

# The Old Texas Rose



Number 3

[www.texasroserustlers.com](http://www.texasroserustlers.com)

Summer 2009

## **Summer Rookie Meeting** **July 11, 2009** **Mercer Arboretum** **22306 Aldine Westfield Road** **Houston, TX**

This year is flying by and soon it will be time for our annual Rookie Rustler meeting at Mercer Arboretum. Mercer Arboretum is located north of Houston. This is always a fun meeting for members old and new alike.

The schedule for the meeting will be as follows:

**10:00 Sign-in, coffee and chatting**  
*Time to tour the Mercer gardens*

**12:00 Lunch in our meeting room**  
*Bring something to share as this will be a "potluck" lunch.*

**1:00** Our own **Ray Ponton** will speak. **Joy Hairston** will show her

rose markers and explain the process she uses to make them.

**Plant Lotto** – *Be sure to bring your plants for the lotto!*

We have quite a few new members to welcome into our fold. Hope to see you all there!

### **Directions to Mercer Arboretum:**

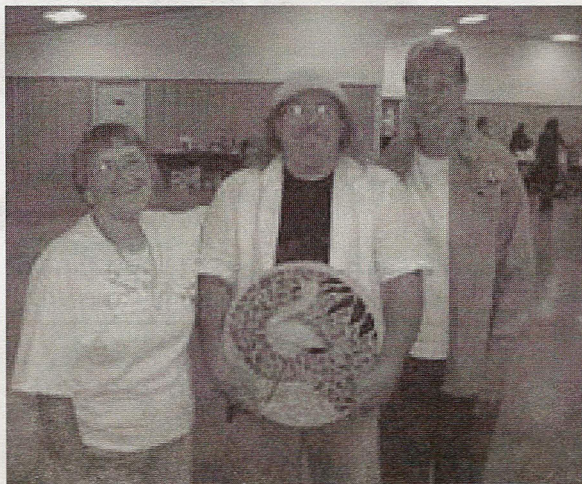
From I-45 or the Hardy Toll Road, exit FM 1960 and turn east. At Aldine Westfield Road, turn left. At the second traffic light (1 ¼ miles), turn right for the Visitor Center and gardens.



**From the Chairman** – *Faith Bickley*

***Life after the Fling and VR***

There is life after the Fling with Felder and the VR rescue, but there also are memories that will stay with those of us involved.



Working with the Fort Bend Master Gardeners on both these projects has enriched both organizations. Many of these people have joined TRR. For the Fling, they provided the backbone of support since the meeting was literally in their backyard.

The sun did not shine on our Fling, but we did get much-needed rain—and what a lot of it! Felder's trip to our area was prolonged due to the weather, but he made it to Glen Flora by 9:00 pm on Friday.

On April 18<sup>th</sup> the hardy faced the deluge and were rewarded with Felder's predictably entertaining and informative talk which ended with the tire planter demo that he is famous for (and he gave the planter to me!) Over 250 brave souls came out despite the weather, and we

had 100 reservations for our barbecue lunch.

The rest of the weekend plans had to be shuffled due to the weather, but we TRR's are definitely flexible. Some enjoyed Saturday supper at Rosarita's and a tour of Caldwell Nursery Sunday plus a tour of the FBMG demo gardens.



And then there was the final VR sale. We had such a good turnout of workers the week preceding the sale. Thursday was amazing as we completed the gigantic move of all the roses to the front area where the sale was to be held.



The turnout for the sale was a bit disappointing although we did sell many of the roses. The memory of the 2008 sale is still with us and this one was just not the same (how could you duplicate that one??) A bunch of us have the rest



of the roses resting comfortably at our homes for lottos, maybe the Woodlands event, etc. Our goal of getting them rescued and to good homes is coming true for sure.

So now we will settle into a calmer mode and look forward to our July Rookie Meeting and the October Cutting Exchange in Nacogdoches. I hope to see lots of you at both.

### ***Change in Newsletter Editors***

This issue of The Old Texas Rose will be the last one for Editor Donna Martin. Donna has done an excellent job in this position for the last couple of years, but will be stepping down after this issue. We really appreciate her hard work.

Our new newsletter editor is Jane Schnell, a new TRR member and also a FBMG. She is looking forward to taking over for Donna and she will do an excellent job. This position is kind of a behind-the-scenes job and often under-appreciated.

Thanks again to Donna for her dedication and welcome to Jane.

Smell the roses,  
Faith



### ***Upcoming Rustler Events: 2009 Mark Your Calendars!!***

October 3, 2009 – Fall Cutting Exchange, Nacogdoches, TX.

Check our website  
([www.texasroserustlers.com](http://www.texasroserustlers.com)) for details which will be published in a bit.

October 17, 2009 – Rose Dango in McKinney, TX



### ***A Very Special Rose Donation***

*We donated a few VR roses to Jodie Douglass, a Fort Bend master gardener, who is landscaping her church. The presentation she made to her priest about the background of these roses follows here...*

During the 1700's and 1800's when Texas was being settled by immigrants from Mexico and Europe, they would bring plants with them from their home country to remind themselves of home and those family members they left behind. They would plant and grow these fruit trees, roses and many other species of plants near their home in order to constantly remind them of their roots.

During this period homes were far from any civilization, consequently, when a family member died they were buried in a "family plot or cemetery" on their property. It was customary at that time when a grandmother, mother or child



would die a rose bush would be planted on the grave. During that first year of the "mourning period" a family member would visit the grave daily at which time they would carry a bucket of water with them to water the rose. As the mourning period waned, their visits were less frequent and soon the rose was left to survive on its own. Through the years, families moved on, homes and family cemeteries were left forgotten.

About 15 – 20 years ago several "old garden rose" enthusiasts discovered these forgotten home sites and cemeteries and the roses left behind. Their mission was to locate and preserve "lost roses" in these wild settings or old abandoned gardens and cemeteries. They began collecting specimens of these plants, propagating them and now these plants are grown by commercial growers and on the market for you and me to purchase for our own personal landscapes. This group of passionate people has named themselves "The Texas Rose Rustlers" with a membership of approximately 250.

Bob & Marcia Roenigk, co-owners of the Vintage Rosery in Needville, were passionate about their roses. They grew them and sold them. Their home on the property is completely landscaped with roses. Marcia died a couple of years ago and now the property is for lease. The roses growing in their fields have recently been rescued by members of the Texas Rose Rustlers as well as Fort Bend Master Gardeners and sold to the public over Mothers' Day weekend.

The Texas Rose Rustlers have donated antique roses to St. John Fisher to landscape our Rectory.

Don Gerard sent this link to the Brazoria County Master Gardeners' newsletter website. He says the June newsletter was devoted to roses and is quite good. I checked it out and I agree with him! Go to this link and check it out yourself:  
<http://grovesite.com/page.asp?o=mg&s=bmg&p=348647>



## Soil

*By Peggy Martin*

The soil in which your rose is planted will determine how well your rose grows for many years to come. A basic understanding of how soil works is essential in managing your garden. Soil is not simply a medium to pour bags of fertilizer on. They are complex, living systems that react to the changes we create.

There are very few soils that require no work on the gardener's part. Most of us live with soils that are not that ideal. They may be low in organic material, they may have a heavy clay texture that does not allow water to drain quickly, or may be a very sandy soil that will not hold water and dries out quickly. Your task as a gardener is to improve those conditions.

Clay soils contain a high percentage of minerals such as mica and feldspar. These minerals are made of tiny, flat plates that stick closely together making it difficult for water and air to penetrate between them. To break up clay, it is necessary to mix in large amounts of coarse textured organic material. These odd-shaped chunks hold clay



particles apart, creating spaces in which water and air can circulate. Because most roots grow near the surface, it is best to work organic material in this layer. The roots will benefit from the increased oxygen and the nutrients that the breakdown of the organic matter creates. Sandy soils have the opposite problem, they are composed of grains of silica, or quartz; which are irregular and have spaces between them that air and water pass through too freely. If there is little organic matter in the sandy soil, it will dry out too quickly.

Water passing slowly through a clay soil dissolves the surfaces of the mineral particles, releasing elements in the process; this is why clay soil is touted as the best soil for roses. Clay soil has a magnetic quality that draws the chemicals and minerals to the plant, which reinforces the belief clay soils are better.

The particles of sandy soil do not dissolve easily in water because of their composition, and the rapid passage of water through these soils tends to drain away what few nutrients there are. For these reasons sandy soils are less fertile. However, the addition of organic material can quickly solve this problem.

Most garden soils lie somewhere between the extremes of pure clay and pure sand. In any case, the solution for improving your soil lies in the addition of organic material. Why is organic material so important? Why not simply add the nutrients we need with chemical fertilizers?

Organic material comes from the bodies of plants and animals. When broken down by the soil's microorganisms the elements contained in them are released and combine with the water draining through the soil. This nutrient-laden "soup" feeds your roses.

Sources such as leaves, grass clippings and prunings are thrown out by countless people every day. Wise gardeners collect all this clean organic waste. Properly composted, these wastes will add texture and nutrients to your soil. Eventually you will have the kind of soil you can dig your hands into! I do not garden without mulches!

Most plants prefer a "forest floor" type of environment. In a healthy forest, the mulch layer is an equalizer. Its insulating qualities cool the heat of summer and the cold of winter. Mulch absorbs and disperses the impact of falling rain drops, eliminating erosion, compaction, and preventing soil bacteria and fungi from splashing up onto roses where they can cause problems.

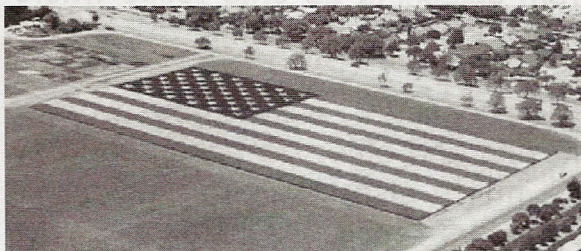
The continual activity by worms, insects and other life encouraged by the mulch also creates a network of pathways which increases the availability of oxygen to the roots. Organic matter is continually broken down in such a soil releasing nutrients to be used by the rose's roots.

A healthy soil seethes with life. The soil's plants and animals go through countless cycles of birth and death.



These cycled waste products, when dissolved in water feed the growth of your roses. Bacteria, worm and insect manures are the prime sources of a soil's ability to nourish plants. One celled creatures such as bacteria begin to digest the fibers and other tissues in the organic matter. Multi-celled creatures consume bacteria, small insects consume these creatures, and so on. As long as there is a steady addition of organic material, the process will continue, keeping your soil humming with activity.

If you treat your soil with forms of soluble fertilizers only, you will gradually degrade your soil. The excessive use of these chemical fertilizers has caused severe problems in our bayous, lakes, rivers and the gulf. So please mulch and use compost, you will see the difference in your garden.



### ***THE ONLY FLAG THAT DOESN'T FLY***

***Between the fields where the flag is planted, there are 9+ miles of flower fields that go all the way to the ocean. The flowers are grown by seed companies. It's a beautiful place, close to Vandenberg AFB. Check out the***

***dimensions of the flag. The Floral Flag is 740 feet long and 390 feet wide and maintains the proper Flag dimensions, as described in Executive Order #10834. This Flag is 6.65 acres and is the first Floral Flag to be planted with 5 pointed Stars, comprised of White Larkspur. Each Star is 24 feet in diameter; each Stripe is 30 feet wide. This Flag is estimated to contain more than 400,000 Larkspur plants, with 4-5 flower stems each, for a total of more than 2 million flowers.***



### ***Tough Love or***

***"Hit Me Again, I Like It"--Jean Harlow  
from A Turner Classic Movie 1932***

*By Doana Fite*

My friend Georgia Gates is a rookie Rose Rustler. She is not, however, a rookie gardener. Her cul-de-sac lot opens into an expanse of garden rooms and vistas. She recently added a side yard garden that is visible from her breakfast table window. A lost alley is becoming a more and more beautiful "room with a view," which includes a Knockout rose to help hide her neighbor's air conditioning condenser. Wrought iron butterflies on the wooden fence provide instant beauty until the plants get well established. She also planted a pink angel trumpet surrounded by 8 layers of the Houston Chronicle topped with two bags of coarse mulch. She finished off with airplane plant to choke out any grass, minimize the care and maximize the beauty.

She recently invited me for coffee to see the new view. Of course we had to tour the other garden rooms too. Her son, John, got a Vintage Rosery mystery rose at the Spring



Symposium and she got a Cherokee Rose. These now embellish the area near her back driveway, so that she and John will have a lovely view as they leave home, and when they return.

Georgia told me a story about a tomato plant that she added in the middle of a tiered garden where the Belinda's Dream rose and Martha Gonzales rose are now neighbors. The tomato plant did not bloom after its first round of fruit. Georgia complained to her brother and he suggested that she "slap it around a little bit" and that would stimulate it to put on more fruit. She showed me how she pulled out a long strand of Bermuda grass hidden in the back of the bed and slapped at the leaves and stems of the tomato plant. Sure enough, it was in full bloom! It reminded me that Mike Shoup said something similar this winter when he spoke at Enchanted Gardens. He says he walks by and "tickles" his roses to encourage them to re-bloom, and sometimes slaps at the leaves as he walks through the Antique Rose Emporium.

When I left Georgia that day, she had a long strand of Bermuda grass slapping the tomato plant and tickling Belinda and Martha. Who knew that Bermuda grass in the garden could ever really be a good thing?



*Let's end this newsletter with a tribute to typos everywhere! If you've ever edited a newsletter, believe me, the following little 'oops' are especially funny. It can happen to the best of us! These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:*

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.



Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.



The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: 'Break Forth Into Joy.'



Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.



Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.



The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.



Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.



This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.



The Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10 AM. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B. S. is done.



The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.



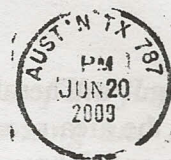
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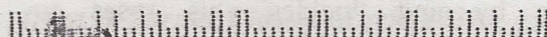
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