old roses from the 18th century that once stood in Wilhelmshöhe Park and were still available. The initiative came from Hedi and Dr Wernt Grimm. Building on the historical rose

collection, they wanted to illustrate the development of shrub-rose breeding by planting examples of species roses, their hybrids and historic garden roses, as well as modern landscape roses. Before the first roses could be planted, a contract had to be signed between the rose lovers and the state administration responsible for preserving this original historical heritage.

In order to conclude a licence agreement with the park administration, Hedi Grimm and the rose enthusiasts had to found the 'Verein Roseninsel Park Wilhelmshöhe e. V.' (The Rose Island Park Wilhelmshöhe Association) as a contractual partner.

In this agreement, the members of the association undertook to plant shrub roses in the areas on and around the 'Rose Island' *“in accordance with the project and the style of the garden”*. The result should not be a rosarium or separate rose garden, but rather the roses themselves should reflect the unique character of the landscape park, similar to the rose collection of the 18th century.

A planting plan was drawn up, and in the spring of 1978, the members of the association were able to plant the first roses. By 1989, 1,600 shrub roses of more than 900 species and varieties had been planted.

The roses are spread across 18 sections of the park surrounding the Rose Island. Their locations near



ponds and waterways, where they are mostly exposed to competition from trees for space and nutrients, as well as the very different soil conditions, have not proved particularly favourable for roses. Nevertheless, the roses blend in very well with the park landscape.

Today's rose collection focuses on historic rose varieties from the 18th century, many of which were planted in the palace gardens at that time and some of which were bred in Kassel. Outstanding collections of Alba, Gallica, Centifolia, Moss, Bourbon and Musk roses have been created. In addition, European, Asian and American species roses and their hybrids have been planted. Other areas feature numerous specimens of *Spinosissima* roses and the Burnet garden roses developed from them, *Rosa rubiginosa* and *Rosa rugosa* hybrids, and Lambertiana roses.

### Special collections

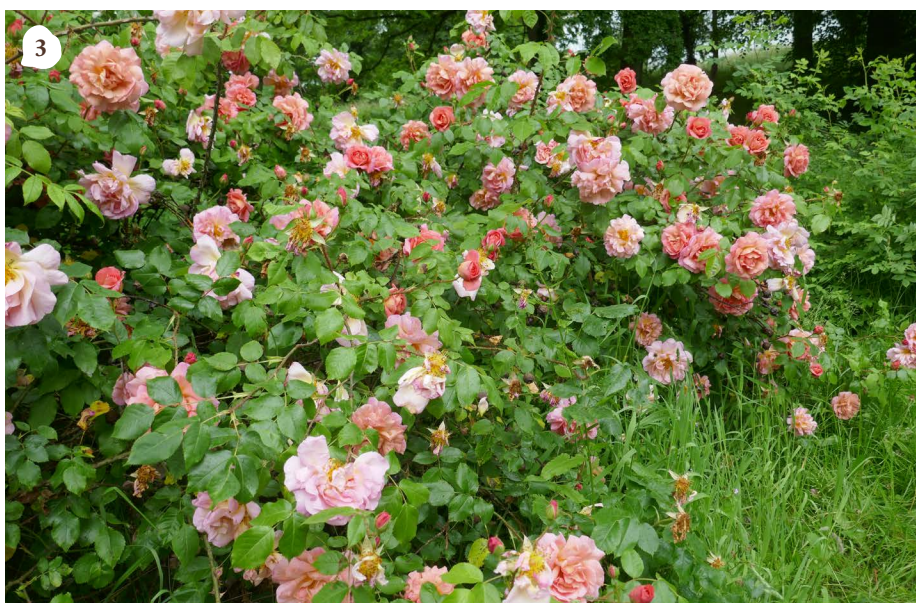
Special features include roses bred by the Austro-Hungarian breeder Rudolf Geschwind, the so-called 'Frühlingsrosen' (spring roses) from Wilhelm Kordes II, and a group of *Rosa omeiensis* forms (called 'Wingthorn roses' because of their large, broad, wing-shaped prickles). Climbing and rambler roses conquer many of the park's trees and hang down picturesquely. In addition, modern shrub roses are also represented in several areas of the collection, extending the flowering season in the park thanks to their longer flowering period.



“In addition to being a beautiful rose garden open to the public, our collection is also an important archive for rare old roses.”

1. *Rosa omeiensis* var. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha* – Wingthorn Rose
2. 'Clair Matin' [Meiland, 1960], Floribunda, shrub/climbing rose
3. 'Louis Rödiger' [Kordes, 1935], Hybrid Macrantha, climbing rose

Images: S. Kalok, B. Kindervater and A. Meier-Dinkel





The rose collection extends below Wilhelmshöhe Palace on the actual Rose Island, on the western shore of the 'Lac' (castle pond) and along a tributary of the 'Lac'.

“Today’s rose collection focuses on historic rose varieties from the 18th century, many of which were planted in the palace gardens at that time and some of which were bred in Kassel.”

Some roses in our collection are very rare and not commercially available. In addition to being a beautiful rose garden open to the public, our collection is also an important archive for rare old roses. We plan to add our collection to the German Rose Gene Bank, founded in 2009. However, we first need to check all our accessions and update the inventory, which is a time-consuming task.

The appeal of this rose collection, which is unique, has grown beyond Kassel’s borders thanks to two significant international awards. In 2013, Wilhelmshöhe Park, with its water features, was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in its entirety. In 2015, the rose collection received the ‘Award of Garden Excellence’ from the ‘World Federation of Rose Societies’ at the World Rose Convention in Lyon.



**Dr Andreas E. Meier-Dinkel** is Chairman of the Rose Island Park Wilhelmshöhe Association, which won the WFRS Garden of Excellence Award in 2015. He is a long-standing member of the German Rose Society, an international rose trials judge and Deputy Chair of the WFRS Awards Committee.

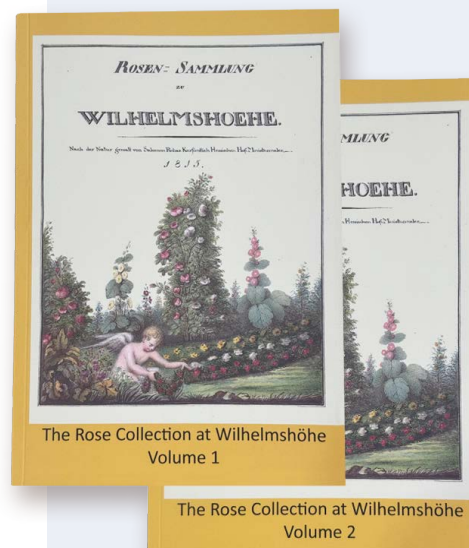
The main source of the article is the guide *The Rose Collection of Wilhelmshöhe*, Grimm, H., Grimm, W., Vemmer, E., Weiß, R and Meier-Dinkel, A. (2024), *The Rose Collection at Wilhelmshöhe. Vol. 1, History, Botany and Care of Roses in the Wilhelmshöhe Park*, pp 144, Vol. 2 *Inventory of the Roses in the Wilhelmshöhe Park*, pp 208, ed. Association Rose Island Wilhelmshöhe Park.

## New edition of the rose guide to the rose collection in Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe published in English for the first time

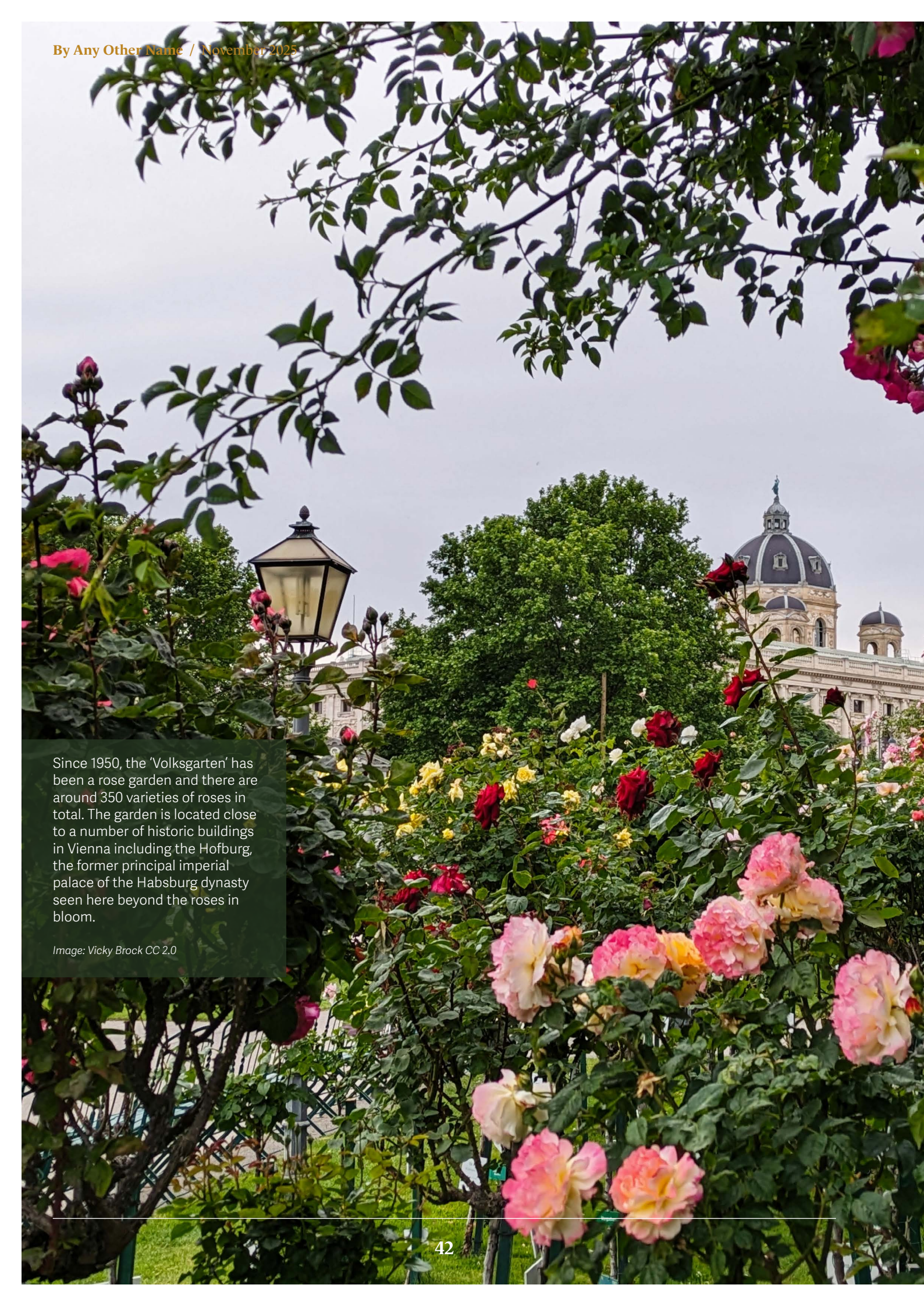
In 2024, the new two-volume edition of the rose guide to the rose collection in Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe was published in English for the first time. The first volume covers the history of the rose collection from the 12th century to the present day. It contains valuable information on the botany and care of roses and is illustrated with numerous colour pictures. The second volume contains the inventory of the collection with newly compiled descriptions of all the roses planted in the park.

These two volumes together are available from The Rose Island Park Wilhelmshöhe Association for €25 plus postage and packing

<https://tinyurl.com/roseninsel-kassel>







Since 1950, the 'Volksgarten' has been a rose garden and there are around 350 varieties of roses in total. The garden is located close to a number of historic buildings in Vienna including the Hofburg, the former principal imperial palace of the Habsburg dynasty seen here beyond the roses in bloom.

*Image: Vicky Brock CC 2.0*





# *The ‘Volksgarten’ in Vienna*

Erich Unmuth

The ‘Volksgarten’ in Vienna was the first imperial garden in the city centre to be opened to the public, in 1823. Initially located within the area surrounded by the city walls, it was expanded to its current size in the 1860s, when the fortifications were demolished and the ‘Ringstrasse’, a planned boulevard, was constructed. The ‘Volksgarten’ is located close to the Parliament, the Hofburg (seat of the Austrian head of state), the Federal Chancellery (seat of the Austrian head of government), the Vienna City Hall, and the Burgtheater (the largest German-language theatre stage).

Since 1950, the ‘Volksgarten’ has been a rose garden, with 1,000 standard roses, 130 climbing roses, and 50 shrub roses covering an area of around 30,000 m<sup>2</sup>. In total, there are around 350 varieties of roses.

What is unique about the roses in the ‘Volksgarten’, however, is that a considerable number of the original roses have survived and, thanks to their vitality, still look anything but old.



“A considerable number of the original roses have survived and, thanks to their vitality, still look anything but old.”

The garden is in very good condition with hardly any visible leaf diseases. No synthetic insecticides or fungicides are used.

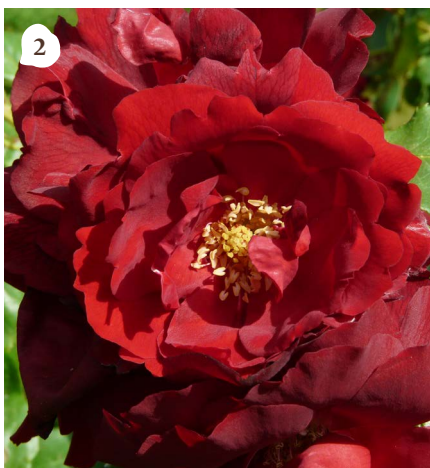
Multiple organic fertilisation from the beginning of the growing season and regular daily watering in summer seem to be the main reasons for the sometimes astonishing growth of the shrub roses.

Irrigation is carried out by an automatically controlled system.

The gardeners undoubtedly face special challenges due to the location in the centre of Vienna, where there are hardly any frosty days during the winter, but late frosts in March and April. Experience and tact are required to determine the optimal time to remove the fleece covers from the standard roses.

Summer temperatures above 35°C also present a challenge, as ongoing deadheading is essential for autumn blooms to develop.

While the large number of standard roses and their impressive arrangement in the garden are the main attraction for visitors, I would particularly like to highlight the shrub roses that have been planted. Most of these are well-known varieties, such as ‘Schneewittchen’



1. ‘Schneewittchen’ [Kordes, 1958], during its second flush in July 2024
2. ‘Oskar Scheerer’ [Kordes, 1961], a perfect bloom
3. *Rosa hugonis* Hemsl. hips
4. ‘Oskar Scheerer’ [Kordes, 1961], its dark red flowers withstand the heat very well
5. ‘Gruss an Teplitz’ [Geschwind, 1897], a perfect flower without mildew

Images: Erich Unmuth





*Rosa foetida* 'Persian Yellow'  
in the 'Volksgarten'

Image: Angela Bokor

Earlier this year, on my way to the WRC in Japan, I stopped in Vienna and had the great pleasure of meeting Erich Unmuth for the first time. He took me to The Volksgarten Park, located in the centre of the city. It is a large park with many kinds of trees, shrubs, water features, open spaces but mostly roses. And not any roses – ones planted more than 50 years ago. They were looking very well. There were several huge shrubs but mostly standard roses, lining up along the sitting area of the park, in front of climbing roses, each a different variety. The park is very well maintained, and people can make a donation for a personal dedication attached to a rose, a great way to involve the people and make them aware about roses. The park is proof that, if well maintained, roses can have a long and happy life!

**Angela Bokor**  
VP Europe for the WFRS

**“It is to be hoped that the ‘Volksgarten’ and its roses will undergo a different development towards an Austrian Rosarium that is truly worthy the name.”**

(syn. ‘Iceberg’, ‘Fée des Neiges’, Kordes, 1958), ‘Oskar Scheerer’ (Kordes, 1961), ‘Feuerwerk’ (syn. ‘Feu d’Artifice’, Tantau, 1962), ‘Elmshorn’ (Kordes, 1950); ‘Gruss an Teplitz’ (Geschwind, 1897) and ‘Gloria Dei’ (syn. ‘Mme. A. Meilland’, ‘Peace’, Meilland, 1935). The specimens are now more than 50 years old, grow to a height of 3-4 metres, and have a similar width. Of particular note is *Rosa hugonis* Hemsl., planted in the 1950s. It is an eye-catcher when in bloom in April, with striking rose hips in July, and has immaculate foliage until autumn.

The assortment will be expanded in the coming years to include Explorer roses bred by Dr. Felicitas Svejda. Born in Vienna in 1920, she completed her university studies there in 1947.

Finally, I would like to point out a remarkable coincidence. On Heldenplatz, the square in front of the Hofburg Palace adjacent to the ‘Volksgarten’, there is a monument to the Habsburg Archduke Karl (1771 – 1847). Archduke Karl was a great lover of roses and his collection at the Weilburg at Baden which is sited near Vienna, was one of the most important in Europe around

1830. He thus established Baden’s reputation as a city of roses, a fact that has sadly been forgotten today.

It is to be hoped that the ‘Volksgarten’ and its roses will undergo a different development towards an Austrian Rosarium that is truly worthy of the name.

In addition to Felicitas Svejda’s cultivars, some roses by Anni Berger (1904 – 1990), the second most important breeder born in Vienna, should also be on display.

Another focus should be on those roses that were brought to Vienna from Asia via the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century and from there found their way into European gardens – consider, for example *Rosa hemisphaerica* J. Herrm., *Rosa foetida* J. Herrm. (“Austrian Briar”) and *Rosa foetida* ‘Bicolor’ (“Austrian Copper”).



**Erich Unmuth** has been a rose collector for nearly 50 years. He lives in Vienna, Austria, and his collection, called ‘Rosenkultivarium Baden’, is located in Baden bei Wien. It focuses mainly on shrub roses, climbers and ramblers. He is a member of the Deutsche Genbank Rose, which is coordinated by the Europarosarium Sangerhausen. He is seen here together with *Rosa moschata* Herrm., one of his favourite roses.



# *Alba roses in art*

Richard Rix





We know that the Ancient Romans used roses everywhere: in their architecture, art, gardens and banquets. And several writers quote Pliny the Elder in AD 77 as evidence that Alba roses were known to the Romans. They base their theories on Chapter 10 of Book 21 of Pliny's *Naturalis historia* [*Natural History*] where he calls one of his twelve varieties of rose 'The Thorn Rose', but Pliny simply describes a rose with 'thorny branches of remarkable length'. That is not enough to make a firm identification.

Roses and, indeed, flowers in general had no place in the early Christian Church. They were still associated with the pagan gods. However, from the 12th century onwards roses became attached to the Virgin Mary, with white roses being linked to her virginity and virtue. With the rise of Marian devotion Gothic cathedrals built around this time usually include a rose window dedicated to the Virgin, and 13th-century Saint Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, is credited with the institution of the Rosary symbolizing garlands of roses worn in heaven.

In art, it was not until the 15th century that paintings by Italian artists and engravings by European herbalists showed roses in sufficient detail to allow an adequate identification to be made. Before around 1500 Alba roses and all other flowers were merely depicted as symbols, particularly in religious paintings and in the heraldic devices of

the day. Even in the 15th century there were few paintings showing white roses complete with leaves and stems

In heraldry, a white rose was the basis of an heraldic badge used by the 1st Duke of York [1341-1402] and became one of the emblems associated with Yorkist claimants to the throne in the Wars of the Roses. This is assumed to be *Rosa* × *alba* 'Semi-plena'. At the end of the 15th century, King Henry VII devised what was subsequently called the Tudor Rose to combine the heraldic badges of the houses of Lancashire and York.

Botticelli's 'The Birth of Venus' in the Uffizi gallery in Florence, painted around 1485, shows showers of roses falling into the sea. These roses have long slender buds, calyx lobes with fern-like ends, and flattish white flowers similar to those of *Rosa* × *alba* 'Maxima' and *Rosa* × *alba* 'Semi-plena'. And Bernardino Luini's 'Madonna of the Rose Garden' (1510) illustrates that white roses were strongly linked with the Virgin Mary.

John Gerard's 1596-1599 *Herball* listed sixteen roses which he grew in his Holborn garden in London. His Albas were *R.* × *alba* 'Maxima' and *R.* × *alba* 'Semi-plena'.

In 1613, in Germany, Basil Besler published *Hortus Eystettensis*, the earliest large-folio botanical treatise. It contains the first detailed engravings of the three Alba roses then grown in

**Opposite:** White roses greet the birth of Venus in Sandro Botticelli's painting, *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1484-1486)

*Image: Public Domain*



1. Detail of the Tudor rose used on a chain in the portrait of Sir Thomas More by Hans Holbein the Younger
  2. Alba roses in Bernardino Luini's 'Madonna of the Rose Garden' c.1550
  3. Detail from Jan Davidsz de Heem's painting, 'Still life with flowers in a glass vase'
  4. This plate from Elizabeth Blackwell's 'Curious Herbal' is entitled *Rosa Alba* but it is probably *R. × alba* 'Maxima'
  5. Mary Lawrance's portrait of *Rosa × alba* shows that single-flowered forms continued to be grown for many centuries
  6. Guimpel's portrait of the single-flowered cultivar is of exceptional quality
- Images: Public Domain and CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication





northern Germany: *Rosa* × *alba* ‘Maxima’, *Rosa* × *alba* ‘Semi-plena’, and ‘Great Maiden’s Blush’. Besler produced the drawings on which the book’s engravings are based, using the plants growing in the garden of his patron Bishop Johann Conrad von Gemmingham.

Then, in 1629, twenty-four rose varieties were described in *Paradisus Terrestris* written by John Parkinson, botanist to Charles I, including the two Albas included in Gerard’s work.

1656 saw the publication of *A catalogue of the Tradescant Collection* by John Tradescant the Younger (1608-1662). Two Albas are mentioned as growing in Tradescant’s garden at Lambeth: *Rosa* × *alba* ‘Maxima’ and ‘Great Maiden’s Blush’, out of a total of 32 rose varieties.

It would be logical to assume that the famous and beautiful Dutch flower paintings of the 17th century predominately show the Cabbage or Centifolia rose, a recently introduced rose of Dutch origin. However, a large majority of the early paintings include Alba Roses and a few Centifolias. *Rosa* × *alba* ‘Semi-plena’ is shown in ‘Flowers in a Blue Vase’ painted in 1608 by Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625), and also in ‘Flowers in a Vase’ by Jan van Kessel (1626-1679). Jan van Huysum (1682-1749) often painted *R.* × *alba* ‘Maxima’, for instance in ‘Glass vase with flowers with a poppy and a finch nest’ painted in 1720. And Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1683) also included *R.* × *alba* ‘Maxima’ in several works. An example is his painting ‘Still Life with Flowers in a glass vase’. So the

## “Before around 1500 Alba roses and all other flowers were merely depicted as symbols.”

Dutch flower paintings confirm the widespread cultivation of *R.* × *alba* ‘Maxima’, *R.* × *alba* ‘Semi-plena’, and ‘Great Maidens Blush’ in Northern Europe in the 17th Century.

Between 1737 and 1739 Elizabeth Blackwell published her ‘Curious Herbal’ or *Herbarium Blackwellianum* in London based on plants grown in the Chelsea Physic Garden.

Between 1794 and 1799, Mary Lawrance illustrated, with some accuracy, 90 varieties then grown

in England in her monograph *A Collection of Roses from Nature* illustrating four Alba roses, *Rosa* × *alba* ‘Maxima’, ‘Great Maiden’s Blush’, *R.* × *alba* ‘Semi-Plena’, and a single *R.* × *alba*. Unfortunately, Mary Lawrance’s book does not contain any text or descriptions, and is simply a collection of hand etched plates.

In *Hortus Berolinensis*, published in Berlin between 1803 and 1816, there is a good hand-coloured engraving of *Rosa* × *alba* by Friedrich Guimpel, an eminent illustrator and professor at the Berlin Academy of Arts. Shortly afterwards, Pierre-Joseph Redouté’s three-volume *Les Roses*, published between 1817 and 1824, depicts five Alba roses: ‘Great Maiden’s Blush’, *Rosa* × *alba* ‘Maxima’, *R.* × *alba* ‘Semi-Plena’, ‘Céleste’ (syn. ‘Celestial’), and *R.* × *alba* ‘Cimbaefolia’ (also known as ‘À Feuilles de Chanvre’ or the hemp-leaved rose), in a total of 169 rose paintings, and from then on numerous images of Alba roses appeared in nurserymen’s catalogues in Europe and North America.

**Below:** ‘Bouquet of flowers in a blue vase’ by Jan Brueghel the Elder, c.1608

Image: Public Domain



**Richard Rix** has a National Collection of Alba roses in Kent, UK. The purpose of his Collection is to prevent less common Alba roses being lost to cultivation and to preserve availability.

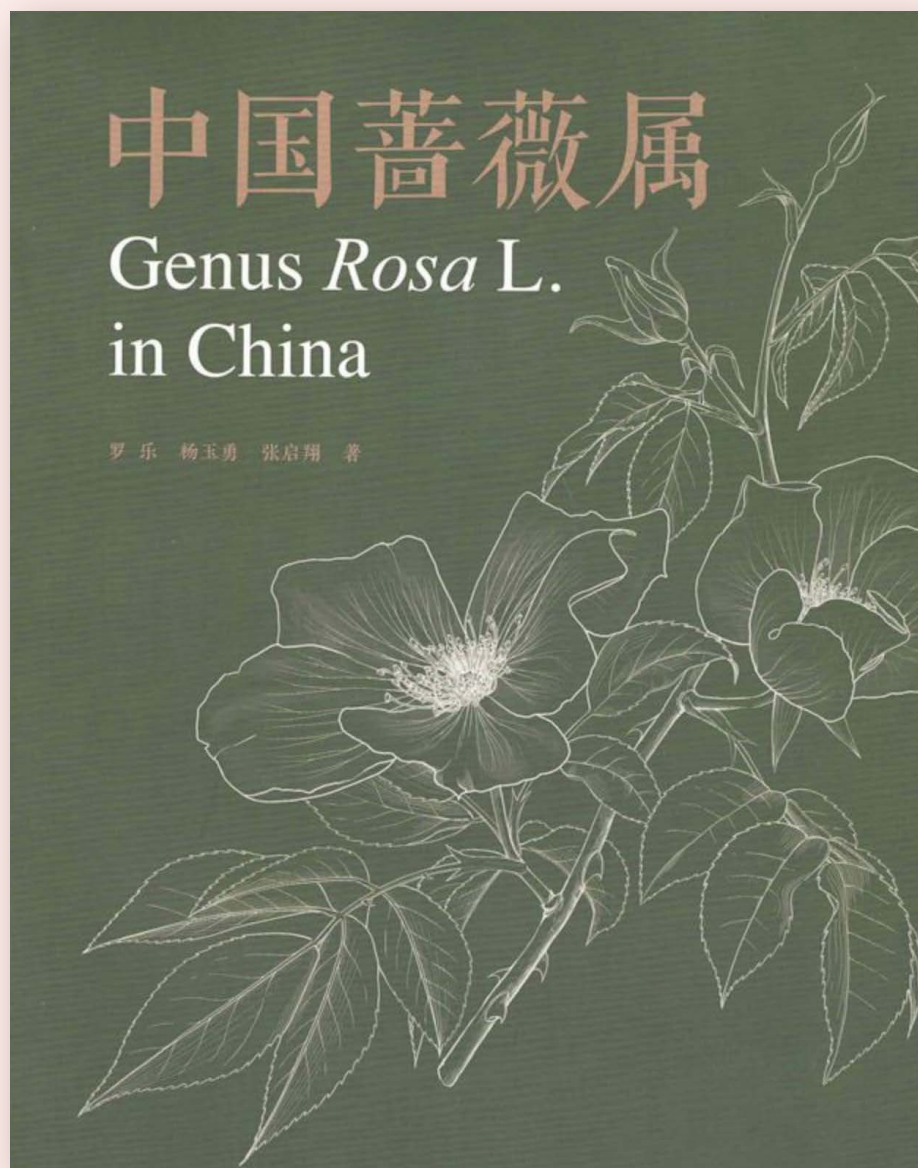
## Book review

# ‘Genus *Rosa* L. in China’

written in Chinese

by Luo Le, Zhang Qixiang and Yang Yuyong

Review by Helga Brichet



**Genus *Rosa* L. in China**  
by Luo Le, Zhang Qixiang  
and Yang Yuyong

[China Forestry Publishing  
House, Beijing, 2024]

pp.534. ISBN 987-7-5219-2503-6

Copies are available on Koeltz  
Botanical Books website –  
[koeltz.com](http://koeltz.com) and China Scientific  
Book Service website –  
[www.hceis.com](http://www.hceis.com)



The authors of the newly published book, 'Genus *Rosa* L. in China' are Professor Luo Le and Prof. Zhang Qixiang, both from the School of Landscape Architecture at the Beijing Forestry University, as well as Yang Yuyong of the Kunming Yang Chinese Rose Gardening Co. Ltd., which today is the custodian of the largest collection of rose resource material in China.

To date, taxonomic references regarding *Rosa* in China have been available only in the 'Flora Republicae Popularis Sinicae' (Volume 37), published in 1985, and 'Flora of China' (Volume 9), published in 2003. A revisitation of roses in China is now certainly timely and essential.

This recent publication catalogues a comprehensive list of 86 species, 53 varieties, 26 forms and 60 other taxonomically significant cultivars, as well as new species and records. It introduces a revised identification key, addressing taxonomic complexities and distinguishing features of this genus. This updated monography not only captures the diversity of *Rosa* germplasm in China, but also offers a solid foundation for further research and the refinement of classification.

Initial field work, starting in the 1980s, was carried out under the direction of Prof. Chen Junyu, of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, who pioneered extensive investigation of wild roses across China's remote northern areas with numerous field expeditions. Since

2000 Prof. Zhang Qixiang has led a nationwide investigation into rose resources in collaboration with research institutes across the country, involving over a hundred participants.

The book is divided into four sections. The first presents an overview of rose resources in China and worldwide, their distribution, origins and evolution.

The second section, assisted by copious illustrations, showcases the distinct morphological traits of *Rosa*. It also gives a detailed review of morphological and historical classification studies by Chinese and Western scholars since the 18th century, and addresses varied taxonomic confusion, such as that introduced by cultivated varieties named as species.

The third section outlines the team's molecular research, resequencing data from 186 germplasm accessions to reconstruct two phylogenetic trees of the genus, tracing the ancestral traits and presenting the team's perspective on its origin and evolution in China.

The fourth section presents an identification key and detailed taxon profiles or portraits with comprehensive data on each species. Here are included several new species, varieties and forms. Notable examples are *Rosa tomurensis*, able to tolerate temperatures as low as -30°C, and *R. yangii*, a wild tea rose with gigantic flowers and mutable petal colour. *R. funingensis*, appears to be a natural hybrid between Sect. *Chinensis* and Sect. *Synstylae*, while *R. forrestiana* var. *maculata* has petals exhibiting stable, dark purple basal markings, a characteristic until recently associated only with *R. persica*.

The English translation of this fascinating book will be eagerly awaited by scientists and rosarians internationally. Meanwhile, they will surely be entranced by the many awe-inspiring photographs, the portraits of the individual subjects as also their natural habitat and magnificent surroundings.



**Helga Brichet** is a distinguished rosarian, plant-hunter and lecturer. She is passionate about introducing rose lovers in the western hemisphere to old and historical roses from China. Helga is President Emeritus of the WFRS.

## Book review

# *Heritage Roses of Uruguay Legacy of Generations*

by Inés Díaz de Licandro

Review by Lluís Abad García

“Many roses found in Uruguay are part of its natural heritage. Witnesses to the past, they represent a legacy that, due to its historical and aesthetic value, holds the potential to promote a sense of individual and social belonging. This appreciation is what promotes the need for their conservation and preservation to ensure their durability through the contexts of each era, for the benefit of present and future generations.”

### **Spanish Edition**

Rosas patrimoniales de Uruguay.  
Un legado de generaciones

### **English Edition**

Heritage Roses in Uruguay.  
A Legacy of Generations

**Pictured:** Inés with her book

Image: Inés Díaz de Licandro





Nothing is more fitting than the preface with which the author, Inés Díaz de Licandro, a Uruguayan expert rose lover – or, as Charles Quest-Ritson defines her in one of the book's two prologues, a “rose rustler” – provides an insight into the purpose and dimension of this work.

For more than ten years, Inés has exerted an intense and original effort to understand and promote the past and present of her country's heritage roses and their gardens. Above all, she has developed active proposals to continue to understand them and preserve their future. This work is undoubtedly unprecedented, at least in the South American continent.

Correct identification is one of the first and main challenges in understanding heritage roses. To this end, the author has developed her own methodology, full of logic and practicality, which also has the virtue of being universally applicable.

By visiting as many gardens as possible in the country over several years, she has developed an initial inventory phase. This has been followed by cultivar identification and, when this has not been possible, a unique code that would allow her to continue advancing the process, promoting the conservation and reproduction of as many varieties as possible. This has been followed by the dissemination of information and knowledge. The still-unsolved case of the “Rosa de la Plaza de Dolores” (“Rose of the Square of Dolores”) is relevant and paradigmatic in many ways. We will not go into

further detail about it; we will leave that to the readers.

For the work and identification, in addition to her own knowledge and research, she has relied on local and international specialists, both remote and in situ—such as Frenchwoman Patricia Cavallo, who wrote a second prologue.

In this research and identification work, in addition to her preliminary fieldwork, Díaz has simultaneously developed a colossal task of inventorying Uruguay's rose gardens and nursery lists from the early 19th century to the late 1950s.

All this knowledge is very well structured and presented, with numerous photographs and tables.

Special attention is paid to the review of the roses that seemed most relevant and representative, organized by groups, both for those whose identity is certain and for those whose identity is still unknown. A rigorous morphological description is presented for each variety in table form, followed by numerous detailed photographs of branches, aculei, leaves, peduncles, flowers at all stages and their breakdown, as well as rosehips and their seeds; a veritable photographic herbarium. This facilitates the objective collection of useful data that can allow for the most rigorous identification possible.

In this process, the book is enriched with a true history of roses in Uruguay and its gardens. In a broader sense, and perhaps unintentionally, it contributes significantly to the knowledge of

the history of gardening, so lacking in general works, but also in detailed works on vegetation, such as Díaz's work.

I therefore found it to be a very interesting, well-documented, authoritative, and innovative book. Highly recommended. An attractive presentation, with numerous photographs, lists, and references, makes it not only a technical work, but also accessible to those unfamiliar with the world of roses, interested in history, heritage, and gardens. It is worth noting that the author is also the editor. All of this is complemented by a high-quality production, commensurate with its content. It facilitates reading and ensures the physical durability of the work over time.

All these aspects have allowed this book to receive one of the prestigious “Literary Award” distinctions, granted by the WFRS at its Fukuyama convention in 2025.

To order a copy email [book@licandrodiaz.com.uy](mailto:book@licandrodiaz.com.uy) or whatsapp Inés Díaz (+598 9422 8615) indicating: name of buyer, dedication (indicate whom the author should dedicate the book, if so desired), delivery address (complete address for international postage, including postal code, city, country).

The author will answer indicating the cost of the book (approximately US\$98 at exchange rates when going to press) & postage to the delivery address.

**Lluís Abad García** is a Master Gardener and Technical Secretary of the Barcelona International New Rose Competition



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