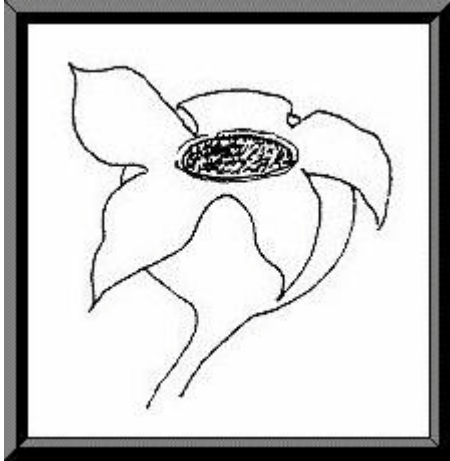


GROWING ROSES FROM SEEDS

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This spring 'the bees must have been busy, for, I discovered that two of my old roses were pregnant! These were Tom Adam's "Blackjack Bramble" (probably Tuscan Superb) and Mme. Isaac Pereire.

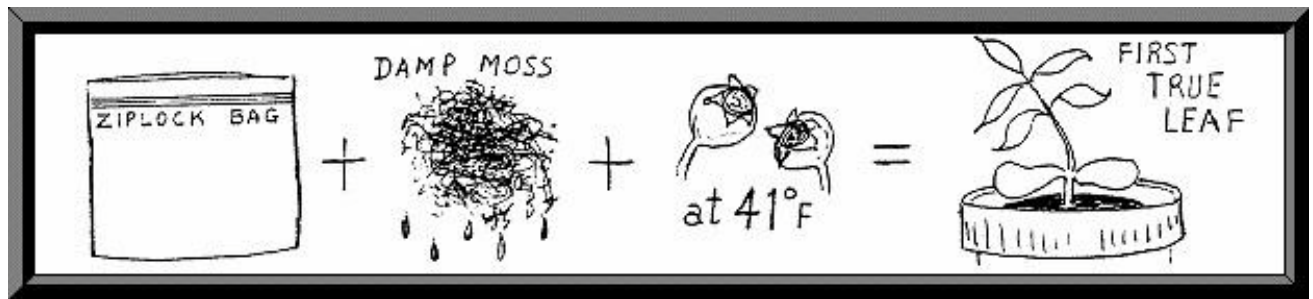


A rose hep (also "hip") looks like this. If the seeds are ripened by a complicated process to overcome their natural double dormancy, and are planted, the li'l Dickens will grow up to be a real rose bush!

First of all, make sure you have a desirable cross. The best way, of course, is not to leave it to the bees, but do it yourself by putting the pollen of one rose on the center of another bloom, and covering with the toe cut out of some old ruined panty hose. This will keep bees and bugs out and insure the cross you made.

Two everbloomers will have everblooming babies, but a spring bloomer and an everbloomer will not, in the first generation. About 15%, with a nod to Mendel, will be everbloomers in the second generation. This is why China Hybrids are only spring bloomers unless crossed again. With this in mind, I will forego raising Tuscany's children, even though "Maggie" was probably the pollen parent. I will plant Mme. Isaac's seeds because Cramoisie was probably the pollen parent there, so chances are I'll get mostly everblooming seedlings. Some roses make better seed parents than others. It seems to me that Hybrid Perpetuals and Bourbons are good potential seed bearers

To ripen your heps once they have formed, store them in the pod for about 3 months in the vegetable crisper in a ziplock bag, with damp (but not wet) peat or sphagnum moss. Then remove to 70 degree temperature for 6 weeks, and then put them back into the crisper at 40 degrees to 42 degrees. In late February - if you can wait that long - remove the seeds from the pods. They will vary in size, but the test is to put them in water; those that float are sterile.



Sow the ones that sank about 1 inch apart in a seed box or in the garden and cover with 1/2 inch of sterile soil. Our very early spring temperatures should be about right for them. Few will germinate and those will be very erratic about it. But what a thrill to see true rose leaves on tiny seedlings!