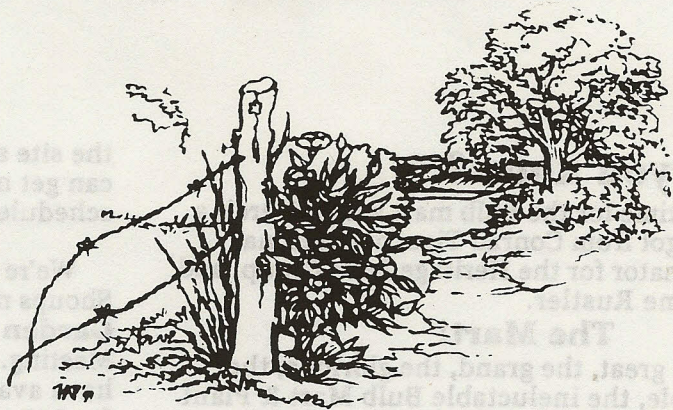


The Old Texas Rose



Number 4

Fall 2000

www.texas-rose-rustlers.com

The Fall Cutting Exchange October 14th, 2000 10:30 - 12:00 ??

We will be meeting at The Secret Garden Nursery, run by Stephanie Wallace, in Montgomery, Texas on Saturday October 14th. The exchange will begin at 10:30 and run till you get tired of swapping and visiting. Lunch will be a brown bag affair so bring your favorite snacks, a dessert to share, and some chairs if you want to sit and visit a while. Any folding tables to set the cuttings up on would be appreciated as well.

From Houston take I-45 North to Conroe. Turn left onto Highway 105 West and go to Montgomery, Texas (15 miles). Once there take a right onto FM 149 and go 8 miles where you'll see the Secret Gardens sign on the left at Martha Williams Road. Turn there and look for the old home, you can't miss it.

The old home is the last standing dog-run home in Montgomery County and was built prior to 1883. The four acres the nursery sits on have been landscaped with antique roses, perennials and annuals. In addition to the plantings the nursery is also home to a large chicken pen and many, many cats.

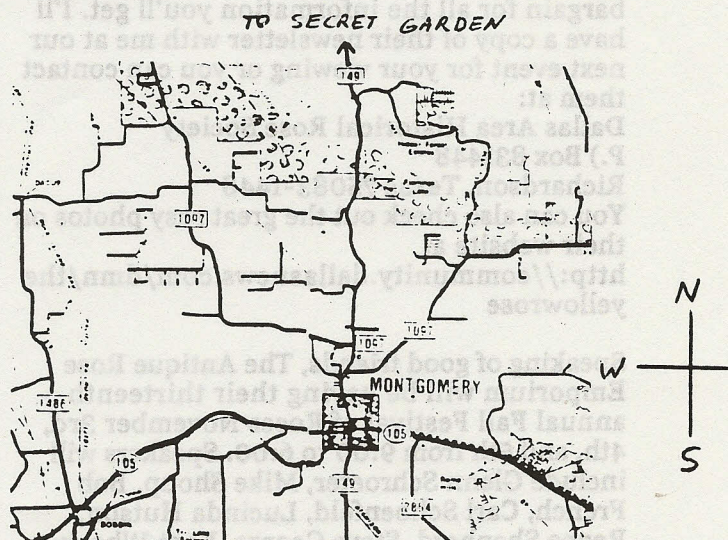
Stephanie is a Master Gardener and regularly speaks at Garden Club functions. She has done all the landscaping herself and has found several old mystery roses on the property, maybe someone can help her I.D. them. There are benches and sitting spots around the grounds so bring a lunch and visit for a while after the exchange.

For those who've never been to a cutting exchange here's an idea of what happens. You can bring cuttings of anything you'd like. Roses, of course, are the most popular but if you have some other plant that could use a trimming it never hurts to bring it as well. We try to collect the cuttings as close to leaving for the event as

possible to keep them fresh. Cuttings with at least two growth nodes are necessary for success. Usually the cuttings are wrapped in a damp paper towel, put in a labeled baggie, and then put in a cooler for the trip down. There is no limit to the number of cuttings you can bring.

Some things you will want to bring with you are a cooler, paper towels, baggies, willow water (if you're so inclined), pruners, a folding chair (for you, not your roses), and a marker to label your cuttings. We also usually have some lotto roses as well so anything that you have extra of bring over. This is a great time to do something with all those extra plants and seeds you never seem to get around to planting. We'll also be doing a rooting demonstration this year for those who want to get some pointers.

Once there all of the baggies are placed on a table and everyone gets to look them over and at the appointed time the "shopping" begins. A couple of stems are all that's usually needed to get a start so everyone gets a shot at them. See you there!



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SECRETARY Mrs.Virginia Sissom	11615 Wolf Run Ln..Houston. TX 77065	(281)955-2599

Did you know?

It's time for the Bulb mart again! Here's a note I got from Conrad Tips, our regional coordinator for the Heritage Rose Group, and longtime Rustler.

The Mart!

The great, the grand, the glorious, the ineffable, the ineluctable Bulb Mart & Plant Sale -- we're 58 and counting! I need volunteers to sell roses the three days: 28, 29, and 30th of September at Westminster United Methodist Church, in west Houston at the intersection of San Felipe and Bering. There are two shifts Thursday and Friday, one shift on Saturday, our short day. Breakfast, lunch and tea are provided by the ladies of the Garden Club of Houston and it is a lovely grub. Nor is specialized knowledge required, handbooks are provided. Staffing the Saturday session is not usually a problem, but Thursday and Friday are often problematic. Those of you who can work those two days, (and everyone else too of course), please ring me as soon as you can at 713-868-5606. "It is the Cause, it is the cause, my soul"!

Our good friends in the Dallas Area Historical Rose Society are looking for a few new members. Their publication, The Yellow Rose, comes out 10 times a year and features a color photograph of a different rose on the cover each issue. It's a fine publication full of information for those of us growing roses here in this furnace called Texas. Family memberships are \$20 and Senior memberships are \$15 a year which is a great bargain for all the information you'll get. I'll have a copy of their newsletter with me at our next event for your viewing or you can contact them at:

Dallas Area Historical Rose Society
P.) Box 831448
Richardson, Texas 75083-1448
You can also check out the great rosy photos on their website at
<http://community.dallasnews.com/dmn/theyellowrose>

Speaking of good friends, The Antique Rose Emporium will be having their thirteenth annual Fall Festival of Roses November 3rd, 4th, and 5th from 9:00 to 6:00. Speakers will include Glenn Schroeter, Mike Shoup, Bob French, Carl Schoenfeld, Lucinda Hutson, Renee Shepherd, Steve George, Kent Whealy, Anita Nelson, Jim Johnson, Henry Flowers, and Peter Beales. There will be food vendors on

the site and tours of the growing fields. You can get more information on the speakers schedules by calling them at (979) 836-5548.

We're pleased to report that the sales of Mike Shoups new book **Roses in the Southern Garden** went very well at our Summer Rookie Meeting. We'll be picking up some more to have available at the Fall Cutting Exchange for \$25 each. The easiest way to make sure you get a copy is by contacting one of the officers before the event and reserving a copy

Those of you who enjoyed the Spring Symposium at Stephen F. Austin University will want to know that the SFA Fall Plant sale is going to be held at the Arboretum on Saturday, October 7th from 9:00 to 5:00. The line forms early so you'll want to be there when it opens up. They will be having many of the roses from the garden on sale along with the other proven plants they grow there.

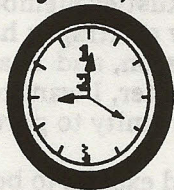
Later in this issue there's a article about the rescue of a group of Crinum lillies. I also got wind of another source of a fine old Southern heirloom bulbs in the mail the other day. Patty Allen of Bayou City Studio and Garden in Humble Texas dropped me a letter telling me about her bulbs. She has in her words "an abundance" of Oxblood Lillies for sale. Oxblood Lillies are to bulbs what China roses are to roses, tough as nails and pretty to boot. She has over 800 gallon pots potted up with three bulbs per pot and about 1500-1800 planted in beds that can be sold bare rooted. Her Nursery is just north of the Sam Houston Parkway and just west of US Hwy 59. They are located about three blocks north of the parkway and two blocks west of US 59 just off Lee Road. You can reach her at 281-441-8646.

I got a note from Phyllis De Gelleke at the Summer meeting. She wants to know who brought the "**Mannerly Climber**" to our October 1999 meeting at Serbin. She says it has REALLY grown and that she is looking forward to Spring blooms. If you know more about it you can reach her at 979-677-3706.

Lucille Idom, our Treasurer, is looking for a few plants. She wants to find St. Josephs Lilly and Byzantine Gladiolas. She also wants White Dancing Lady Ginger and has the Yellow Dancing Lady Ginger to trade for it.

Minutes of the Summer Board Meeting

July 22, 2000



Officers present: Candy Fite, Lucille Idom, Shannon Sherrod, Audrey McMurray
Also present: Doana Fite, Mayo Idom, Melissa Sherrod, Ursula White, Mike Herr, Mary Herr, Joshua Herr, Phyllis DeGelleke, and Faith Bickley

Old business: Two boxes of Mike Shoup's new book, *Roses in the Southern Garden*, were available for sale at the Rookie Rustler Roundup at Mercer Arboretum prior to the meeting. Twenty-three books sold, leaving only nine books left.

The pruning clinic scheduled at Darla Gip's house (Bobbie McKenna's place in Splendor) will be held on the 10th of February with a rain date of February 17th. Candy will check with Darla to make sure the rain date is acceptable and to see if Darla would be amenable to this becoming a regular event.

The Winter Planning Meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2000.

Candy will take care of filing dates and venues of meetings with Brenda Smith for publication in the *Houston Chronicle* and Brenda's gardening calendar. Candy will be listed as the contact for event information and Lucille will be listed as the contact for membership questions.

The trip to Waco was discussed. August was the target month for several Rustlers taking a short trip there to help a man identify some of his roses. Shannon and Melissa have relatives in Waco and are planning a visit there soon so Shannon will help the fellow with the roses to be identified as best he can. He will also look around Waco with an eye toward having future events there. Virginia could not be at this board meeting but is interested in making this trip so it was agreed she should be informed about everyone's comments.

The 2001 Cutting Exchange was then discussed and it was decided Shannon would contact friends at Stephen F. Austin's

arboretum to see if it could be held there. October 20 and October 6 were discussed as to possible dates.

New Business: Doana Fite, Faith Bickley and Phyllis DeGelleke expressed a desire to have another yard tour. They were quickly and enthusiastically named to head a Yard Tour Committee. Mary promised to send them an old program and Audrey volunteered to help make up a revised one if they wanted to use the same format, since it is still in her computer.

Audrey discussed the idea of working on a Margaret Sharpe Memorial Garden on the grounds of the University of Houston. Mike and Mary asked for a site plat and volunteered to design a garden. The Rustlers present were enthusiastic and thought of several good ideas to work into the garden. Shannon will look back into old OTR issues to find Margaret's list of favorite roses. Mike and Mary will drive by soon and have a look at the proposed site: the west wall of the Moores Opera House on Cullen Boulevard.

● ● Almanac Dates ● ●

...from Blum's Farmer's and Planter's Almanacs for the Year 2000.

For rooting all cuttings

September: 14, 17-18, 21-22
October: 14-15, 18-19, 25-26
November: 12, 15-16, 21-24
December: 12-13, 19-23

For transplanting cuttings and potted roses

September: 1-4, 30
October: 1-2, 27-29
November: 1-3, 25, 29-30
December: 26-28, 31

To prune roses for increased blooming

September: 21-22
October: 18-19
November: 15-16, 24-25
December: 12-13, 21-23

Margaret Sharpe Memorial Garden

By Audrey McMurray

It's long been on my mind to plant a garden to honor Margaret Sharpe, one of our founders. She was not just a Rosa Mater to me but also a friend and something of a mentor. I could not attend her funeral and I told myself that I would do better than make the funeral: I would plant a garden with a plaque telling all who stopped to smell the roses, just who this remarkable lady was. But last year, as my Rustler friends know, was my first year teaching and Life for me sort of stopped. I didn't even tend my OWN garden last year!

Now though, it's time to bring up the idea again and put it out before the Rustlers to see what ideas they might have. You have as much to thank Margaret for as I do because you would not BE Rustlers if it weren't for Margaret, Pam Puryear, Bill Welch and S. J. Derby's forays into the Texas countryside armed with a tire iron, snippers and cucumber sandwiches. Someday we'll have to plant a Margaret Sharpe, Pam Puryear, Bill Welch, SJ Derby, Mike Shoup, Marion & Francis Brandes, Jackie Fischer, Earl & Deanna Krause, (did I forget anyone?), garden, but for now, let's just start with Margaret.

Let me list for you what we have discussed so far:

Sites: Veteran's Cemetery, where Margaret is buried.

University of Houston, next to the Moores' Opera House

There are pro's and con's to each site. U.H. is very interested in having a rose garden as part of their landscaping plans for the near future, and we are in the middle of discussions. The Rustlers and U.H. folk both seem to have the same view, but these things take time to finalize.

Projected date to begin: Late Fall 2000 to early 2001

Features:

1. Plant Margaret's 10 favorite roses

2. Include arches - poignant, according to her son, because it was watching her mom plant a climbing rose over an arch Margaret's dad built that made Margaret fall in love with roses in the first place

3. Include benches, particularly near the scented roses

A Letter From Brenda Beaust Smith

Dear Texas Rose Rustler members,

Something very exciting is happening at University of Houston, and as an UH alum and Channel 8 broadcaster, I want to make sure you have an opportunity to participate if you wish.

I am thrilled and excited to be part of a volunteer landscaping advisory committee that is preparing recommendations to present to the University of Houston, my alma mater, for consideration. The best part is: everyone on the committee is enthusiastic about making the UH campus a living, educational example of how ecology-friendly beautiful landscaping can be. Through Channel 8, I hope to document what is done.

We are not attempting to establish a botanical garden, a garden center here- or anything even close to this kind of facility. I very much applaud the active, dedicated group already focusing on this exciting goal. We do not in any way want to conflict with, or impede, their ambitious undertaking. UH has no horticultural or agricultural component. We are simply trying to create a university campus so beautifully landscaped that even non students will want to visit and, at the same time, we want to do this in a recognizable, educational ecology-friendly manner through the use of wonderful Gulf Coast- hardy plantings and ecology-intelligent cultural techniques.

As with educational facilities, funding for landscaping is limited. But we see this as having great potential for mutually-beneficial co-partnerships with area plant societies and garden clubs. The Native Plant Society is already providing their expertise. There is a great potential here for participation with no significant expenditures of actual cash.

If you are interested in working with UH on any basis, we would very much like to hear from you and please feel free to pass this letter on to other groups. I am out of town right now and we're trying to at least get our potential contacts made. So, favor? If you're interested, would you contact:

Ms. Josanna Smith, Committee Chairperson
(281) 242-8737 (phone); (281) 242-6785 (fax);
email: smithservices@aol.com

Hope to see you soon,
Brenda

Roses of Exceptional Performance for the Houston/Gulf Coast Area

by Mary Herr

China Roses:

Cramoisi Superior, Louis Phillipe,
Old Blush, Le Pactole (pale yellow),
Archduke Charles, Ducher (white)

Polyantha Roses:

Perle D'Or, White Pet, Echo, Marie
Pavie, The Fairy

Old Garden Teas:

Mrs BR Cant, Mrs Dudley Cross,
Duchess de Brabant, Madame Joseph
Schwartz, Marie Van Houtte,
Safrano, Beaute' Inconstante,
Madame Berkley

Found Roses:

Katy Road Pink, Annies Red,
Caldwell Pink, Maggie, Schulenberg
Apricot

Species/Large Climbers:

Mutablis, Mermaid, Cl. Cecile
Brunner

Hybrid Musks:

Buff Beauty, Gartendirektor Otto
Linne, Penelope

Noissette Climbers:

Reve D'Or, Crepuscle, William Allen
Richardson, Marechal Niel, Celine
Forestier

Floribunda Shrubs:

Valentine, Iceberg, Rosemary Rose,
Playgirl

Griffith Buck Roses:

Prairie Harvest, Folk singer, Polonaise,
Hayakawa Belle, Pearlier Mae, Earth song

Bourbon Roses:

Souvenir de lo Malmaison (bush or
climber), Souvenir de St. Annes,
Kronprinzessin Victoria

Recipes, Formulas, and Recommendations

by Mike Herr

Garlic Pepper Spray

5 Jalapeno Peppers

5 cloves garlic

2 C. water

Put all the ingredients into a blender, pulverize, then strain. Use 1/2 cup of this concentrate to 1 gallon water in a pump up sprayer or mister bottle. Can be used to combat beetles, grasshoppers, spider mites and other chewing pests.

Powdery Mildew Spray

Mix 1 cup of milk to 9 cups of water. Spray twice weekly to combat fungus problems

Mikes Secret Plant Tonic

Into a 1 quart container mix:

1 C. Media

2 T. 'Watch Us Grow'

2 T. Molasses

2 T. Super thrive

2 T. Seaweed Extract

Fill container with water. This makes a concentrate. Put into a hose end sprayer and spray at dilutions of 2-10 T. per gallon. Can be used weekly and is good for everything. It also deters many chewing insects like grasshoppers.

Organic Pest Deterrents

'Cedarcide' Granules and Mulch Topping

These two different grinds of pure cedar are effective in repelling many insects without harming the beneficial. Granules may be applied through a lawn spreader as a excellent control for chinch bugs, fleas, mites, snakes, chiggers and also discourages ants from moving into a area. Mulch Topping is applied on top of garden beds to repel all of the above insects and seems to work better on slugs and snails than the granules.

'Cedar Oil Spray': Effective as a mosquito repellent and can be used on babies, pets and livestock. Also good to repel fleas.

'Citrex' and 'Cedarcide Rid Ants'

Two oil based soil drenches. 'Citrex' is orange oil and 'Rid Ants' is a special formulation of the cedar oil. Pour slowly onto mounds for maximum penetration.

The best all purpose fertilizer we can recommend is Agricultural Organics P/L (poultry litter). This fertilizer is a culmination of 12 years of study to utilize poultry manure and all of its trace elements without burning plants with too much nitrogen. It is broken down by microbial action and feeds the microbes and soil.

Further Along the Rustling Trail

by Joe Cooper

I am frequently asked about when and how much to prune Old Garden Roses, and the answer is, "It depends---".

Before you assume that I am simply being evasive, let me explain the reasoning behind that answer. There are two general categories of roses with respect to pruning:

**** REPEAT BLOOMING ROSES**** - Those that bloom repeatedly or continuously each year

**** ONCE BLOOMING ROSES**** - Those that bloom only once each year

The distinction is based on the type of wood from which the blooms form. In the repeat blooming and continuous blooming roses, the flowers form on new shoots. But in the once blooming roses, the flowers form on wood that grew the previous year. Therefore, the type of rose dictates the pruning strategy, because if you prune a once blooming rose in the winter or early spring, the only thing that you have accomplished is cutting off all the flowers that you otherwise would have enjoyed in the summer. Similarly, if you do not prune a repeat blooming or continuously blooming rose in the early spring, there will be less new growth to produce flowers. So you see, "It depends".

AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

All this having been said, however, there is an exception to the rule. If you have just purchased, been given, or otherwise obtained a rose, prune it hard when you plant it. There are several reasons for this:

(a) The planting process inevitably damages the roots and causes an imbalance between the amount of foliage and the available roots to support that foliage. Therefore, it is a good idea to reduce the amount of foliage to avoid overtaxing the remaining roots.

(b) When you prune a young rose hard, it encourages growth of desirable new shoots at the bottom of the plant. On the other hand, if you prune lightly or not at all, the new growth will tend to be at the tips of the shoots. Therefore, pruning heavily on a young rose

encourages basal shoots that may be hard to develop when the rose is older.

WHAT MAKES A ROSE PUT ON NEW GROWTH

Before continuing with the subject of pruning, it would be a good idea to clarify how roses grow and what makes them put on new growth. A rose plant is composed of multiple shoots, both vertical and lateral, each of which is growing in only one direction along its major axis. That is to say each shoot grows by getting longer and adding new growth at its tip. However, you will find that there is a bud hidden under the place where each leaf joins the shoot. Under certain circumstances, those buds will wake up and grow into new shoots. Most of the time, the buds under the bases of the leaves are just sitting there in a semi-dormant state waiting for a signal that they need to start growing. When something happens to the tip of the main shoot that prevents it from growing any longer, a chemical signal goes back down the shoot that wakes up the buds and tells them to start growing a lateral shoot. There are really only two things that cause this to happen: (a) a flower forms at the tip of the shoot and stops the growth, or (b) someone comes by, such as a stray deer, cow, or rosarian with clippers, and nips off the tip of the shoot. In either case, the buds wake up and new shoots begin to form.

So what is the point of all this? The point is that if you prune a rose, you are cutting off the growing tips of the shoots. When that happens, the rose will respond with a flush of new growth, unless it is in the dead of winter when the rose is dormant and sound asleep. That is precisely why some repeat blooming roses are pruned in the late summer to produce new growth and flowers for the fall. And that is also precisely why you should never prune within two months of the first frost, because the new growth needs time to mature and harden before winter sets in.

ONCE BLOOMING ROSES

The once blooming roses fall into several categories that can be distinguished by their growth habits:

**** Bushes and Shrubs****

How you prune a once blooming bush or shrub rose depends to some extent on the type of rose. The general rule is "When in doubt, do nothing", other than (a) remove dead or

diseased wood, and (b) remove any shoots that are rubbing against each other or growing a way that will cause them to rub against each other in the next year. If the rose is a Damask, Gallica, or Centifolia, prune it lightly in the summer after it finishes blooming. In general no more than a quarter to a third of the foliage should be removed. Be careful to keep the desired shape of the plant in mind and prune with restraint and respect. If the rose is a species rose, the general rule is to "leave it alone", unless you have nothing else to do with the rest of your life, or it is threatening to eat your house or engulf the driveway. However, if one of these species roses has forgotten all of its manners, you can prune it hard to keep its growth within reasonable limits.

**** Climbing Roses****

The general rule for once blooming climbing roses is to prune them in moderation after they finish blooming to encourage the desired growth habit and the development of laterals and shoots that will produce flowers the next year.

**** Rambling and Scrambling Roses****

The general rule for Wichuraiana, Multiflora, and other such roses and their hybrids, is to "leave them alone as much as possible". Left to their own devices, they will grow, and grow and grow, without much intervention. However, when they get out of bounds and become nuisances (or absolute pests), they may be pruned as needed (including application of deadly force) because they are almost impossible to kill.

REPEAT BLOOMING AND CONTINUOUS BLOOMING ROSES

Once again, the way to prune repeat blooming and continuous blooming roses depends their growth habit:

****Repeat Blooming Bushes and Shrubs****

Well mannered bushes like **Old Blush** (as well as Godzilla-like bushes such as **Bon Silene**) should be pruned in the early spring and then deadheaded to encourage more flowers. The general rule is to shape them according to their growth habit and your preferences in the early spring, removing no more than a quarter or a third of the foliage. This will encourage development of new shoots that will produce blooms. As the blooms fade, cut them off, (deadheading), so that the rose will put its energy into producing more

flowers rather than hips. It is a good idea to give repeat blooming roses a light pruning in the late summer. This encourages a lot of new growth and more blooms in the fall. However, do not prune them within two months of the first frost, because the new growth is tender and will be severely damaged or killed by frost if it has not had time to mature and harden.

**** Repeat Blooming Climbing Roses****

Well mannered climbing roses like **La Biche**, **Queen Elizabeth**, etc. benefit from a moderate pruning in the spring and a light pruning in the late summer. **Noisette**, **Climbing Teas**, and **Hybrid Perpetual** roses fall into this group. The rule is to shape them according to their growth habit and your preferences, but do not remove more than one quarter to one third of their foliage.

Aggressive Repeat Blooming Climbers

(translate Godzilla-like), such as **Old Blush**, **Climbing**, **Cecille Brunner**, **Climbing**, etc., are not likely to pay much attention to what you or anyone else says with their clippers. So clip away with these roses, but do not have high expectations about affecting their shape. Anyway, they will soon be safely out of your reach, and you will need an extension ladder to get to their growing tips. With these roses, I just, "let them do their own thing."

A MATTER OF SOME GRAVITY

One last suggestion. When you have a large climbing rose you will soon notice that there are more blooms on the lateral branches than on the vertical stems. There is a good explanation for this. In order to produce flowers, the plant needs nutrients. Those nutrients come from the roots, and the plant has to fight gravity when pumping them up the vertical stem. However, if the lateral shoots are more or less horizontal, the plant is no longer pumping them up but outward, and gravity offers less resistance. The result is that a much greater quantity of nutrients reaches the horizontal branches and they produce more flowers. This is particularly true of branches that are allowed to arch downward. So when I have a large aggressive climber, I give it minimal support for the vertical stem and then just let the lateral shoots arch downward wherever they want to go. It may sound untidy, but you should see the blooms!

"Carolyn's Crinums"

by Audrey McMurray

On 1-27-2000, four Rustlers met at an old homestead called Hargrave Manor, in Spring, TX that had been sold and divided into lots. When they arrived, they were dismayed to see that bulldozers had already pushed an 7' pile of soil onto about half of the manor's largest flowerbed. It was obvious that concrete slabs were going to soon be poured over what remained. The heavy machinery had flattened what had obviously been a yard full of flowers planted among the pines - a sight that almost made the four women feel ill.

The Rustlers dug up what they could until it was too dark to dig anymore. They worked from the edge of the pile of soil outward and filled four large plastic sacks with bulbs, some of which were 8" in diameter. Carolyn Feinstein, the Rustler who had organized the rescue, said that these bulbs grew crinum-like flowers, solid wine color, about knee high. She said they almost looked like a cross between an amaryllis and a crinum, but she couldn't be sure.

There were other treasures, bulbs and small plants, once carefully planted but now surviving in spite of neglect, that were saved as well and each of the four Rustlers took them home to their own gardens, far from the bulldozers and cement mixers. One of the Rustlers commented that she could just imagine the spirit of the lady of the manor looking over their shoulders, so happy that at least some of her plants were being saved.

The large bulbs were given the study name "Carolyn's Crinums" and were then divided among friends who promised to plant them in their flower beds. This was as important as rescuing the bulbs in the first place, since too many of the older varieties of bulbs, like the older varieties of roses, are being lost to "progress". One can't buy them even if they set out to do so because they are simply not in commerce anymore.

Hopefully these bulbs will not meet with the same fate. Look for them in our Lotto giveaway in a year or so, after they have multiplied and can be divided.

"As I do not know the names of all the weeds and plants, I have to do as Adam did in his garden - name things as I find them."

Charles Dudley Warner
My Summer in a Garden (1871)



*Coffee with
Auntie Lott*

I should really be drinking ice coffee in this heat, while walking through the garden. I still don't care what they say about other roses **Annie's Red** is still on top of my list - been blooming all summer long.

I was looking through last year's Family Circle and found some interesting information that I'd like to share. Did you know that in Turkish harems long ago, newborn babies were wrapped in rose petals? And the ancient Romans stuffed their pillows with rose petals to scent their sleep? My, what a nice way to go to sleep. Of course, if you were allergic to them, you might have had problems. And here is something you never saw in western movies: Indians beautified their campsites by planting wild roses.

Cleopatra preferred to walk on a floor cushioned by 18 inches of rose petals. Can you imagine Caesar coming back from one of his battles and Cleopatra coming up to him, "Caesar, Darling!", with him kicking petals out of the way, "Dadgum, what are all these rose petals doing here?!" Well, so much for romance. I'll have some more interesting facts in the next article.

I leave with this saying from French writer and editor, Alphonse Karr: "Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses."

"In my view, one of the most beautiful of all roses in form and grace is the old Maman Cochet, and an essential part of that grace is the fact that she always slightly bends her neck in greeting you, just as a woman of refinement will do when she welcomes you at her door. And as for a climbing rose with a "weak neck", that I hold is a definite advantage. Why plant a pergola with those climbing roses bearing upright flowers that only the birds will see?"

Francis E. Lester
My Friend the Rose (1942)

Rooting Tips

by Shannon Sherrod

Even though it seems hard to believe right now Fall is going to get here one of these days and with it will come the prime time to take rose cuttings. My favorite time to take cuttings is right after the bloom has fallen from the stem and before the new growth starts to pop out. In the Spring this is really hard to time just right while Falls cooler temperatures give you a little more time. Another plus to starting cuttings in the Fall is that they don't have to struggle through one of our Summers for almost a year. Having said all this the best time to take cuttings from a endangered rose bush is whenever you can! Don't let a bush die just because it isn't the best time of year to try.

So how do I root my cuttings? I use the system that I learned from Audrey McMurray who got it from Bobbie McKenna. I will count back about four leaflets from the flower and make a cut below the fourth one. A lot of rooting systems will tell you to take a cutting the size of a pencil but I've found that the size cutting depends on the rose. If you're talking about a large caned rose like a Hybrid Tea the four leaf cutting will be that size. On a Polyantha or small China though the cutting will be much smaller than a pencil. I will then store the cutting wrapped up in a wet paper towel inside of a labeled ziplock bag. Remember that if you are doing this away from home to put the cuttings into a cooler or they will cook inside the bags. One tip that I recently learned from Mike and Mary Herr is to soak the rose the night before you're going to take the cutting. This ensures that the stems will be pumped full of water and will be easier to root.

Once I get home I try to start them right then but if for some reason I can't I'll store them inside the refrigerator for up to a couple of days. I try to use a good draining potting mix thats been thoroughly moistened. I've used everything from styrofoam cups with holes poked in the bottom to the peat pots that look like egg cartons. I've come to the conclusion that anything can work as long as it has drainage holes.

The next step is to make a small hole to set your cutting in, I usually use a pencil or other small item to make mine. This is to keep any rooting hormone you apply from rubbing off as you put the cutting into the pot. Now that the pot is all ready its time to prepare the cutting.

I pull off the bottom two leaves which exposes a node on the stem where each leaf was

attached. These nodes are where the future roots will come out. To help them do this I scrape through the nodes. The goal here is to just cut through the outer green layer of the stem, not slice it to the bone. Once the stem has been scraped I then clip it off just below the bottom node at a angle. I then dip it into some water to moisten it and then into my rooting hormone. Rooting hormone can be found at most garden centers and I've tried several brands, some powdered and some liquid without noticing any real difference between them. One thing to remember about the hormone is that a little goes a long way, don't overdo it. Another thing is don't dip your cutting directly into the bottle it came in because you could contaminate it. Instead pour a little of it out into a old envelope or other disposable container and dip into that, then discard it when you're done. Stick the cutting into the soil and firm the soil around the cutting.

I then take my potted cutting and put it into a gallon ziplock bag. I've also used large clear plastic storage boxes to act as my greenhouse and some people put their cuttings inside clear soda bottles. It doesn't matter what you use as long as some light can get in and it holds in the humidity like a greenhouse. The placement of the container is what I've found to be the most important thing. If you put it where it'll get direct sunlight the cuttings will bake; not enough light and they'll mold and die. Just to prove my point I'll tell you about my trials. I originally tried using a spare bedroom window shelf on the north side of our house, there wasn't enough light and they molded. I then tried outside in the open and they fried. I finally found my spot outside under a tree where they get shade with just a little indirect light. I have also had some luck in other windows on the south side of our house but only if the blinds are partially closed.

Depending on the variety your cuttings can root in a week to six weeks. Once rooted they should be grown out in a larger pot until they're large enough to plant.

The main thing is to be confident and keep trying to find your spot and method. Make it easier on yourself and start with a few easy to root varieties to build your confidence. My easiest ones are roses like Red Cascade, Marie Pavie, Caldwell Pink and Old Blush. Rooting roses is a great way to increase the size of you garden and preserve those found roses that we're all trying to preserve.

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