



CELEBRATING TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS & SOME LESS FRAGRANT ESSENCES

BY BRENDA BEUST SMITH

"Overshadowed by modern hybrids, old roses have been neglected in this century; but now there is a renaissance afoot to restore the older varieties to their place in the garden."

--"Antique Roses for the South"

*By Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas*

The [Texas Rose Rustlers](#) are a uniquely Lone Star kind of organization whose actions help preserve not only endangered floral treasures but their place in Texas history as well. In our Spotlight Article below, Rustlers recall how their unique group started, and how they helped spread word of incredibly hardy roses that have survived for centuries in cemeteries and at old abandoned homesteads, among other historically old spots.



Even better, TRR's Rustlers helped bring these treasures into public retail so the rest of us can grow, enjoy and help preserve them as well. Congratulations, TRR members, on your 40th Anniversary!

The Sat., July 20, [2019 Annual Texas Rose Rustler Summer Meeting](#) at the [Antique Rose Emporium in Independence](#). will feature two noted antique rose enthusiasts, Peggy Martin and Leo Watermeier. Leo Watermeier is curator of [New Orleans' Antique Rose Garden in Armstrong Park](#), which has, in Leo's words, ". . . grown to become one of the largest collections of 'old roses' that do well in warm climates...anywhere in the country or the world." (Praying "Barry" leaves it safe.)

Peggy Martin and her namesake rose hold a unique spotlight among antiques.



Break for Truth-in-reporting:

- ***My sister Audrey Beust McMurray is a past TRR Chairman.***
- ***I was born in New Orleans so love to promote outside-the-Quarter treasures.***
- ***This spectacular 'Peggy Martin' rose display above (in Crystal Beach) started with numerous cuttings from my own 'Peggy Martin' (which never grew this large!), started and planted by Trish Smith. Her mother Edith Smith is pictured on their porch.***

In 2005, only two roses survived the 20 feet of Katrina Hurricane-floodwaters that covered Peggy Martin's generations-old, New Orleans-area family homestead. One was a delightful thornless spring-blooming rose planted long, long ago by one of Peggy's ancestors. She had no idea of its name or variety.

Peggy, already an antique rose advocate, told her friend, Dr. Bill Welch, about her rose's amazing resurrection. Long story short, Dr. Welch, with the help of the Garden Club of America and other entities, spearheaded a drive to get the then-named 'Peggy Martin' rose into retail trade, with a portion of proceeds going to restoration projects at Katrina-devastated botanical gardens throughout the South. Talk about a win-win project!

Peggy Martin roses, of course, will be available for sale at the July 20 Summer Meeting, along with ARE's full inventory of these historic treasure. Track the history of Texas rose rustlin' in our Spotlight Article below. First, however, a slightly less fragrant aroma.

Spotlighting the . . .
Texas Rose Rustlers!
Lazy Gardener and Friends Newsletter



Three of the hundreds of antique roses we now enjoy thanks to the Texas Rose Rustlers: l to r, San Felipe Noisette, Natchitoches Noisette and Maggie.

COMMEMORATING FORTY YEARS OF **ROSE RUSTLING**

By **ELISABETH CASTRO**
Texas Rose Rustlers
Texasroserustlers.com

“Roses are difficult to grow.” This was a common sentiment shared by many who thought keeping roses healthy and free of disease meant a strict regimen of spraying with toxic chemicals.

A sentiment not lost on Pamela (Pam) Puryear (1943-2005), one of the founders of the Texas Rose Rustlers. In the May 1980 Heritage Rose Letter, Pam described her efforts growing hybrid tea roses, comparing them to roses growing on street corners of her home town, Navasota. She

remembered efforts spent on pampering her HT roses in well-tilled beds with manure and sprayed with benomyl. They still languished in the heat.



L to r, Margaret Sharpe, Pam Puryear and 'Pam's Pink,' named in her honor

Pam soon met a kindred spirit at a Houston Rose Society meeting. Margaret Sharpe (1918-1998), Houston's Grand Dame of Roses and American Rose Society Judge, had been growing hybrid. Before long, others who heard about Pam's excursions to cemeteries jumped on the rustling bandwagon. Trips were organized to find more old-fashioned roses.



The first official rustle was organized in Nov. 1979 at the Anderson Cemetery where cuttings from 'Old Blush,' 'Silver Moon' and 'Excelsa' were obtained
L to r, 'Old Blush,' 'Silver Moon' & 'Excelsa'

Serendipity kicked in. Michael Shoup heard about "rose enthusiasts" scouring cemeteries and abandoned homesteads looking for old roses. Michael's nursery in Independence specialized in native and other plants that survive Texas summers. He could not help but notice roses blooming on abandoned plots and fences. At the same time the "Rose Rustlers" were gaining popularity, Dr. William (Bill) C. Welch approached Michael to grow roses from his cuttings and later those from Pam and her group of rose rustlers.

In 1982 the Texas Rose Rustlers were officially formed with Dr. Bill Welch as President, Pam Puryear, Secretary and Margaret Sharpe as Vice-President.



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Although The Texas Rose Rustlers no longer go on rose rustling excursions they have followed the tradition of exchanging cuttings and helping out in preserving old roses when needed.



At every Fall Exchange, The Texas Rose Rustlers freely share rose cuttings from their gardens, some of which date back to earlier rustles, such as the Schulenberg Rose, left, found at the Catholic Cemetery in Schulenberg. Some of these roses cannot be obtained in commerce and are therefore very special to the group. (See below)

NOTES:

- **SAT, JULY. 20: TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS SUMMER MEETING**, 10am-3pm, Antique Rose Emporium, 10000 FM 50, Independence. Free. No reservations needed Texasroserustlers.com
- **SAT., OCT. 19: THE 2019 FALL EXCHANGE** will be part of the **TEXAS ROSE RUSTLERS 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION** at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 414 E. McAlpine St. Navasota. Dr. Bill Welch and Greg Grant will be guest speakers. Details: Texasroserustlers.com
- **"THE ROSE RUSTLERS"** by [Greg Grant](#) and [William C. Welch](#) (Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service Series). [Details](#).

