



TOP: Aenchen von Tharau  
BELOW: Arborétum Borová  
hora above the town of  
Zvolen, Slovakia.  
Photos by Vladimír Ježovič.



# Slovakia's Arborétum Borová hora

Vladimír Ježovič

*A*rborétum Borová hora was founded in 1965 at the Wood and Forest University (now the Technical University) in Zvolen, Slovakia, by the renowned dendrologist and ecologist Professor Pravdomil Svoboda (1908 to 1978). In addition to being an educational example of applied dendrology, the Arborétum's role was to house a collection of native central European trees, displaying their range of forms, varieties, and cultivars.

The Rosarium of the Arborétum was developed under the guidance of Viera Višňovská. By 1970 the collection of roses had grown to approximately 14,000 bushes of 1,000 varieties (Svoboda, 1971). Some of the Arborétum's roses came from the former Arborétum Peklov near Kostelec nad Černými Lesy; others were collected by Professor Svoboda from the Kunratice, Dáblice, Litomyšl, Žehušice, Velim, and Blatná rose nurseries in the Czech Republic. The collection was supplemented with old roses from Sangerhausen, Budapest, Lvov, Moscow, and other cities, and further augmented by purchases of other old roses. Viera Višňovská was responsible for all of the planting, maintenance, recordkeeping, and rose propagation.

Roses were originally planted with coniferous species in two locations in the Arborétum:

- Borová—terraces on the southern and southwestern slope planted with newer landscape roses.
- Čertolín—informal plantings of old roses around a cottage and terraces on the northern slope. These beds receive less maintenance because the setting makes the work arduous.

Reorganization of the garden was begun in 1981. The roses were planted in groups by breeder, with the roses of each breeder in chronological order for each rose class. The collection now specializes in roses grown in the historical area



of the former Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia), for which the Rosarium might be declared a national rose collection. Viera Višňovská left in 1983, and several skilled workers took over care of the garden.

Juraj Labanc became the Arborétum's director in 1990. He developed a detailed method for describing and evaluating the garden's roses. Under this method, both old roses and new cultivars are studied for a period of five years. The new method supplements the previous system, which consisted of collecting and verifying data about individual varieties—the breeder, year of breeding, classification, and origins—and researching literary sources. The Internet is now used as an additional, valuable source of information, especially [www.helpmefind.com](http://www.helpmefind.com).

By coincidence, the most important breeder from the area that is now Slovakia, Rudolf Geschwind (1829 to 1910), worked only 18 miles from the Arborétum, in the town of Krupina. His roses can be said to have sparked the renaissance of interest in old roses worldwide, and they occupy an important place in the Arborétum's Rosarium. Their popularity is also connected to their hardiness and relatively modest maintenance requirements, a plus in today's fast-paced world. It is thanks to Erich Unmuth of Vienna that the Rosarium was able to obtain many "Geschwindroses," and to his colleagues at the Vienna Rosarium, the

Rosarium “Carla Fineschi,” the Rosarium of the Botanical Garden Průhonice near Prague, the Rosarium in Olomouc, and elsewhere.

Today the cultivars generally grow in one area in the Arborétum’s Rosarium. Czechoslovakian, German, French, and a few Russian roses are arranged by breeder in seven terraces. Nine terraces were built originally, but the expense of maintenance and difficulties at the Arboretum have prevented planting of the English and American ones. Creeping roses grow above the terraces, and shrub roses grow around in the grass outside of the other beds. Approximately 35 European species roses are spread out in various places throughout the Arborétum.

Currently the Arborétum has more than 600 varieties of roses, 213 varieties of which are from 27 Czechoslovakian rose breeders (including 70 by Böhm, 45 by Geschwind, 30 by Urban, 13 by Brada, and 9 each by Večeřa and Chorvát). A complete list of the roses at Arborétum Borová hora is posted on the Arborétum’s website ([www.arboretum.sk](http://www.arboretum.sk)). The Rosarium plans to plant new varieties of Slovakian breeders Silvester Gyory (Miniatures) and František Glváč (Hybrid Teas).

The Rosarium has an expansive view of the town of Zvolen, surrounded by forested hills and the silhouette of Zvolen Castle. It is open to the public on the third weekend of June each year at the peak of the roses’ bloom for the Days of Roses. This year the “Rosa klub” in Zvolen put on its third annual exhibition in the pavilion. Children compete to draw the most beautiful rose, and there is a competition for the most beautiful flower arrangement. The garden is open to the public on weekdays from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM from April 1 to October 31.

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TOP LEFT: Eurydice.

MIDDLE LEFT: Ovid. Photos by Étienne Bouret.

BOTTOM LEFT: Nymphé Tepla.

Photo by Vladimír Ježovič.