

## **Note From the President**

Stephen Scanniello (New Jersey)

I would like to say hello to all of our members. This is my first newsletter as president of the Heritage Rose Foundation. Following in the footsteps of Mike Shoup, our long-time leader from Texas, I have some mighty big shoes to fill.

Our 2005 meeting in El Cerrito is guaranteed to be one that you won't want to miss. Gregg Lowery, Mel Hulse, and all members of the committee involved in putting this event together are working hard to make this a memorable conference. Details are included in this newsletter and I encourage you to sign up as soon as possible since space is limited. The El Cerrito meeting promises to be a landmark event in many ways, not only for its valuable information on California's rose heritage, but also because it will bring together many different rose groups. The Heritage Rose Foundation has reached out to all the rose societies who contribute to preservation efforts in California, to make this a groundbreaking conference. Looking beyond the California meeting, the board of trustees of the foundation is working hard to foster harmonious and enduring relationships with national rose groups, such as the Heritage Roses Group and the American Rose Society. We also look to strengthening our ties with international rose societies, including the World Federation of Rose Societies. Stay tuned for updates as the possibilities for new joint projects emerge. As I look out my office window and see six inches of snow in the garden, all I can say is "California, here I come!"

## **November 2004 Trustees Meeting**

The Heritage Rose Foundation trustees met in November, in Brenham Texas, in conjunction with the Antique Rose Emporium's Fall Festival of Roses. At the meeting, the following changes in administration occurred: Gregg Lowery (California), Liesbeth Cooper (Bermuda), and Mel Hulse (California) were reinstated to the Board, with terms ending November, 2007. Pat Toolan (Australia) and Betty Vickers (Texas) were invited to join the board, also with terms ending November 2007.

Officers for 2005 are:

President – Stephen Scanniello

First VP membership – Nancy Kohlman

Secretary – Betty Vickers

Treasurer – Claude Graves

Chairman of the Board – Malcolm Manners

We would particularly like to thank Mike Shoup for his years of service as president of the Foundation. Mike has been tireless in promoting old roses and the Heritage Rose Foundation. Much of the renaissance of the HRF can be credited to his vision and passion for old roses and his recognition of the value of this organization. We look forward to many more years of association, cooperation, and friendship with “member” Mike Shoup. Thank you Mike!

## **Meet your Trustees – Patricia Toolan (South Australia)**

At the November 2004 meeting of the Board, two new HRF trustees were chosen – Pat Toolan and Betty Vickers. We’ll continue our series on “Meet your Trustees” with Pat, this time, and hope to feature Betty in the spring issue.



Patricia Toolan is a conservator of old roses who lives on 80 acres in the Barossa Valley area of South Australia with her partner Harry Makris and four of their eight children. Here she has a large garden of old and rescued roses, species iris and various plants that have been mainly grown from seed. She is a garden consultant specialising in old roses.

For the past 25 years Patricia’s interest in gardening has become an obsession to save the older varieties of roses, iris and bulbs before they are lost. This is ensuring the survival of many found in old cemeteries, old gardens and on roadsides.

Patricia is a member of Heritage Rose Societies in Australia (presently coordinator for the local region Barossa and Beyond), New Zealand, USA, UK and Europe, and also many Iris groups.

She is currently the President of the Aril Society International, Australian Group Captain for Lost Beauties ([www.lostbeauties.com](http://www.lostbeauties.com)), Australian Correspondent for The Rosarians Network eJournal, and has compiled an Australian report for the WFRS Specialised Conservation Committee.

Patricia has written many articles which have appeared in journals in Australia and overseas. She has also spoken on old roses in Australia, NZ and the USA. In 1999 Patricia was awarded the Deane Ross Memorial Award by Heritage Roses in Australia for her work in publicising and saving the old roses. The Churchill Fellowship awarded to Patricia in 2001 enabled her to travel in 2002 to the USA, Italy, France, Germany and the UK to study the preservation and conservation techniques and strategies for old roses and plants in cemeteries.

Patricia is currently compiling an Old Rose Register and a book that will detail old roses of significance and their location, their background and their owners.

A garden is being formed in the Barossa Valley to house the found early Barossan roses, and a cemetery in Adelaide is a repository of found early South Australian roses – both at Patricia's instigation.

## **Ruth Knopf Receives Award**

Stephen Scanniello

On January 10, 2005, Ruth Knopf was awarded the prestigious "1830 Award" by the Charleston Horticultural Society. Ruth, a founding member of the Heritage Rose Foundation and a current board member, was presented with this award for her "exemplary horticultural service and creative vision in the Charleston area." Ruth is the first person in the history of the Charleston Horticultural Society to be honored with this award, named for the founding year of the organization. Watch for more on this in our next newsletter. Congratulations Ruth!

## **Easy Old climbers for Difficult Conditions in Northern California**

Jacqueline Deane Schmidt, San Rafael, CA

When my husband and I moved into our home in Marin County, California 15 years ago, I had never had a garden or grown a rose bush. Our Victorian home had an old mature (overgrown!) garden on 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of an acre, which had received minimal care for the past 20 years, although it had once been a lovely formal garden tended in turn by my husband's great grandfather, grandfather and father. There were numerous very tall and medium sized trees, such as huge scarlet oaks and eugenias over 60 feet high, and stands of figs, plums, ornamental cherries, pomegranates, and privets which had multiplied over the years. Also several ornamental bushes which had grown to gigantic proportions.

Except for a row of rose standards in the front yard, I didn't notice the roses until the first Spring. Then they started appearing everywhere, to my astonishment. A huge (about 9 feet high by 15 feet wide) hedge in the front of the property suddenly clothed itself in lovely, large pink roses – I had not even known that it was a rose bush! It turned out to be all one bush, I am guessing an old Tea, which covers itself completely in blooms in the Spring, and then continues blooming moderately until the end of December. An old cabbage rose suddenly appeared in the middle of what I knew was a Japanese quince bush. Our garage roof sprouted roses which were climbing out of the nearby hawthorne tree. I noticed, out of our second story bedroom window, roses blooming 25 feet up an ancient plum tree. Most amazing, a huge old rose bush, deep inside a dark overgrown thicket, suddenly started producing a roof of exquisitely elegant buff/blush nodding blooms.

So, instead of having to search out old graveyards, I had a garden full of my own "found" old roses. A friend told me about the book "In Search of Lost Roses", which helped me understand what these things were. I decided to try and take care of them, and later I got brave and thought I'd plant some more.

One problem was that our garden has very little direct sunlight, and all of the rose books I read said that "roses need 6 hours of direct sun" or forget it. Well, I had evidence that this was not always the case. Also, we are visited all summer (which in our Mediterranean climate is hot, dry, and hard on wildlife – winter is wet and green and easy) by nocturnal deer which, I discovered, think that rose buds are candy. A final problem is that I worked in

the City, did not have much free time, and did not want to spend what I had taking care of roses.

So, I started planting roses sort of randomly and had varying success. Short bushes were a disappointment because of the deer – a bush that was literally covered in buds one day looked like someone had taken a lawn mower to it the next morning. Many bushes succumbed to balling or blackspot, or just didn't grow because of the lack of light. However, some of the roses I planted succeeded splendidly. I discovered that if I planted climbers inside tomato cages, they would be able to get taller than the deer (our local mule deer are short), and then just take off vertically from there. Some of the climbers were able to do this even in very dark places, as they somehow knew that if they got 6 feet tall or taller, there WAS sunlight up there!

Eventually our 4 story house was covered on three sides with roses, all the way up to the roof; the garage was covered, several very tall trees had roses climbing all over them, and there are roses covering several tall rose arches I got my husband to put up for me.

After a disastrous year when I religiously sprayed all of the roses for bugs, and then noticed that we had NO fruit on the fruit trees, as I had killed all of the pollinators, and very few birds or butterflies, I decided never to spray again. So, I don't. My rose culture is: 1) Pruning: once a year, usually with an electric hedge clipper. The very tall climbers only get pruned if/when they fall off their supports during winter storms. 2) Feeding: once a year feeding with a time release food like Osmocote®, 3) Mulching: I try to mulch all of the roses at least once a year. 4) Water: we do irrigate in the summer, as it doesn't rain here for 5-6 months between May and November.

Following is a list of old climbing roses which grow in my garden, are happy, healthy (without ANY spraying of any kind), and bloom a lot, with the minimal care noted above. These are all roses I planted, so I know their names. I have listed the amount of sun they get now, but, as noted, many of them grew in the dark the first year or two. Lots of the old original roses are also thriving, but I have no idea who/what they are, so can't include them. I suspect most of them are Teas, however. We are USDA cold hardiness zone 9 here.

Name	Height	Amount of Light per day/Exposure
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Climbing La France top one third	15-20'	medium shade except for
Sombreuil	10-15'	6 hours sun / East
Madam Alfred Carrière*	25-30'	medium shade except for very top / East
Banksia lutea	25-30'	6 hours sun / South
Cécile Brunner Climbing	25-30'	2-4 hours sun / South
Pax	20-25'	1-2 hours sun / West

Other, not so old climbers that are also successful under these conditions: Golden Showers, Buff Beauty, Climbing Iceberg, Blaze.

\* Madam Alfred Carrière is the most amazing rose here – it grows in the least light of all of them, while still blooming very heavily, and is always healthy.

## Notes on the El Cerrito Meeting

Gregg Lowery, California

Greetings from the Golden Gate. On a clear, warm winter day in January some twenty-five hard-working souls gathered at the home of Carolyn Sanders in Albany, a little urban village wedged between Berkeley and El Cerrito. While all of us in the room yearned to be out pruning and primping our gardens, we knuckled down to the ongoing process of planning a conference on old roses. Not a murmur of remorse stirred from these tireless friends of the Heritage Rose Foundation. The 2005 California Conference for the Heritage Rose Foundation has been surprisingly smooth in its planning; but the deft irons that keep the wrinkles out are an army of devoted lovers of old roses who hope to share their experiences and their enthusiasm with you when you visit here in May. It was with these people in mind that Mel Hulse and I began to plan this conference in the fall of 2003. We wanted the Californians we knew who have given so much to the preservation of old roses to be the center of this conference.

We felt it was time that the story was told of the past 25 years of rose collecting and old rose garden-making on the West Coast. Years of a vibrant and lively Heritage Roses Group have left a mark on gardeners here. The encouragement of Miriam Wilkins has led to the creation of numerous sub-groups of HRG throughout California.

Since I first began attending HRG meetings in 1978, six sub-groups have arisen. The San Jose Heritage Rose Group formed and began a several year development of their Heritage Rose Garden. Barbara Oliva and a band of old rosers in Sacramento took charge of a beautiful old cemetery, overseeing and protecting the existing roses and adding other foundlings from historic sites around the state. Frances Grate galvanized a group of docents in the Adobes of Monterey to push the state for a sensitive historic treatment of the gardens surrounding these oldest California landmarks. These efforts continue today around the state to restore old rose plantings. In the works currently with the State Parks Department are the Will Rogers garden, the Leland Stanford Garden and Hearst Castle, all developing recreation plantings that include large numbers of period roses. Landscape Architect Tom Brown, who will give our conference keynote address on the history of roses in California, has advised on many historic plantings where roses of the era are called for.

The rustlers of Texas are renowned, celebrated in literature and the popular press. Californian rustlers have always been a quieter lot, chipping methodically away at their cemeteries and homesteads, leaving no rose unfound. Over these three decades hundreds and hundreds of roses have been collected; they sift their way into nurseries and expand the ever-growing lists of "Lost Beauties," saved from oblivion. Our passion has been so strong that some roses, found over and over again at the same plots, beside the same crumbling stones have gone on to be known under a half a dozen found names. Most of these lovely roses remain mysteries; a state we are quite content to live with. Others have turned out to be old roses of great fame; some rediscovered to the world by our efforts. An old house in Santa Rosa provided the historic parent of many Hybrid Teas – 'Souvenir de Claudius Pernet'. On the island of Alcatraz a deep red climbing rose was rescued, a cutting taken when the plant was in its last throes of life which proved to be the very rare and famous seedling of 'Gloire des Rosomanes' – 'Bardou Job'. At an abandoned 19<sup>th</sup> Century factory in Petaluma – 'Elisa Boelle'. On the edge of a supermarket parking lot, where an old house once stood – 'Mlle. de Sombreuil'.

Our progress has at times seemed painfully slow but with each decade great strides have been achieved on behalf of the old roses.

By 1991 when the first California conference of the HRF was held in Santa Rosa we had seen the beginnings of a real growth in nurseries specializing in old roses. Now we boast an overabundance, all of these small nurseries driven by passionate people for whom old roses come first. The development of the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden provided a place for many of our found roses to reside. The courage of its creators to grow not just known old rose varieties, but mysteries as well, is inspiring. Many of us have shared our enthusiasm with friends across the country over these thirty years, and we have shared our found roses and the stories of gardens and the devoted gardeners who tend them in California. Others have not had that chance to share.

But what Mel Hulse and I recognized is that we have at long last come to the age where that sharing can happen very easily. The age of the Internet has brought new fellowships around old roses, and many of the company who have worked on this conference were our cyber pen-pals from around the block! From GardenWeb's Antique Roses forum a wonderful bunch of rose lovers has appeared. For many of them it is their first experience with the Foundation, and their first live experience getting together with old rose lovers! Some of them will share their gardens with us; others will work quietly behind the scenes making sure we do all that we can to make you all feel welcome! And computers will figure in a fun and educational way in this conference.

Lest you fear that this is all about our little corner of the continent, we aren't so smitten with ourselves that we would do this without bringing in new experiences. To that end we have invited several speakers from afar to share their rose knowledge with us. From New England, and the Elizabeth Park Garden in Hartford, Connecticut comes Dan Russo. His work with other volunteers maintaining and preserving the very very rare collection of American-bred ramblers is most interesting. From Washington State, Anne Belovich, photographer, house-builder, world traveler and collector of climbing and rambling roses will delight us with her exceptional collection of Barbier ramblers. And from Australia, the five authors of a new book on the Tea roses of Australia, will offer a glimpse of rose collecting and preserving on the other side of the globe! We look forward to meeting all of you at the 2005 HRF Conference in El Cerrito. Our plans feature good food, fascinating

presentations and the chance to share with new friends and old, thousands upon thousands of fragrant and colorful old roses.

For those who simply cannot attend we have planned the publication of a journal, contributed to by the presenters at the conference as well as by a host of others who have much to share with us. This publication will be a milestone for the Heritage Rose Foundation, and worthy of a prized position on your bookshelves. Watch for information on the Foundation's website, and in the next issue of the newsletter to find out how to get your copy, plus the extra copy you'll want to pass on to that special old rose buddy in your life.

## **Selections From The HRF Auction of Rare Roses Catalog**

Jeri Jennings sent this "teaser" for the auction of rare roses, to be held at the El Cerrito conference in May. The full list is around 100 varieties (as an old friend would say, Wowzers!), but here are a few to whet your appetite:

"Barbara's Pasture Rose" (B&B Propagators/Sacramento City Cemetery Historic Rose Garden) A beautifully-formed, upright plant, that blooms singly and in small clusters. Blooms of a crisp pink, tinged violet, are showcased against clean, medium-green foliage. Buds open as huge globes, and end as flat, five-inch, ruffled saucers, held gracefully on sturdy green stems, with few prickles. Large bloom size and form serve as a framework for a rich offering of fragrance. Collected by Barbara Oliva of the Sacramento City Cemetery, near Cherokee, California, (one of California's true ghost towns). (Own-Root)

'Casimir Moullé' 1910 Barbier (R. wichurana x Mme. Norbert Levavasseur) One of a group of rare Ramblers, donated for this occasion by Anne Belovich. Flowers are purplish-pink, with a silvery pink reverse. (11 Own Root plants, in bands)

"Forest Ranch Purple Pom-Pom" (B&B Propagators/Sacramento City Cemetery Historic Rose Garden) Another wonderful founding from the collection of the historic Sacramento City Cemetery (Sacramento, CA). Sherri Berglund of B&B Propagators, says: *"I've had the Forest Ranch Purple Pompom for 5 or 6 years. It is a typical damask perpetual, reblooming, though not in constant bloom. I'll get a mid-summer repeat and in the*

*fall it has a good show. It is a short statured plant for me; 3ft or so; the one in the cemetery in Sacramento is perhaps twice that. Other than some rust in the fall, it is pretty clean, and I don't spray at all."*

Extremely fragrant, this mystery rose offers an exquisite floral x damask scent. (Own-Root)

"Gilbert Plot" (Jeri and Clay Jennings) (Possible Hybrid Perpetual) This repeat-blooming deep pink rose was collected from the Gilbert Family Plot in the North San Juan City Cemetery. Once-vibrant North San Juan, on Hwy. 49 in California's Gold Rush Country, is one of the true Ghosts of the Gold Rush – with only a few remaining buildings. This rose blooms well in the spring and repeats in the fall, producing fragrant, rose-pink blooms, singly and in small clusters. Completely clean in the untended North San Juan Cemetery, "Gilbert Plot" has some fungal problems in a damp, foggy coastal climate, and would probably be better in an inland environment. (Own-Root)

'Grandmom Schmidt (Donated by J. Delahanty) A pink sport of Smith's Parish. Only the color differs from the original. There is the same rank growth if left unpruned, the same sneaky prickles in the midrib of the foliage, the same lanky distance between the bud-eyes, and the same disease free performances in the garden. The blooms tend to appear in candelabra style with 17 to 25 petals, showing silvery pink inverses and darker reverses. So far, the color repeat is stable, with little or no reversion, Tea. 2004. Delahanty, USA (own-root, 1G) [Ed. note: It will be interesting to see if/how this sport differs from 'Red Smith's Parish' ]

"The China From Adina" (Donated by Jeri and Clay Jennings) – A barely-semi-double pink blend China, much in the style of 'Old Blush' Blooms carried singly and in small clusters, open pink and white, and quite flat. The pink color darkens as the bloom ages. The "mother" plant, in the Adina, TX cemetery, is easily 7 ft. tall, and shows signs of periodic rough pruning (*perhaps by chain saw?*). Roses once grew at the Adina home of Confederate Veteran, R.L. Cain (Jeri Jennings' Great-Grandfather). We believe "The China From Adina" may have come from that garden but no one now living can verify that. (Own-Root)

## On the trail of a forgotten rose

Stephen Scanniello, New Jersey

*Introduction.* Imagine a rose so enchanting that four horticultural journals featured it with full color illustrations; that the doyennes of high society and their gardeners grew it to compete for the highest honors at major horticultural exhibitions; and rose scholars argued over its correct classification. You might expect a rose this sensational would be in cultivation for a very long time. But the truth is that ‘Smith’s Yellow Noisette’ was instead a mere flash in the history of roses. Today, all that remains of this 19<sup>th</sup> Century beauty are a handful of written testimonies hidden away in journals and the rarely seen illustrations.

For several years I immersed myself in rose books, nursery catalogs, and horticultural journals from the nineteenth Century looking for clues to piece together the life of this elusive yellow rose in the gardens of 19<sup>th</sup> Century America. The result is this tale of a rose that is a part of our garden heritage and which deserves to be restored to the lore. This is the story of ‘Smith’s Yellow Noisette’.

*1832 – The Introduction of ‘Smith’s Yellow Noisette’*

I wasn’t looking for this rose when I turned the pages of the 1833-34 volume of *Annales de Flores et de Pomone*, a French horticultural journal, to see a full page color plate of an odd yellow rose. Looking more like a camellia than a rose, I immediately wanted to know more about this beauty identified as ‘Rosier Noisette Jaune de Smith’. The author of the text, M. Jacquin, wrote that he received this new rose from England during June of 1832. Contrary to the belief of his peers, he felt that it was not another China rose, but indeed a new Noisette rose. (Hmm, already a controversy, how could I resist? So I continued reading...) Even though the plate only shows one fully opened bloom and one closed flower bud, he claimed that it had produced clusters of blooms in his garden. Jacquin kept this new rose in the greenhouse for the first winter under lock and key – out of site from visitors. The author claimed he wasn’t sure whether his specimen would survive the Paris winter or not. He also added that his “invaluable” acquisition

would doubtless pique the curiosity of amateur and professional gardeners, alike. I couldn't help but wonder if he was protecting it from poaching by his competitors as well as from the frost? An everblooming yellow rose in 1833 was a rarity, worthy of protection in a locked greenhouse. Certainly, *my* curiosity was piqued. This was enough of a tease to send me on a trek through dusty journals and garden books of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

No, there's no funny sex, no improper business deals, not even a simple murder in this story. However, I did find more illustrations of this specimen. Pre-dating the illustration of M. Jacquin's discovery is an equally detailed, colored illustration titled 'Smith's Yellow Noisette Rose', drawn in 1832. Intended originally for Robert Sweet's journal, *The British Flower Garden*, this plate and text were actually first published in Belgium in 1832 in *L'Horticulture Belge*, in French translation. Sweet published it subsequently, in his journal, in 1838, in English. The illustration shows one fully opened, many petalled yellow rose, surrounded by three buds in various stages of development – definitely more Noisette-like than the plate from *Annales de Flore et de Pomone*. In his text, Sweet credits a Mr. Smith of Coombe Wood, England as the creator of this rose. Gardener to the Earl of Liverpool, William Smith was also an amateur plant breeder. In 1830, Smith had already gained notoriety for his successful rhododendron cultivars, *Rhododendron* 'Smithii' and *Rhododendrum* 'Smith's Aureum'. It's no surprise that he was dabbling with roses. Robert Sweet made the following claims on the parentage of this rose:

*"A hybrid production ['Smith's Yellow Noisette'], from the Noisette Rose, fertilized by the pollen of the yellow China Rose."* It's quite possible that the "Noisette" Smith used was 'Champneys Pink Cluster' and the "yellow China rose" was 'Park's Yellow Tea-Scented Rose', as both were plentiful in Smith's England. If this is true, then Smith's cluster-flowered, everblooming yellow shrub was perhaps one of the first Tea-Noisettes. It's interesting to note that both of Smith's rhododendron cultivars (introduced into American gardens during the 1830's) are still grown today in National collections in North America. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for his yellow rose.

The last illustration of this rose to be released was in 1854 in a British journal titled *The Ornamental Garden and Shrubbery*. This journal was edited by the noted English botanist John Lindley and was simply a re-issue of Robert Sweet's work from *The British Flower Garden*. The plate and text for 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' was identical to that published by Sweet in 1838.

Sweet described 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' as having ten to twenty-two blooms per cluster; the flowers are about the size of the double-yellow China, but a deeper yellow; vigorous in growth; perfectly hardy; readily increased by cuttings; and highly fragrant. These were all the right things to say to launch this new yellow rose to a public that was hungry for novelties. Rosarians on both sides of the ocean received 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' with great enthusiasm and high expectations.

*'Smith's Yellow Noisette' in America*

Within two years of its debut in France and Belgium, a "yellow fever" of the rose variety had infected gardeners from Boston to Washington, Mississippi. News of this new yellow rose spread quickly, and it wasn't long before 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' was at the top of the list for new imports. Offered under several different names – including 'Smith's Yellow Noisette', *Rosa Smithii*, 'Smithii', 'Yellow Noisette', 'Noisette Jaune', and 'Lutea Smithii' – this new hybrid went quickly from the nursery catalogs to the exhibition tables of the major horticultural societies of North America, and some pretty important rosarians were enraptured by this rose.

The trail in America starts in Baltimore. On May 30, 1835 Samuel Feast entered the same yellow rose as both *Rosa Smithii* and 'Yellow Noisette' in the monthly competition of the Maryland Horticultural Society. He obviously had high hopes for his entry; it was the only rose he exhibited in May. Losing that competition he sent in his brother for the big show in June. On June 3-5, of that same year, the Horticultural Society held its third annual exhibition. John Feast exhibited 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' (note the use of a new name!) in an effort to win the premium of the show. He was bested by Samuel who won the \$3.00 award with his collection of Tea roses. This may seem like ruthless fraternal rivalry, but together, the brothers had just started their florist and nursery business in downtown

Baltimore. No doubt they saw these exhibitions as opportunities to gain publicity as well as show off their newest roses, 'Yellow Noisette' was indeed among them. Meanwhile, up in New York, Prince's Nursery in Flushing, New York (today a part of New York City), in their 1835 - 1836 catalog, had listed the cultivar simply as 'Yellow Noisette', priced at \$1.00. They noted that their new rose was able to survive a New York winter and recommended it as a climbing rose. (Ah, a sales pitch reminiscent of modern day rose catalogs!)

It's in 1836 that accounts of the rose's performance in gardens begin to appear in American journals and sales were apparently on the rise. C.M. Hovey's *The American Gardener's Magazine and Register of Useful Discoveries and Improvements in Horticulture and Rural Affairs* was a highly respected journal for amateurs and professionals. A regular feature of this monthly journal was a column titled "Calls at Gardens and Nurseries." Here, Hovey would comment on the state of the various gardens and nurseries he visited that month. Apparently he had a habit of making the owners and gardeners quite nervous; his visits were unannounced and he held back nothing in his reviews. In August of 1836, Hovey wrote of a strong plant of the new Noisette 'Smith's Yellow' growing in the gardens of Belmont, the estate of J.P. Cushing, a wealthy citizen of Boston. The rose had bloomed well the previous season but had been killed to the ground during one of Boston's typical winters. On August 14, there were new shoots already reaching past three feet in length, all loaded with many clusters of yellow blooms. All was going well for Mr. Cushing, until his gardener, Mr. Haggerston, cornered Hovey as he was leaving the gardens. Haggerston was quick to point out to Hovey that the blooms of this rose did not open easily, in fact hardly *any* opened on their own. (*Oh, be nice to your gardener!*) Hovey lamented over this issue:

*"We are sorry to see that this exceedingly fine variety is likely to show a defect which will prevent its being generally grown. We hope some of our amateur florists will try to discover the cause of this, and, if possible, means to render the flowers perfect".* The "dirty little secret" of 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' was now national news and many gardeners answered the challenge, experimenting with different growing techniques to improve the quality of this rose.

Most effective was the work conducted by J.W. Russell, the superintendent of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, then a country suburb of Boston. Russell grew the yellow Noisette and was very familiar with its tendency not to open. In a paper he presented to the horticultural society on March 20, 1837, Russell claimed that the best way to grow 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' was to bud it onto a rootstock; he recommended Boursault, Greville, or Multiflora roses. He assured the gardeners that if grown in this fashion, the yellow Noisette would indeed bloom with perfect flowers. Other gardeners in Boston offered advice as well, soon the 'Four Seasons Rose' and 'Adélaïde d'Orléans' were added to the approved rootstock list.

Mr. Russell continued his research on the roses to serve as rootstock for tender roses, and in 1840 he announced that the *best* rootstock for the 'Yellow Noisette' and other tender roses was *Rosa rubifolia* [sic] (today known as *R. setigera*), our native 'Prairie Rose'.

In Philadelphia, gardeners felt they could grow 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' much better than Boston gardeners ever could. They weren't deterred by the balling nature of the yellow Noisette. In 1837, Robert Buist, owner of *Robert Buist's Exotic Nursery*, and Mr. A. Dryburgh, owner of *Dryburgh & Sherwood Nursery* kept large quantities of 'Smith's Yellow' (as they called it) budded onto the Boursault rose, and grew them directly in the open ground for all to see. (Take that, Boston!)

The enthusiasm for this hybrid as a unique greenhouse plant and exhibition-quality rose eclipsed any problems it may have had in the garden. This rose was selling faster than hot cakes and scandal sheets. Society matrons and sweaty gardeners competed side by side for the cherished Best of Show award, otherwise known as the Premium. The Philadelphia Horticultural Society held its first monthly exhibition in 1838. Included in the competition for the premium for best collection of Tea and China roses were potted plants of the 'Yellow Noisette', in full bloom. The amateurs didn't stand a chance — both Dryburgh and Buist were also competing for this top prize. Robert Buist entered, along with the 'Yellow Noisette', the following Tea roses: 'Triomphe de Luxembourg', 'Madam Desprez', 'Lilacina', and 'Juane Panaché'. But the premium was

awarded to Andrew Dryburgh. In addition to the 'Yellow Noisette', his prize winning entries included: another Noisette 'Amie Vibert' (as it was spelled), and several Tea roses: 'Madam Desprez', 'Yellow Tea', 'Triomphe de Luxembourg', 'Palavicina', 'Admiral de Perrie', Charles Desprez', and 'Faustine'.

Exhibitions weren't the only venue for this rose. In 1839, everblooming yellow roses in the summer border were a rarity, and highly sought after. Even as far north as Boston, where gardeners were still battling the effects of harsh winters and humid summers, this Noisette and other tender roses were popular summer bedding plants. Those with manpower and means would dig up 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' and other tender roses and store them in outdoor pits for the winter. Hovey, despite his negative reviews of the rose, was making a good business of selling standards of the 'Yellow Noisette' from his nursery in Cambridge, in 1840. Around the same time, about two hours north of New York City along the Hudson River, Charles Downing, the brother of the celebrated landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, sold 'Smith's Yellow' and other tender roses in their Newburgh, New York nursery. They recommended using them as summer annuals. In his book *Cottage Residences* Andrew recommended using 'Smith's Yellow' planted in circular beds with trailing petunias and verbena for a cottage villa design. He kept this rose on his lists as late as 1853. There was a strong push for the yellow Noisette as a garden plant from Buist in Philadelphia, as well. In his book, *The Rose Manual* (1844), Buist was at least honest about the horticultural limitations of this rose.

*"Lutea, or Smithii, is a great favorite through the southern states, growing freely, and opening in great perfection, except in time of rain; the colour is of a pale lemon-yellow before the sun destroys it, and is delightfully fragrant, though entirely too tender for the open air of Pennsylvania; it makes a splendid rose for forcing if kept in a high and rather dry atmosphere, but if syringed with water before the flowers are expanded, it glues the petals together and they perish before opening. When I first introduced this rose I could not supply all the demands for the first year, at five dollars each plant."*

Noisettes grow very easily in the south, so it's not surprising to find accounts of 'Smith's Yellow Noisette' in southern gardens. However, the southerners were not as excited about it as the gardeners up north. In 1847, Jas. Waddell, a rosarian affiliated with the University of Georgia in Athens, reported on the performance of 'Smith's Yellow' and 'La Reine'. He referred to both of these roses as "hard headed," meaning they opened badly or not at all. But, a few years later, when he was asked by Downing to submit a list of recommended roses for the south to be published in *The Horticulturist*, Waddell included 'Smithii' at the top of the list. Robert Nelson, a Macon gardener and established nurseryman recommended it, as well — but not without reservations. Nelson stated:

*"Smithii, or Smith's Yellow — it is a beautiful yellow rose when grown to perfection; in order, however, to show its full beauty, it might [need] to be grafted and planted in a rich and deep situation; not a very good bloomer, and rather dwarfish."* Thomas Affleck included 'Smithii' in his catalogues while he was based in Washington, Mississippi. No doubt he sold it to gardeners from Natchez to New Orleans, as it appeared on many lists he generated of roses recommended for southern gardens. Affleck dropped this rose when he moved his operation to Texas, in 1853.

There was always some question as to the true class of this rose. The French thought it was a China. However, Mr. Smith introduced it as a Noisette, claiming that it bloomed in clusters. C.M. Saxton, in his book *The American Rose Culturist* seems to be the only American who challenged whether 'Smith's Yellow' belonged to the Noisette class. In a section about Noisette roses (p. 23), he makes the following statement:

*"But here we have Lamarque, which is anything but a Noisette; it does not flower in bunches, unless every rose which has two or three flowers on a stem is to be called a Noisette; and Smith's Yellow Noisette is about as much entitled to the name of Lamarque. But they are not alone; too many which have no claim on the family have nevertheless been forced on them."* I would like to leave you with a quote from the *The American Flower-Garden Directory* by Robert Buist (sixth edition, 1865). In the section for Noisettes, Buist writes:

*“Lutea, or Smithii – Pale yellow, large double flowers, but does not open well in moist weather; it is a superb article when perfect, and is quite a dwarf, having very little of the Noisette character, but delightfully scented.”*

Hmm, to me this seems like Buist saying to the rose world “I told you so”. Did Buist, whose comment is the last reference I’ve come across in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to this rose, know we would be wondering about this rose today?

For now, the tale of ‘Smith’s Yellow Noisette’ has come to a pause. However, this is a story without an end, the research continues, the speculation will go on.

During our 2005 annual meeting of the Heritage Rose Foundation this spring in El Cerrito, California, members of the Foundation will have a an opportunity to visit gardens rich with the rose heritage of California. Perhaps within the inventories of these collections are further clues to the existence of this rose. Or maybe, in the gardens of the deep south, along the Gulf coast, or somewhere in a protected garden of Baltimore, Philadelphia, or even Boston – grows a forgotten yellow Noisette.



Sweet’s 1854 illustration in the journal *The Ornamental Garden and Shrubbery*.

## Rosa Gallica Association

Daphne Filiberti

It is a pleasure to announce the debut of an English edition of the *Rosa Gallica* newsletters in spring 2005. Two issues will be published per year, one in spring, the other in fall. These semiannual issues will present an assortment of articles that appeared in previous newsletters in the French language. Their selection will be based on delivering the latest information on the historic French varieties, which are the specialized interest of the association. The price is 10 Euro per year. Many rosarians are familiar with François Joyaux and his work as author of *La Rose de France*, which is recognized as the preeminent reference for study of the Gallicas. The publishing of the book rejuvenated a great interest in these historic varieties. The book is both beautiful to look at and is a pleasure to read. The Rosa Gallica Association may be less known and might need a little introduction. The genesis of Rosa Gallica began in 1992 when François Joyaux started the Rosa Gallica collection, known as the Roseaie de la Cour de Commer. This has become an exceptional collection, which currently includes approximately 1,300 roses. An essential feature of the garden is its 300 varieties of Gallicas, making it the most comprehensive collection of Gallicas in the world. The collection was created with the highest principles of preservation in mind. The roses that are selected to comprise the collection at Cour de Commer are not chosen based on their aesthetics but because they are in need of conservation. Varieties that bloom once a year may be more threatened by extinction than others because they are not as popular and are not as distributed in commerce. The association gives priority to those varieties based on their historic significance. Roses that were no longer in commerce have been systematically reintroduced from the collection. This is nothing less than an ultimate achievement for any preservationist. The garden became formally recognized as a national collection in 1998. A catalogue of the Gallicas in the collection was published under the title *La Rose de France* that same year. The Rosa Gallica Association was also founded during that same time. The Association's objectives are to promote the study and conservation of the historic French varieties. Beginning in spring 1999, the Association began publishing newsletters to document and inform others of the important work that was happening within the organization. The

Association is at the core of an important network of rosarians, public and private rose gardens, specialized hybridizers, scientists and so on. It has become a cultural center of study on all aspects of historic French varieties. Its newsletters are a creative and inspiring resource to gain perspective into the rose world. The English edition will be very welcome and we hope you will join. A registration form may be downloaded at [www.rosegathering.com/registration1.pdf](http://www.rosegathering.com/registration1.pdf)

### **Have you Registered Yet?**

The California folks preparing for our May conference tell me that registrations are coming in quickly, especially since the notice appeared in *The American Rose* magazine. It would be a shame if some of you, our HRF members, were unable to attend because you procrastinated until after the registration limit had been reached! So get out the check book and register today! We're including a registration form, as well as a schedule of events.

### **About our cover:**

On the front of the cover of this issue is 'Smith's Yellow Noisette', from the 1833-34 volume of *Annales de Flores et de Pomon* (see Stephen Scanniello's article). On the back cover, we have "Gibson Plot" and "Secret Garden Musk Climber" at the top left, and "Barbara's Pasture Rose" at the top right, some of the roses to be auctioned at the May conference in El Cerrito, California. At the bottom is a mystery rose in Jackie Schmidt's garden (see her article here).