

The old Texas Rose

Number 3

Summer 2003

www.texas-rose-rustler.com

Rookie Rustler Roundup July 26, 2003 10:00-12:00 Mercer Arboretum

This year's summer meeting will be at Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens. For years now, the folks at Mercer have been gracious and made the Rustlers feel quite at home for our annual summer meetings. Our goal is to educate the newer members on subjects such as; Gulf Coast gardening, using antique roses, hardy perennials and annuals that will survive the extreme heat and droughts we here in Texas are sometimes plagued with. We encourage the public or anyone new to the Gulf Coast area, interested in gardening, to attend.

This summer we will welcome back, Mr. Greg Grant! I've decided to include the biography he sent to me in this issue. It includes the highlights and the impressive accomplishments of his career.

"If You Don't Like the South, Ya'll Go Home!" (Southern Plants for Southern Folk), will be the topic of Greg's speech. He will discuss the "hot facts" about gardening in the south and how we better learn to love it! It will be a good ole' time, so don't miss it!

We will also have our rose lotto, so bring those rooted cuttings or anything else you'd like to share. Hope to see ya'll there!

A Big Thank You to Joe Cooper!

Our annual spring Symposium this year was held at the Peaceful Habitations Rose Gardens in Boerne, TX on April 26th. Joe Cooper and his wife Juanita were very generous to invite the Rustlers to visit their beautiful rose gardens. We enjoyed hearing Joe's presentation about "how it all started..." His stories were a joy to hear and his gardens were wonderful to stroll through.

Our rose lotto was a huge success! We even had enough to go through the tickets twice. I happened to be one of the five lucky winners of a "supervised" rustle in Joe's garden. He graciously contributed five invitations to our lotto. Each person was allowed to take up to 25 cuttings from his rose gardens. Frances Brandes, a veteran rustler, was our tour guide (supervisor!) and she did a superb job showing us around, offering help to those who needed it and keeping a watchful eye on everyone else!

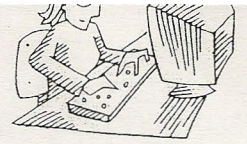
After our meeting we all met up at PoPo's restaurant. The folks at PoPo's pleasantly accommodated our party of 20+ rowdy Rustlers, and smiled when we all asked for separate checks! The atmosphere was warm, inviting and the food was great. It was the perfect end to a perfect day.

On Sunday morning the Rustlers gathered at Peaceful Habitations Rose Gardens. The race began...“On your mark, Get set, Go!” The rose sight-seeing adventure was off. Even though I was up before the sun that morning, I somehow missed the start of the race. Doana and I spent about 1 ½ hours chasing after the group caravan. Between frantic cell phone conversations, almost giving up and just heading back home, we finally convinced the group to pull over and wait for us. It was a sight to be seen, a ten car caravan pulled over on the shoulder of I-35! Rumor has it, that one of the cars got pulled over and the officer said something to the effect of, “You just can’t pull all those cars onto the shoulder like that on an Interstate!” Thank you to everyone who pulled over to let us catch up, and hopefully nobody was ticketed for it!

We admired many roses that day, including the famous Flores Street House Eater. Boy, was that a Rustler’s dream! What is said to be Brightside Cream was in full bloom, amazingly healthy and appears to be the only thing holding the house together. The Flores Street House Eater is everything I have been searching for while being involved with the Rustlers. Even after it is torn down by the City, it will live in the hearts and minds of those who have witnessed its awesome beauty. Thank you again Joe for giving us the opportunity to see such a sight.

After lunch, we made one more cemetery stop. There were roses everywhere you looked! As we drove through, Doana and I were pointing out the ones we recognized. It was my turn to be in the driver’s seat, so I had to be very careful to drive slowly and not bump into the car in front of us! Our caravan, which had shrunk to about 7 cars, drove through the winding roads amazed at how many roses were planted. It was there that many of us said our goodbyes. I’ve heard rumors that several Rustlers continued on to the San Antonio Rose Emporium. They later visited the home and gardens of Marion and Frances Brandes. What time was it when you straggling Rustlers got home that night, midnight? I wonder if ya’ll where the subject of lunch on Monday? I can just hear the conversations now...“Did you hear that she was out running the streets last night until midnight?” “No, doing what?” “Something called, rose rustling.” “It sounds illegal to me!”

Notes from the Editor...



Howdy Rustlers! The heat of summer is already upon us. This will be our third day of temperatures near 100 degrees! For me, gardening here in Brenham has been a learning experience. The soil fools you in the winter; it makes you “think” it’s fertile. Only until you plant a huge veggie garden along with herbs and marigolds, do you realize that it’s nothing but sand which acts like a huge strainer! For the past month, I’ve been running around like crazy just trying to keep it all alive. Dragging around a hose over more than an acre of plantings will drive you nuts quicker than you can say, “Dry as a bone”! Even the weeds are croaking! Needless to say, the next garden will be smaller, more controlled, and I’ll have to add lots of organic matter.

My roses are surviving; all except the ones my husband continues to mow down with his tractor! I have about twenty cuttings that have rooted, all stuck in one gallon pots, just waiting for the new house to be finished. (That’s a whole new paragraph in itself!) I’ve had several cuttings that have rooted from my collection from Peaceful Habitations. Thanks again Joe!

We finally closed on our loan May 15th! The construction should begin soon. First, we have to get power out there. We’re all very excited for different reasons of course: My reason is everything will be clean, fresh and new. My husband is waiting for the two-unit central A/C system. Jessica, (age 10) wants her own room for more privacy. Ashley, (age 5) only has one reason to be excited...while we were driving home from the closing she yelled, “Yea! No more scorpions!” Since the heat began, we kill them daily here in the Camphouse. The Camphouse is a cute 2 bdrm home here on the property that was built back in the 60’s. It belongs to Jesse’s parents, whom have been most generous in letting us live here during construction. I’m just thankful she hasn’t seen the gigantic, jumping tarantulas walking around the yard! I’d never get her to sleep at night!

I just want to know, is there something in the rule book that states: When you move out to the country, you must acquire more animals??? Since October, we have accumulated one cat, two (about to be three) horses, four ducks and two geese.

May all your roses beat the Texas heat!

Until the fall...your Editor

Confessions of a Recovering "Pot Head"

Yes, it is time to 'fess up. I collect pots. Black pots with plants in them, that is.

You know how it goes. You go to WalMart for milk, and end up in the garden section, looking at the discounted plants *that will die* if you don't take them and give them a good home. (They're cheaper to bring home than stray kittens, right?) But when you get home, there are umpteen other duties tugging at you to be done first, so the newly saved arrivals get set to the side of the patio or flower bed, andmostly ignored.

I'm good at watering them, keeping them alive, and admiring them. I'm not so good at planning their best spot to be added to my beds....and actually getting dirty and planting the little dudes. Sometimes the darlings wait on me so long that they manage to grow roots right out of the drain holes and into the soil!

I want to change this about myself. I want to be more prompt at actually getting rid of the pot(s) in my life!!! Those plants deserve a rightful home, don't you think? I know they'd reward me with more growth and flowers if I'd only give them a better chance in life! I must resolve to commit one morning or evening a week to thinning out this black-potted plant collection I have. The pots are an eyesore.

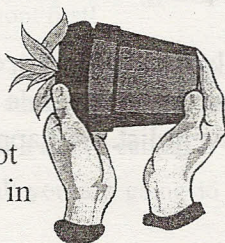
Another confession: I have some roses that have lived in black pots for three years!! Poor babies! I finally told myself this spring it was time to give up this potty attitude, and plant those babies. I was rewarded by the Anderson Cemetery rose producing its first bloom ever! This has given me the incentive to de-pot the others in my pot brigade.

They say the first step onto the road to recovery is to admit you have a problem. Ah, I feel empowered already! Wish me luck with reforming my addictive ways, okay?

.....V. Sissom

Note from the Editor...

The second step is to place your hands around the plastic pot and remove the plant. Then place in the ground!



Look Who's Talking!

***For years we've had the privilege of hearing Greg Grant speak. Although he is an extremely busy man, as you will soon read, he always seems to make the time for the Rustlers. Following is a biography that Greg sent to me. I thought the Rustlers would be interested in reading what he has accomplished so far. Check out his introductions!

Greg Grant is a horticulturist, garden writer, ornamental plant developer, lecturer, and bulb farmer from Arcadia, Texas. He is co-author, with William C. Welch, of *The Southern Heirloom Garden* (1995, Taylor Publishing, Dallas, Texas), contributing editor to *Texas Gardener*, and is currently working on a home landscaping book.

He has degrees in floriculture and horticulture, both from Texas A&M University and has attended post graduate classes at Louisiana State University, North Carolina State University, and Stephen F. Austin University. He has experience as a horticulturist with the Mercer Arboretum and San Antonio Botanical Gardens, an instructor at Stephen F. Austin and Louisiana State Universities, an award winning horticulturist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the director of research and development for Lone Star Growers, and with the Antique Rose Emporium.

Greg has introduced a number of successful new plants to the Texas nursery industry including Blue Princess, Ice Princess, and Pinwheel Princess Verbenas, Gold Star Esperanza, VIP Petunia, John Fanick Phlox, Stars and Stripes Pentas, Pam's Pink Honeysuckle, Duelberg Sage, and Marie Daly rose.

He has traveled extensively to hundreds of botanical and public gardens throughout the United States and Europe and is a popular and entertaining public speaker. He is a graduate of the Benz School of Floral Design, a member of the Garden Writer's Association of America and the International Bulb Society, a charter member of the Crapemyrtle Society of America, and a lifetime member of the Southern Garden History Society.

He gardens in deep East Texas, where he tends a cottage garden full of old fashioned flowers, a rose garden full of chickens, and the world's only arboretum dedicated to the Catalpa.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TEXAS

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS:

Humble, June 7, 9:00 - 11:00 am

BASIC BIRDHOUSE BUILDING

Greg Harmison, Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road. Phone: 281-443-8731.

Austin, June 12, 7:00 pm

HILL COUNTRY NATIVE EDIBLES

Eloise Doherty, Austin Herb Society, Zilker Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd. Phone: 512-927-8478.

San Antonio, June 21, 9:00 am - 11:30 am

FUN WITH HERBS

Gardening, cooking, health, Anne Morris, San Antonio Botanical Society, 555 Funston @ N. New Braunfels Ave. Phone: 210-657-8866 to register.

Arlington, June 21, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

NATURAL URBAN LIVING GARDEN SHOW

Arlington Organic Garden Club, Bob Duncan Community Center, 2800 S. Center St. Phone: 972-660-1346.

Austin, July 10, 7:00 pm

HERBS FOR WILDSCAPES

Eloise Doherty, Austin Herb Society Study Group, Zilker Garden Center, 2220 Barton Springs Rd. Phone: 512-927-8478.

Houston, July 24, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

WORKDAY - TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS

Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road. Phone: 281-443-8731.

Lufkin, August 23, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

CHOOSING & GROWING ROSES IN SOUTH-EAST TEXAS

- Gardening Friends of Lufkin & Houston Rose Society, First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 805 East Denman Ave. Fees: \$20 before 8/10/03; \$25 after 8/10/03. Phone: 713-236-2600.

Houston, September 13, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

WILDSCAPE WORKSHOP/NATIVE PLANT SALE

U of H, Texas Parks & Wildlife.

Phone: 281-456-7029.

Houston, September 27, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

PLANT SALE

Master Gardeners, Bear Creek Park, Patterson Rd. @ Hwy. 6. Phone: 281-855-5600.

Navasota, September 27, 11:00 am

FALLING FOR HERBS

Ann Wheeler, Log House Herb Farm, Martha's Bloomers, 8101 Hwy. 6 Bypass. Phone: 936 870-4044.

MONTHLY EVENTS (Alphabetical by Location):

Houston, 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm

GROWING ROSES IN HOUSTON

Houston Rose Society, Houston Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Dr. Phone: 713-236-2626.

Houston, 3rd Sunday of each month; 2:00 pm

GROWING FERNS

Texas Gulf Coast Fern Society, Houston Garden Center, 1500 Hermann Dr. Phone: 713-529-3960.

Humble, 3rd Saturday of each month, 9:00 am

GARDENING IN HOUSTON

Master Gardeners, Mercer Arboretum, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road. Phone: 281-443-8731.

Jasper, 2nd Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm

ROSES

Lakes Area Rose Society, City Hall, 465 S. Main St.

Rosenberg, 4th Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm

GARDENING IN FORT BEND CO.

Master Gardeners, Community Center, 1436A Band Road. Phone: 281-341-7068.

San Antonio, Saturdays, 9:00 - 3:00

PLANT CLINICS

Talk plants with Bexar County Master Gardeners, San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston @ N. New Braunfels Ave. Phone: 210-207-3270.

San Antonio, Mondays, 7:30 pm

ROSES

San Antonio Rose Society, Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels. Phone: 210-207-3270

Please send your events to Sandra Smith at smith4749@evi.net or 1111 Lakeview Estates Dr. Coldspring, TX 77331.

Thank you Sandra for taking time out of your busy schedule to put together this event list. We appreciate it!





Flowers and roses, Bad Toelz, Germany

My youngest son Steven arrived from Alaska at the Munich Airport just 15 minutes before my arrival from Manchester, England. His wife and baby daughter, who had gone 2 weeks prior, met us to take us to Bad Toelz. She did not just stay on the Autoban; she went on back roads through farming villages. Window boxes on every window were overflowing with blooming flowers. The roads curved through the villages, keeping us in suspense, as to what would be around the next curve. It always proved to be a picture of charm. Driving through the forests, delicate wildflowers bloomed in shaded sunlight.

Bad Toelz is a lovely, friendly town. I learned that when my son and his family are there, they live in an old Tower of the 1600's. It has been beautifully modernized on the inside. The tower is very famous, owned by Steven's Father-in-law, Dr. Keller, whose house is adjacent. It stands as a gate to the town, and the only entrance to the town is through the tower. Large containers of flowers decorate the cobble stone street in front of the shops, pubs and hotels. The old Church, where my Granddaughter was to be baptized, had the largest growth of Sweet Peas I have ever seen in my life. Roses graced every garden. Here the gardens were full of color and growing thickly, overlapping each other. The smallest of gardens were charming, the larger gardens a thrill. The thought crossed my mind that I could live in a place such as this, and gardening would be most enjoyable. If I had to pick one word to describe their gardens, I would have to say, "happy". To me all the gardens looked, "happy".

After meeting my Daughter-in-law's family, my son took me to Gasthof Zantl, the Inn where I would be staying. Since I had arrived several days before my other two sons and their families, Steven would come to the Inn every morning to give me the schedule of the day. He would always be surprised when he could not find me. Frau Morlock, the owner of the Inn, would come to get me as I finished my breakfast, to walk in her rose gardens. The Inn is famous for its rose gardens. The kitchen even baked a cake with edible, glazed rose

**Notes from
Serenity
Pond**
Patricia J.
McCain

buds on top of the icing. I ate some of the cake and it was delicious. Dr. and Mrs. Keller held an evening reception in the gardens. I could smell the fragrances of the roses as I danced to the music and ate German delicacies.

While walking with Frau Morlock through the gardens, the serious voice of my son echoed in my head, warning me do not try to take cuttings back to Texas as it is illegal. DO NOT, MOM, TRY TO TAKE ANY PLANTS INTO THE



U.S. I thought to myself, that if I found something really, really interesting, perhaps just one little piece! I was amazed that I had the same roses back home that Frau Morlock had in all her gardens. There was only one exception, a modern rose created by a German friend, who had asked her to name the rose. She named it Lady of Bad Toelz. Yes, it was tempting to steal a cutting, but the plant was much too small, just becoming established.

This Easter, Steven and Renate, with baby Mia, came to visit. Since Renate's best friend was getting married, she would be leaving for Germany from Texas. Now her best friend happens to be Frau Morlock's daughter. I wanted to send a little gift. Complaining I could not send a rose, Renate said she didn't think going to Germany it was a problem, only coming into the U.S. I sent a small rooted start of Marie Pavie and one of Martha Gonzales. I wrapped the roots in saran wrap along with a little Texan soil. The reason for those two was because they were the smallest ones I had with little roots. Then I took cuttings of Katy Road Pink and San Felipe Noisette to send also. I thought a couple found roses from Texas would be most unusual and meaningful. All of them fit very well into one large zip lock bag for easy packing.

I have heard from Renate in Germany. She arrived with no problems. Frau Morlock was happy with the roses. Later I heard she summoned Renate to come see where she had planted each rose. So Texas Rose Rustlers, I did not come back with anything I could share with you, but I did send a little of us to share with Frau Morlock, at Gasthof Zantl, in Bad Toelz, Germany. With Renate, I also sent a little of the history of the Texas Rose Rustlers.

Have a rosie day!



Almanac Dates

...From Blum's Farmer's and Planter's Almanac for the Year 2003

For rooting all cuttings:

Jul: 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28

Aug: 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24

Sept: 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20

For transplanting rooted cuttings & potted roses:

Jul: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12

Aug: 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 29, 30

Sept: 1, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

Pruning for increased blooming:

Jul: 17, 18, 26, 27, 28

Aug: 13, 14, 15, 23, 24

Sept: 10, 11, 19, 20



Fall Cutting Exchange

Our fall Cutting Exchange will be held on September 27th to coincide with the Harris County Master Gardener's Plant Sale. The plant sale starts at 8:00 a.m. and we will gather at 10:30 a.m. There will more details in the fall newsletter.

* Mercer Arboretum is located at 22306 Aldine-Westfield. Their number is 281-443-8731.

Good Rustling Etiquette

Although some of these may be humorous, they're to be taken in all seriousness. It is imperative that we as members make sure that the honor and integrity of the Texas Rose Rustlers is not compromised. Please follow these simple rules:

- Always ask first.
- *Know* the meaning of "No".
- Explain who you are and what you're doing.
- Never take more than the rose/ owner can stand.
- Don't rustle after dark; Texans shoot first!
- Take pictures & notes, be friendly & polite.
- Don't hop fences, they're usually barbed!
- Offer something in return; perhaps a rooted cutting.
- Leave before they begin to think you are going to stay for dinner.

Coffee with Auntie Lotte



Looking over the yard while drinking my coffee, there are not many roses blooming. The ones that are really hardy and blooming are **Belinda's Dream, Mrs. B. R. Cant, Eutin, Amazon, Puerto Rico and the Duchess de Brabant**. The daylilies must love this heat, though, because they are really blooming up a storm, and look beautiful between the rose bushes.

I'm going to make my roses happy this month. I found this recipe in Jerry Baker's "Giant Book of Garden Solutions". You take:

- 1 cup of beer
- 2 tsp. of instant tea granules
- 1 tsp. of fish emulsion
- 1 tsp. of hydrogen peroxide
- 1 tsp. of liquid dish soap
- 2 gallons of warm water

Maybe the beer makes them forget this heat – ha, ha! Mix all of the ingredients together and give each rosebush 1 pint every three weeks. This is a very interesting book.

I am still enjoying "The Life and Times of the Rose" by Fleur Cowles. Did you know the rose is used as a symbol even in war? In the fifteenth century, England had a civil war and each side took a rose as their symbol, one red and the other white. Even today, when the descendents of the red side (the Lancashire Fusiliers) celebrate the initiation of a new member, he must eat an entire red rose that was dunked in champagne, before he is rewarded with a full mug of champagne and cheers by his new friends.



Well, that is all for now. Try to stay cool and write me if you have anything to share:
auntielotte96@yahoo.com

By Julie Ardery

BOERNE— “YEE-HAH!” A white-haired computer executive with a perilous allergy to sunlight stands caterwauling under the noontime sky, gnashing a pair of garden snippers. If he were a little lighter on his feet, Joe Cooper would jump up and down. He's got Ziploc-bags, paper towels, the water bottle, notepad and pencil, dark glasses and a tire-sized sombrero. He's hot to rose rustle.

For the next four hours, Cooper, his friend Frances Brandes of Kerrville and I loop and lurch through the Hill Country and San Antonio in search of old roses. “Rose rustling is highly contagious,” Cooper says, “and there's no known cure.” Seven years ago, he began planting old roses on eight acres of “caliche and rock” north of Boerne, and today his Peaceful Habitations Rose Garden is home to more than 1000 plants: 600 varieties of antique roses. Some of these he politely bought, but most of them were rustled: snipped and rooted from bushes Cooper and his friends spotted driving through the Texas landscape.

I'm scrunched in the back seat of Joe's pickup as he and Frances warble on about ‘Souvenir de Mme. Leonie Viennot’ and ‘Katy Road Pink,’ all their favorite prickly treasures and the renowned treasure-hunters who tracked so many of them down. The conversation trails beyond my ken into Latin botanical names and discussion of an Iowa hybridizer. Ho-hum. Then “Theresarose!” they bark in unison, and I'm hurtling toward the dashboard.

On the west side of San Antonio, we've jammed to a stop near some softball fields, next to an empty house. A ten-foot bush is spilling leafy canes over a chain link fence. Frances and Joe quiz each other as to its possible identity, jump out and, like great white bees, begin sniffing and squinting into its early flowers, the first blooms of spring. Cooper and Brandes are both in a tizzy; with all their years of looking and growing, this cherry-red rose is completely new to them. Out come the snippers. Joe clips a few pencil-sized canes, cutting them into 6-inch sections, while Frances holds a Ziploc bag open to receive each bunch of stems, sealing them in with damp paper towels. “Instant greenhouse,” Joe says smugly.

Just before I bumped my head, Frances had been explaining how, had it not been for the Texas

Rose Rustlers' discoveries and successful rooting of old roses, “San Felipe Noisette” and many others “would have been lost forever.” But as we fumble with water bottles and bags on a curb in West San Antonio and Joe darts a look over his shoulder, I'm not feeling too noble — more like a middle-aged hooligan with her hand hung in a jar of thorns.

Anyone who's tried gardening in Texas grows broad-minded. From prissy concerns like “Is it pretty?” or “Does it take shade or sun?” one gets down to balder requirements: “Can it live?” and “Where do I get one now?” Pam Puryear grasped these fundamentals back in the mid-1970s, after several years of what she calls rose “horticide.” Then living at her family home in Navasota, she had been toiling to grow hybrid tea roses, the exquisite long-stemmed beauties you see standing in pails at the flower shop. Even with the “purple fingers” Puryear inherited from her gardening grandmother, she just couldn't pull off hybrid tea roses. “I mean, they took one look at our summers and turned into three brown sticks,” she says.

One dry August day she drove out into Grimes County to photograph a cabin built about 1820 on a limestone cliff. “I don't guess water had been laid on within ten miles,” Puryear says. The place had been abandoned in the 1940s, but “here were these two roses planted on either side of the front door, and they were about ten feet tall and ten feet wide and you couldn't put your finger between the blooms. And I looked at those roses, and I looked at those three brown sticks I had at home, and I said WAIT A MINUTE. I've been picking the wrong roses.”

Puryear had found ‘Old Blush,’ a rose that predated all the hybrid teas by more than a century. And she kept on finding it, in cemeteries and vacant lots and yards all over Texas. This and other so-called China roses had been imported to England from Asia in the 18th century and prized for their long blooming season. Pioneer Texans had loved them too, for their fragrance and generous flowering -- and their capacity to look a Texas summer in the eye. Chinas don't do well in cold climates, so nurserymen of the North and East dropped them from their catalogues. Growers in the South generally stopped offering them, too, once hybrid teas, first introduced in 1867, captivated the public. The fragrant old roses all but disappeared from the marketplace, but thanks to their inherent toughness

and the relative ease with which they could be passed from friend to friend, many of them survived anyway.

It was old rose enthusiasts like Puryear who insured that survival, taking cuttings of found roses, nestling them in clean soil, and then nursing them along with dappled sunlight and moisture until the "slips" grew roots of their own.

"If you are looking at 'Archduke Charles,'" Puryear says with wonder, "This is the same bloom your great-grandmother was looking at. Somebody came and cut off a piece and planted it and it grew and then cut off a piece and planted it and it grew... It's a rose bush that's five miles tall and you just have the tip of it, the root is back 150 years ago. It's so nice in a world of change to have something that's absolutely true."

Two other Texans made similar discoveries around the same time. Dr. William Welch, an extension landscape horticulturist at Texas A&M found several old garden roses at a nursery in California, brought them back to Texas and grew them successfully at his home in Washington County. Then, on a visit to Mangham, Louisiana, he discovered a beautiful purplish pink rose which has since been spotted growing all ~~across~~ the Deep South but never identified. It still goes by "Maggie," the study name Welch gave it, in honor of his wife's grandmother.

Around 1980 Mike Shoup, then a young horticulturist from Houston, was just getting his start in the nursery business with an inventory of photinias and ligustrums, all the Stepford-wife shrubbery of those days. Then the oil crash hit, and Shoup was scrambling to keep his nursery solvent. He began gathering and growing native plants as a niche business; meanwhile, one of his propagators, Tommy Adams, came across a giant climbing rose blooming untended in the countryside near Marble Falls. This was 'Mermaid,' a rose as fierce as its name is dainty. With thorns like talons, it grows to 20 feet and, as reported in Shoup's recent rose catalogue, "is a good choice for smothering ugly outbuildings."

Puryear's amateur daring and knowledge of Texas history, Welch's plant expertise and contacts in the world of extension horticulture, and Shoup's determination to succeed in the nursery business mixed by accident and made magic. They met in the early 1980s and with a small group of fellow old

rose fanciers from the Houston area became the Texas Rose Rustlers. Setting out in the spirit of "yee-hah," they've been at the forefront of an international movement to locate, identify and save old roses.

Puryear and Margaret Sharpe, a maverick in the rather stuffy Houston Rose Society, produced the group's first newsletter, *The Old Texas Rose*, in September 1982. A year later, Shoup and Welch opened The Antique Rose Emporium north of Brenham, offering all the beauties that these brake-jamming, clipper-gnashing bio-antiquers had managed to find and root thus far: 'Old Blush,' "Maggie," 'Mermaid,' and more than 60 others.

If you want roses fit for the Miss America pageant, these buds aren't for you. Pastel colors, loose blooms, short stems, longevity and heartaching fragrance aren't telegenic. But if you'd like to enjoy roses in your very own yard, they're the greatest qualities of all. "Breeders for the last 75 to 100 years have been concentrating all their efforts on getting that perfect flower, the long stem, the bright colors, the one to win best of show," Shoup says, "and they did that to the demise of what was inherent in roses" – their scent, variety of shape and hardiness. These old roses, he says, "have withstood Mother Nature's onslaughts." Many thousands of roses were introduced in the 19th century, and "99% of those have been weeded out. You're only privy to the strongest." When you find old roses blooming like mad in an abandoned lot, Shoup says, "you're looking at the best time-tested plants" for that locale. It's not that the old roses are immune to black spot, the adversary of every rose gardener, "We just call it early fall color," Shoup says laughing, since these roses will endure and flower again.

Welch left the nursery business in 1986 to focus on teaching and writing; his 1990 book *Antique Roses for the South*, packed with his own research and photography, drew also from a decade of the Texas Rose Rustlers' discoveries. Shoup's Antique Rose Emporium, which began with rustled cuttings, thrives and has attracted competition. He grows 250,000 roses annually and operates a healthy mail-order and wholesale business, supplying several Austin outlets with plants. Shoup has opened a second nursery in San Antonio, and receives 80,000 visitors a year at the display gardens in Independence. A visit at peak bloom time will rival your first French kiss.

Neither Welch nor Shoup attended this spring's gathering of the Texas Rose Rustlers. Neither did Pam Puryear. She says that once the group grew beyond a certain size, the rustlers became too formidable. What person in their right mind would welcome "thirty cars and people converging on you with snippers"? Puryear declares, "Success killed 'em."

But that's not so. Much like 'Old Blush,' the Texas Rose Rustler organization lives on with a minimum of tending. Club secretary Virginia Sissom says membership is holding steady at "a little over 200." Many of the newer members, she says, are young "first time homeowners, who're looking for drought tolerant shrubs," busy people who don't have time to fuss over their flowers. Antique roses do make good garden plants, but the rose rustlers aren't truly practical; they're in it for thrills and a whiff of eternity. "This is the only crazy thing I do," says Linda Mieke of Paige, grinning and holding a shaggy little rose in a 6-inch pot. The ultimate kick, Sissom, says, "Is finding one that's not in commerce and propagating it so it doesn't die out."

About 50 people gathered at Joe Cooper's gardens April 26 for the spring meeting, coming from as far away as Waco, Houston, Taylor, and Schulenburg. Saturday morning they swapped rose cuttings under the trees. Ursula White helped Patricia McCain identify a mystery rose as "Annie's Red." Frances Brandes, dubbed "Rose Nazi" for the afternoon, supervised five lucky visitors who had won the chance to take a few cuttings in Cooper's sumptuous garden. Club Chairman Audrey McMurray gave a jocular refresher-course in rose rustling etiquette. "Always ask permission," She counseled the group, "and always go when the soaps are on." Sunday morning, Joe would lead a caravan of twenty hard-core rustlers along the route we'd traveled in late March.

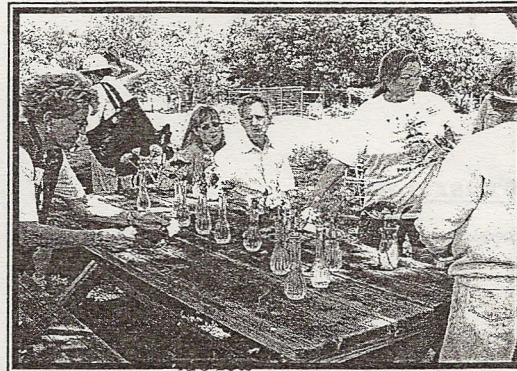
After two decades of looking, you'd think they'd have found all the antique roses around, especially since so much Texas dirt keeps turning to pavement and the abomination of "perpetual care" (a.k.a. riding mowers, weed eaters and herbicides) has destroyed the old plants in hundreds of cemeteries. But Joe's and Frances's quickstop on Nevada Street in San Antonio proves there are adventures left to be had, and some of them are hot-

pink. What other search-and-rescue mission lets you feel like a hoodlum again?

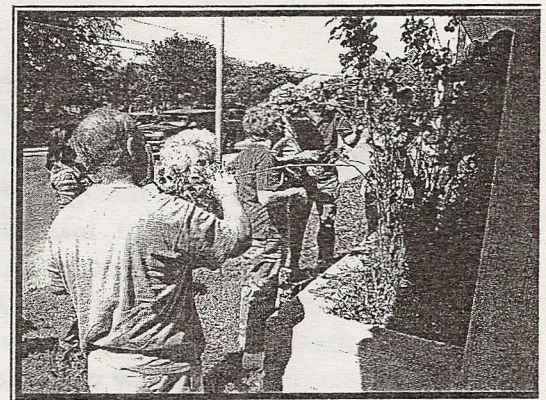
***Freelance writer and sociologist Julie Ardery lives in Austin. This article first appeared in The Austin American-Statesman May 25, 2003. You can contact Julie by e-mail at JArdery@austin.rr.com

***Thank you Julie for giving us the permission to reprint your awesome article! I know the Rustlers will all enjoy reading it!

***Thought this would be a good place to add a few pix of our spring meeting in Boerne.



Rose
Display



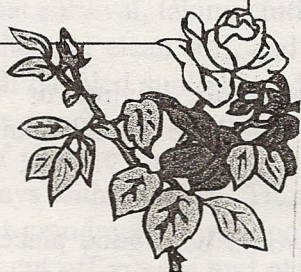
Sunday
Rustle



Sunday
Rustle

The Texas Rose Rustlers

C/O Mrs. Candy Fite
8020 FM 2502
Brenham, TX 77833



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