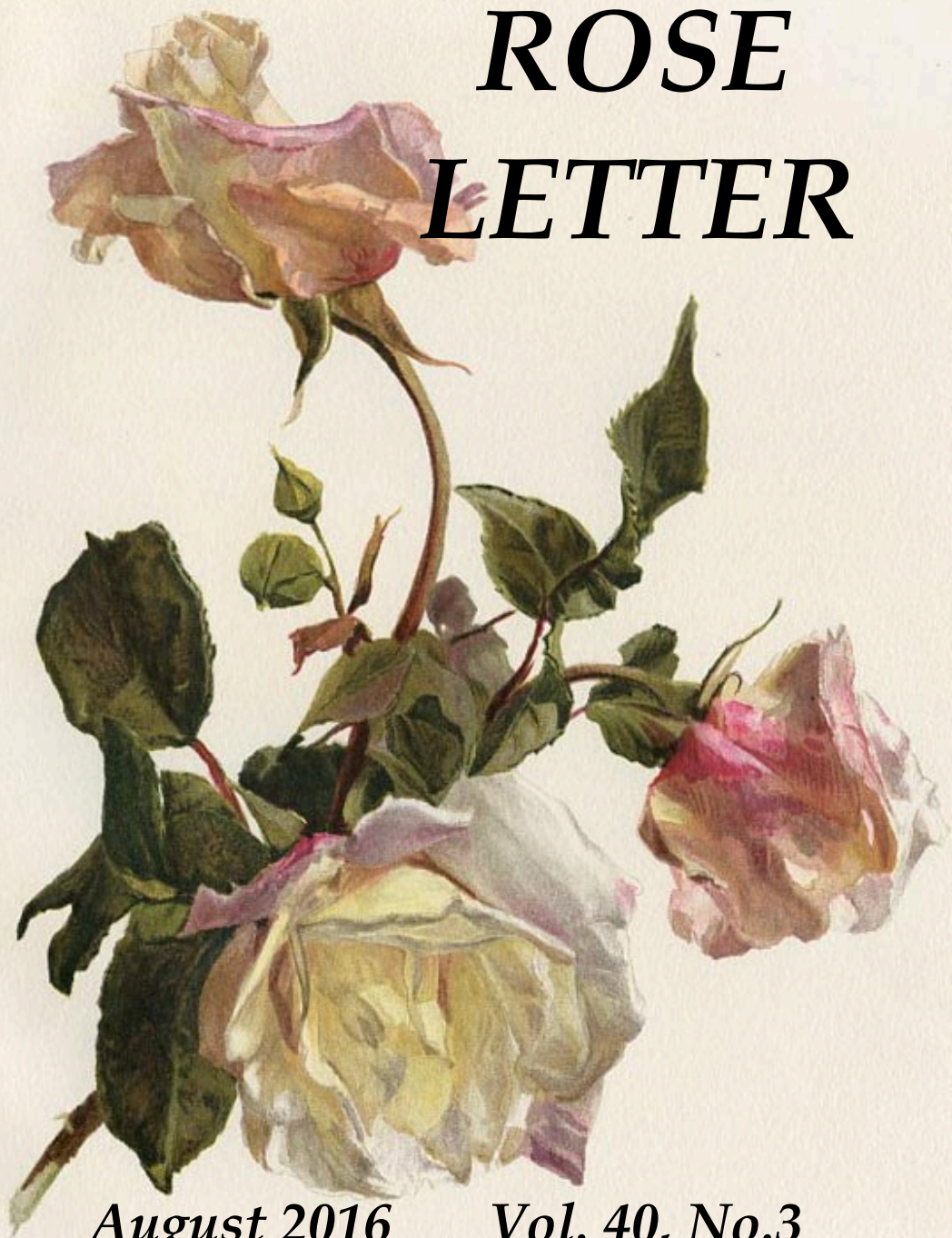


ROSE LETTER



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ROSE COMTESSE VITALI

Rose Letter
The Heritage Roses Group

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Belchite, Spain today, destroyed in the Spanish Civil War 1937

ROSES OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Darrell g.h. Schramm

Nine three-engine airplanes suddenly appeared from the southeast, from Mallorca, over the inland city of Lleida. For many citizens it was too late to seek shelter. Bombs began hailing into the main streets of the old Spanish city and onto one particular secondary school, which seemed to be a chosen target. When the air raid was over, nearly 300 civilians lay dead, including 48 students and several teachers. The date was November 2, 1937, the middle of the Spanish Civil War. Earlier, from August to early September, the town of Bechite in a long battle had been destroyed.

Even earlier, in July of 1936, the city of Lleida had been commandeered by Marxists who were fighting for the Spanish Republic against the forces of General Franco; Lleida (Lerida in Spanish) was a key defense city of the Republican rearguard close to the Aragon front. Four months after that first shelling, the Catalan city was bombed again,

for two hours, sending in nearly 400 deaths and hundreds more casualties. For five days the bombs continued to fall. By the time Franco's forces entered it, they found the city virtually evacuated.

The Second Spanish Republic, having overthrown the tyranny of the monarchy in 1931, had been in effect only five years, but in those years workers had attained rights, women were allowed to vote, illiteracy was being eradicated, and the working class were given opportunity to own land. Into this elected, socially liberal government where the working class owned both equitable and shared power, the Fascist forces had launched their uprising. Catalonia, that area next to southern France from the Costa Brava and Costa Dorada shore to the Pyrenees, had its own recognized autonomous government. This region, the rose capital of Spain, was not about to surrender its freedoms to a military Fascist dictatorship. And so, along with the rest of the Republic, the Catalonians fought. And lost.

The first bombardment of the Catalan coast occurred on October 30, 1936. Franco had asked Hitler and Mussolini for troops and air power; both men were glad to comply. Between Christmas Day of 1938 and January 15, 1939, at least 36 Catalan cities and towns were bombarded—Blanes, Sant Feliu de Guixols, Palamos, La Escala, Girona, Figueres, and a town called Roses (Rosas), among them. The worst victim to this death and destruction was Barcelona, which the Kondor Legion, stationed in Mallorca, attacked thirteen times in three days of March 1938, dropping 44 tons of bombs.

The Spanish Civil war lasted from July 18, 1936 to March 27, 1939. Astonishingly, despite fighting in the streets and countryside, bombs dropping from once peaceful skies, and Franco targeting even women, children, and the elderly fleeing for France, roses continued to be hybridized, grown, and introduced. How could this be?



Children during the war

My Colombian friend Lisa Espinosa said of the violence she lived through in the 1980s and into the first ten years of the 21st century, “You get used to it. You realize your life can’t stop just because people are constantly being kidnapped and bombs are constantly planted in cars or buildings. What’s the use of being alive if you can’t live? So you go on.” So too, according to another source, “The initial shock of the bombardments became an everyday event. Little by little, people assimilated the war into their lives.” Shopkeepers stayed open for business, children went to school, theatres gave plays and concerts.

The famous viola musician Pablo Casals gave a charity concert in 1938, in which he asked for help from the United States. Sadly, our government, like that of England, essentially ignored the war. For that reason, citizens from different countries formed various international brigades to fight on the side of the beleaguered Spanish Republic. Another musician who performed in Barcelona during the war was the great Catalan violinist Francisco Costa.

This year, 2016, marks eighty years since the Spanish Civil War began.



When Cebria Camprubi Nadal (1889-1972) introduced a hybrid tea in 1936, he named it ‘Violinista Costa.’ Francisco Costa (1891-1959), who taught at Barcelona’s Conservatory of Music, was so enormously popular

that one admiring critic wrote that the public was addicted to his art. According to the renowned composer Joaquin Turina, Costa was the most inspired and Bohemian of Spanish violinists. Naming the rose for him in a dangerous and difficult time was surely Camprubi’s way of showing both praise and gratitude for the gift of music.

The rose is a large one, growing on a very stalwart bush to about

three feet high. The blossom's color varies somewhat, sometimes vermillion with outer petals rose-pink, sometimes rose-pink or vermillion with orange highlights, sometimes even orange-gold with pink outer petals—all the colors of fiery flamenco. It remains one of Camprubi's most well known roses.

Blas Munnè, whose interest in roses had awakened in the late 19th century, also offered his wartime compatriots a new rose in 1936. He called it 'Aurora Borealis'. A hybrid tea the color of honey blended with red, it seems to have been his last rose. He died in 1941. But his two sons continued the family enterprise.

Two other roses emerged in 1936, both bred by Josep Padrosa (1875-1946): 'Señorita Pi', a white rose "like a gardenia," and 'Señorita Rosa Costa', a pinkish rambler. He seems to have kept inadequate records, for at least a dozen of his roses have not been identified by variety. Of interest, however, is Pedrosa's old-fashioned method of propagation: he preferred springtime bee pollination in hybridizing his roses. In 1937 he put out a red rose called 'Verano' (Summer). It was one of only four Spanish roses introduced that precarious year.

Another was the hybrid tea 'Alezane', a reddish-brown and apricot-colored rose developed by Llorenç Pahissa (1890-1940). During that horrific year of 1938, with bombs thundering onto Barcelona eight miles away, Pahissa, in honor of his grievously torn country, produced a dark red, velvety hybrid tea that he named 'Hispania'. Though he was an amateur, he won the Gold Medal at Bagatelle for his rose 'Lorenzo Pahissa' in 1941. Unfortunately, he died before learning of his international award.

The most famous of Spain's rose breeders was Pedro Dot (1885-1976), who bred more new roses than all other Spanish hybridists combined—at least 175. Like Camprubi, Munnè, Pedrosa, and Pahissa, he was from Sant Feliu de Llobregat, a coastal town on the river Llobregat a few miles south of Barcelona. During the war, the





town changed its name to Rosas de Llobregat. Guns and roses. Pedro Dot was inventive and experimental, often going beyond the usual method of merely crossing a hybrid tea with another hybrid tea. He obtained crosses using *Rosa chinensis minima* (Lawrenciana), *R. moyesii*, *R. spinosissima*, moss roses, Pernetianas and others.

In all, Dot released fourteen roses during the Spanish Civil War, five in 1936, one of which is still available commercially, but two of which concern us here.

'Lleida' was named, of course, for that ancient, often assaulted Catalan city, where the anti-clerical Marxists had at the start of the war put before the firing squad the city's priests.

'Lleida' was a hybrid tea but is either lost or extinct. The other, 'Girona', a fragrant hybrid tea of a soft red (pink?) and yellow blend, is still sold. The Province of Girona suffered numerous air raids; even civilians fleeing on the roads toward the border were attacked and massacred. Near the end of the war, the city of Girona itself was bombed six times.



Only two roses by the hand of Pedro Dot were developed in 1937. 'Madame Fojo', named for the wife or mother of the rose breeder Eugenio Fojo, is no longer sold anywhere, and 'Radio', a sport of

‘Condesa de Sastago’, pinkish yellow with rose-colored freckles and stripes, is still sold by a few nurseries in Japan.

In 1938 Dot released seven roses: ‘Golden Sastago’, another sport of the Condesa; ‘Ibiza’ and ‘Mallorca’, named for the Balearic Islands, which the Republican armies had first held until defeated by



Mussolini’s Italian air force in September 1936; ‘Rafaela de Peña’, a pure orange polyantha; ‘Ramon Bach’, an orange and reddish-gold hybrid tea named for a Catalan patriot who was killed; ‘Senateur Potie’, a yellow-orange hybrid tea named for one of the international supporters of the Spanish Republic; and ‘Snow White’, a fragrant hybrid tea no doubt named to commemorate Walt Disney’s first feature-length, animated film released the previous year. Though most of these roses were still on the market fifty years later, today only the white hybrid tea ‘Ibiza’ was available, but just barely, sold worldwide only by Vintage Gardens until its close June 30, 2013. I’m glad I grow it.

Many of Dot’s roses were rather promptly introduced to the United States. This situation was made possible by funds from a few American rosarians and the Conard-Pyle Company, which presented many of his roses to the public. While Dot continued his research and hybridizing, his sons Simo and Mari fought at the front. The city of Dot’s birth and livelihood, Sant Feliu de Llobregat, known as The City of Roses, endured attacks as well. Its ancient church of Sant Llorenç, built in 1524, was destroyed. Later, its undeterred citizens rebuilt it.

Barcelona fell to the Fascists on January 26, 1939, and the long besieged Madrid fell three months later. Catalonia, along with the rest of Spain, was now under the dictatorship of General Franco and the Fascists.



International Brigade Cemetery, Fuencarril, Spain

Pedro Dot and Cebria Camprubi were instrumental in setting up the first rose exhibition in Spain in 1928. The Civil War put the shows on hold until 1949. Today the rose show is held regularly on Saint George's day (April 23), when men present a rose to their beloved wives, mothers, sweethearts, or other, and the women in turn present the men with a book. Over six million roses are usually sold in Catalonia on that day. Sant Feliu de Llobregat has also founded the Dot and Camprubi Rose Garden, growing 20,000 roses of over 400 varieties. In 2010 the town exuberantly celebrated the 125th anniversary of Pedro Dot's birth. Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini and all their forces could not destroy the love of the rose.

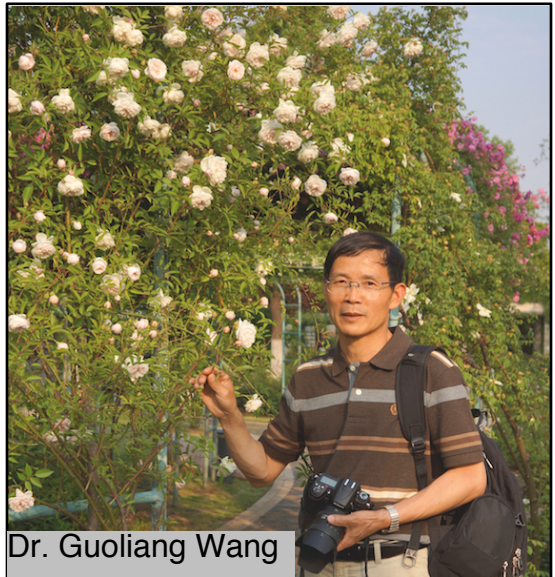


Chinese-American Roses: How Chinese Species Roses and Ancient Cultivars Transformed the Roses and Gardens of America

Gregg Lowery

The human attraction to color is surely the primary reason we grow roses. However, History is often the compelling reason why we continue to grow roses, and the history of rose breeding, particularly the efforts of those breeders who have sought solutions to significant problems, compels our interest. Our own fascination with roses that have derived from the place we live in can inspire us even more. But perhaps the most moving experience that we may have is to discover roses from far distant places and to recognize the connection to roses that is shared by human beings around the globe, and which unites us all as people.

After centuries of ignorance, Westerners have learned many things in recent years about the roses of China. Dr. Wang Gouliang has researched and catalogued a great many roses that date back some 700 years to the Soong Dynasty and beyond. He has surprised and delighted the world with his careful study recently published in his book *Old Roses in China*. In America, an extensive genetic study of Tea and China roses was performed at Texas A & M College by Valerie Soules, showing definitively the



connection between wild roses of China and the cultivated forms that came to Europe in the 18th century. And, worldwide, with each passing year we discover new evidence that the so-called Four Stud China Roses were just a few of many rose hybrids that reached Europe from China over the past thousand years.

For all of these advances in our knowledge I am grateful. My own searches for the answers to questions about the old roses have been rewarded by this progress. I feel deeply indebted to Dr. Wang for sharing his 30 years of study of the old roses of China; it is welcomed around the world by those who wish to know the full history of garden roses.

In the West the understanding of the story of garden roses—from wild plants to the modern hybrids of the 20th century—has been simplified and misunderstood for decades. The story of the four stud China roses continues to confuse those who wish to learn more, and it continues to deny the significance of the development of the rose 1,000 years ago and longer by the Chinese.

I am neither a scientist nor a scholar, but I have spent the past 30 years tending a very large collection of old roses, including China and Tea roses, observing them and reading the literature of their past. What I hope to do here is to offer a different perspective on those roses, and an appreciation for the fundamental way that roses native to and hybridized in China altered our roses and our gardens.

The First Step Toward 'Chinese-American' Roses

At the time that the United States declared its independence from England, in the late 18th century, its European inhabitants were still discovering a new and strange continent. New plants arrived each day to cities like New York, Philadelphia and Charleston. They excited the imagination of botanists, horticulturists and gardeners. Many of these plants were American native species,

but many arrived on ships returning to Europe from Japan and China. And the wealth of Chinese plants that had been brought to England were propagated and sold by English nurseries to the American colonists.

One city in America played a significant role in the history of roses: Charleston, South Carolina. Located in the southeastern corner of the continent, Charleston enjoys a nearly sub-tropical climate with a very long growing season. It sits at the confluence of two large rivers where they empty into a gentle harbor and the Atlantic Ocean.

When the British colonies banded together to form a new, independent country, a divide between North and South had already become well established. The warm, southern colonies from Virginia through Georgia had adopted the Plantation economy, with large landholdings maintained by slaves, and wealthy owners able to live in a style similar to the aristocracy of England. Large and elaborate gardens were common; rare plants from the Orient were sought after. Many of the plants brought from China by English botanists stopped first in Charleston, on their journey home through Bermuda to Britain. The earliest plantings of camellias and roses in America (not to mention of the agricultural plants, rice and tea) were here, in the South.

These differences between the two Americas were significant for plants, for horticulture and for garden building in America. Most of the plants from China that were introduced to the young United States thrived in the South but not in the North. The significance for roses brought from China was great. From Virginia to Georgia, the China and Tea roses grew outdoors and flourished. Even in France where breeders were raising and naming seedlings from them, they were not reliably hardy except in the south of France. Most were grown in glass houses in France, England, and in the northern states of the USA.

In Charleston, the most favored port of the South, the first

American horticultural society was established. It became an important meeting place for plantation owners and merchants alike. John Champneys, an Englishman born in Charleston, and Philippe Noisette, the son of a French nursery family, were each deeply engaged in the Charleston Horticultural Society.



Old Blush

In the first decade of the 19th century, John Champneys raised a rose seedling from a cross between 'Old Blush' and *Rosa moschata*. Both roses were by 1800 widely grown in the US. *Rosa moschata*, the "Musk

Rose" of medieval European herbals, survived the northern winters along the seaboard, and was an old and familiar rose to English colonists. Champneys' seedling, known as 'Champneys' Pink Cluster', created a great stir of excitement among plant lovers and nursery people in the young country.

Champneys shared both rooted plants and seed collected from his pink cluster rose, a plant that bloomed with the regularity of the monthly China rose, but in very large clusters of small fragrant flowers, similar to those of *Rosa moschata*.



Champneys Pink Cluster

Philippe Noisette received a seedling plant from Champneys, or perhaps seed that Champneys had bred—the details are unclear

from surviving documents. That rose Noisette sent to his family in France where it took on the name 'Blush Noisette', and thereafter this new group of roses, raised in America, came to be known as the 'Noisette Roses'.



Overlooked Details of the Early Noisette Roses

The Musk Rose is believed by most to be a hybrid of unknown parentage and not a wild species—no natural populations are known to exist in the world. Its long history

as a rose cultivated for fragrance oils in Iran, and at one time all the way into the Mediterranean, suggests the possibility that its wild parent roses may have included species from parts of China. The Musk Rose is one of three parents of the Damask rose, as genetic research in Japan has shown. [*Editor's note: The Musk Rose, as I wrote in our last issue, may be one of the parents as the genetic research seems to have shown.*]

Much has yet to be learned about the origins of both the Damask and the Musk roses. Both played very important parts in the development of roses in Europe. How very surprising it would be if the first American rose seedling, 'Champneys' Pink Cluster,' turned out to have been the mating of two ancient roses from China!

The impact that Champneys' new rose had in American horticulture was great. By 1846 other named introductions of this early, small-flowered Noisette rose included more than 70 varieties in the catalogue of one nurseryman, William Robert Prince of New York. These fragrant, hardy roses were recognized

as ideal parents to combine with wild American species roses to broaden the selection of garden roses for northern climates.

'Champneys Pink Cluster' and 'Blush Noisette' took European nurseries by storm as well. What the early Noisettes did to rose breeding in France is too often downplayed in modern writings. We will visit this later in the story, but suffice to say here that 'Champneys Pink Cluster' laid in the hands of breeders the very thing that they were trying to create, a reblooming rose of sufficient hardiness to survive the climates of much of Western Europe.

***Rosa setigera* and the First Chinese-American Hybrid Roses**



A most intriguing wild rose from North America, *Rosa setigera* was first observed and described by the French Botanist, André Michaux, from plants found in South Carolina in the late 18th century. Known also as the Bramble Rose, or Blackberry Rose, and named *Rosa rubifolia*, by the later botanist, Robert Brown, it was distributed over a very wide region of North America from the Great Lakes region southward to Louisiana,

the Texas, and the Carolinas, and through the northeastern states into New England.

Shortly after Michaux's publication of *Rosa setigera* appeared in 1803, the wild rose and many unusual forms began to be grown in gardens and soon after became the subjects of curiosity by 'florists' of the day, those we would today call nurserymen and plant breeders. The rose held the promise of many valuable qualities as a plant for gardens. Its common name, the Climbing Prairie Rose, explains its initial attraction to breeders who saw an opportunity to breed cold-hardy, disease resistant climbing roses.

It was the early Noisette roses, newly introduced, that were used to breed with *R. setigera*. Noisettes were grown and sold by William Prince's nursery on Long Island, and at the Baltimore, Maryland, nursery of Samuel Feast and his brother John. The Feasts grew many roses, among them forms of *Rosa setigera*. And it was Feast who first experimented with combining the good qualities of that hardy wild rose and the Champneys Noisettes.

At the same time, in Washington D.C., an amateur flower breeder, Joshua Pierce followed a similar line of experimentation which led to a similar, but smaller group of hybrids, some of which were introduced by Samuel Feast. In New York, William Prince may have been creating additional hybrids of *Setigera*, although none of his introductions appear to have survived for long.

Of some twenty *Setigera* hybrids introduced by Feast and Pierce, only a tiny handful have survived in commerce or in notable rose collections today. That they have survived at all is remarkable, and to some degree a testament to their cold hardiness.

'Baltimore Belle' is perhaps the most widely grown of these few survivors. It is one of the most prolific and beautiful old roses I grow. The small flowers of cupped form and palest blush

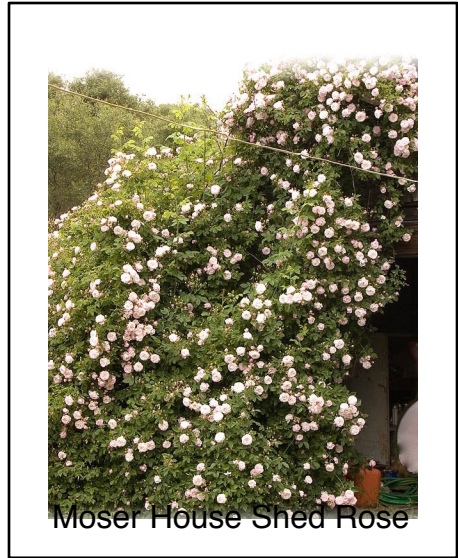


coloring perfume the air with their fragrance. They appear in large clusters on a long-caned plant that is ideal for covering an

arbor or fence. The old Noisette parentage is very evident in this variety, from the typical Musk Rose clustering of the small blooms, to the pale, apple-green tint of the foliage. It is the rose's propensity to re-bloom in the Autumn in climates with long growing seasons that marks it as a Noisette seedling.

At long last the genes of an ancient Chinese garden rose were joined with those of a wild American rose. Of Feast's

hybrids two survive; 'Baltimore Belle' and 'Queen of the Prairies', and a third, discovered in two locations in California appears to be one of the lost Noisette-Setigera crosses, though which one, we may never know. No known likenesses of the early Setigera-Noisettes were ever painted, and the descriptions in catalogues are brief and vague. It is known by two mystery names, "Arcata Pink Globe" and "Moser House Shed Rose".



The 'Hybrid Chinese' Roses of Europe

It was not by chance that the early 19th century in Europe saw the first great increase of new hybrids of roses. The era of industrialization in Europe was well underway by the late 18th century, and with it followed an increase of population, urbanization of that population, and the growth of a middle class of merchants and managers with the means to create ornamental gardens. Gardens of roses had become a popular notion, made widely known by Josephine Bonaparte's garden at Malmaison.

Nurseries in France, in particular, began raising seed taken from the Chinese roses that were grown side by side with old once-blooming European roses, as well as alongside the Autumn

Damask rose, its descendants the Damask Perpetuals, and the early Bourbon roses. These seedlings came to be considered a new race—showing traits of the China rose overlaid on the European rose style—known as the Hybrid Chinese roses or Hybrid Chinas.

It is often said that European rose breeders at the time wanted to recreate new roses that looked like old European types (Gallicas, Centifolias, etc.) but bloomed repeatedly like the roses from China. Yet the breeders themselves left behind little in writing to indicate what indeed were their objectives. It is equally likely that the styles of the roses from China appealed greatly to breeders. And it may well be that they simply hoped to find seedlings with the China flower form that had the hardiness of the Gallicas.

Conventional wisdom says that the Hybrid Chinas were crosses between various of the four stud roses from China and the once-blooming Gallicas, Centifolias, and Damasks. Nineteenth century authors like William Paul of England suggest that most of those crosses resulted in roses that look like Gallicas, Centifolias and Damasks, bloomed once like those parents and were sterile, until at last one or two proved fertile, most notably 'William Jesse', a rose with a strong affinity to the Damasks.

What is often overlooked in histories of this era is the fact that these new roses, the Hybrid Chinas, swelled the ranks of the traditional old European rose classes. Relatively small numbers of varieties of Gallicas, Damasks and Centifolias existed prior to 1800. Today it is only with careful observation that a Hybrid China can be distinguished from the much smaller groups of the true old European roses.

The fact is that most of the progress toward re-blooming roses derived from the China roses came via old hybrids that were already remontant. One group known in Europe for more than 1000 years was the Damask rose that bloomed in the spring and

the autumn, known under various names, commonly the Autumn Damask. The Autumn Damask in turn had produced a very old hybrid, or so it is believed, the Bourbon rose 'Rose de l'Isle de Bourbon', in crossing, perhaps unaided, with 'Old Blush', the monthly China rose. There is still great mystery surrounding the original Bourbon rose which may have come from India, and perhaps before that from China. 'Gloire des Rosomanes' a Bengali-Bourbon that strongly displays the influence of a red China rose parent, is simply a mystery, and perhaps was derived from a Chinese hybrid obtained in India.



Supposedly 'bred' by Plantier in 1825 and introduced by the great French rose breeder, Jean-Pierre Vibert, it is fully remontant, and reasonably cold-hardy. It is the ancestor of more than 12,000 rose hybrids, according to the HelpMeFindRoses online database.

What is, in fact, difficult to see is any strong connection between the Gallica roses and the Hybrid Perpetuals and Hybrid Teas of the latter half of the 19th century; the assumption of that connection seems to be taken for granted by many authors today. The Hybrid Perpetuals, in fact, appear to be the result of re-blooming Damasks and everblooming Bourbon roses, crossed again with the monthly China roses, red and pink. In fact, there was so much China and Tea rose blood in these 19th century roses that it begins to look very much as though modern roses are not the equal blending of European and Chinese roses, but simply Chinese roses, altered somewhat by the Autumn Damask rose—a rose parented by *R. gallica*, *R. fedtchenoana* and the ancient hybrid *Rosa moschata*. Only one quarter of the Damask ancestry is found in *R. gallica*.

The Noisette Rose in Europe

No group of roses underscore this concept of the replacement of old European roses with Chinese roses more than the Noisettes. Traditionally the story that is told is that the early Noisettes arrived in France to be promptly 'improved' by the addition of Tea roses to their makeup in France. Thus the first group of remontant climbing roses came to be—a beguiling and beautiful group of flowers in warm tones of peach, yellow, gold and citron, large of bloom and fragrant.

All of this is true, but the point perhaps is missed: this transformation of the old Noisettes simply made them even more Chinese in their makeup, and a small amount of hardiness was added to their genetics. The Tea-Noisettes were not very cold hardy, and were the epitome of the greenhouse rose of the wealthy European aristocracy.

The real story of the Noisette rose in Europe is fascinating, and reveals the degree to which it genetically permeates the world of roses. Arriving in France as they did, between 1810 and 1817, 'Champneys Pink Cluster' and 'Blush Noisette' were sought by most breeders of roses and used in all of the various efforts with the groups of roses being hybridized. Certainly crosses with Tea roses were exciting but other roses that were altered by the Noisettes are equally fascinating.

Many Hybrid Chinas have white or blush colored flowers. There are even a number of Gallicas and Centifolias with white blooms which defy the true colors normally found in



Mme Plantier

those groups; reds, pinks, purples and maroons. These are, in fact, not purely of those classes but hybrids with Noisette roses in which most of the physical traits of the plants reflect the old European class. Perhaps one of the most notable example is 'Mme. Plantier', a Hybrid China and so recognized in its time, with pure white flowers, formed like perfect small Gallica roses. Others called Gallica roses like 'l'Ingenué' and 'Mme. Zoetmans', or Damask roses like 'Mme. Hardy', should be considered Hybrid Chinas in which the old Noisette rose has played a part.

Nowhere, however, have the old Noisette roses had a greater impact than in the Bourbon rose family where they parented many white varieties and led the movement toward the earliest Hybrid Tea roses in shades of white. The Bourbons , 'Comtesse de Rocquigny', 'Mlle. Blanche Lafitte', and even the pale blush blooms of 'Souvenir de la Malmaison', all hail back to the old Noisettes. And the small amount of progress in the 19th century toward creating white Hybrid Perpetuals are due to those advances in the whites of the Bourbon roses. To my way of thinking, the Bourbons so affected by the old Noisette strain are the first Hybrid Tea roses.

A New World of Roses

The great explosion of new rose hybrids in Europe arrived on the shores of America throughout the 19th century. From that point forward the influence of the ancient hybrids from China guide the course of rose breeding. Roses are designed as flower factories to deliver the color that humans cannot resist. Small inroads are made with the admixture of wild roses for their cold hardiness or floral coloring—the arrival of strong yellow and orange pigments. But on the whole, little changes for the next century. They are plants adapted to warm-temperate climates, unable to withstand harsh winters. And over the same century human populations have shifted more and more into those 'comfortable' climates around the world.

The roses of China have become the roses of the world. But China with its impressive number and variety of rose species



may still hold the answer to improvements to come. *Rosa gigantea*'s potential to extend the rose's range into the tropics—the work of India's Viru Viraraghavan—is most exciting. One thing is certain, we have much to learn from the development of the rose at the hands of Chinese gardeners over a very long history. And we Westerners have still a journey to travel to rewrite our own history of the rose and to understand the global context of even our own native plants.

In my view, preservation should be our primary goal. The habitats of wild roses should not be allowed to be destroyed. Our living history of plants, roses from 2000 years ago and more, roses from 100 years ago, is a history we should treasure and protect. Genetic material is priceless and not easy to preserve in a bottle. Better we should preserve it alive in the gardens we build and the wilderness we protect for as long as we are able.

We welcome letters to the editor and
feedback on articles.

WHY MOSS ROSES

Ivy Bodin

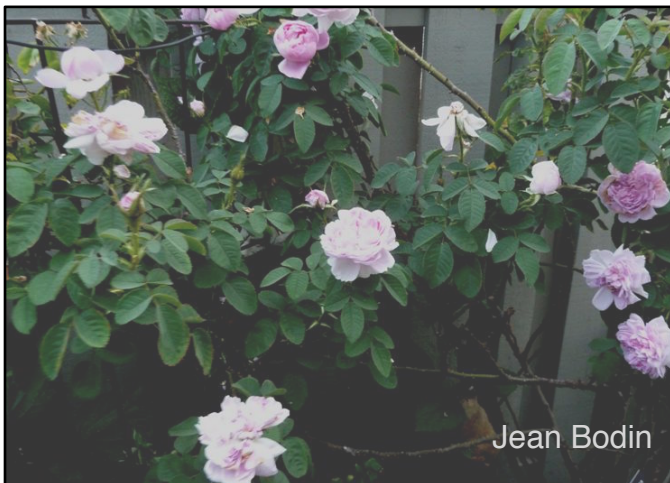
I was lured into the Moss family of heritage roses when I became interested in exploring the mossiness of the buds I had read about. I tried one, was thrilled with it and ordered another:



William Lobb

‘William Lobb’ (Old Velvet Moss). This one is spectacular with lovely bloom form and shades of purple and lilac and blue. The mossy buds are quite a show, and the bloom very interesting as it fades through shades of color. Besides, it has a nice fragrance. The buds with their moss also have that special resinous fragrance. It is a very productive bush although gangly, throwing out long, sidewise canes.

My second Moss family rose is ‘Jean Bodin’, unbelievably stocked by [the former] Vintage Roses upon special order. It’s my



Jean Bodin

family name and so I ordered two. One lived and is a very large bush to this day. It makes a smallish, lovely, light pink bloom that is very full of petals. The bush is covered with blooms for about six weeks.. The bloom is nicely

fragrant and so are the resinous buds.

I might add that both bushes are currently growing in pots, where I had planted them over a dozen years ago, and thriving. They are two of my three remaining mosses, with ‘Quatre Saison Blanc Mousseux’ being the other. I am so proud to be able to grow these beauties. How magnificent are these roses!

Ivy Bodin of Vista, CA, belongs to the Heritage Rose Foundation and the San Diego Heritage Rose Society.

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Page 5	Cliff Orent
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NEW OLD ROSE PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Cliff Orent



The California Coastal Rose Society members, based near San Diego and known for their annual auction of rare roses, have made the decision to completely revamp its entire reason for being. They will no longer have their traditional rose show, nor will they follow the cookie cutter mold for how rose societies should be run in this country.

Instead, they have chosen to dedicate themselves to the preservation of rare roses and are

embarking on an incredibly ambitious program that will include a multi-pronged attack to approach this enormous issue on many fronts.

This tremendous and well coordinated effort is being led by John Bagnasco and Joel Ross, and if the number of individuals who have become seriously interested in the early months are any indication, they should hopefully be able to have a significant impact on this critically important issue.

With John and Joel at the helm, the effort is being structured to include committee chairs and sub-committee chairs who will oversee a wide variety of functions. Propagation efforts are already underway, building upon their experience with their annual rare rose auction. There are horticultural committees, initially including found roses and OGRs, with the expectation that there will at some point be a breakdown into smaller groups, such as Polyanthas, Hybrid Perpetuals, etc. The Modern Roses group will be broken into classes and specific breeders,

and early discussion has focused on Miniatures, Hybrid Teas, Floribundas and the roses of Ralph Moore and Sam McGredy. The procurement committee will coordinate the propagation of cuttings for budding and will work with growers to receive plants for the auction.

Ping Lim and I have been asked to jointly chair the committee that will be responsible for importing roses, arranging for them to be held in quarantine, etc. They knew that this would be too tempting for me to turn down, as it will allow me to continue to do something that I thoroughly enjoyed for several years -- locating/identifying candidates to be imported -- but without the personal financial commitment that ultimately forced me to discontinue my efforts.

My overriding concern was that while I applauded their enthusiasm, I feared that their goals were overly ambitious. However, from what I've seen to date I truly believe that they are structuring their efforts in such a way that they are poised to have a major impact with their "Save the Roses" campaign.



Cliff Orent once owned EuroDesert Roses, a very large nursery of many unusual and imported roses near Palm Springs.

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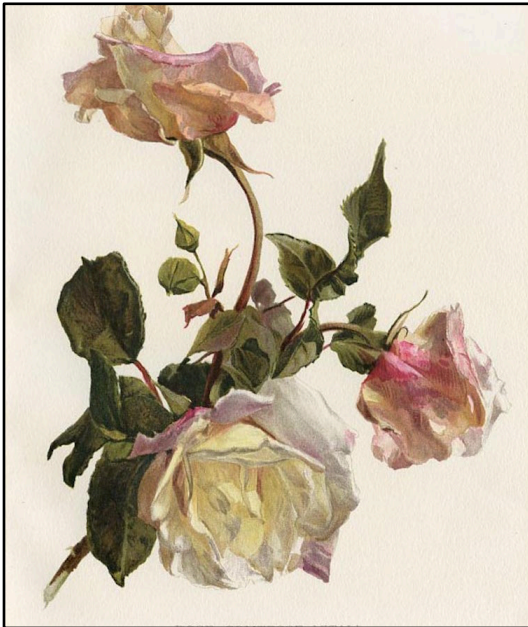
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THE ROSE ON OUR COVER

The rose on our cover, 'Comtesse Vitali', is named for Marguerite nee de Cholet who at age twenty in 1887 married the Count Georges Vitali. He was perhaps the most important European railroad builder of his time, director of the large French Railway Co., and builder also of railroads in Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey, the latter built with some financing by the Deutsches Bank, which had approached him to do so; Vitali built the first section of the Anatolian Railroad between 1889 and 1892. Comtesse Vitali, on the other hand, collected notable canvases by such famous painters as Gauguin and Matisse. The couple spent part of the year at their Villa Fiorentina on the Riviera. They owned a few other chateaus as well.

Unfortunately, this lovely semi-double rose, bred by Nabonnand in 1899, is hidden in some private garden or forgotten plot or is lost entirely. The autumn 2013 issue of *Roses anciennes en France* mentions the 'Comtesse Vitali' in



an article about Nabonnand's roses; is it still to be found growing in France? Its buds were said to be a blend of saffron and carmine, opening to cream with various shadings of carmine. It is rarely referred to—not even mentioned in Brent Dickerson's compilations of old roses. It was listed in *Les Roses Cultivées à L'Hay* in 1902, in William Paul's tenth edition of *The Rose Garden* of 1903, and in Simon and Cochet's *Nomenclature* of 1906. The watercolor of this rose was painted in 1904. Though it spoke somewhat flatteringly of 'Comtesse Vitali', England's *Gardening Illustrated* periodical of

August 19, 1905, did not do much to promote the rose with the lukewarm words "Although it has made very few friends in this country, it is, nevertheless, a desirable kind." We, however, are sorry the rose seems to have vanished.

ANOTHER ROSE FUNGUS

Darrell g.h. Schramm

One fungus acquired by certain roses that has not received much attention is Cercospora Leaf Spot. Caused by the *Cercospora rosicola* fungus, it affects numerous cultivar shrubs and ground cover roses across most of the country. The lack of detailed study of this parasite may be due to its confusion with Black Spot: both fungi exhibit dark spots which cause defoliation of rose plants severely infected. Furthermore, sprays—whether organic or not—that control Black Spot or Powdery Mildew also seem to keep Cercospora in check.

But the fungus has been extant for more than 130 years, first described in Florida on rose foliage in 1885. The infection generally begins near the bottom of the rose bush, gradually progressing upward toward new growth. Though contaminating primarily the leaves, these dark lesions can also be transmitted to stems, pedicels, bracts, and hips. It seems to be a summer phenomenon, occurring in late June and July.

Candida, similar to spores, erupt through the leaf surface. Usually they show themselves as circular dark spots—unlike Black Spot whose edges are feathery or blurred. The marks of Cercospora Leaf Spot typically appear as tiny purplish spots two to four millimeters in size, though, depending on the species or cultivar, they can be as large as ten millimeters. As the disease progresses, the spots tend to enlarge. In these older lesions, the center of the spot turns tan or grey, known to plant pathologists as a “frog eye,” an indication that the cells are dying.

Research thus far indicates that where Black Spot and Powdery Mildew are controlled, Cercospora Leaf Spot is not problematic. The disease is, however, rampant in the Deep South. It was particularly severe in Louisiana in 2013. One study in Alabama tested 25 rose cultivars for both Black Spot and Cercospora, finding that only two roses, ‘The Fairy’ and ‘Petite Pink Scotch’, revealed severe and persistent signs of Cercospora. ‘Fuchsia Meidiland’ was also susceptible in both Alabama and North Carolina.

Lest rose growers in western USA become complacent, they should be aware Cercospora Leaf Spot occurs there as well, especially

where the weather is warm and humid. In my own Northern California garden in the North Bay Area, I have observed it for the first time. Among my own some 200 rose varieties, the following modern roses display the dark freckles and frog eyes of the disease: ‘Bonica’, ‘Della Balfour’, ‘Eden/Pierre de Ronsard’, ‘climbing Iceberg’, ‘Kateryna’, ‘Sally Holmes’, ‘Sparrieshoop’, ‘Tamora’, and ‘White Meidiland’.

Among my heritage roses, those exhibiting frog eye lesions are ‘Baronne Prevost’, ‘Baptiste Lafaye’, ‘Blush Noisette’, ‘Charles Lawson’, ‘Etoile de Hollande’, ‘Gruss an Coburg’, ‘Ulrich Brunner’, ‘Sombreuil’, and the mystery rose “Old Town Novato.” Then, sad to say, there is ‘Dr. Huey’, often a rootstock for other roses, now a freckled pillar.

Research thus far has concluded that four chemical brands of applications can greatly reduce the disease to only a few lower spotted leaves: Compass™ and Daconil Ultrex® when used weekly, and Eagle® and Heritage® when applied bi-monthly. A few others offer somewhat less control. Annually rotating the chemical used would be wise in order to lessen the chance of disease resistance.

Biological management suggests providing good air circulation so that the leaves can dry swiftly, and a thinning of interior branches to enhance air flow. Defoliating the lower leaves as soon as the purplish spots appear is also helpful. During warm, damp weather, the candida can be splashed from leaf to leaf, promoting new infections; therefore, it is best to irrigate infected plants with a drip system or a soaker hose.



FROM OUR READERS

Just received my first newsletter - looking forward to reading all of it. I must be one of the rare folks who also grows 'Nigrette'. Just captured this photo weeks ago. I get some black spot on it, but it is gradually building up. I made a few crosses of it with some healthier/more vigorous cultivars in hopes of getting seedlings with near black color.



—*Stephen Hoy, GA (Stephen Hoy edits the online newsletter Singularly Beautiful Roses.)*

I appreciated the “Damask Roses: The Untold Story” immensely. ... After reading Connie Hilker’s article in the last *Rose Letter*, I wish our ‘New Dawn’ were the original ‘Dr. W. van Fleet’. It may be repeat-blooming but is difficult to maintain and not “a graceful presence.”

—*Carolyn Bennett, CA (Carolyn Bennet volunteers beyond the call of duty at the Woodland Library Rose Garden.)*

Enjoyed the latest issue and found most interesting the article on 'Nigrette' not just because I do grow it (obtained it from Rosemary Sawyer) but because the story about Mrs. Charles Derby - she was one of the early leaders of the Santa Clara County Rose Society and was instrumental in the founding of the San Jose Municipal Rose Garden. Thanks!

—*Beverly Rose Hopper, CA (Beverly Rose Hopper led the rehab of the San Jose Municipal Rose Garden and is now spearheading the salvation of the Plymouth Cemetery roses, including the mystery rose "Pulich Children.")*

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