

Please Help Save a Historic Rose Garden

This garden is dedicated to the preservation of California's heritage roses. It contains nearly 500 antique and Old Garden Roses, with particular emphasis on those roses found in abandoned sites, homesteads, cemeteries and roadsides through northern California.. This garden was conceived and established by Fred Boutin, an internationally recognized rosarian and authority on "found roses," and Jean Travis, a member of the Heritage Rose Group.

Members work to collect, plant, and maintain those roses which were popular from the Gold Rush era through the Victorian/Edwardian era (roughly 1850-1915).



Many of these antique roses were brought across to California in the holds of ships or carried in wagon trains by early pioneers to the new homes of the pioneers and, finally, placed at their gravesite. Because roses are propagated by taking a slip or piece of the original to start a new plant, they are, in essence, the same plant. Therefore, roses in a Mandarin's garden in old China or Empress Josephine's famous 18th Century French Garden are now planted in Sacramento's Historic Rose Garden.

Old roses come in many shapes and colors. Unlike modern roses, with rigid stems and

tight, high centered blossoms; the old roses may be flattened like architectural rosettes, open with a large boss of yellow stamens, cupped, with the petals wrapped tightly around the center, or even huge, fluffy and overblown. They are highly fragrant and have been used for medicines and perfumes.

Their hard work was recognized at the World Federation of Roses at their 2015 Conference in Lyon France when the gardens were given Award of Excellence for being truly exceptional from a historical, educational and/or visual point of view.

Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, 1000 Broadway, Sacramento, California, 95819

To learn more about the Historic Rose Garden click on: <http://www.cemeteryrose.org/>

Historic Rose Garden Endangered!

~Charlotte Owendyk

For decades, the Sacramento City Cemetery has reflected the style of gardens of the Gold Rush and Victorian Era.

At the time the Sacramento city cemetery was established, it was a place for families to enjoy while they paid tribute to their departed. The families picnicked, gardened, and enjoyed nature. It was not just a place to bury the dead with a monument marking the spot. Cemeteries of that era were not devoid of plants and trees like our current day cemeteries—which are mostly grass. (As such they do not evoke the romanticism of the past.)



Just recently, the Gold Rush cemetery has been designated as a historic site with new rules that could require a removal or drastic cutting of many rare specimens of which some can only be found in the garden.

Under the guidelines supports for climbing roses must be eliminated and plants removed from grave sites. Under the new guidelines, markers and monuments must be fully visible from all directions. No plants can be within 12 inches of monuments.

The rose garden contains more than 60 metal structures. That includes about 40 arches over pathways as well as rebar supports that are not visible when the roses are in bloom. Volunteers modeled them after 1860's photos of the cemetery.

The rub comes since the existing garden of roses, a collection of historic roses of the period, was planted in 1992. Consequently, it is not necessarily considered historic to the cemetery.

Before the garden effort started in the early 1990s, the cemetery was essentially abandoned and ignored. The cemetery suffered vandalism and destruction. Plots were no longer tended and plants died, weeds were waist high.

Through the efforts of many volunteers working to nurture this historic garden, it has been internationally heralded as a "living library of rare roses".



1079. City Cemetery, Sacramento City.

This 1866 photo shows original plantings of lush roses, shrubs and trees. Some of these roses are on arches or trellises.

That worldwide reputation has brought many accolades to the cemetery rose garden. In 2009, the garden was inducted into the Great Rosarians of the World International Hall of Fame.

“The reputation of this garden is bigger than national, it’s worldwide,” said Stephen Scanniello, president of the Heritage Rose Foundation and curator of the New York Botanical Garden’s Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden. “This garden contains the largest collection of rare and endangered roses in the United States. ... It’s a national treasure.”

With its graceful arbors and trellises, the cemetery garden is true to its Gold Rush and Victorian roots, he added. “Among the most important elements of the garden are the historic climbing roses. When garden cemeteries were first created, roses were an important feature. They were trained on structures, decorating tombs, and planted on graves to honor those who rest in peace.”

Scanniello, who visited the cemetery garden in January, noted he’s familiar with rules in national historic districts and landmarks; he works at one, too.

“The unreasonable and unfounded demands from the city will endanger the integrity of this collection,” Scanniello said. “No doubt, fragile roses will disappear forever.”

Why destroy a historic garden that has won worldwide recognition? The spirit and humanity of the cemetery as envisioned by the founders and families of the deceased will be lost. The approach espoused by the City of Sacramento is sterile and not in keeping with historic preservation of a time and place. It only looks to preserve artifacts and not the reason for a cemetery as a garden and refuge for the living and a place of rest for the deceased.

Stop the destruction of a historic rose garden which is a lovely example of a Victorian cemetery, a place of peace for their departed. As a living museum, the City of Sacramento Cemetery with its historic rose garden is a fitting tribute to the individuals who have found a last resting place in Sacramento, California.

Please help save this garden. Send emails and letters to:

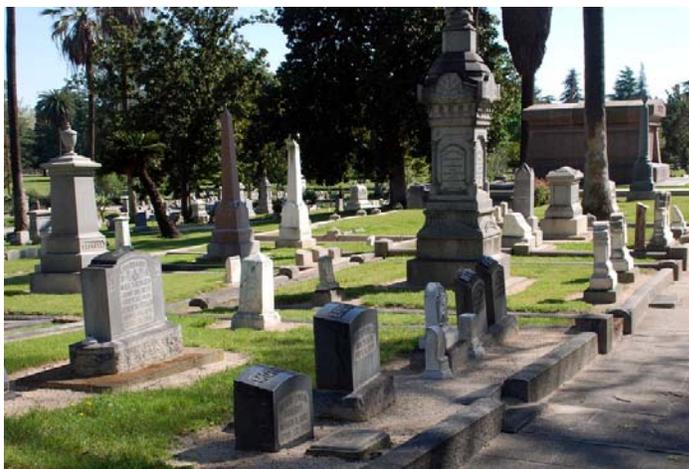
Kevin Johnson - Mayor mayor@cityofsacramento.org
John Shirey, City Manager JFShirey@cityofsacramento.org

Their address is: 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814

Thank you!

Article used excerpts from Sacramento Bee article and Historic Cemetery Rose websites. See links below:

<http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article65582972.html>
<http://oldcitycemetery.com/roses.htm>



What would you rather see?

