



Old Texas Rose

VOL 52 SPRING 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR.....BECKY SMITH

Hi Rose Rustler Friends,

Wishing you a bright, warm, and beautiful Spring! My beds are cleaned up, mulched and most of my roses are pruned. In the vegetable garden, plants have been planted and seeds have been sown. Looking forward to harvesting a good crop of tomatoes, onions, asparagus, squash, peas, green beans and more.

My favorite bloomer in March was a flowering Apricot "Rose Bud." It does not produce fruit, but the blooms are spectacular!

Mike Shoup presented "All You Wanted to Know about Roses" at the Wharton Garden Club in March. Mike shared beautiful pictures of roses and talked about the founding of the Antique Rose Emporium. It was a wonderful and informative program.



My favorite bloomer in March was a flowering Apricot "Rose Bud." It does not produce fruit, but the blooms are spectacular!

I received an update from our friend in Taylor that has been caring for the roses in Robert Stiba's rose garden at the Old Taylor High School. He reported that the new owners of the old high school are converting

the school into a type of market-place with some changes.

This was his report:

"Well, the new high school owners' verdict arrived, on circling buzzard wings...they really don't want any roses there, the responsibility of their tending, or anybody else taking it on. The cynic in my head sez: what remains will be crab and Johnson grass with intermittent Bermuda. 'And, isn't that special,' as Jon Lovitz (SNL) used to say?"

I was very sad to learn that another beautiful rose garden, tended with love and care for so many years, would be lost. But, good news to report!

Robert Stiba and Ray Ponton were good friends and shared their love of roses throughout their lives. Thanks to Marianne and Burt Moncrief, Ray Ponton's daughter and son-in-law, Margaret Ponton, Ray's wife, and friends David and Suzanne Paul, Robert's roses have been rescued from the Old Taylor High School and moved to the Ponton's home in Taylor. An article by Marianne about the "Rescue" follows in the newsletter. Robert's roses growing in Ray's garden is a sure winner!



Robert in his rose garden at the Old Taylor High School



Robert in his home garden with his good friend, Ray Ponton



Robert with some of his rose pictures at the dedication of his garden

Some of the roses that were hybridized by Robert Stiba:



Betty of Dublin



Apache Pink



Texas Burnt Orange

Don't forget to Save the Date for the Texas Rose Rustlers Spring Symposium on May 14-15, at Chambersville Tree Farms in Celina, Texas. More information to come.

A quote from Conrad Tips, "Gardens become art through love." —Robin Lane Fox

***Have a great Spring!
Becky***

Rescuing Robert's Roses

March 19, 2022

by Marianne Ponton Moncrief



The remaining roses being dug up in Robert's Garden.

When Becky texted me that she had just learned that Robert's roses—the few left at the Old Taylor High School in the Rose Garden named in his honor, were to be dug up and destroyed—my heart dropped. I could not bear the thought of it. Knowing how Robert loved sharing his roses with the community of Taylor I could not imagine this.

I asked Becky what she thought of us trying to get them and save them. She thought it was worth a try.



The remaining Mutabilis.

I contacted mom and asked her what she thought about trying to dig them up and transplant them to Tucek Rd. with Dad's roses. She immediately said "Yes!"

Mom called David Paul who had been caring for the roses since he found out about them not too long ago. He asked the new owners of the Old High School building if we could come get the roses and they agreed. He told us the owners felt like David could probably not commit to caring for the roses long term, and even though they would have liked to have kept them, they needed to simplify the landscaping. The roses would have to go. They were glad for us to dig them up. So, Mom, Burt and I made plans to meet the Paul's at the rose garden on March 19 to rescue the roses.

Mutabilis had grown very large, and we decided not to tackle that one. It is located close to the steps of the auditorium, and we are crossing our fingers the owners will fall in love with the blooms and decide to keep it. There were only four remaining plants left out of the 18 (per David) roses that had once been this lovely rose garden.

Now, even though Dad was an expert on all things roses, his family is not. We did our best to dig (well, my husband, Burt did the digging) to get under the root ball. Not an easy task! We can only hope we have not traumatized them too much. Suzanne, David's wife, brought shovels, and pruners and they cut the canes way back. Mom helped, and I did my best with my sharpshooter to help Burt. Now I am more motivated than ever to learn how to take cuttings—digging up a well-established rose is not for the faint of heart.



After a very brief Mexican food lunch to celebrate our mission, we said goodbye to our new friends the Paul's, and headed home to dig more holes.

We have no idea what the roses are or if they will survive. If they bloom, we will put pictures in the newsletter in hopes that some of our experienced Rose Rustler friends will help us identify them!

We did learn that David has also been looking after the roses and some of the plants at Robert's house and has made friends with the new owner. That news also made my heart happy.

Blessings!

Marianne Ponton Moncrief

Interview with Conrad Tips

By Kathy Huizinga

Q. Did your family have a garden when you were growing up? Did you garden or were you exposed to gardens as a child? What about roses?

I was not born to the trowel. In the late 30s, we had a large house on an unusually, for that time and place, large lot, fine trees and lawns. Mother planted wisteria, Hortensia, 'Cecile Brunner' roses, and cestrum nocturnum, sacred to the memory of Jefferson Davis. My father had a small orchard put in—the figs, citrus and pomegranates did well, the rest not so much—and later a quite large bed of 'Peace', the only rose he truly liked.

Perhaps in competition with Uncle Edward Ryan? He had two beds, 13 plants each, of 'Texas Centennial' and the perfume would knock you flat. My contribution was what I called a rock garden, in which I grew dwarf bearded iris, rather grotesque little things but modish just then.

My paternal grandparents were not much interested in gardening, though Grannie Tips was involved in the early days of the Garden Club of Houston's Plant & Bulb Mart, but as a social occasion. Much later I sold roses at the Mart for 30 years with the help of the Rustlers, great fun. My grandfather enjoyed raising sweet white corn and tomatoes, which he did with success, and I enjoyed the fruits of his labor.

Q. Conrad, You said " for that time and place" - where was this? Since citrus was grown I don't think it could have been very far north of Houston.

A. Time and place—around 1940 we moved to Garden Oaks so that me an' the sibs could attend GOES. It was the back of beyond back then, far to the north of metropolitan Houston. We had uncut forest on two sides, wonderful for exploration as small boys will.

Mother's mother—Big Mama, but being Southerners we also had a Little Mama and an Other Mama, nor can we forget Aunt Jake, Aunt Sister, Aunt Sook, and Uncle Brother—had a large garden. Not as a hobby. She was left a youngish widow with a large brood of children and it was a matter of survival. Also fruit trees, nut trees, timber for cutting and selling, swine, cattle, poultry, fish ponds; not much came onto the place and that primarily by barter. And a vineyard. As a Saved by the Blood of the Lamb East Texas Baptist Lady, Big Mama had no use for Drink, but she made wine and spirits, medicine she claimed. My brothers and I appropriated a bottle of the stuff, drank it and got so sick. Our father was amused, our mother was not, and Big Mama smacked our bottoms, then went on to more important matters. The vines were trained on tripods of lopped branches and petunias seeded themselves here and there, pink, white and lavender, a pretty effect however unplanned. Life there was not altogether comfy because Big Mama scorned effete modern conveniences like indoor plumbing and electricity, both of which I quite liked. Then too her tales about the pain of the War Between the States, the horrors of the Reconstruction Era, the rise of the Klan, blood feuds, family dissection unto the grave if not beyond—all too Faulkner for me.

But I enjoyed hearing about her mother, Sophronia Jane Tullos. She buried three husbands, her marriage contracts were the talk of the County, she never dressed without the help of a servant, and had no idea where the kitchen was. "A great woman," said my sister, "an example for all." I don't know anything about S.'s marriage contracts other than they existed. She was a woman of property and required protection, and as Mother said, she was a woman as knew her mind.

About Sophronia Jane: a granddaughter described her to me as "petite, mais tres grande dame." She was proud of her fluent French, though I doubt she had much use of it in the East Texas of her day. But she had a collection of books in French—history, biography, court life at Versailles and such. I have a florilegium that belonged to her.

When she needed cash, Big Mama would allow a certain number of her trees to be cut, but only under her supervision. She would sit in her rocking chair, watching with steely eye, her late husband's six-shooter in her lap. Nobody messed with Big Mama.

Big Mama lived in the depths of E TX, not very far from Livingston. She was land rich but cash poor and when she needed a bit of the ready she sold timber under close supervision. She did not trust the timber companies. About a mile from Big Mama's place was Uncle Billie Hutto's gambling hell and sportin' house, very popular with free spending outlaws of the day—if the law come in the front door guests of the establishment could go out the back door and into the Big Thicket, where nobody with good sense would follow them. Big Mama had stories—the James brothers, "perfect gentlemen"; the Dalton boys, "trash", Belle Starr, "that face would stop a clock"; Sam Bass, "henpecked".

Big Mama was formidable because she had to be. Times were not so great in East Texas and got much worse during the Depression, thanks to the banks and the timber companies. People were evicted from their land and wandered the roads, but Big Mama, who trusted neither the local bankers nor the timber merchants, fortunately, cleared several buildings on her place and took in anyone who needed help. She birthed a few, buried a few, and fostered a number of orphaned or abandoned children. Not everyone could do that, but how many people would do that?

When we went to E. TX to visit Big Mama, we would pass little rural churches along the way and mostly they had what was called a tabernacle. A detached and quite simple timber structure, no walls and a roof of lattice or louvre, used for services during the heat of the year, and overgrown with trumpetvine, honeysuckle, morning glories—pretty. Big Mama had a swept yard, not uncommon back then, the idea was to discourage insects, rodent, snakes, also it would be a fire brake. Imagine the expense of finding suitable grass seed or turf, installing it, nurturing it—country folk would not dream of such frivolity. Big Mama, when she visited us in Garden Oaks, must have been amazed at the sight of endless green lawns.

My great grandmother Rather's situation was quite unlike. Mu was the center of a large and adoring family on a large and handsome property. She liked her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren about her, she liked her comforts (no vase-de-nuit for Mu), and she understood the Theory and Practice of Staff: Aunt Liz, her maid and companion, Aunt Temp and Aunt Lou in the kitchen, Uncle Amos, the houseman, the cleaners, the people outside, and so on. Mu was Plantocracy and life in her house was comfortable. We children were allowed to play in her garden, a spacious square plot, not small and well fenced, never allowed to leave without supervision. But who would want to leave? I always

thought. I never did. As gardens go it was a bit shaggy, overgrown, tousled, perfect for exploration and let's pretend. I remember great unpruned bushes of tea roses, watermelon red crape myrtles, and masses of plants we called lemon lilies, naked ladies, four o'clocks, mourning brides, old maids; bygone perennials. And a big, grand vitex that perfumed the house. Mu did not approve of idle hands. She had her needlework—cobwebby linen and muslin, silk too now and then—and she liked to make sachets and sweet bags using dried vitex leaves. As a bit of cake was to Proust, so the perfume of vitex is to me, still; a piercing memory. These semi-wild gardens speak persuasively to me, emotionally, but then I am not one of those obsessively tidy people. Obsession is unhealthy. I felt a familiar atmosphere when I visited Sissinghurst before the National Trust took it on and changed it, and again at luncheon in Peggy Guggenheim's garden in Venice. It can be overwhelming.

Q. I had to look up Plantocracy, as it is an unfamiliar word to me.

A. Plantocracy: the plantation owners of the South. For instance, Lady Bird Johnson was Plantocracy, her husband was not, hard scrabble ranching and farming in the Hill Country, where the scrabble does not get much harder. Mu by descent brought in the Lees, Jeffersons, Randolphs, Curtis-Washingtons, etc., and her daughter Aunt Mamie, married Henry Austin Perry, Uncle Austin, descended from Moses Austin by way of his daughter.

I wonder where the fruit trees came from—possibly

Gilbert Onderdonk's nursery near Victoria? I recommend GILBERT ONDERDONK, THE NURSERYMAN OF MISSION VALLEY, by Evelyn Oppenheimer. She reproduces his 1888 catalogue, everything you could possibly want in 1888, including a very nice list of roses. "Texas is the land of Roses" he said. I remember that figs, apricots, pomegranates, and grapes did well, heavenly grape jelly made from the wild grapes of the area, in Mu's kitchen by Aunt Lou and Aunt Temp. Mu rarely set foot in that part of the house.

Q. Conrad, these fruit trees refer to Big Mama's fruit trees, right?

A. No, great grandfather Rather's orchard. Big Mama of course had fruit trees also but not as an orchard per se, just here and there. Ever hear of indian peaches?

Q. No, I have not heard of Indian peaches. Are they a peach as we know them today? Or are they some other type of fruit called a peach?

A. *Prunus persica*, Cherokee Peach, Blood Peach, and so on. How it got to North America is a mystery—the Spanish maybe, or maybe not. Anyway, Jefferson grew them and so did everybody else in the South. Grand for cooking and preserving, peach brandy, even food for livestock I am told. The skin is purple streaked red at times, flesh ruddy and firm. Unique flavor and unusually prolific. Also it comes true from seed, which is convenient. I remember from visits to Big Mama hedges of it. Beautiful in bloom. Plants are available online and I have tried to grow it here, but this is not a suitable climate for peaches. Oh the frustration!

Indian peach—I don't remember eating them fresh off the tree, mostly pickled or in pies and cobblers. Big Mama was a legendary cook and all on a cast iron wood stove, but she did do that terrible thing Southern woman did back then, stew vegetables to mush. Hated that. But everything else—divine and almost everything on the table came off her land. Cookery may have been an art form to her, and crochet. She was the World's Champeen Crochet Lady, could do anything with cotton or linen thread, and so could Aunt Emma.

Q. Conrad, just so I am clear on this, is Great Grandmother Rather, Mu, Big Mamma's mother? Or is she from your paternal side? Where did she live?

Mu was my paternal grandmother's mother. The Rather place was located near Sequin and, curiously, my ggg grandfather settled in the area when he came over from Prussia in the 1840s, at Live-Oak Farm. Lemon lily, probably a day lily, don't really know. Yes, vitex is marvelously fragrant, like lavender. The Secret Garden—I remember it well and some of the lady's other books too, she wrote a lot, for adults too. One of my aunts had a shelf of her work, from her mother I think, all the Oz books and on and on

Q. I have never visited Sissinghurst, but I find it fascinating that it would have once been more wild and untidy. How old were you at that time? Can you remember any more details?

A. Sissinghurst.....yes, well, I do have some fairly vivid memories but I think I might save them for an article someday.

Q. I am totally unfamiliar with Peggy Guggenheim's garden in Venice. Can you tell me more about it?

(January 7, 2021) . Miss Guggenheim—oh my. Her garden there in Venice, gardens in Venice being rather rare, but I don't have much memory of it. A magnolia I think, some oleanders in tubs, but it was quiet, private and comparatively cool for an Italian summer. Mostly I studied her, curious little woman, plain, Jewish, not young, but she had a notion that she was a femme fatale, not just fatale but unspeakably fatale. She flirted outrageously with my Scottish friend Chris and I am sure wished me at the bottom of the Grand Canal. I just smiled and agreed with everything she said. Don't recall how Chris knew her. He bought quantities of Italian fashion twice a year for the British market, which is why we were in Venice, looking into the studio of someone who dyed silk to order. Lord, the stink! Anyway, she gave us a private tour of the house, including her bedroom (!), we gazed upon the bed, made for her by some sculptor and featuring insets of glass eyes. Gave me a turn. Her art collection was famous, if not to my taste, and the house is now a museum.

Q. Did any of these gardens (Mu's, Sissinghurst, Peggy's) inspire you later on when you began to garden yourself? At the time of seeing them, did you say to yourself, "Some day I am going to have/do such and such in my garden?"

A. Abundance. As Vita Sackville-West said, "Cram! Cram! Cram!" Yes. If More is More, why settle for Less? We children were not allowed to leave Mu's garden without supervision: the river to splash about in, the sawmill and the cotton gin, the tenant farms, the orchard for a picnic, the cattle but only at a safe distance, and Uncle Charlie's ponies. Respected in equine circles, he bred and trained quarter horses, and was a brilliant horseman, never saw better. As a boy, he went on one of the last great trail rides, taking cattle to market. A treasury of Western lore and cowboy wisdom, Uncle Charlie was the sweetest man imaginable, and such tales! And then we might be taken to the general store for a treat. I preferred pineapple sorbet. A stout old building, it was built as a refuge from Indian attacks, then it was a stop for the stage on its way to San Antonio, and finally repurposed by my great grandfather as a store and post office. Dark and musty and wonderful for exploration.

Uncle Charlie had an interesting, perhaps unique, way of feeding the cattle. Pastures would be planted with watermelons. When ripe the cattle would be driven in, to browse, scatter the seed, and fertilize in a perfectly organic way. An elegant solution. "Improvement" it was called in those days, ever so euphemistically. No Southern man in those days would use Language in the presence of the ladies.

Q. Do you have a favorite book on roses? Was there a book on roses or gardening that had an influence on you?

A. Books: I don't recall being particularly moved by any book in particular—got all the catalogues though—and then I found G.S. Thomas' trilogy. Still have them. Mrs. Drennan and Mrs. Keays, lovely nostalgic wallows for a Southern boy; Miss Jekyll and Miss Willmott and their contemporary Eleanor Vere Boyle, a forgotten heroine of British gardening; Bunyard, Dickerson, G.C. Thomas (I have a soft spot for Capt. Thomas), Francis Lester; but of course politics and gardening are local—Bill, Greg, Liz and Mike; and then there is MISS NANCY LINDSAY'S ROSE LIST.

I forgot: Francis Parkman, a treasury of information and it has been reprinted. The original edition is in that vile wood pulp paper that falls to pieces as you turn the page.

Allyson Hayward wrote "Norah Lindsay: Life and Art of a Garden Designer" —very very good. Not much about Miss Nancy unfortunately but some. We can't have everything I am told, which really is poor management.

Q. Was there was a person or event that caused you to become interested in roses? I remember that you once mentioned Leonie Bell and her daughter Miriam. I don't know lots about Leonie Bell, but her name certainly makes me think of roses. Isn't there a Leonie Bell rose garden somewhere? I seem to think of Noisettes in relation to it. And I know she wrote a book about scented plants called "The Fragrant Year", but I read it so long ago, I am afraid I don't remember much about it.

A. No one really, I think now that it was my discovery of the G.S. Thomas trilogy that prompted my interest in roses, or more exactly focused my interest in roses. I enjoy growing things—I'm trying bearded iris again this spring—but to a great degree it's literary and historical, the flora of old Southern gardens. A lot of documentation fortunately. Leonine: yes, she wrote the chapter on roses and illustrated the book, grand isn't it? And then the garden at Monticello, early Noisettes. She didn't much care for the tea Noisettes. After she died the family gave her research, mounds and piles of it, the work of years, to Doug, but what he did with it I cannot discover. I mean after he died and Miriam doesn't know. Maddening! I was hoping it could all be scanned.

Q. I remember you telling me once that your grandmother used to sometimes take you along when she went to visit Ima Hogg at Bayou Bend. Do you remember much about your visits there? Particularly regarding the gardens?

A. What I mostly remember about the gardens at Bayou Bend—I was very young you know—fountains, statues, manicured hedges, not the usual thing hereabouts in those days. During the committee meetings indoors, and Grannie Tips was a great one for committees, the dressier the better, I was allowed to ramble a bit, but watched of course. Miss Ima was perfectly kind to me, though I wonder now if she wasn't a bit surprised to see a small boy in attendance. But where my grandparents went, I went. Package deal.

I told you that I was allowed to wander a bit in Miss Ima's garden when Grannie was visiting. My grandfather said, with a perfectly straight face, that I must be cautious because the bayou was teeming with 'gators! On mature reflection perhaps not, anyway I never saw them, however teeming, but I was careful. Who knows what may be lurking behind the azaleas?

Q. Are roses your favorite plant? Do you have a favorite plant or a favorite group of plants?

A. My favorite plants are trees, flowering and fruit. I shared that taste with Big Mama, though of course she looked upon them as a source of food and, when necessary, cash. She had little interest in ornamentals. She would talk to her trees now and then, tell them how much she was anticipating the pecans, persimmons, pears, whatever, or she would advise them to produce or else. She always had a need for kindling.

What else? Did I tell you about Miss Lindsay's Rose List?

Q. No. Please do tell me about Miss Lindsay's rose list. And you can start by telling me who Miss Lindsay is.

A. Impressed, Barbara decided to publish it and asked me to do research, editorial work and so on. Delighted of course, I was very fond of Barbara, but she had a collaborator and the whole thing collapsed. A scathing letter from Miriam Wilkins about it—Miriam was nothing if not frankly spoken. But I kept the List, a mimeograph of a typed manuscript and poorly done, full of errors, and I would happily share it with the Rustlers, surely of interest and so unknown. But it is long, 300-odd entries with descriptions, and then it requires some explication and revision. Nancy was a spontaneous girl. So you see it is something of a project

Q. I assume your response is in regards to Miss Lindsay's rose list, and Barbara - might this be Barbara Worl, who owned a bookstore?

A. Yes, Barbara Worl. I saw garden two when I was visiting my pal Charles Knight in San Francisco. Lovely! And so non-tidly, just my cup of tea. Even Charles, who would not have known a magnolia from a dandelion if it bit him, was impressed. Specially by a R.g. versicolor in full bloom amidst a sea of sweet violets. Barbara was good! Then we sat down under a Santa Rosa plum of the original introduction Barbara said, and gorged ourselves. Bliss.....

Norah Lindsay has ascended long since into the pantheon of British Garden Goddesses, together with the likes of Mrs. Lloyd, Mrs. Fish, Miss Jekyll, Lady Salisbury and such, and according to her biographer she was adored by all who knew her. Except possibly her husband. By way of contrast, her daughter Nancy was not much loved. She was...difficult, and riled the rather staid gardening grandees of the day, not very usefully. A talent to annoy it appears. So: a Grand English Eccentric or a Crazy Lady. Take your pick. I admit that she was problematical and not easy to deal with, but I quite like what I know about her. Of course I am used to women with, shall we say, personalities on a large scale. Miss Nancy was also a distinguished botanical artist, an intrepid collector of rare, not to say utterly unknown plants, particularly in the Middle East, and a nurserywoman in the avant-garde of antique rose rediscovery and distribution. Oh to read her correspondence with V. Sackville-West—where is it now?

Barbara Worl was in England sometime during the 1970s and got from James Russell or G.S. Thomas (don't remember which) a copy of the Rose List, that is the roses she offered from her nursery. Impressed, Barbara decided to publish it

Q. Can you tell us about any of the early rose rustles you attended? Or anything about what the rose rustler meetings were like when you first began attending?

Are there any people from the past who stand out in your memory? Any special happenings?

Didn't you tell me that you had stopped at Schulenburg when going to a rose rustle once? I also remember you telling me about your grandfather's car breaking down at that same town decades earlier.

Yes, the Schulenburg rustle. We were going into town I think, stopped at an abandoned house and found Schulenburg Cream and Schulenburg Apricot. My grandfather's Packard broke down in Schulenburg, greatly to his distress. And ours. The early rustles rather flow together now, hard to recall anyone particularly, all very unscripted, improvised, hugger-mugger. Much to Pamela's taste of course. She had a certain buccaneering quality. I can see her as a lady-pirate, the Terror of the Gulf Coast! In a becoming hat. I enjoyed most visiting gardens—The Peaceable Kingdom, The Emporium in its earliest manifestation, like that. Personalities: Pamela, Margaret, Bill, Mike, Greg, Tom and Suzanne Christopher, Libby Winston, the Herrs, so many others, and you may remember that we sold roses at the Mart for years. And Liz Druitt—how did I forget her? One afternoon Robert and I were out and about and we ran across Liz. So back to Robert's house for wine and tea cakes and conversation. He said later, "I like that Liz—she's crazy!"

Q. Conrad, do you remember when you first heard about the Texas Rose Rustlers and/or became involved with them?

A. Yes. Pamela wrote me, she had my address from Miriam Wilkins. At that time the group was called The Brazos Symposium, Pam's idea I think. TX Rose Rustlers was Margaret's. I recall the debate and I think Bill was there. He might remember.

Q. Have you always gardened in Texas? Or have you ever gardened in any other place?

A. Yes, always in TX.

Q. If you could have a garden anywhere in the world, where would you choose to garden?

A. I would like to be 20 and have a garden in any benign climate, that is 4 seasons but not too hot and not too cold, with sufficient rainfall but also with water on the place, a nice stream, ponds, all that, fertile soil of the neutral persuasion, space enough for trees and meadows, and a stunning view would be nice. Also a staff. Is it too much to ask?



VINTAGE CORNER

A Thornless Rose Descended From Rosa Carolina

Robert E. Bayse, Fall 1993

When I first began hybridizing roses some 30 years ago, my prime objective was to make at least a beginning on the age-old problem of blackspot. I had already built up a good collection of the wild roses and had become especially attracted to the healthy foliage of *R. bracteata*, *R. laevigata*, *R. Carolina* and several others. After ten years of hybridizing I began to get a faint glimmer of some of the enormous difficulties involved and my morale began to sag ever so little.

Then serendipity intervened. A thornless rose suddenly appeared in my garden. The story of this rose is the subject of this article.

R. Carolina is a tetraploid which crosses easily with many garden roses. One cross which I made in 1956 was *R. carolina* x *Hugh Dickson*. Among the open-pollinated seedlings of this cross was one which, during its first year of growth, appeared to be thornless. During its second year, however, a few thorns appeared on the laterals. I then grew 15 open-pollinated seedlings of this rose, one of which proved to be completely thornless. It bears the number **65-626**, being seedling number 626 of the year 1965. This implies that the bees carried out the actual pollinating in the year 1963.

It would be nice to know whether the two open-pollinations mentioned above were selfs or involved other roses in the garden. We will never know, but the credit must go to the bees. They achieved in two lazy afternoons what I could not likely duplicate in a lifetime with a pollen brush.

Not only is **65-626** completely thornless, but the midribs of the leaves are perfectly smooth, a property possessed also by its mother. The growth is vigorous to six or eight feet. The flowers are single, pink, small and occur in clusters on strong stems, somewhat reminiscent of *R. carolina*. The foliage has high resistance to blackspot.

My record book shows that in 1961 I made a somatic chromosome count of the mother of **65-625** and found it to be 28. Apparently, I never got around to making the count for **65-626**. But over the last 20 years, its wide compatibility with garden roses, both as male and female parent, leaves little doubt that it, too, is a tetraploid.

Selfed seedlings of **65-626** are generally thornless with smooth midribs. Rarely a thorn will appear. But roughly half will have a few fine bristles low on the canes, close to the base of the plant. This is clearly a throwback to *R. carolina*, which has a generous supply of these latent (recessive?) bristles in later crossings. I would suggest several recessive selfings of **65-626**. This was one of my oversights as an amateur.

But even without first abolishing the bristles, **65-626** has made some remarkable crosses. When crossed with a thorny rose, the thorniness is usually much reduced. Occasionally the F1 cross will be completely thornless. For example, I have thornless plants with smooth midribs and no bristles by using as pollen parents, *Crimson Glory*, *Don Juan*, *Sibelius*, and some unnamed hybrids. And similar plants have also come by applying the pollen of **65-626** to *My Choice*, *Soria Horstmann* and various unnamed hybrids.

One of the thorniest roses that ever graced my garden is a probable amphidiploid arising in 1967 as a tetraploid seedling of the diploid cross *R. abyssinica* x *R. rugosa*, which I made in 1955. In 1975 I applied to this horrendously thorny rose the pollen of **65-626**. One of the seedlings, **77-361**, was not only thornless and free of bristles but had perfectly smooth midribs! It carries genes of three wild roses and has, like **65-626**, easy compatibility with other roses, both as seed and pollen parent.

Recently I grew 36 selfed seedlings of this rose. None had bristles! 29 were thornless with smooth midribs; three were thornless with rough midribs; three had a few thorns and smooth midribs; and one had a thorns and a rough midrib. Also, five of the seedlings showed some recurrence, possessed also by the mother, **77-361**. This may be a throwback to the *rugosa* ancestor, or even to *Hugh Dickson*.

I consider **77-361** to have high promise for future breeding.

The three roses above described, **65-626**, **77-361** and the probable amphidiploid are now growing in the Huntington Botanical Garden. Interested rose breeders having understocks can obtain budsticks in return for any contribution to the Huntington Rose Research Fund. Letters may be addressed to The Curator, Huntington Botanical Garden, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108.

If **65-626** should, in younger hands, be privileged to play some role in the thornless garden roses of the future, then perhaps it should a name. I have chosen *Commander Gillette*, for the navigator on the light cruiser, USS *Marblehead*, on which we both served during World War II.

I cannot close without making an embarrassing confession. I have long known that roses which have been thornless in my garden for a number of years may suddenly, for no civilized reason, throw a thorn. [Ken Nobbs](#) of New Zealand, in his most

interesting article in the 1984 American Rose Annual, mentions such a seedling which grew for seven years before throwing its first thorn. For 20 years I have searched for that first thorn on **Commander Gillette**, hoping never to find it. But last November, running my hands through one of these bushes, I found it! There's a mystery here. Why? And why must perfection, like truth, be so elusive?

Yellow Rose of Texas

By Elisabeth Castro



At a recent plant sale where I was volunteering a lady stopped me and asked when we were going to have more of the Yellow Rose of Texas. She said her mother used to sing that song all the time and she wanted to plant one in memory of her.

Since I love a good story, I went in search of the connection between a yellow rose and the song "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

I found one of the versions on YouTube, sang by Lane Brody and Johnny Lee.

There's a Yellow Rose in Texas
I'm going home to see
No other man has held her
Her heart belongs to me....

The original version was written in 1830 and although the verse may have changed somewhat over time, the chorus remained the same. The Gettysburg College Singers version in their album Songs of the Civil War is probably the closest to the original version.

We did have the rose Nacogdoches or Grandma's Yellow for sale at our plant sale. It's a yellow rose that was selected as a Texas Superstar in 2010. Dr Larry Stein, AgriLife horticulturist was one of the developers of the Nacogdoches Rose and named it Grandma's Yellow in honor of his grandmother, Tillie Jungman.

Back in 1996 a team comprised of Dr Stein, Greg Grant and Jerry Parson began looking for a yellow rose that was low maintenance, a good performer and easy to root. They found several selections but the one that performed the best was a yellow rose found near an abandoned motel in Nacogdoches. Several selections of this rose grew in Grandma Tillie's Garden from 1999-2003 where they were noted for high disease resistance. Of the six that were planted one was different and was selected as Grandma's Yellow Rose.

The Yellow Rose of Texas was not a rose but as legend goes a young mulatto girl, Emily West, who played a role in the defeat of the Mexican army at the Battle of San Jacinto. It appears that the term "yellow" often referred to mulattoes and "rose" to young girls. But there is no evidence that there is a connection between Emily and the song

In an article written by Amelia White for the Alamo Messenger “Who was the Yellow Rose of Texas, Myths and Legends of the Texas Revolution” she explores the origins of the song, the lyrics of which can be read in <http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/adp/archives/yellowrose/yrlyrics.html>

For more information on the original song written in the 1830’s read [TSHA | Yellow Rose of Texas \(tshaonline.org\)](https://tshaonline.org/online/reading/1830s/yellow-rose-texas)

SAVE THE DATE



American Garden Rose Selections™



The American Garden Rose Selections™ (AGRS™) is a national testing program for new rose varieties. The program evaluates new roses for a period of two years at trial site locations around the country to determine the adaptability of those varieties to the specific regions where they were tested. Rose growing experts review and rate the roses several times a year to discover their strengths and weaknesses. The roses with the highest ratings are given the prestigious American Garden Rose Selections™ Regional Choice Award. The AGRS™ symbol lets you know this rose has withstood multiple years of scrutiny and evaluation to deem it appropriate for your garden.

Pat Shanley, founding and current Chairwoman of AGRS™ will share information about the beautiful roses that won AGRS™ awards in 2021/2022 and are well suited to our area.

Pat is perhaps best known for her service as Past President of the American Rose Society. She is also the founding Chair of the New York Metropolitan Rose Council, founding and current President of the Manhattan Rose Society and founding Chair of the Great Rosarians of the World™ East lecture series. She is also an ARS Horticulture and Arrangement Judge, Master Rosarian, recipient of a number of awards for her service in the ARS and local rose societies as well as an excellent author.

Please join us using GoToMeeting from your computer, tablet, or smart phone on Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 7 pm CDT:

<https://meet.goto.com/875520813>

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>



Texas Rose Rustlers Spring Symposium

WHEN: May 14-15, 2022

Details are still being finalized. We will send out an e-mail when they are complete.

WHERE: Chambersville Tree Farms in Celina, Texas

<https://chambersvilletreefarms.com>



THURS., APR. 7: STARTING PLANTS FROM CUTTINGS (virtual) by PAUL WINSKI, 10am, Free. Texas A&M Agrilife Extension event. Register: homegrown2022.eventbrite.com



SAT MAY 7: HOUSTON HEMEROCALLIS SOCIETY ANNUAL DAYLILY SALE, 9am-2pm, 5705 Pinemont Dr. Inventory: ofhs.com/hhs/plantsales.html



Texas Rose Rustlers Membership Form

Dear Texas Rose Rustler friends.

Membership in TRR runs from July through June of the following year.

Your membership supports the organization by providing speakers and venues and include the following:

1. *Old Texas Rose* newsletter published four times a year
2. Three events per year, including:

- Spring Symposium
- Summer Rookie Rustle
- Fall Cutting Exchange

Membership Dues are \$15 per household for one year. Please include this renewal form with your personal check or money order.

Please make your personal check or money order payable to Texas Rose Rustlers and mail to:

**Texas Rose Rustlers
c/o Elisabeth Castro
28423 Wild Oaks
Magnolia, TX 77355-1995**

Please return this completed form with your dues payment. (Please print clearly)

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **State & Zip:** _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Alternate Number: _____

Rose Sources

**Greenmantle Nursery
Garberville, CA 95542**

www.greenmantlenursery.com

**Listing of roses that you can only
order via Phone or by mail
707-986-7504**

**Antique Rose Emporium
9300 Lueckmeyer Rd.
Brenham, TX 77833**

www.antiqueroseemporium.com

Heirloom Roses
24062 Riverside Dr. NE
St. Paul, OR 97137
www.heirloomroses.com

Chamblee's Rose Nursery
16807 CR 363
Winona, TX 75792
www.chambleeroses.com

Rogue Valley Roses
P.O. Box 116
Phoenix, OR 97504
www.roguevalleyroses.com

Angel Gardens
P.O. Box 1106
Alachua, FL 32616
www.angelgardens.com

A Reverence for Roses
7073 N. Lecanto Hwy
Hernando, FL 34442
www.areverenceforroses.com

Rose Petals Nursery
16918 SW 15th Avenue
Newberry, FL 32669
www.rosepetalsnursery.com

Roses Unlimited
363 North Deerwood Dr.
Laurens, SC 29360
www.rosesunlimited.com

This is your newsletter. I'm always looking for articles on your garden, your favorite rose, how you became interested in roses, photos of your garden, etc. Please send them to me at steves223@yahoo.com.

Rose Websites

Texas Rose Rustlers: www.texasroserustlers.com
Rose File: www.rosefile.com (Rose ID)
Help Me Find: www.helpmefind.com (Rose ID)
American Rose Society: www.rose.org (Rose information)
UCI IPM website: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu> (Pest information)
Baldo Villegas Bugs and Roses: www.sactorose.org (Rose and pest information)

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