

Your Antique Rose Garden



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Written by G. Edwin Varner.

Preface

This guide helps you learn and discover heirloom roses that provide beauty and delightful fragrances for your garden. This ebook is not the definitive listing of all fragrant old roses. There are too many to list in a small publication like this.

In this ebook, I have enjoyed smelling the following roses for their various fragrances. Please understand the sense of smell is different for each person and results may vary.

The information on each plant may contain inaccuracies. I have tried to research each rose as accurately as possible concerning their histories, growing conditions, and hardiness.

Each plant has its USDA hardiness zones, best growth conditions, and my recommended varieties to find and grow. Several roses can grow in colder locations. Please be aware they may not be available or discontinued by specialist nurseries.

The following antique roses are presented by their accepted name or names. The digital photos are of the flowers at my home, public gardens, and many nurseries within my area.

Introduction

Imagine taking a rose from your garden to an antique appraiser. You explain to the appraiser, "I've had this rose in my garden for many years. Can you tell me it's worth?" The appraiser scrunches his eyes looking at every petal and thorn. "Well," he says, "it is an ancient rose from the late 18th to early 19th century. I think it originates from Empress Josephine Bonaparte's famous rose gardens. It's priceless!" How would you react? Do cartwheels of joy or faint? This rose would be worth what the nursery charged you. However, it has historical valuable and uniqueness in beauty.

Antique roses are varieties grown several years ago – some, many centuries ago. Botanists will classify roses as an antique or heirloom if growers created them before 1900. Some authorities feel 1867 is the dividing time. That year is when our early modern roses (specifically, Hybrid Teas) had their introduction to gardeners.

My intent of this publication is to highlight a few of the old, classical roses only specialist nurseries grow. Sadly, they are slowly disappearing. Within a generation, they may no longer be with us.

There are many makes and models old rose varieties, such as an Alba, Moss, Cabbage, Damask, Bourbon, Hybrid Perpetual, and others. Some roses remained as being a species with no additional varieties. Each group has a different flower appearance, hardiness, fragrance and bloom time. It is a matter of opinion if you like one rose over another.

It is unfortunate they rarely grace our gardens today. There are several reasons for this; one being is they grow tall and wide. You will need a large flower bed to grow them. Today's homes are small and don't have the vast acres like those of a *Downton Abbey* estate.

Another reason is these old roses need more care and attention than modern varieties. The old, large estates had full-time gardeners to manage the gardens. I am sure if the owners had to do all the work they wouldn't have had them!

However, the primary reason these roses eventually lost popularity is most have only one dominant bloom display of the year. Most bloom in late spring or early summer for a few weeks, and that's it – no more flowers. Modern roses will bloom all summer but can't compare to the fantastic show of the old ones in full bloom.

So why grow them? They are living antiques and have names based on honor and love. These are personal roses and gardeners should never forget them. Unfortunately, that is slowly happening. My hope for this ebook publication is to inspire you to become interested in these old roses. Appraised only by you, I hope you eventually say, "they're priceless!"

To find the following antique roses visit your nearby larger garden centers or search online specialty nurseries.

The Alba Roses

These are old roses the Greeks and Romans grew then became well established in Europe by the Middle Ages. There are about less than a dozen remaining varieties still produced today.

The flowers are small (as compared to other old rose types) and are white to off-white with a few varieties having a light pink coloration. Their perfume is outstanding.

They bloom only in the late spring to early summer. To flower, they must experience a cold winter. In warmer climates, they may fail to bloom.

They have blue-green foliage and have excellent resistance to fungal diseases plus are more tolerant of shady conditions than many other roses. They grow tall and wide, so they would not be suitable for small gardens.

Overall, the Alba Roses are carefree and highly enjoyable. No wonder they have been around for a long time! Rosarians classify the following two varieties as Alba roses even though they may be hybrids with other antique variety.

Belle Amour



Let's start out on a confusing note for this section of Alba roses. This beautiful variety confuses many rose experts. No one can determine which classification it belongs. Some say it is an Alba; others swear it is a Damask, or a Gallica rose (hold on, we will eventually get to them), while others wave the white flag and say it's a complicated hybrid of them all.

It has the foliage of an Alba, but not the flower color, is way too thorny, and it has an unusual myrrh fragrance not associated with Alba roses. Being an old variety is also questionable. Discovered in 1940, at a French monastery or convent, it could be an early - or new - hybrid. It grows to five feet tall and wide and is hardy from zones 4 to 8.

Most experts say it's an Alba rose so let's place it here. We will live life dangerously starting with this variety. Whatever its heritage, this rose is gorgeous – and that matters most.

Madame Legras de St. Germain



This plant is probably the most beautiful of the Alba roses with perfect double, creamy-white flowers. They have a heady rose perfume, and the stems are almost void of thorns. It can grow as a bush or trained into a climber.

The leaves have the typical bluish-gray-green color and have a massive bloom in the early summer. This combination of qualities sounds like a winner of a rose!

It was first grown in 1846. The origin of it is uncertain, and it is most likely a hybrid with another rose's qualities. No matter – it is an outstanding old variety with steady growth and bloom-power. It is hardy from zones 4 to 9.

The Bourbon Roses

The botanical classification of these originated not in France but on the French colony of the Isle of Bourbon (they now call Reunion Island.) French nursery workers had dabbled in crossbreeding old rose strains with species from China and Asia. The result of these laborious crossings and re-crossings created these large, baseball-sized flowers.

Breeders exported them to France and caused a sensation for their intense perfume, and for being vigorous growers. They have intermittent re-blooming in the summer (some even into the fall.) A massive bloom happens in the late spring, but this recurring blooming was a great accomplishment back then.

Unlike the Alba roses, these varieties do not need a real cold winter to make flowers in the late spring. They are hardy from zones 5 to 9. They continue to be favorite roses throughout the world.

Louise Odier



For a Bourbon rose, you can expect the most delicious, intoxicating perfume. They bridge a gap between old and modern roses; meaning, old fashion fullness with new-rose blooming power.

Dear Louise is no exception with having large, round, fully double, cupped blossoms. The multitudes of petals are pink and silky smooth to the touch. You can expect it to bloom most of the summer.

Louise was first raised in 1856 and is compact for it grows to under five feet tall and is bushy, so it makes a good candidate for a hedge. The Bourbon roses are not very hardy, but if you live in zone 6, you can grow this one with no problems.

Madame Isaac Pereire



Similar to 'Louise Odier,' this variety, named after the wife of a French banker, is a vigorous grower that can reach up to eight feet tall. Don't let this height concern you for it has the makings of being a climbing rose.

The late, great, rosarian and British gardening guru, Graham Stuart Thomas claimed this was possibly the most fragrant of all roses. Okay. I suspect other rosarians may have differing opinions, but Mr. Thomas knew everything about roses. It is fragrant (with a redolent raspberry perfume), and even though it grows tall and bushy, it covers itself with huge, magenta-pink or deep crimson-pink, fully double, cupped flowers for most of the summer and even into the fall. What a magnificent rose!

This variety was first introduced in 1881 and is hardy from zones 5 to 9.

Zephirine Drouhin



First introduced in 1868, this rose can grow well over 20 feet high producing masses of semi-double, dark pink blossoms in the spring and another flush in late summer. The fragrance is outstanding!

One other exceptional quality is the canes are almost thornless. That is especially good news for gardeners who don't like being attacked by weapons of fingertip destruction. I will always remember my one Aunt telling me (as a child) roses are red due to them absorbing blood from thorn-pricked fingers. It is a wonder I am brave enough to venture into a garden with vampire roses.

Another quality is its ability to grow in partial shade – and still be able to flower. However, it is better to plant it in sunlight.

Try to train it on fences, pergolas, trellises and any other support. Like any other climbing rose, help it along by weaving it around and through the support structure. Eventually, it will settle in, love its new real estate then grow and bloom well. It is hardy to zones 5 to 9.

The Centifolia Roses

These roses took petal production to the extreme. The word centifolia means “a hundred petals.” The common name is the Cabbage Rose for the shape of the flowers, in full bloom, appears as heads of cabbages. Even with all those petals, they are not compact but are loose and open.

Centifolia roses are cold hardy (at least zone 5) and have excellent resistance to fungal diseases. The very thorny canes can grow to five feet tall and wide. There is a massive burst of bloom in the early summer, and then that’s it until the following year. What a grand display they provide! Most of the flowers are in shades of pink and are strongly fragrant. The perfume industry harvests the petals to extract rose oil needed in the fragrance industry.

These roses were a favorite from the 15th to the 18th centuries, and Flemish painters loved to use them as subjects in their paintings. Look at many masterpieces of this time, and you will see these roses along with the obligatory semi-nude women. I’m sure you only look at the roses. Yeah, right.

Anyway, by the 19th century, their popularity diminished due to the demand of growing reblooming roses. Today, rarely offered to the public, they in danger of being forgotten. That would be a travesty in gardening, in art, and in history. Grow at least one variety in your garden.

Rosa centifolia Bullata



Let's begin with a strange form of the species, *Rosa centifolia*. Its name is the **Lettuce-Leafed Rose**. Ah, excuse me, the what rose? Yes, it is the Lettuce-Leafed Rose for the large leaves are bubbled or puckered in appearance. That is what the subspecies name of *bullata* means. This is the only surviving variety of those that had these unusual leaf structures. There used to be peach-leafed and celery-leafed varieties, but they no longer exist.

The beautiful, double flowers are light to medium pink with a great fragrance. The canes are very thorny, which is typical of this group. It is hardy from zones 4 to 9.

This rose was first discovered growing in 1801 presumably in Empress Josephine Bonaparte's extensive rose gardens at the Chateau de

Malmaison outside Paris, France. She loved roses – especially the more unusual ones. We will learn more about Josephine later in the Damask rose section of this ebook.

Blanchefleur



The name of this rose – also spelled '**Blanche Fleur**' – means “white flower.” I think this rose needs an extra word such as a dazzling white flower. It had its garden debut in 1835.

It has fully doubled, creamy-white petals (sometimes they are pale pink) with the center of the blossoms pinkish-red. I think the exact color changes with the mineral content or fertility of the soil where it grows. The general opinion is they are white with a blush of pale pink. No matter – they are gorgeous and the fragrance is delightful!

Being a Centifolia rose, it has one main bloom in the late spring or early summer. It produces a healthy bush of grass-green foliage but has many sharp thorns. Oh well, we don't want everyone picking off all those

beautiful flowers! Due to the excessive production, the canes droop to the ground from all that flower-weight.

It is super hardy to zone 4 and is a “must-grow” rose.

Petite de Hollande



This stunning rose is a smaller-flowered Centifolia variety but still has an overpowering fragrance. The flowers bloom in clusters instead of as individuals on a stem. The main flush of flowers occurs in the early summer and the petals are lavender-pink with a slightly darker rose-pink center.

It is a smaller bush (three feet tall and wide) and is more compact than the species. It would fit well in smaller garden beds. Some nursery people have converted it into a standard or tree-like form with one central stem – even though it is thorny. It has great potential for growing well in large containers.

Its exact history is unknown but first mentioned around 1800. It is very hardy (zone 4 but better at 5) and has excellent disease resistance.

So, at what point did I persuade you to locate and purchase it?

Prolifera de Redoute



You can tell a rose was popular with gardeners long ago when it has other names. One such name is 'Isabel,' but it also had less memorable names such as Childing, Prolifère, and Childing Provence. Let's stick with Isabel.

It was first grown in the mid-1700's, but some authorities say near 1800. It grows to an average of four feet tall and wide, but the canes arch over – which many roses do as they age. Well, that's understandable for I do the same thing for my age!

The fully rounded, rose-pink flowers have that gorgeous “quartered” form (you'll understand when you see them) and have an outstanding, super strong perfume. One major attraction to each flower is the inner

greenish-yellow 'eye' when fully expanded. I am not sure why it has this, but it looks cool. I guess roses can have bling.

As with all Centifolias, it has very thorny stems. OUCH! It appears to be hardy to zone 5 and has a massive bloom in the early summer.

Rose de Peintres



As I mentioned earlier, authorities commonly call Centifolias as Cabbage roses for the excessive overlapping of petals. Someone counted them one summer day, and the total came to 200. I guess he had nothing better to do.

All these petals caught the loving attention of painters in the mid to late 17th century, and they became one of their favorite floral models. Roses (along with Tulips and Poppies) appear in many Dutch masterpieces.

This rose (and most of the Damask roses) supply the potent Attar-of-Roses fragrance oil used by the French perfume industry. They commonly call it **The Rose of Painters** for its “pretty as a picture” beauty. It was an admired flower for painters such as Jan van Huysum and Gerard van Spaendonck. They probably wished they could have

added this fragrance to make the paintings come to life. Who knows, they could have begun the first “Scratch ‘n’ Sniff” project if they had added the perfume oil with their paint oils. “Scratch the canvas here and smell the roses.” Whoa! I may be on to something here with new painters. Remember, you read it here first.

This variety forms a tall bush, but the canes can flop over due to the weight of all the flowers. There is a colorful explosion of petals in the early summer. This one is hardy from zones 5 to 9.

The Damask Roses

The stunning fragrance is what these roses all have in common. The other roses are fragrant, but the Damask roses rank the best in quality.

These flowers are small compared to other similar old roses. The perfume industry grows them (and a few others like "*Rose de Peintres*") to extract their fragrance oil – again, known as Attar-of-Roses. This oil is costly, but a little goes a long way in scenting perfume and cosmetics.

Historically, the returning Crusaders may have brought these roses home from their wild adventures in the Middle East, specifically from Damascus, Syria. Other stories suggest the Romans brought them into England. Well, no matter 'who and where' for many people loved this rose and gave it to other people.

The flower color is white to dark pink, and the canes are long and very thorny. Their hardiness is zone 5 and can tolerate poorer and drier soil plus grow in shadier locations.

There are two types of Damask roses: Summer Damasks which has only one significant bloom in the early summer and Autumn Damasks which extends some sporadic bloom well into the early fall. Guess which Damask group aroused more interest for rose breeders? It was a 'no-brainer' decision for them to pursue breeding a longer blooming rose. They eventually did after many hybridization attempts.

Gloire de Guilan



This rose, along with two other Damask varieties, grows in Bulgaria for the distillation of the fragrance oils. The scent also increases as the petals dry, so they are also a vital ingredient in making potpourri.

This rose was unknown before 1949, so it is debatable if it is an old or modern variety. Most roses grown throughout the world don't have name tags attached to them. Nancy Lindsay, a British plant collector for the British Museum, "discovered" this rose (and *Rose de Rescht* described later) growing in the Gilan Province of Iran in 1949. They were (maybe still) important in making Attar-of-Roses oil.

This one has an extended bloom period in the early summer with large, quartered, pink blossoms. It forms an attractive bush, but the weight of the flowers can drop the canes down. And that is a bad thing? I think

not! Just prop them up before they bloom. There – problem solved. This gorgeous variety is super hardy to zone 4.

Marie Louise



This rose has an interesting story. It begins with the divorce of Napoleon Bonaparte and his wife, Empress Josephine. Although they loved each other, Napoleon desperately wanted a son, a male heir, from Josephine. She could not have a child with him, so Napoleon divorced her and married a younger woman by the name of Marie Louise of Austria. There was a political reason for this for he did not love Marie all that much (just her body). Well, it happens!

Anyway, there was a slight catch to having a divorce; Josephine wanted to stay at her beloved Chateau de Malmaison residence. Being an avid gardener who loved many flowers (especially roses) and exotic animals, she wanted to remain there for the rest of her life. She told Napoleon he could have the divorce if he agreed to allow her to stay there and have a

generous yearly income. Napoleon said, “Honey, you got yourself a deal!” Not bad considering no divorce lawyers were involved.

It was customary for new royalty to have roses named after them. Napoleon, busy with day-to-day national affairs, asked Josephine to have her gardeners create a new rose for his new wife, the now Empress Marie. Josephine (possibly out of spite) had the gardeners change the name of an ordinary, run-of-the-mill Damask rose (perhaps one she did not care for) and rename it “**Marie Louise.**” Josephine must have thought, “Why bother to go to all that trouble just to create a new rose for that little hussy?” Many rosarians feel Empress Marie received a good rose from Josephine. Maybe so, but it’s the thought that counts.

Well, the plan worked. Everyone was happy. Napoleon eventually got a son. Empress Marie gained fame and fortune (including a rose named after her – which she probably cared less about since she was not interested in growing flowers). Josephine lived happily for her few remaining years of life at Chateau de Malmaison, enjoying her large rose, exotic flower, and rare animal collections. She was one remarkable lady, well ahead of her time.

I may have embellished this true story – somewhat – quite a bit – but that is how this rose came to be. It is gorgeous with double-petaled, deep pink blossoms having that delightful quartered pattern. It blooms only in the early summer and has a great fragrance. It forms a compact bush, few thorns, and seems suitable for smaller gardens, and is hardy to zone 5.

Empress Josephine grew several hundred varieties and species of roses at the Chateau de Malmaison. She took the time to look throughout France to find new roses. She also had help from Napoleon, even during extended battle campaigns, to discover new roses and flowers for her to grow. He did so out of devotion and love to her, but he also loved the peaceful Chateau gardens.

Due to her intense interest in roses, Josephine encouraged her gardeners to experiment with growing new varieties. This policy may be the first historical record of making rose breeding (and other

flowers) a serious activity. Over a few years, her rose gardens became the most beautiful in France, if not all of Europe.

Quatre Saisons



This rose is possibly the one that created a stir back in the Middle Ages (even back to the Romans in some reference books) for its re-blooming habit. Most old roses bloom in the late spring or early summer, but this one (possibly via a genetic mutation or a lucky seed that grew and blossomed) has, at least, two significant yearly bloom cycles.

However, people thought it bloomed into the winter and so the name **Four Seasons Rose** took hold. The other name – or more exact Latin name – is *Rosa damascena* Bifera. The Bifera name means ‘twice blooming.’ Thus, it became known as the **Autumn Damask Rose**. So many confusing names. Come on people, choose one!

However, that name did not offer the right sales appeal, so the title “**Quatre Saisons**” remained. Why bother with two when you can have

four seasons? Deceptive advertising? Yeah, but during those old times, there wasn't a complaint department or a Better Business Bureau office.

This rose has a magnificent fragrance, is exceptionally thorny and is hardy to zone 5. It is one of the most famous varieties in history for it became the principle type to create newer roses which bloom nonstop throughout the growing season. The flowers are rather small, but they put on a great display on the four to five-foot canes.

Rose de Rescht



There is a debate if this variety is a real antique rose or a modern one. The reason for this discussion centers on our old friend, Nancy Lindsay (who re-discovered the *Gloire de Guilan* rose discussed earlier.)

Nancy discovered this rose while on one of her field trips to Persia (now Iran) in 1945. Unfortunately, she had her critics and naysayers. A debate arose over this rose. A few botanists believe it is a hybrid and is not a real antique rose but a modern one. Others feel it is a Damask variety grown in France during the Middle Ages but later found itself in the old Attar-of-Roses fields in Persia (Iran).

Then, there are people who feel Miss Lindsay told a tall tale about discovering it in Iran. They believe she found it growing in a garden in France and made-up the whole exotic Persian story. Oh my, the plot

thickens. Maybe she did – perhaps she didn't – but she stuck to her story. Anyway, don't lose sleep over this botanical mystery.

This rose has smaller flowers than other Damask varieties but compensates with many of them. It has fully double blossoms and blooms for most of the summer. It only grows to about three feet tall, is bushy but very thorny. It would make an excellent addition to any small sized flower bed. No mystery here – it's excellent!

The Gallica Roses

Rosa gallica is known as the oldest garden-grown rose. They call it a Gallica for it grew wild in the fields and forest clearings of the region of Gall now known as France and Belgium. These plants became known as French Roses.

It forms dense bushes with canes reaching nearly three feet tall and wide. Most of the varieties in this category are almost thornless. The fragrant flowers can grow as single or double blooms, but also in small clusters.

By chance, this rose became essential in the development of future rose groups and varieties by adding a vivid red color. Amateur breeders later discovered that red could change to neon pink and mauve-purple. The sudden appearance of streaked and blended colors on a flower caused a wild sensation. They eventually called these highly colorful roses Mad Gallicas (as in the realm of craziness.)

As for hardiness, they survive well in cold climates (around Zone 4) and need a cold winter to bloom well in the early summer. This behavior explains why they grew throughout northern Europe. They may have only one significant bloom, but the display is incredible.

Apothecary's Rose



The official name of this Gallica variety is *Rosa gallica officinalis*, and it is THE MOST celebrated rose in history. Why such an honor? Well, it depends on the various reasons for using the rose.

Let's take a quick history tour. It all began with the Crusades when gallant knights came riding (not marching) back home again (hurrah, hurrah). Some knights came back with these rose bushes. How odd. Well, yes and no – for this rose was considered a cure for many health maladies. What is more valuable – gold, jewels or your health?

Monks in monasteries became the first gardeners to grow and distribute this rose far and wide in the belief it had super-duper medicinal properties. The highly scented petals could help cure or ease anything from headaches, heartaches, stomachaches, toothaches, and

whatever aches the body and mind can offer. People carried around the dried petals in bags or small boxes. This rose was the aspirin of their day. “Take two petals and call me in the morning” was what may have been a prescription back then. It was a significant healing ‘drug’ of a Middle Ages doctor. Thus, it became known as the **Apothecary’s Rose**.

Rumor has it (according to TMZ of that era) that on her way to Paris to marry the future king of France, Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette was very nervous and sleepless. When her entourage came to Provins, France – a town whose primary industry was in growing roses and other fragrant flowers – her physician prescribed having her stop and sleep on a bed stuffed with dried petals of this rose. You guessed it – she fell asleep. Oh, the wonders of late 18th-century medical science!

The dried petals may not have been an actual cure for any ailment, but they gave any person a reason to smile in such sad times. We still use this rose today for the scenting of potpourri, teas, skin lotions, and cosmetics.

Blooming happens ‘off and on’ throughout the summer with clusters of gorgeous single to semi-double, vivid red-pink petals with bright yellow stamens.

This rose can form a sizeable five-foot bush or a hedge and is hardy to zone 4 or 5.

Belle de Crecy



This beautiful Gallica rose was first introduced to the gardening public around 1829 in France. It has been popular since then. Part of this popularity is its ever-changing color of the double blossoms. It begins as a dark pink bud then opens to pink, then a magenta shade, and ending with a dark violet shade. Not a real purple but a grayish blue cast. At any one time, all these colors will be present. You could say this is a rose of a different color!

One other part of its popularity is the pleasant fragrance. The late, great, Graham Stuart Thomas, who expertly knew about antique roses, wrote in his book, *The Old Shrub Roses*, "... Belle de Crecy is supreme among all old roses, and for the fragrance, it is hard to beat." Please remember, this man understood his roses!

Growing to nearly four feet tall, the number of flowers it produces can make the canes bend downward. They do not have “real” thorns but tiny, sharp prickles, bristles or needles. Yes, whatever you want to call them they hurt when touched so admire this rose with your eyes, (and carefully) with your nose. It is hardy to zone 4.

Belle Isis



With all the antique roses in this ebook, I believe this one is the most beautiful. Created in 1845, people continue to love its beauty and fragrance. This rose has very soft, pale pink flowers folded together to form a quartered or “cupped” pattern.

A few rosarians question if this is a true Gallica rose (while others believe it may have Damask heritage) due to the colors and size of the bush which, in this case, is ideal for smaller gardens. The canes can grow to nearly four feet tall and less in width. It blooms in the early summer and is hardy to zone 4.

The flowers have a refreshing fragrance, but not your typical rose perfume. It has a myrrh-like scent. And what is the aroma of myrrh? Well, it’s hard to say without having it nearby to nose-sample. Offhand,

and off-nose, fragrance-experts believe myrrh smells of an exotic blend of rose, pine, and licorice. That sounds rather ghastly, but it works, and the fragrance is famous throughout history.

This rose can spread by underground shoots, and the canes have thorns. David Austin, the outstanding breeder of the fantastic new English Roses, used this variety as a parent for the first of his new roses. Mr. Austin calls it 'Constance Spry' — which almost looks and smells like Belle Isis.

Cardinal de Richelieu



I mentioned earlier that Gallicas would have purplish flowers, and this variety shows the color well. It surprised me when I first laid eyes on it. To be honest, it's not my favorite color, but it is interesting. It is not exceptionally fragrant, as compared with other Gallicas, but is very noticeable from the dried petals.

It is supposedly hardy to zone 5, but questionable for the bushes I saw suffered over a mild winter. Some rose experts believe this variety grows and blooms better in warmer conditions – which is unlike most Gallica varieties.

It is a vigorous bush increasing more lengthways (five feet) than in height (two to four feet) although some references mention up to eight feet tall. Wow, they must have fed Viagra-based fertilizer to them. The

canes have few thorns, but, if you are like me, you'll eventually find them. Massive blooming occurs in the late spring or early summer, but I have seen sporadic flowers even until late July.

Introduced to gardeners in 1845, the breeder named it after the famous (or infamous, based on his actions) mid-17th century Prime Minister of France. If you remember, he is also a ruthless character in the Alexandre Dumas novel, "*The Three Musketeers*," written in 1844. I love the book, but not this rose. Many people differ. How about you?

Rose de la Maitre-Ecole



Be careful when naming roses. The other name, more commonly used, is 'Rose du Maitre d'Ecole' but this spelling is incorrect. Well, what does changing a few letters around matter? The answer lies in the translation.

Growers consider the original title as correct for the rose breeder christened this rose after the name of a district or village outside the French city of Angers where he lived. At some point, the rose's name was changed (or misspelled) to "Rose du Maitre d'Ecole" which, when roughly translated, means "teacher of the pink school" or "a pink school teacher." Yes, Houston, we have a problem.

I am not fluent in French (and this publication proves I am also not fluent in English), but I am sure the original name of this variety is

correct. Let's hope so, or we have a mighty strange rose breeder.

Anyway, this variety was first displayed in 1831 with beautifully quartered dark pink to light purple blossoms. Some experts feel it has the largest flowers of all Gallica roses. They have a surprising violet perfume! There is one main bloom in the early summer; enough blossoms to make the canes drop from their weight. I love roses that do that. For further enjoyment, the canes have few thorns. I love roses like this even more! It is hardy to zone 4, but zone 5 is more likely to be correct.

The Hybrid Perpetual Roses

This classification marks a significant milestone in creating modern-day roses. The word “hybrid” dates back to around 1600. The Latin word is ‘hybrida,’ and it means mongrel, as in a mongrel mix-breed dog.

When rose breeding was the “in thing to do,” breeders would cross different rose species or varieties. There wasn’t any definite plan (at first) for it was your usual “hit or miss” tactics to make new and exciting roses. When the old semi-re-blooming roses bred with one another, a unique and impressive group of reliable re-blooming mongrel types appeared. They eventually became known as Hybrid Perpetuals.

These plants created a stir of excitement adding a different blossom shape and bloomed throughout the summer and fall. Over time, breeders grew hundreds, possibly thousands of mongrel varieties, but they went overboard in creating them. All their concentration went into flower color and better re-blooming characteristics. They forgot (or entirely overlooked) how the rose bush grew.

These roses grew like mad and developed large – sometimes excessively large – bushes that could not fit in many garden beds. So, they became less popular. Out of possibly thousands, only a few now remain. The remaining ones are the best of the mongrel litter, and I list three varieties next. Their hardiness varies, but most survive to zone 5.

Frau Karl Druschki



That's it, no need to look for the most beautiful white rose. Here it is. Well, it has a few faults, like not having a fragrance, but, so do other favorite roses. It has beautiful shell-pink buds which expand into fully double blossoms. They appear to be large, present-day Hybrid Tea roses.

It grows upright into a well-managed, almost thornless bush (unlike many Hybrid Perpetuals) and is ideal for smaller gardens. It has the potential to make a climbing rose, but with a few clips it will branch out. The leaves are dark, glossy green and the bush is hardy to zone 5.

First introduced in 1901, this rose became instantly famous. Due to an excellent re-blooming quality, it was the most famous white rose of the time. However, times and people change for the rose developed new

names, especially when the First World War began. Having a German name was a no-no for many stupid people (especially politicians) of that era. Someone changed the name to '**White American Beauty**' or '**Snow Queen.**' Even today, such renaming shenanigans occur for all flowers to help boost sales.

General Jacqueminot



Rose growers call this rose “General Jack” for simplicity and possibly because many cannot speak French. It’s all right. I’m sure there are plenty of wild pronunciations of this name and many other French roses. I have butchered plenty of names throughout the years.

This great rose, created in 1853, was in honor of a General in Napoleon’s Army. Although it has a massive bloom in the early summer, it will re-bloom well into the fall. This rose is the parent of our modern Hybrid Tea roses.

It forms an impressive (Generals always like being referred to as being impressive) five-foot-tall bush. The double blossoms are very fragrant, and the silky petals are garnet or crimson red changing to a dark rose-pink.

The flower stems are much longer than all other varieties grown, and this trait caused florists to jump up and down with joy. Well, not really but they realized it would allow them to sell the first long stem roses to the public.

Then, they had an epiphany (the mother of all big ideas) – if this variety can form long stems maybe future roses can do the same. So, new breeding ideas came about to develop fragrant long stem roses, especially for florists, instead of for gardeners. Roses of all colors with long stems to sell. SWEET! So, when you purchase a dozen red roses from your local florist thank General Jack (the rose) for making your purchase and enjoyment possible.

Mrs. John Laing



I'm in a torrid love affair with Mrs. Laing, and I don't care what John thinks. In fact, I am not the only one loving Mrs. Laing for there are many admirers. The late, Graham Stuart Thomas, the famous British horticulturist, was also an admirer of Mrs. Laing by saying of her, "*[she] is one of the most satisfying roses to grow and cut.*"

The breeder named this beautiful variety, created in 1887, after the wife of John Laing, a London gardener fanatic over growing roses. It grows tall – up to four feet and nearly wide – and produces plenty of large, silvery-pink, fragrant, double flowers all summer. Until this time, it was unheard of for a rose to bloom the entire growing season.

This variety is the pinnacle of what Hybrid Perpetual roses represent and is an excellent bush for any garden. It is hardy to zone 5 – maybe 4

– with excellent protection and has few thorns. The perfume is a mix of old-rose and Hybrid Tea. Now, are you in love with Mrs. Laing?

The flowers, being excessively double, resembles a Cabbage Rose and became valuable for further breeding work. The next step was having other roses bloom all summer and be smaller in stature. That action created today's extensive selection of Hybrid Teas.

The Moss Roses

Well over a hundred years ago, long before Hybrid Teas, an impressive group of roses was the rage. They were popular, grown in every garden and were very hardy. Today, many people have never heard of this group and surprised when they encounter them. So, what are they?

Rosarians call them Moss Roses and are genetic mutations of the Centifolia or Cabbage roses discussed earlier. These are different for they have fuzzy, ferny, feathery or, more commonly called, mossy leaf 'beard' growths on the flower buds, stems and even on the canes. They sometimes have a reddish-brown color and secrete a resinous substance. This resin has a sweet fragrance when handled. On some Moss roses, this "mossy" growth looks like tiny, soft prickles.

In the early 1700s, a Cabbage rose developed this mossy beard growth on the buds and stems. This "mossification" (my word) may have happened way back in the 1600s but not documented. This mutation, either spontaneously or redevelops, created joy with rose lovers.

It was not until the 19th century for this love affair, in today's vernacular, went viral. Everybody wanted the Moss roses and, at some point, close to 400 varieties were available to gardeners. Then, with introducing Hybrid Perpetuals and later the Hybrid Teas, demand dropped, interest faded, and these roses almost disappeared.

The older varieties have the most moss while the later developed types have the least. Due to excessive hybridization, this moss trait was being lost. The old varieties have double flowers of various shades of pink to purple, have one significant bloom in the early summer (although some can re-bloom in the fall) and are fragrant.

A typical Moss rose bush can grow to five feet tall and just as wide. They are hardy (Zone 4) and seem to thrive best if not pampered. Leave them alone, and they seem to enjoy it. Presenting next are a few varieties available today to grow and enjoy in your garden.

Capitaine John Ingram



This variety has a violet color similar to the "*Cardinal de Richelieu*" rose described earlier in the Gallica section. It may begin as a dark pink or even crimson but changes as it ages to a shade of violet.

Created in 1854, the breeder dedicated it to the honorable career of John Ingram, a Captain of the Horse Guard, for his service to Queen Victoria. The flowers are smaller than other types but make up for size with many petals. It has an excellent perfume but with an added spiciness. The bush grows to around four feet tall and wide and is hardy to zone 5.

It had the typical significant bloom in the early summer and reported having outstanding disease resistance to the blackspot fungus. I

respectfully disagree. The bush I took the above photo had blackspot on the foliage. Oh well, the flowers are attractive to see and to smell.

Unlike the *Cardinal de Richelieu* rose, I am a fan of this one due to the dark rose-purple color. However, when the flowers are young, they have a beautiful dark pink coloration and eventually changes to a shade of purple. It is gorgeous!

Communis



As luck would have it – this is the first Moss rose discovered around 1696. It is, technically, a Centifolia variety, but this is the one that went crazy and developed the classic sticky, mossy beard on the flower buds and stems. It is highly attractive, which explains why it became so popular.

Due to its popularity, a whole menagerie of nicknames graced it over the years. Two names are **Common Moss** and **Old Pink Moss**, both not especially exciting but they get-to-the-point. No matter what the name, many rose authorities feel this is the best Moss rose – period. I mean, how can you improve on the original? The sequels may be good or mediocre, but the original tops them all.

It is still growing in many gardens throughout the world (probably not in Antarctica but give it time with global warming.) Yes, it is pink, a beautiful shade with an equally outstanding perfume. It has a lifestyle of vigorous growth (I hope I am that active when I'm over 300 years old) for the canes can reach over six feet tall with slightly less width.

Being old, it should have excellent disease resistance and be very hardy too, let's say, zone 4. Happily, it does on both counts. Being a Centifolia, it has one major blooming in the early Summer, but what a show it makes!

Comtesse de Murinais



This variety will probably require more work for it to bloom well. However, it is worth the trouble. It has the desire to grow and grow. It can become a mountain climber in your garden but to allow it to do so sacrifices having plenty of flowers. More of the bloom would be near the top of the canes, and it is not enjoyable getting out the stepladder to smell them.

At some point, it needs pruning in the winter, to produce more side branches. It is from here, in the late spring or early summer, where most of the big flush of flowers will be blooming. They open as a beautiful shell pink then gradually change to pure white as they age. At any point during the season, you can expect both pink and white flowers. I told you that little extra work is worth seeing each flower and smelling their delightfully strong fragrance.

The canes come armed with plenty of thorns and prickles so be careful while trimming them. Being a Moss variety, the buds and stems have lots of that delightful feathery growth. This rose is hardy to zone 5.

Henri Martin



The common name for this variety is '**Red Moss.**' This one is special for Louis-Henri Martin was an influential French historian who helped organize the planning and building of the Statue of Liberty to become a gift to the United States. *"The statue will represent Liberty enlightening the world,"* Henri said as he and others planned the construction of Lady Liberty. How thoughtful. Thank you, Monsieur Martin!

They completed the statue and presented it to America on October 28, 1886. Sadly, Henri Martin died three years before this happened. He was around when honored with this rose in 1863. It has a massive early summer blooming with fragrant, semi-double, crimson red-purple petals. Due to all these flowers, the canes will need support. The resinous moss covers the flower buds and stems.

This thorny bush can grow to nearly five feet tall and wide plus it is hardy to zone 5. It seems to enjoy growing in warmer locations, tolerates drier, less fertile soils, and partial shade.

Louis Gimard



I hate it when there is little information about a named rose variety. I always like to know more about the person someone named it after. Rosarians consider this variety a hybrid with a China Rose heritage. The purplish-pink flowers are larger and are more “puffed out,” for lack of a better description.

Some experts call this a Damask-Moss hybrid for it has large, rounded flowers and a more pronounced fragrance. The mossy outgrowths of the buds and stems have a pine smell. So, if you pick a stem, you can experience the delightful combination of the two fragrances. The canes grow to nearly five feet tall and slightly less in width. There are so many flowers produced in the early summer that the canes will flop over unless supported.

This one was first introduced to gardeners in 1877 and rated as being hardy to zone 5. One disadvantage with this variety, according to the various sources, is its tendency to develop blackspot fungus and viruses – more so than many other roses. However, it has beautiful flowers, and that always outweighs its faults.

Violacée



This rose's name is for the vivid color of the flowers. If you think it is "violet" you are wrong. Sorry, thanks for playing. You will receive some parting gifts. Well, that was also my answer. The petals are a dark "old rose" red but have some purple highlights mixed in. Oh, all right – we are half-right about the color being violet.

Some authorities use the word mauve for the color. Okay, let's say this rose is 'marvelously mauve.' It is one of those varieties difficult to describe, but you do a double-take when first seeing it. It's beautiful, and that explains it well. The flowers are semi-double to all-double and have a pleasant fragrance. The canes can grow to nearly five feet tall and a little less wide. It has the potential to be a short climber, but it can make more flowers to bloom in the early summer if you clip the cane tops back in the fall or winter.

This variety can be difficult to find but is worth growing in a garden. It was first introduced to gardeners in 1876 and is hardy to zone 5.

William Lobb



No discussion of Moss roses is complete without admiring this beautiful variety. Shown to the public in 1855, Jean Laffay, a Frenchman, named this rose “**Duchesse d’Istrie**” in honor of a beautiful woman who married a French hero in the Napoleonic Wars.

All was fine and dandy until later it was renamed to “**William Lobb**” in England. Now, why did they do this? Well, there is a reason, or better yet, speculation.

Let’s get to the key aspect and ask who was William Lobb? He was a famous British plant explorer (1809 -1864). Think of him as an 'Indiana Jones' for rare plant explorations. He went all over North and South America searching for seeds and plants to ship back to England. It sounds like a fun job!

To make a long story short, he went to California in 1860 during the Gold Rush and later was never heard from again. Eventually, his brother found out he had died of a disease. To posthumously honor his dedication to botany, a rose bears his name. Either it was deliberate or by accident for his rose turned out to be 'Duchesse d'Istrie.'

Was adversary nationalism involved in changing a famous French rose into an English one? Over time, William Lobb became the accepted name. But wait! There's more. This variety has a thick, shaggy outgrowth of moss. Due to this attribute, a generic name of **Old Velvet Moss** became popular. A rose by any other name, etc.

Its double flowers are crimson-red and slowly change to shades of purple or the ever-confusing mauve. Blooming begins from early spring to midsummer with a vibrant rose perfume while the moss smells of pine. The canes grow tall, over six feet, and are hardy to zone 4.

The Rugosa Roses

Getting a little tired of all the French varieties? Let's head on over to the Pacific coastal areas of Japan, China, and Russia. Here we find the Rugosa roses native to these regions. They are hardy, thorny and gorgeous. It is not only the flowers, but the dark green, 'crinkly' leaves also look attractive. The name 'Rugosa' means folded or pleated.

Not introduced into France and the rest of Europe until the early 1800s, this rose then became famous. There was not much breeding work with them until the end of that century.

Rosarians consider them the easiest to grow, and the single to semi-double flowers are fragrant. And they do not have your typical rose perfume but that of spice, mainly clove. The large flowers are dark pink to white, and almost-purple.

They are the hardiest of most roses, tolerate poor, dry soil and do not quickly succumb to leaf diseases. There is one other exciting quality (not mentioned in most other species,) and that is their formation of large rose hips. Rose hips are the generic term of the developing seed receptacle or ovaries of a pollinated flower. The valuable hips make many food items from teas, jellies, jams, and syrups. They are high in Vitamin C making them vital for the health of people living in Arctic locations.

It sounds like the perfect rose but (yes, there is always a catch), they have sharp prickles (small, straight thorns) all over the canes and stems. There is no empty real estate on a stem for every millimeter has 'prickles on prickles.' You can't handle these roses without a suit of armor. It could be this overabundance of prickles frightened off would be hybridization (and breeders) in the early days of its introduction.

The canes can grow well over eight feet tall but less in width. Even with this towering height, they can make beautiful (but impenetrable) hedges. You appreciate them by sight and nose, but no touching allowed!

The only things that bother this rose (and most other roses) are Japanese Beetles which love to eat the flowers and leaves. Another problem is constant rainy weather will turn the blossoms into the consistency of wet tissue paper. Then, when they die, change into brown “blobs” – not beautiful by any stretch of the imagination.

The following varieties are not, technically, antique roses, but they will be years from now. Most variations are hybrids created after 1900 and well into the 20th century. Here, we will concentrate on the oldest ones developed and still cherished.

Blanc Double de Coubert



Introduced to the gardening public in 1892, the name of this variety refers to Coubert, France where the breeder lived. Gertrude Jekyll, the 19th-century English gardener, and writer wrote that this rose, she thought, was the whitest-white of any flower. Gardeners could have fist fights in dismissing or defending her opinion.

The semi-double blossoms are fragrant, what some people say, a blend of rose and licorice. Other people say rose and clove. They heavily bloom in the early summer then sporadically until late fall.

The canes can grow over six feet tall but you can cut them back in the winter to make a shapelier and better-blooming bush. It, like most other Rugosas, can survive in zone 3 with little die back to the stems.

The leaves are bright green with the characteristic crinkly veins and are highly resistant to blackspot fungus and other diseases.

Hansa



Created in the Netherlands (yes, that is a pleasant surprise) in 1905, this variety is one of the most popular of the Rugosa roses. It has beautiful semi-double, dark pink to red-violet flowers scented of a blend of rose-clove perfume. The very thorny canes can grow over 6 feet tall but less in width.

It is a hybrid with another variety, but many rose experts are not sure which one. No matter, for this has been a very popular variety for over a hundred years based on its Zone 3 hardiness, excellent disease resistance, and for the bright orange hips, it produces in the fall. Overall, this is probably the best of the Rugosas that can grow in average-sized gardens.

And now for the nagging question of what does Hansa mean? It is the name of the nursery where the breeder worked.

Magnifica



A rose with the root word of 'magnificent' had better live up to this reputation. Nicknamed 'The Sea Tomato' (for its large hips), this one dated back to 1905 and believed to be the double-petal version of the species with large, dark pink-red blossoms. Other authorities think this is a hybrid and suggest the Rugosa species bred with another rose.

Anything else to mention? Well, that's about it. It has all the qualities I discussed earlier in the Rugosa introduction such as outstanding fragrance and disease resistance.

Since its presentation to the public, it contributes as stock in breeding newer hybrids - that may include new colors from other roses. I would also recommend getting rid of most of those painful prickles! All of this

is difficult when breeding any rose (or any flower.) For now, just enjoy growing this magnificent rose.

Sarah Van Fleet



The biggest Rugosa of all belongs to this one, bred by Dr. Walter Van Fleet in 1926 and named for his loving wife. Sadly, its introduction to the public occurred after Dr. Van Fleet's death.

I know, we are way outside the boundaries of the antique roses discussed in this ebook, but I can't help but include this beautiful shrub. It can grow to well over eight feet tall and wide. It blooms in the late spring and continues off and on over the summer. The large, semi-double flowers are a beautiful shade of pink but slowly changes to pale pink as they age.

The late, English horticulturist, Graham Stuart Thomas poetically described the flowers as "shallow cups of cool pink with a hint of lilac."

Doesn't that sound beautiful? The fragrance is of old roses instead of the usual clove scent.

Some researchers suggest (by Dr. Van Fleet's records) this is a hybrid Rugosa bred with an unknown or forgotten Hybrid Tea rose. It has the typical Rugosa influence with excessive thorniness, exceptional hardiness, and long blooming.

The Species Roses

Think of a rose garden as a play in a theater or as a movie. Some roses are the main characters who command most of the attention - like the ones described earlier. Then, there are “supporting role” roses that add uniqueness or flair to a garden.

The next few roses have that role - having no features that place them within similar groups. They did not form new varieties but add something unique to a garden.

Some have become legends of being grown and cherished for a long time. They may not have been the prettiest or the most fragrant in any garden, but they have a special charm that made them become ‘pass-me-along’ plants for generations of gardeners.

Whatever roses you plant do not forget to add at least one of these scene-stealer characters to your next garden performance.

Father Hugo's Rose



(Rosa hugonis) – Back in 1899, an Irish Catholic priest named Father Hugh Scanlon was performing missionary work in western China. One day, he came across this rose species and knew he had a godsend to horticulture. Well, maybe not at that exact moment but he knew it had to be something special. He later sent seeds to Kew Gardens in England. Now, it grows throughout the world.

I am not sure if Kew Gardens misspelled his name, or someone nicknamed Father Hugh as Hugo. Now, if you are not so religiously inclined, the other name is The Golden Rose of China. It is a sturdy rose, hardy to zone 4 and grows in many soil conditions.

It has a massive bloom in early to mid-spring – earlier than most garden roses – with single to semi-double petals of light to a deep

golden yellow. Some people detect a slight scent, but most do not. The canes are thorny but grow to an average of six feet tall and will arch over like a fountain. You can control it to fit well in your garden.

One added charm is its fern-looking leaves is atypical of most roses. Plus, they turn bright red in the fall! It is a rose made in heaven.

Harison's Yellow Rose



(Rosa foetida x Rosa pimpinellifolia or Rosa harisonii) – There are different interpretations of how the American westward expansion was successful. New land for making a new life (at the expense of Native American lives) is probably the biggest reason. How did this rose fit into this “hitch-up your wagon and go West” travel plans?

It began life from a small garden in New York City, in 1824. This garden belonged to an attorney and amateur rose breeder named George Harison. His name is significant for it, even today, causes spelling confusion. One day, George saw a new rose bloom for the first time. It was his creation, and boy was he proud of it. He should be for it turned out to be a rare hybrid.

The petals were semi-double bright yellow with a surprising fruity fragrance. It was also very prickly but, hey, so are a lot of other roses. Later, wanting to show off his new rose he contacted a nurseryman by the name of Thomas Hogg. Mr. Hogg loved George's rose and took cuttings to propagate it. He later sold small bushes to the public as 'Hogg's Yellow American Rose.'

People loved the rose – not so much the cowardly name – but Mr. Hogg could not supply the demand. It caught the eye and nose (plus most likely, the pricked fingertips) of another nurseryman named William Prince. Mr. Prince contacted George and asked if he could propagate his rose and rename it "Harison's Yellow." The answer was "YES!" So, Mr. Prince sold them, and, to make a long story short, it was a blooming success.

Everyone wanted to grow this must-have-it-now rose. Yes, everyone! It was easy to propagate, either by cuttings but also by suckering. Many old roses (especially the species) can spread outward by new shoots arising from the roots. And so, from one plant, many younger plants can grow and be given to friends and family.

Within time, it went with the westward bound pioneers, tucked into barrels and wrapped in wet burlap. As it traveled across the continent, its name changed. In many locations, someone called it "The Pioneer Rose" or the "Oregon Trail Rose." In Oregon, the lumberjacks renamed it "The Logtown Rose." Some places misspelled the original name with an added "r," and it became "Harrison's Yellow." It's still misnamed today in some nurseries. Oh well, mistakes happen.

The name-game took a significant detour in what eventually became the state of Texas. It became adopted as a native rose and affectionately called "**The Yellow Rose of Texas.**" Someone later composed a boisterous song (of the same name) but is debatable if it is about this rose or about a famous lady (possibly a prostitute) who helped in establishing Texas's independence from Mexico. Texans were not keen to this yellow rose being a Yankee Rose. New York City? Oh, lordy no!

So, this is “How the West Was Won”, at least for this city rose, one plant and one mile at a time. Even after homesteads across the country became abandoned, extensive thickets of it survived, and still do in out-of-the-way places.

It is hardy to zone 4, blooms in the early summer but has sporadic, fruity-scented flowers throughout the season. The four or five-foot canes have many prickly-thorns. It tolerates many soil conditions but grows well in drier, poor soil and thrives with a little care – which explains why it was so popular. It was your basic “plant it and forget about it” rose.

The Irish Rose



(Rosa hibernica or Rosa canna 'Hibernica') – Irish-American, Chauncey Olcott, composed the song, 'My Wild Irish Rose.' According to legend, the inspiration for this song was on a trip he and his wife made to Ireland in 1898. While there, a young Irish boy gave his wife a rose. She asked him what its name was, and he replied it was only a wild Irish rose. The boy could have named it 'O'Shaughnessy,' but he was honest about it. She kept it dry-pressed in an album as a souvenir.

When Chauncey composed the melody of an Irish song but needed lyrics and a memorable name, his wife opened the album and told him "here is the inspiration for your new song." It is not every day you come across a wild growing rose to have its very own song.

This rose, discovered sometime around 1800 (give or take a day) in or around Belfast, Ireland has been famous for generations. It may be a naturally occurring hybrid from two other wild roses. Being an excessively thorny rose, it flowers only in the early summer and is hardy to zone 4. The canes can grow to over eight feet tall and nearly five feet wide.

Although they have a little fragrance, the simplicity of the single petal, pink flowers are inspirational. Ah, the luck of the Irish!

Stanwell Perpetual



(Rosa spinosissima) – Most species of roses have one significant bloom in the late spring or early summer. However, a rose bred with another rose (a hybrid) has the potential to increase the blooming period. That process created this beautiful variety. It may be a hybrid of *Rosa spinosissima*, and the Autumn Damask rose, discussed earlier.

Its discovery was on a beautiful sunny day in 1838. It may have been a cloudy day with a 50% chance of showers – who knows. Someone named ‘Lee’ saw it blooming near Stanwell, in Middlesex, England and thought, “My goodness, that’s a mighty pretty rose. It’s a keeper.” Well, whatever he thought it was the correct decision to save it. Thanks, Lee for having a good eye!

This rose is a repeat bloomer, having pale pink, semi-double flowers that fade to off-white as they age. It also has a beautiful perfume, excessive prickly thorns, and the leaves have a “ferny” look to them. The canes are exceptionally hardy to zone 3 and grow to about four feet tall and wide. Ever since Lee’s discovery, it continues to grow in many gardens.

Sweet Briar Rose



(*Rosa eglanteria*) – This old rose (also known as Eglantine) is native to England and was a favorite of Chaucer (the author of “*Canterbury Tales*” you may have read in high school) and William Shakespeare (whose works you should have read in high school.) Bill wrote about it several times in his plays and sonnets back in the late 1500s. A good example is from his “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*” where the character of Oberon describes Titania’s bower:

“I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows; Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine, With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.”

Now, prepare yourself for a shock if you have never encountered this enjoyable rose. Its love is not for the lightly fragrant, single-petal, pink

blossoms but the dark green leaves. The leaves? Yes, isn't that weird? It is part of a group called Incense Roses, where the leaves release a sweet apple-scented aroma into the air when wet by rain, dew or warmed by the morning sun.

If you have never smelled this bush (yes, the bush not the flowers) after a summer shower you are missing out on an enjoyable gardening experience. Try to place it where you can enjoy the fragrance after a summer shower.

Over time, this unique rose has spread across the world for it is hardy to zone 4. The thorny canes can grow to a whopping height of 15 feet but don't fret for you can trim it back to a more manageable size. The soft rose-scented, single petaled, pink blossoms bloom only in the early summer, but the red rose hips are attractive in the fall.

It grows well in many soil conditions and even in partial shade. It is an "all-purpose" rose of historical importance. Go ahead – plant a bush and turn your garden into a living poem.

Conclusion

One hundred years ago there were over 150 old rose varieties growing in gardens. Today, there are almost less than 30 now sold by specialist growers and nurseries. What happened? Blame it on change.

Today, many of the old roses are replaced by new varieties that bloom more and longer, are healthier and more restrained in growth. This is wonderful! Old rose breeders had these qualities in mind all the time.

Should we keep these old roses or discard them like yesterday's newspaper? The antique roses are beautiful, and many have historical stories to them. However, do we care about their names or which one the Crusaders desired? Few people care. And here lies the main reason for the decline of these stunning giants. The adage of "out of sight and out of mind" is the fatal disease of these roses. Someday they will only "survive" in garden books. Photos of them will survive but what about their fragrance?

Let's face facts. Old roses command little interest or demand. You could search nurseries far and wide and not find one of these plants. There are specialty nurseries (mail order) that offer some of these shrubs. Please remember, they can be expensive but so do all other beautiful antiques.

I hope this publication persuades you to grow old roses before they disappear forever. It can happen within one generation, and that would not only be a crime against history but also against beauty.

Thank you for reading this ebook.

I hope you have enjoyed learning something new about these heirloom or antique roses. It is my wish for you to grow at least one or more of these fantastic old roses to turn your ordinary flower garden into something extraordinary!

Please visit my author website at <https://gedwinvarner.com> concerning my other gardening ebooks and contact information.

About the Author

G. Edwin Varner grew up on a farm helping his father in the crop fields and assisting his mother in the flower and vegetable gardens. This early experience and learning led him to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with a minor in Botany.

For twenty years he successfully owned and operated a fragrant flower mail-order nursery. Unlike most mail-order nurseries publishing colorful but expensive pictorial catalogs, his frugal catalog extensively described the flowers he grew. He once said, "I write a thousand words worth a picture in my catalogs." Today, he has the same style of writing (thankfully with fewer words) through a variety of enjoyable and informative ebooks. This time, the ebooks include color photos of each flower.

He encourages you to cultivate something unique and beautiful in your gardens. His motto is "read about it, see it, grow it, and enjoy it!"

G. Edwin Varner lives in a rural area of northeastern Ohio, USA.