

# ROSE LETTER



August 2015 Vol. 39, No. 3

**Rose Letter**  
**of**  
**The Heritage Roses Groups**

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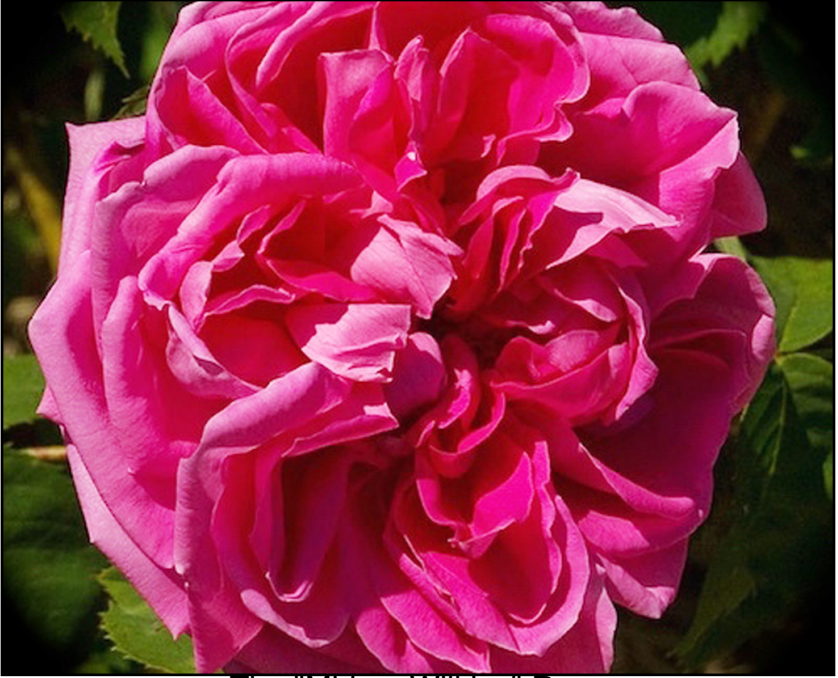
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**40 YEARS!**

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*Welcome to our 40th Anniversary issue. True, that American icon The New Yorker magazine is 50 years older than we are this year, but 40 years of Rose Letter is no mean feat and certainly a cause for pride and applause.*



The "Miriam Wilkins" Rose

## **Rosily, Indeed**

**Don Gers**

**I**n California it seemed all rose paths eventually met at Miriam Wilkins' doorstep. Even the path of modern roses came round to the old rose look which she championed for so many years. Until Miriam came along, the people who loved old roses were like ships adrift at sea. They had roses, of course, and books but no way to meet and share their found roses, enthusiasm and rose love.

I remember asking Miriam years ago how she got started with roses. We were sitting in her living room waiting for my

partner Michael to return with Miriam's daughter Lynn, a schoolteacher, from a presentation Michael made on California Indians to Lynn's classroom. Miriam's house, perched on a steep slope, gave us a bird's-eye view of her rose garden spread in all directions below the windows.

It was 1948 on that same but then empty El Cerrito hillside lot at 925 Galvin Drive, when she acquired her first rose 'Mrs. John Laing'. Soon there were others. A nurseryman living nearby was planting roses in the neighborhood. Miriam remembered 'Felicite et Perpetue' and across the street 'Mme. Cecile Brunner'. There was also 'Belle of Portugal' and a double yellow Banksia climbing in a fir tree.

Several years later, in the 1950's Miriam spotted an ad in *Good Housekeeping* magazine advertising garden catalogs for 50 cents. She sent for, got a Tillotson catalog and started ordering the old types—simply wasn't interested in modern HT's. So began her garden of old roses and species.

She attended local meetings of the American Rose Society taking bouquets and books to display. Setting up a card table, she made educational arrangements, illustrating rose history and classes with the species, gallicas, albas and so on.

She did not compete like almost everyone else. At refreshment breaks only a few stopped or showed any interest in her displays, but she persevered with her favorites.

Serendipitously, it was another ad that changed everything. In 1974 Miriam placed an ad in the *American Rose* magazine seeking correspondence with like-minded old rose people. So began a voluminous correspondence. Soon the idea to consolidate all this letter writing into a news publication came about. Miriam turned to Edith Schurr for help. Edith was one of her correspondents in Washington state and also Chair of the Old Rose Committee for the A.R.S.

Edith suggested Lily Shohan of New York and Carl Cato

of North Carolina ( both A.R.S. Members) be included as coordinators. Now they needed a name. A straight-speaking Norwegian, Miriam suggested "Old Roses Group" but Carl proposed the more dignified "Heritage Roses Group," no doubt reflecting his southern gentility. Now with a name, organized and eager to start, their felicitous announcement written by Miriam was printed in the March, 1975 issue of the *American Rose* magazine. Miriam named their publication "The Rose Letter" and served as its first editor.

And soon the paths through Miriam's rose world extended beyond her garden to the far corners of the planet. One of those well worn paths I shared with her was the Species Roses Round Robin (SRRR), a packet of letters circulating among members.

The charm of wild roses is in their details, and over the years we examined and marveled at many of them. In one Round Robin exchange, Miriam gave us guidance on the pronunciation of a botanical name, in this case *Rosa ecae*, the beautiful single yellow species discovered in 1879 near the Kyber Pass in Afghanistan.



As Bill Grant will attest, sometimes botanists get carried away Latinizing botanical binomials, e.g. *Rosa wichuraiana* which Bill successfully corrected to *Rosa wichurana* after years of effort. And

Miriam took the issue of botanical pronunciation to a new realm. She pointed out the name *Rosa ecae* is an acronym based on the name of the discoverer's wife, Eleanor Craig Aitchison's rose. Therefore, she insisted it should be pronounced Rosa "EE-SEE-AA-EE" not "A-KAY-EE" and also should be written with uppercase letters thus, Rosa ECAe. It all seemed perfectly logical to me; I admired her innovation.

Miriam initiated the SRRR with a notice in the May, 1981 *Rose Letter* followed by announcement of an "enthusiastic start" in November of 1982. Now thirty-three years later the Round Robin is still flying, but we've changed the name in her memory to Miriam's Rosy Round Robin (MRRR).

In 1980 Miriam branched out, creating another publication, the *Old Roser's Digest*. Published in September and April with the objective to announce Fall rose catalogs and Spring open gardens and other local events.

And international Heritage Rose Groups started appearing. In Australia one was initiated in 1979 by Trevor Nottle, and a New Zealand group was started by Toni Sylvester and Ken Nobbs, a Johnny rose seed who planted seedling roses along many a Kiwi roadside.

Miriam was among the first to import roses, learning from Irma Wilson of Bend, Oregon, with Valdemar Peterson as her first source. I have no idea how many species and hybrids Miriam introduced to the U.S. but she generously shared them with others. Over a dozen of mine originally came from her.

And then there's the Celebration of Old Roses. The idea, planning and name came from Mark Frappier, a landscape gardener, and the first gathering was held at University Village, Albany, in a barn-like building. Jane Kilkenny displayed her paintings, and Barbara Worl a wealth of books and her beautiful arrangements. Miriam also had a book display, Mark sold roses, there were slide shows, etc. but the display of roses on tables was

the centerpiece and delight of all. Then the venue moved to El Cerrito when the event passed into Miriam's capable hands (and the numerous helpful hands of her family, too). I'll never forget the wonderful rose fragrance filling that Moeser Street building. The Celebration of Old Roses was like a summation of Miriam Wilkins' lifelong endeavor, all things old roses in one big place for all to savor, share and enjoy.

Thinking back to our interview in her living room and remembering Michael's Indian presentation, I realized what made it work. It's one thing to read in a detached way that Indians ate acorns, made fire with sticks, had obsidian knives and arrows, animal skins for clothing and feathers for ceremony. But Michael gave that elementary school class a hands-on experience. Those kids got to make real fire, taste acorn flour they had ground themselves, feel the skins and feathers and the sharp edge of obsidian tools and so became immersed in a new and memorable experience. It's like that with the Celebration of Old Roses: it literally rubs your nose in a wonderful world of old roses.

Congratulations on the 40th anniversary of *The Rose Letter*. So here I think it fitting to conclude with her signature farewell, "Rosily, Miriam".



This photo of Miriam with her dear friend and volunteer gardener Jay Williams was taken by her son Richard Wilkins in September 2009, two months before Miriam died.



**Mrs. John Laing**

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

**S**ixty-seven years ago, in 1948, Miriam Wilkins purportedly acquired her first rose, ‘Mrs. John Laing’. She had excellent taste.

After winning a Gold Medal both in England and in New York in 1885, Henry Bennett, who raised the rose, decided to introduce it commercially in 1887. This sweetly perfumed, cool pink hybrid perpetual rose exhibits—in the words of Jack Harkness—a “confident beauty.” The flowers are large and shapely, the stems are strong, and the plant blooms almost continuously. If this rose leans toward any imperfections, I have

neither heard nor read of them. Dean Hole called it “Beauty’s Queen.”

The rose was named for Florence Mason of Edinburgh who married John Hugh Alexander Laing, also of Scotland, in 1885. John Laing was a doctor ahead of his time, advocating healthy living by eating substantial amounts of vegetables and fruit, wearing loose and light clothing—open-necked shirts and straw hats in summertime—taking cold baths and morning jogs. A granddaughter wrote years later that he was Henry Bennett’s doctor; he must have been also a friend of the couple.

But much grief intruded the Laings’ marriage. Three boys were still-born, though three girls and one other son survived. (The boy, Ian Alistair Laing, moved to and lived out his life in San Francisco.) John Laing became an alcoholic, dying prior to World War I. Florence Laing lived another thirty years. During all that time, she wore the Victorian widow’s habit of black dress, black shoes, black stockings, and a black veiled hat, prompting her five grandchildren to call her “Black Gran.” She died during World War II. Happily for us, her namesake rose lives on.

### **National Officers of Heritage Roses Groups**

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James Bateman stone

## In Her Footsteps from There to Here

Darrell g.h. Schramm

**F**ollowing Miriam Wilkins' love of species and heritage roses and her desire to preserve them, I set out this late May to scour pioneer cemeteries in Oregon in pursuit of old roses. Here *pursuit* seems the correct word, for I did and do want to locate—if not also classify and name—these old roses and champion their preservation

before they are mowed down or chemically killed and then forgotten. How many old cemeteries, I wondered, still proudly flaunted or modestly displayed heritage roses?

With me came my *Oregon Burial Site Guide*, a 1,180-page tome, complete with maps and directions. In all, from the southernmost part of the state to Portland, I investigated 33 cemeteries. Twelve of these grew no old roses (though two or three grew a few modern hybrid teas or floribundas). The Melrose Cemetery west of Roseburg demurely sent out one wild rose, a tiny bush snuggled against the broken headstone of a James Bateman who died in 1838. And Logtown Cemetery, southwest of Jacksonville, holds onto one suckering rose, possibly a species. I had thought it might be 'Harison's Yellow', but the one bloom was spent and the one tightly closed bud hinted at pink.

In 1853 Maryum (echoes of Miriam) Bowen McKee had crossed the plains and mountains tending a 'Harison's Yellow' all the way from Missouri to the Rogue Valley of Oregon. She

planted it at the gate of her front yard, where as of 2009 it was still growing under the protection of the Applegate Valley Garden Club. Later I learned the club in 1959 planted sixty more 'Harison's Yellows' along the front of the cemetery. Unfortunately, if they were still growing there, they were past their springtime bloom, so I did not see them. It hadn't occurred to me to look for roses along the narrow highway and cemetery border.

Although 'Harison's Yellow' surfaces repeatedly along the Oregon Trail and in tales and documentation of the Trail, I did not to my knowledge encounter it. Of course, being past bloom, the rose may have sat under my nose without recognition.

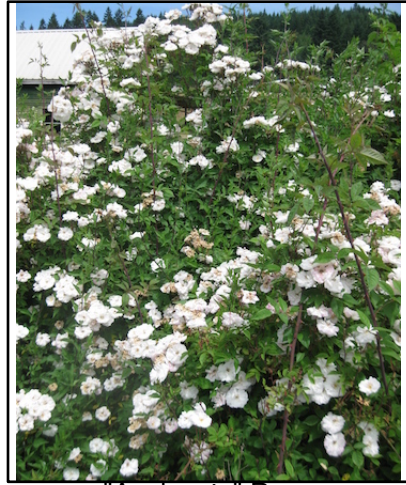
Leaving Logtown, I drove the winding backroad to Interstate 5. In Canyonville, home to the enormous Seven Feathers Casino, I tried to visit the hilltop pioneer cemetery behind the Forest Glen Senior Residence. Development had cut off the road to the cemetery, so its only entrance was via a switchback footpath immediately behind the senior residence building. Though I began, in sandals and walking shorts, to ascend the hill, the rampant poison oak quickly discouraged me. I vowed to return, wearing boots and long denim pants.

The next five or six cemeteries I explored contain few or no old roses, but I recorded assiduously the traits of those I found, photographing them as well. In Yoncalla I met the great-great granddaughter of Charles Applegate, brother of Jesse Applegate who established the southern route of the Oregon



Harison's Yellow

Trail that led to the lower Willamette and Rogue Valley areas. We spoke at length on Oregon History. On the family property, which includes the well-preserved old homestead, grows an old white climbing rose planted there, she said, in 1851. It is a semi-double rose that I saw often in southern Oregon ditches and roadsides. I suspect it is ‘Adelaide d’Orleans’.



"Applegate" Rose

Of all the pioneer cemeteries I visited, those most thriving in old roses and most exciting for me were Eugene’s Pioneer Cemetery, Sandridge Pioneer Cemetery near Lebanon, Salem Pioneer Cemetery, and Damascus Pioneer Cemetery, not far from the end of the Oregon Trail. Each one occupied so much of my time in logging and photographing their roses that I felt rather exhausted afterward.

A few patterns emerged. With the great exception of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery, most graveyards owned or tended by the Masonic Order inclined toward pristine neatness, all old roses banished, and proud of their tidy, trim, prim and proper lawns. Mostly those cemeteries were about convenience and monotony, not beauty and variety. Another pattern I noticed in most cemeteries was the many old rose shrubs without prickles, especially of gallicas and bourbons. A third pattern was the button eye: in rose after rose, whether gallica, damask, centifolia, or hybrid china, a green or yellow button eye made its appearance. And finally, the early hybrid tea most often found in these Oregon cemeteries is the 1890 ‘Mme Caroline Testout’—



Mme Caroline Testout

no surprise, since in 1904-05 Portland's young rose society was instrumental in having 50,000 bushes of 'Mme Caroline Testout' planted along the streets and in the front yards of the city. When the project was done, nearly 200 miles of city streets were lined with this rose and decorating home gardens. Its popularity spilled into towns and cities south, east, and west of Portland.

I had visited several cemeteries along

the coast last year and various cemeteries and memorial gardens in 2013. Add those to the cemeteries I visited this May and June, I'm inclined to state that hybrid gallica and bourbon roses seemed to predominate. Of white roses, 'Mme Hardy' and 'Mme Plantier' seemed the most popular.

With the exception of one other cemetery, I concluded my investigation of old roses in Oregon by



Mme Hardy

giving a short talk as part of a program for the Friends of Salem Pioneer Cemetery. Afterward, on a docent-led tour in the cemetery, I found myself responding to numerous questions on the heritage roses growing there. I was especially heartened to see this group concerned and enthusiastic about preserving their old roses and their history.

To be enthusiastic (*enthusiasm* means “possession by a god” from *enthousiasmos*; formed from *en* meaning “in or within” and *theos* meaning “god”, and so “having the god within”)—as Miriam Wilkins was, as the Salem crowd is, and as I was and still am in exploring my obsession with heritage roses in Oregon—is to feel the god of roses within us, propelling us forward into the history, into the beauty, into the meaning of the rose. Thank you, Miriam Wilkins, for having brought me here.



A typical pink, button-eyed rose found in pioneer cemeteries of Oregon.

**A Fond Farewell To A Good Friend**  
**Bob Edberg**  
of  
**Limberlost Roses & Rose Books**

**Jeri Jennings**

Robert E. Edberg, III, 85, passed away  
Tuesday, June 16, 2015 in his home near Tryon, N.C.

Our first and best mentor in the world of Old Roses, Bob was an educator as well as a rosarian. After 30 years in the recording business, he retired to work with Antique Roses — and along with roses, Bob shared knowledge. And what a FOUNTAIN of knowledge he was!

He taught us which sorts of roses would flourish here, and which sorts would not. He was right 100% of the time. When we've been able to help someone in turn, and are thanked, I tell them that we are just paying forward the many kindnesses Bob did for us.

There's a huge "Grandmother's Hat" rose at the base of our hill. Bob gave us that plant, around 1989, and we think of him whenever we look at it. I think of Bob, and smile, when I see that a potted rose has "gotten its feet in the ground." And I think of him when I look at our "Smith's Parish." That also came from Bob's Limberlost Rose Nursery, and is now "as big as a bus."

Bob told me once that he was sure that "Smith's Parish" was really Robert Fortune's long-lost 'Five-Colored Rose.' He was sure, he said, because "That's what I would have called it."

And you know what? He was probably right.

During his years in North Carolina, Bob compiled

five volumes of *The Encyclopedia Of Antique Roses*. I am proud to own three of the five volumes, and I treasure them. Many of my other rose books came from Bob as well — but the greatest things he gave me were friendship and shared knowledge.

**And those are simply irreplaceable.**



"Smith's Parish"

**TO JOIN OR RENEW HERITAGE ROSES  
GROUP**

Send \$16 for the print format of *Rose Letter*

or \$10 for the digital format

to clay Jennings, Membership Chair

22 Gypsy Lane, Camarillo, CA 93010

or contact him at [e.c.jennings@gamil.com](mailto:e.c.jennings@gamil.com)

## Jules Gravereaux as Breeder

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

What is most familiar to heritage rose lovers about Jules Gravereaux (1844-1916) is his attempt to identify and list every rose the Empress Josephine supposedly grew at Chateau Malmaison. He assumed she grew about 250 different varieties in her time, 85 years before he undertook his project. His investigation garnered a list of 197 roses, both species and varieties. Admirably, Gravereaux admitted that his record quite possibly contained inaccuracies and that, in fact, at least twenty roses on that list were suppositions.



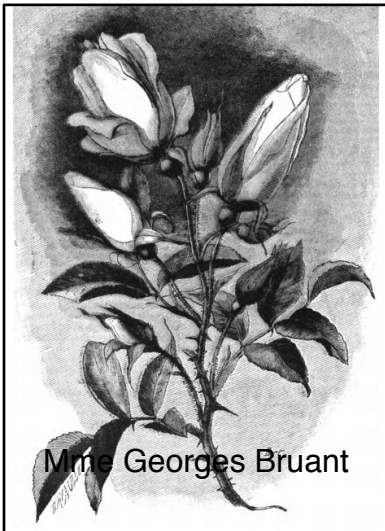
Second to that enterprise, Gravereaux is known for establishing his own garden at L'Hay where by 1900 his collection of roses numbered about 3000. It was France's first public rose garden and as such become a popular tourist stop—which, as a conservatory, it remains today—motivating the citizens to rename their town L'Hay-les-Roses. Using roses from his own garden, he re-established between 1909 and 1911 most of the collection at La Malmaison he had determined had grown there.

Earlier, when the city of Paris in 1905 had planned an exhibition garden to attract visitors to the grounds of Chateau de Bagatelle, the conservator of the city's parks and gardens Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, a friend of Claude Monet, approached

Gravereaux. The rhodophile (rose lover) provided over 1,500 roses. Later, when Bagatelle became a repository for modern roses, and the state, after Gravereaux's death, governed his garden Roseraie de L'Hay, the state returned most of those roses. Gravereaux's garden then became a repository for old roses. Today it is France's largest public rose garden.

However, Jules Gravereaux was also a prolific breeder of roses. Indeed, he introduced more than eighty different roses of his own in about fifteen years. While he bred a few hybrid teas, pernetianas, polyanthas and at least one tea rose ('Maria Starr' of 1913) as well as a few species crosses, the great majority of his roses were hybrid rugosas.

Why *Rosa rugosa*? It proves to be a hardy rose under quite adverse situations, whether in poor dry soil—even seaside sand—salt air, and strong winds. Its toughness makes it nearly immune to disease. It resents pruning and all chemical sprays. Essentially, rugosas ask for very little attention other than admiration. All the above, however, is less true for some of the most modern hybrids. If rugosas have two flaws, it is their eager willingness to send forth suckers and their unwillingness to last when cut.



*Rosa rugosa*'s flaws did not trouble or inhibit Gravereaux's intentions and breeding. With a precedent set by Georges Bruant who introduced the first notable hybrid rugosa "Mme Georges Bruant" in 1887, and with a taste for breeding as early as 1889 (he seems to have participated in breeding Dr.

Muller's 'Thusnelda'), no doubt inspired by Dr. Muller who introduced his 'Conrad Ferdinand Meyer' in 1899, Jules Gravereaux felt motivated to begin his own hybridizing in 1894. By the end of 1899, he had introduced at least three hybrid rugosas: 'Potager du Dauphin', 'Villa Andre', and 'Villa des Tybilles', and at least another three the year after.

In 1901 Albert Viger, French Minister of Agriculture, sent Gravereaux to the Balkans on a mission to find perfumed roses. Having observed acres of *Rosa damascena* var. *trigintipetala*, their harvest and distillation process for rose oil, Gravereaux returned to France determined to help

France develop its own distillation process. He brought back from Bulgaria six different scented roses from the Kazanlik district as well as seven others from various areas, all of which he planted in his own vast garden. He also had on hand his own store of new hybrid rugosas, a rose known for its scent, and was eager to breed yet more. He found his new variety 'Rose a Parfum de L'Hay' to be especially amenable to the process, as



well as the similar rose ‘Roseraie de L’Hay’ developed by his friend Cochet-Cochet who assisted him in the research. However, after four years, the creation of rose essence was found to be not economically feasible by the government.

Undaunted, Gravereaux continued to breed his own roses and to produce his own attar (rose oil) for perfume. He received encouragement from his friend Maurice de Vilmorin of horticultural fame who wrote that *Rosa rugosa* was “a species inferior to none in respect of the size and continuity of the flowers, beauty of the foliage, and hardiness.” Furthermore, between 1901 and 1908, he and Dr. Muller collaborated to produce another four or five roses. At the same time, P.C.M. Cochet-Cochet in his nursery introduced many of Gravereaux’s roses, even while experimenting with rugosas on his own and eventually bringing out seven under his name.

According to the Conard & Jones book *How to Grow Roses* (1916), Jules Gravereaux had “improved the method of extracting the oils, and, furthermore, has proved by extensive experiments that certain perpetual-flowering roses, like Caroline Testout and others, are capable of producing a much larger amount of the essence than the Damask and Centifolia roses heretofore largely used.” The book goes on to describe his method, which, frankly, is not noticeably different from that of the ancient and then-current methods used in Bulgaria, Turkey, Tunisia and other places that produce(d) rose oil.

The Conard & Jones’ claim begs the question, If Gravereaux’s use of remontant roses was superior in quantity of oil produced, why all these 100 years later has that method and usage not been continued? Perhaps the quality was inferior? Perhaps without the cheap labor of third-world countries it is simply too expensive?

Be that as it may, Gravereaux, finding that rugosas hybridized easily, continued breeding with a passion. In 1901

many of the roses he had begun hybridizing in the mid-1890s were ready; he released over forty hybrid rugosas into commerce that year, ‘Mme Turet’—co-bred with Dr. Muller and still sold by one German nursery—and ‘Rose a Parfum de L’Hay’ among them. Thereafter his output decreased but nonetheless continued until his death. Even after his demise, the Guillot nursery released two or three of his roses in 1919.

During those years from 1902 to 1916, other interests also demanded Gravereaux’s time. In 1902 he produced his catalogue *Roses Grown at L’Hay in 1902*. In 1905 he published his book *La Rose dans les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts*. The following year he came out with his *Manual for the Description of Roses* and his work *Perfume Roses and the Manufacture of Rose Oil at the Roseraie de L’Hay from 1901 to 1905*. Then, in 1912, having for three years restored many of Josephine’s defunct flowerbeds, he wrote *La Malmaison: The Roses of Empress Josephine*.

Of the many roses Gravereaux bred, apparently only seven have survived to the present day, six of which are sold by



only one nursery, a different nursery in each case: ‘Maria Starr’ and ‘Mme Tiret’ already mentioned, ‘Mme Constans’ (a white rambler of 1902 grown today by Anne Belovich in Washington state), ‘Mme Rene Gravereaux’ (also 1902), ‘Mme Julien Potin’ (1913), and the richly scented and perhaps the most beautiful ‘Amelie Gravereaux’, a hybrid rugosa of 1903 named for his daughter.

One other rose deserves mention: ‘S. M. I. Abdul Hamid’, apparently still growing at L’Hay. When Robert Cromey observed it there over twenty years ago, he wrote, “Despite being named for Abdul the Damned, the horrible last Sultan of Turkey, it needs an introduction into modern society.” It produces quite huge purple-magenta flowers and grows to five feet, a healthy plant.

Rather widely sold (more abroad than in the USA) is ‘Rose a Parfum de L’Hay’, a plant that had its beginning in 1894 when he produced a seedling by crossing a damask rose with the famous red ‘General Jacqueminot’, a hybrid perpetual, which in turn he crossed with Dr. Muller’s hybrid rugosa ‘Germanica’. The result was this red-violet or crimson rose that remains a memorable tribute to that trait Gravereaux so valued in a flower—its perfume.



Rose a Parfum de L’Hay



Mme Jules Gravereaux

## **ROSES BRED BY JULES GRAVEREAUX**

All roses are hybrid rugosas unless indicated otherwise.

Amelie Graveraux 1903	Mme Bertaux 1901
Chateau de la Juvenie 1901 HRox	Mme Caslot 1901
Daniel Lesuerir 1908	Mme Christo-Christoff 1901
Domaine de Chapuis 1901 HRox	Mme Constans 1902 HWich
George Sand 1909 HP	Mme Dervieu 1901
Georges Cain 1908	Mme Droussant 1901
Jeanne Gautier 1900	Mme Dubost 1901
La France Victorieuse 1919 HT	Mme E. Bonnevery 1901
La Villageoise 1919 HT	Mme Falcimaigne 1901
Laure Graveraux 1901	Mme Grosset 1901
Les Rosati 1906 Pernetiana	Mme Henri Danet 1901
M. Gustave Beinvetu 1906	Mme Henri Graveraux 1902
Madeleine Fillot 1901	Mme Hofele 1901
Madeleine Orosdy 1912 Poly	Mme Julien Potin 1913
Maria Starr 1913 T	Mme Lagrange 1901
Mlle Lemoyne 1901	Mme Langlois 1901
Mme Alvarez del Campo 1900	Mme Leloir 1901
Mme Ancelot 1905	Mme Levasseur 1901
Mme Ballu 1901	Mme Louis Plassard 1901

Mme Lucet 1901	R. pomifera x R. semperflorens 1904
Mme Lucien Villeminot 1904	R. rugosa x lutea 1900
Mme Maurice de Fleury 1901	R. rugosa x noisettiana 1900
Mme Mole-Traffier 1901	R. rugosa x pimpinellifolia 1900
Mme N. Touchet 1901	R. rugosa x pomifera 1900
Mme Narcisse Gravereaux 1901	R. rugosa x R. gallica 1904
Mme Ouviere 19901	R. rugosa x indica 1900
Mme Paul Gravereaux 1901	R. rugosa x rubiginosa 1899
Mme Pierre Lafitte 19907	R. rugosa x rubrifolia 1899
Mme Raymond Poincare >1915 HT	R. rugosa x virginiana sterilis 1899
Mme Rene Gravereaux 1902	R. rugosa x virginiana bland 1899
Mme Ricois 1901	R. rugosa x virginiana f repens 1899
Mme Roiffe 1901	Regina Badet 1908
Mme Ruau 1909 Pernetiana	Rose a Parfum de L'Hay 1901
Mme Savary 19901	S.A.R. Ferdinand I 1901
Mme Tiret 1901	S.M.I. Abdul-Hamid 1901
Mme Verdin 1901	Sou. de Mme Fillot 1901 HRg + HCh
Petite Franacoise 1915 Poly	Souvenir de Mme Campenon 1901
Potager du Dauphin 1899	Suzanne Leloir 1901
R. microphylla x R. rugosa 1901	Villa Andree 1899
R. multiflora simplex rosea vivida 1904	Villa des Tybilles 1899
Poly	

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

***NATIONAL HEIRLOOM EXPO!*** Sonoma County  
Fairgrounds, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd, Santa Rosa, CA  
September 8-10 Visit our Heritage Roses booth

Also

**World Federation of Rose Societies**  
Rose Conference in Beijing China in May 2016.  
Registration will open early next month.

Web address is

<http://www.rosebeijing2016.org/index.php?>

## PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES OF PRUNING

**I**f only I had read what is to follow, long before I was beset with the obsession of roses. Not having read it until recently nor anything as clearly explained about the principles and purposes of pruning, I simply went at it—or primly and fearfully refrained from pruning properly. (A mouthful of peas does one no good unless it is swallowed.) I, your callow editor, have now swallowed the advice that follows.

Excerpted from the book *Beautiful Roses* by John Weathers, 1903:

...[I]f one is to continue to have an abundance of blossom, the plants must be encouraged to produce plenty of vigorous shoots.

As the young shoots, however, spring from other shoots older than themselves, how is the development of fresh young wood to be secured? A closer examination of the stems will show that each one has many joints at various intervals, and it is from these joints that the leaves spring. A still closer examination of the stems will show that right at the base of the leaf stalk, in the axil formed between it and the stem, is a small bud. What is the use of this bud? ... [A]ll new shoots must spring from these buds that seem to be almost hidden by the leaf-stalk in summer.

[S]ap contains valuable food, and arises to feed the young buds. One might naturally think the lower buds would be first supplied with food, as they are nearest the roots. But a glance at the stems will at once show that it is the youngest buds at the top of the stem—that is, those last produced in the previous year's growth—that are first supplied with food. ... First the topmost bud, then the others lower down, one after the other, start into growth in the same way, and if the season is mild, quite long leafy shoots will develop from them in a few weeks. But lower

down the stem it will be seen that the older buds have not yet made a sign of life. They allow most of the nutritious sap to pass them to feed the younger buds above, and if no accident occurs, perhaps they will not start into growth at all during the season. The same process of growth might be continued for several seasons, and still the lower buds will remain in an apparently quiescent or non-active condition. ... And this is what takes place when a plant is allowed to become lanky and straggling in growth. The young and immature buds if left to grow each year will only produce weak spindly growths, and there will be so many of them that it is a matter of impossibility for the roots to pump up enough sap to enable each one to come to a sufficiently ripe stage to give good blooms.

Hence the reason for regulating their growth by pruning and thinning out.

When a plant is pruned there are two main objects in view: first, to regulate the growth, and keep the plant in good shape; second, to induce the development of strong sturdy flowering shoots. ... [T]o secure the two objects aimed at, these young buds at the top must be cut away. Sometimes quite a large number are cut away, leaving only two or three of the older buds at the base, sometimes only a few, leaving perhaps six or a dozen or more buds behind on a stem to carry out the work.

[A]ll Roses must not be pruned alike. In other words, some must have more cut away than others.... A good general rule to bear in mind is this: cut *weak-growing* plants hard back to one or two buds on a shoot, and *strong-growing* plants to perhaps four, six, or a dozen buds according to vigour. The more vigorous a shoot, the less it should be cut; the weaker the shoot, the more severely it should be pruned.

from pp. 76-80 *passim*

## PRUNING THE ONCE-BLOOMING

**Miram Wilkins**

**E**very expert tells us not to prune most roses for the first three years. By that time, the bush will have reached its inborn size and form. From then on, you wildcat it back to accentuate those characteristics.

All rosebushes need to be renewed from time to time.



Woody old canes produce little foliage and bloom.

You can remove them at the base whether own-root or budded, taking out the entire cane.

Again, do this after the rosebush has bloomed; all live canes will produce some roses, but taking out tired ones will cause the bush to send new canes out to balance top and

root system.

All we have been able to do for years is to cut dead wood and dieback. If you can perform only one chore in the garden, at least do this. Dieback will continue down, and the whole cane will die. If down to and into the bud union, you may lost the plant. Next important is to remove infected leaves to keep problems from spreading. Don't water foliage on plants with blackspot; spores will spread. Do water foliage with mildew and rub mildew off. Mildew spores carry their own moisture.

Prune all once-bloomers after they finish blooming unless they will have decorative hips. The species' seed pods will be as

nice as the roses. Do not prune them unless they are taking over. They prefer to grow at will as they do in the wild. If you must cut back, take out whole canes rather than cutting them back.

Gallicas grow in an upright fashion mainly. Prune them back as much as one-third; take out old canes so new ones will emerge. Very little pruning is needed, after bloom time, of course.

Albas, like the damasks, mainly bloom on older wood, so do not over-prune. They are more gangly than the gallicas, so you can take back side branches in addition to the main canes. They can be trained along a fence, bent, so that all nodes sprout and bloom. Prune after bloom.

Damasks can attain some height. You may cut them back, particularly if bottom canes are becoming bare. By shortening canes, you will have a fuller bush, but they do not like to be pruned heavily.

The centifolias, including their mossed sports, are vigorous growers that bloom mainly on older wood. They do not need to be pruned much. If too tall, you can cut back 1/3 and trim side canes back also.

—*Old Roser's Digest* 37, April 1999, p. 9

### **Reader Response**

Margaret Nelson from Washington state writes, adding to last issue's list on suckering roses: "I have had a 'Celeste' Alba planted in a harshly sunny spot next to our driveway for about ten years. Last year it made a runner which I removed and potted. This year there is another runner which I will do the same to as it is a lovely rose. Alba 'Felicite Parmentier' also runs like mad. It took a few years but now I find it showing up about 5-10 feet from the original plant."

## IMAGE CREDITS

Front Cover . . . . painted by M. Hart for *Botanical Register*  
1831

Page 2 . . . . Cass Bernstein. The "Miriam Wilkins" rose  
was discovered by Philip Robinson and propagated by him  
and Gregg Lowery

Pages 4, 21, & 22 . . . . Bill Grant

Page 6 . . . . Richard Wilkins

Page 7 . . . . J. Horace McFarland, *Roses of the World in*  
*Color*, 1947

Pages 9-13 . . . . Darrell g.h. Schramm

Page 15 . . . . Karl King

Page 17 . . . . from *Vick's Magazine*, 1888

Page 18 . . . . painted by Alfred Parsons

Page 20 . . . . Steve Dunatov

Page 26 . . . . Jeri Jennings

Back Cover . . . . R. Zuccarini, *Rosa rugosa* from *Flora*  
*Japonica* 1835

Miriam Wilkins  
The Rose Letter  
May 1975

I can imagine a  
garden with only *one*  
rose, an Old Pink Moss,  
allotted a very special spot  
because of its age, its  
beauty, the memories it  
brings to mind. Sort of  
enshrined.

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