

Singular and Unique

by Pamela Puryear

After years of rose collecting and growing, and after hours of pouring over luscious catalogues with HTs imperceptively becoming so many colors like a Baskin-Robbins display, the rosarian yearns for a rose, not of shape, nor even of fragrance, but of distinction; a rose at once unique that might never be mistaken for anything else.

The Victorians thought they had such individuals in those cultivars striped, blotched, and edged. It must have taken a certain type of rosarian to grow these when they were introduced, and it really does today!

"Commandant Beaurepaire", Honoriene de Brobant and Variegata de Bologna are closely kin Bourbon roses with fat and fragrant blooms. "Comm. B" is a heavy but single bloomer with "astonishingly bizarre" flowers of light crimson or crimson-pink splashed wand striped with purple, maroon, rose, and even scarlet. "CB" broke upon the rose world of 1874 bearing (as is so often the case) the name of a French soldier on a bloom almost too gorgeous for a woman!

"Honorine de Brabant" blooms on a chunky bush for a loner time. Her flower is lilac and pink with deep lilac stripes. "Variegat di Bologna" a Bourbon introduced in 1909 which boasts white blooms striped in purple. "Ferdinand Pichard" classed as a HP (though probably a Bourbon) of 1921 is like "CB" though ever blooming and on a taller bush. "Roger Lambelin" is a sport of "Prince Camille de Rohan" in which the marron crimson blooms were both indented and edged in white.

It was introduced by Schwartz of Lyon France in 1890. In 1879 the same nursery's crimson Eugene Furst had sported "Baron Girod de l'Ain". The "Baron" has a cup and saucer sort of bloom with white edges, but the contrast is not as great as "Roger Lambelin".

These roses were Bourbons and HPs, and while they may be grown in our area, they are happier in cooler, wetter summers. All are in commerce, but here must be watched for black spot and mildew.

The Rose Rustlers had no hopes of finding these on our hunts, but we were always secretly hoping for the two Prairie roses- "Flag of the Union" and "American Banner". Alas! never seen. Both are obviously red and white striped.

The only striped rose that fell to our clippers was Mrs. Meyer's sister's China, located in Brenham. We got it in the mid 1980's. It's loose bloom had dusky rose and pink stripes, and we study-named it "Peppermint China". Does any Rustler volunteer to see if anyone has it, and discover its "real" name? It is really a horse of a different stripe!

A garden is like those pernicious machineries which catch a man's coat-skirt or his hand, and draw in his arm, his leg, and his whole body to irresistible destruction.

Ralph Waldo Emerson
The Conduct of Life (1860)