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GUARANTEED ROSES

by Maureen Reed Detweiler

Here in New Orleans, I used to grow modern roses and a few old garden roses that were budded onto 'R. multiflora' or 'Dr. Huey' rootstock. I also grew old garden roses on their own roots. I could never understand why the budded roses did not thrive as those on their own roots did.

Even though I amended the soil, sprayed, fed, and watered as the experts advised, the budded plants steadily declined. I researched the rose manuals and society journals. But rosarians in other places did not seem to have this problem with budded roses.

Then one day, about 20 years ago, a dear rose friend, Charlotte Haring, gave me a copy of a fine monograph which was published by a New Orleans rosarian in 1954. The work is entitled *Roses Guaranteed* and was written by Lt. Col. Frank Russell Worthington, U.S. Marine Corps.

The work is an 8.5 x11, typed, 37-page booklet, illustrated with 14 charming pen and ink drawings by the author. It details the writer's 25 year quest to determine why budded roses do not thrive in New Orleans as they do in other places. But also includes a brief history of the rose in New Orleans, the rose in commerce, and rose cultivation.

In the preface of *Roses Guaranteed*, Col. Worthington states, "After 25 years' work filled with many disappointments, we have met with a measure of success, because of a determined will to find the key to successful rose growing in our city."

For years Col. Worthington had meticulously employed the cultivation techniques of recognized rose authorities whose specimens were awarded top honors in rose shows in other climates. His efforts were not rewarded; the plants failed to thrive. However, the roses of his neighbors, which were of great age and growing on their own roots, produced an abundance of beautiful blooms with practically no care and were never dormant.

He was determined to solve this mystery. He investigated and found that the neighbors' old roses were varieties which had as their original habitats places of high humidity, heavy rainfall, and rich soil. These were conditions which closely paralleled those of our own New Orleans climate.

He decided to investigate the possibility of growing
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Frank Russell Worthington

