



Heritage Rose Foundation Newsletter

May, 2017

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From our President: Stephen Scanniello

The Heritage Rose Foundation returns to its roots in May with our annual conference in Fredericksburg, Virginia on May 18 – 20. Among the highlights of our event will be a day in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia where HRF charter members John and Marie Butler discovered the

“Crenshaw Musk Rose” back in the early 1980s. In a rare moment of agreement between Graham Stuart Thomas and American rose rustlers, Thomas was convinced that the Butlers had found *Rosa moschata* in Hollywood Cemetery.



The Crenshaw Musk. Typical *R. moschata plena*.

Hollywood Cemetery was the source of yet another musk rose discovery, a more double-flowered version whose central petaloids don't discolor in hot sun, as is typical of “Crenshaw Musk.”

Discovered on the Temple grave by John and Marie Butler, they christened it "Temple Musk." Sadly, the original "Temple Musk" has disappeared from the cemetery. In the spirit of our mission of rose preservation, we'll plant "Temple Musk" on the Temple grave and add numerous heritage roses to this beautiful garden cemetery.



Temple Musk. With more petaloids, few to no stamens, and often a green "eye."

The heritage roses in Hollywood Cemetery have been maintained over the years by the Friends of Hollywood Cemetery under the guidance of HRF director Connie Hilker. Connie has organized our Virginia conference which also includes a visit to the Leonie Bell Noisette Collection at Tufton Farm near Monticello. Leonie is featured in this newsletter, in a provocative piece written by Ben Whitacre. Ben has captured Leonie's passion for roses and her legendary struggle with Graham Stuart Thomas in his candid portrait of this often-controversial rose scholar. Leonie collected many unknown Noisette roses during her years of rose rustling in her Pennsylvania garden. In memory of Leonie and to honor of her studies of the Noisette roses, her family moved this vast collection of found roses to Tufton Farm to create the Leonie Bell Noisette Collection. During our pre-conference

tour, Peggy Cornett will share this garden with us. This is not to be missed!

Friday has a stellar line-up of speakers at the 18th century estate Belmont. On the roster are Benjamin Whitacre, Beate Ankjaer-Jensen, Scott Dean, and Mike Shoup. Then to cap off a great weekend, we'll have our Saturday banquet and auction of rare roses and other "stuff" in the garden of Hartwood Manor, the home of Connie and Steve Hilker. I look forward to seeing everyone in Virginia!

Our mission of education and preservation of heritage roses continues to bloom in New York City with the addition of The Hamilton Grange National Monument in Harlem to the Heritage Rose District of New York City. With the success of the musical Hamilton, visitor numbers to the Grange are at record highs. Our rose garden is front and center, on view to all who visit. So, I thought I would give you an update and a more detailed look at the roses we've planted there. We're currently in discussion with the National Parks Service to upgrade the garden to include heritage perennials, shrubs, and bulbs that Mr. Hamilton requested. I'll keep you posted on this as it progresses. Meanwhile, here's some background on the property, the history of our involvement with the site, as well as a list of the roses growing there.



FSC students pruning at The Grange, March, 2017.



Students pruning at The Grange Porch Flower Beds.



This year's students were all brothers of Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. Posing here by the Circle Bed.

Alexander Hamilton built the Grange. It was his country estate in the village of Harlem, about 7 miles north of New York City. Alexander lived here from 1802 till his death in 1804. During this time he sketched a plan for a flower bed as a front garden for the original site of the house. His design, a circular bed with a diameter of sixteen feet, included spring flowering bulbs and roses. The following instructions to the gardener were included with the sketch – “They may be arranged thus: wild roses around the outside of the flower garden with laurel at foot...”. Sadly, Hamilton never saw this garden completed.

In 2008 the house was moved to a new site in St. Nicolas Park, just a few

blocks from the original 1802 location. In 2011 the National Parks Service approached the Heritage Rose Foundation asking for advice on how to proceed with completing Mr. Hamilton's rose garden. With the assistance of students from Florida Southern College the design was installed and planted on April 13, 2012. Modifications to Mr. Hamilton's wishes for “wild roses” were made to include antique varieties documented to be popular in Manhattan during the early 1800s. These varieties bloom continuously from May through November. We also added heirloom roses to the flower beds near the front porch. When completed, a total of 39 heritage roses, all grown by students from Florida Southern College, were planted. Every spring students from Florida Southern return to prune and fertilize the roses.

Here is the complete list of roses growing at the Grange. When you visit The Hamilton Grange Memorial located at West 141st street near Hamilton Terrace in June, make sure you stop to smell the roses.



The Grange in flower, in June.

The Roses of Hamilton's Grange: Porch Flower Beds:

Autumn Damask: date of origin pre 1600. Used in medicines and cooking; two plants planted in 2012

"Ethel Yount's White:" found in the garden of Malcolm Manners' grandmother Ethel Yount north of Pittsburgh, PA. Thought to be the ancient *Rosa alba* from pre-1600; medicinal; two on site



Ethel Yount's White.



Manners siblings Crystal (Long), Rosemary, and Malcolm, pruning "Ethel Yount's White" in the Porch Flower Bed. (photo by Stephen Scanniello)

Kazanlik - pre-1600; still grown today to make rose oil for the perfume industry; one on site

"Belfield" - discovered at Belfield, Bermuda; thought to be the original red rose from China, *Rosa chinensis semperflorens*; one on site

"St. David's" - discovered on St. David's Island in Bermuda; of unknown origins

Rosa roxburghii (single petaled): from Asia; in US around 1814; one on site

Rosa roxburghii (double petaled); ditto above

Rosa roxburghii "Spineless"- discovered in Lynchburg, Virginia; one on site



Carl Cato's "Spineless Chestnut" refers to the calyx. Stems are as prickly as any *R. roxburghii*.

Circle Bed Rose Garden:

Old Blush - first grown in US late 1700s; pink rose from China; 5 planted

The following "found" varieties of *Rosa moschata*, a species rose first illustrated around 1576; important medical plant

"Crenshaw Musk" found on the grave of a Revolutionary War family in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond Virginia; one planted

"Elmwood Musk" found in Elmwood cemetery, in Charlotte, North Carolina; one planted

"Graham Thomas Musk" found in England; one planted

"Saluda" found in Saluda South Carolina by Ruth Knopf; one planted

"Temple Musk" found in Hollywood Cemetery, Virginia; one planted

Champneys' Pink Cluster - first American hybrid rose, 1802; parents were Old Blush and *Rosa moschata*; five plants

Blush Noisette - from France, 1814; five plants

Mary Washington - according to legend George Washington created this rose. This is probably not true, but the rose was found at Mt Vernon around 1891; five plants

Stanwell Perpetual - from England, early 19th century; three plants



Champneys' Pink Cluster.



Graham Thomas's Musk. Typical *R. moschata moschata*, as painted by Redouté.



Blush Noisette.



Stanwell Perpetual.

Photos for this article by Malcolm Manners except as otherwise noted.

La Roseraie du Désert

Anita Clevenger and Becky Hook

If you are a lover of Teas, Chinas, and Noisettes, or interested in unknown roses of Chinese Heritage, you may be familiar with La Roseraie du Désert in the south of France and the work of its owners, John and Becky Hook. At the Huntington "No Rose is Safe" conference on Oct 1, 2016, Becky spoke about creating the nursery, some of the successes and challenges it brought them, the eventual creation of collection of four different rose groups and how a passion for saving these old varieties has shaped their future plans.



Nancy Hayward at La Roseraie du Désert.

According to Becky, "The decision to start a rose nursery in France was an easy one to make; who wouldn't want to move to the south of France and grow roses?" But turning this dream into reality was not so easy. "Finding the right place was not very difficult, but purchasing it proved to be quite complicated and gave us one of many insights into the administrative world of the French." The sale finally was completed after many months "and a little intervention from a French friend."



La Roseraie du Désert.

John and Becky wanted to create a display garden that would also act as "the mother stock for all our propagation. We felt that if people could see the plants growing they would be able to appreciate their qualities and better visualise them for their own use." (They created terraces and pergolas, planting the roses about 1.5 meters apart.) Roses thrived in the heavy rich clay soil, although occasionally in the winter they had to "rescue a drowning plant as it sunk into its hole." Despite the fact that several parcels of their land were called Le Désert, there have been few times that they have needed to water the garden.



La Roseraie du Désert.

Becky said, "The first few years were full of excitement as we watched the roses grow and burst into flower. It was

a revelation to see so many variations of colour and flower forms. Especially with the Teas, there is an almost delicate tenderness about them and their distinct fragrance is unlike many other rose varieties." However, as they got to know the plants, they began to see that there were many mistaken identities. "Trying to find the correct identification for the misnamed roses became something of a passion for John and I think this led him on to be curious about the roses he would see out on his bike rides and was soon collecting. Most of these arrived in the nursery via John's drinking bottle, either with or without the permission of the owner of the rose."



La Roseraie du Desert.

Although most roses in Europe are propagated by grafting, the Hooks grew their roses own root. They took them to plant fairs to get their name about and try to sell some roses.

Gathering the collection was relatively easy. "John had done his homework and knew where to buy many of the roses we wanted in order to establish a collection of Teas, Chinas and Noisettes. Once we had acquired everything that was commercially available, we approached the major gardens throughout Europe – L'Hay-les-Roses and Tête d'Or in France, Sangerhausen in Germany, Cavriglia in

Italy and finally Mottisfont in the UK. We obtained cutting material from all of these gardens, even if it was a duplication of something we already had because you never knew, one of them might be incorrect or turn out to be something altogether different and interesting."



Etoile du Portugal at La Roseraie du Desert.

John and Becky "began to realise that many of these incorrect roses could potentially be long lost varieties so we made a point of saving everything until we were sure that they duplicated another rose in our collection. We filled the field adjacent to the garden with "study roses" and began the long process of observing and comparing." While the provenance of roses and their identification is very interesting to heritage rose enthusiasts and preservationists, it is of less interest to the general public or commercially.



Labatut Tea at La Roseraie du Desert.

As the Hooks became a little better known, they began to have more contact with “the rose world.” Many of these contacts became friends and also provided them with an abundance of new varieties from all over the world. They acquired quite a few roses from Australia, where many of their found roses turned out to be varieties lost in Europe, such as Hugo Roller, Bardou Job, and Papa Gontier. They obtained the true Mme Falcot from India thanks to Viru and Girija Viraraghavan, who have also been very generous in sending cutting material of found roses as well as their own creations.



Madiran Climber at La Roseraie du Desert.

Chinese Heritage roses “just seemed to find their way to us, mostly through Helga Brichet who had established close ties both with Japan and China.”

They also continued to collect found roses. John retrieved “many roses that have been growing in abandoned farmyards, over crumbling walls by the side of the road but rarely in a cemetery; these are usually very well tended and in current use, and most of the flowers are plastic!” More than twenty roses have been added to their collection in the hopes of identifying them.

Identification is a slow and tentative process. “We continue to try to identify the found and mislabeled roses by comparing to correctly named varieties in our collection and using a database of historic information to help with our searches. Sometimes, we may have an inkling that a study rose might be a notorious extinct rose but this can cloud one’s judgment and lead to hasty decisions being made, so it is important not to be swayed by these early ideas. There is also the danger of equating too readily to an existing variety.” While one may never know if a name is right, the Hooks believe that “giving them a valid name hopefully helps to keep them in circulation even if the ID is eventually shown to be false.”

Becky observed, “I see this identification issue as a thorny one because it can occasionally lead to bad feelings (and unpleasant or unhelpful comments) when there is disagreement with another’s observations. The science around identification is not absolute yet and in the meantime it is preferable to keep an open mind about rose ID and concentrate on keeping them in circulation. We can do this by growing them in our gardens, private and public.”

What started out as a business turned into “something of an obsession.” La Roseraie du Desert “has become just as much a means to preservation as a viable business.” The Hooks have found that it

has become too difficult to preserve the collection, the display garden, and the business. They plan to sell their property in France and relocate to northern California "where we will set up a downscaled version of La Roseraie du Désert." They have already been importing roses to the United States, not easy to do, but they have managed to learn how to navigate the export labyrinth by paying strict attention to the rules. At their new nursery, they plan to restrict propagation to "the varieties that are currently unavailable in the US and of course are part of our collection, the Teas, Noisettes, Chinese Heritage and some of the Hybrid giganteas." The Hooks look forward to being closer to their two children, both of whom live on the West Coast, and to "like minded rose enthusiasts."

Becky said, "One of the best aspects of our 14 years in this business has been the contacts we have made with so many amazing people from all over the world, all doing their part to promote a wealth of roses that deserve a place in our gardens. The heritage rose community has done a tremendous job to bring us this far and we need to find ways to build on their dedication and enthusiasm."

While the Hooks plan to continue selling roses, Becky says "I don't think it is for everyone nor is it likely to make you a fortune. Having a reasonably limited focus on the roses we grow has helped contain our project (if one considers 800+ roses contained)." In California, "Our next venture will be about preservation, research and topping up the retirement coffers. The future for Heritage roses should be secure if, in the end, we let the roses speak for themselves."

Photos for this article by Becky Hook.

A Perspective of Chinese Heritage Roses

Becky Hook

We never set out to collect the Chinese Heritage roses, they just seemed to find their way to us, mostly through Helga Brichet who had established close ties both with Japan and China and having been given, over the years, roses from the collections of Yoshihuro Ueda and Mikinori Ogisu in Japan and Guoliang Wang in China, she passed most of these on to us as well as other nurseries in Italy. Helga has been a tremendous supporter of our efforts from the early days, you could say our first ambassador as well as being extremely generous both with plants and her expertise. She once invited John to give a talk to a small group in Italy and this is where he realised that public speaking was not for him! The rose world can thank many people for bringing these roses to the West and our attention but I think Helga deserves a special mention.

The Chinese have been breeding roses since before the 8th century and records show they bred repeat blooming double flowered forms since the 10th century. Countless varieties had been bred and lost before the Western plant explorers discovered these repeat-blooming roses. The two main groups are the traditional China types as currently in circulation and the Tea types.

The Tea type is of particular interest to us as we think these have a significant bearing on the Teas that were bred in Europe during the 19th century. Although it is generally argued that the European Teas originated from 'Hume's Blush' crossed with 'Parks Yellow' this doesn't really explain the large variation

of the early Teas. We believe that many more of the Chinese Tea types were used in the early breeding and there is some indication that French breeders were travelling to Italy to obtain them from Italian missionaries who at the time were active in China (along with the Portuguese).

The Yue Yue Hong group is most like our Chinas and they all tend to be good repeat bloomers.

A few varieties of this type were introduced to the west around the beginning of the 19th century, such as 'Rosa indica Sempervirens', 'Miss Lowes Variety' and 'Old Blush'. We have received many from this group and a few from Dr. Wang's garden, some of which have study names from the position they came from in the garden, i.e. "Schenzen Dogs" and "Schenzen Front Red", etc. Identification is not easy without more detailed documentation (such as an English version of Dr. Wang's book, "Old Roses of China", sadly not yet available). Although in Wang Guoliang's article in the Rosa Mundi book "Mystery Roses Around the World," he gives some general descriptions which one can try to narrow down their identities. One of these roses that we grow which I especially like has the study name of Yue Yue Hong but there are six roses (at least) that have Yue Yue Hong as part of their name; by process of elimination we think it might be Xiao Ye Yue Yue Hong. Others within this group are Yuki's Dream, Nanjing N92 and L19 Laos, the latter found by Dr. Ueda in Laos in 1999 and probably originating from the Yunnan province.

Next there is the Tea Group. These are likely to be large flowered (usually fragrant) borne singly or in small clusters; bushes are medium to large, slightly sprawling but a few are more upright, almost Hybrid Tea-like in

appearance, such as Ji Nang and Sui Mei Ren, these two are said to date from the Ming Dynasty. These very early ones demonstrate that the rose breeding done by the Chinese was quite sophisticated for its time. Hundreds of these have been documented. Here you will see a few pages from a document named "Chinese Ancient Roses list in Qing Dynasty." As you can hopefully see they can have pretty fanciful names. [ed. note: This article is a summary of Becky's talk at the Huntington HRF conference, with slides. The slide of the ancient roses list is not reprinted here.]

And a third lesser known group, the *R. multiflora* var. *cathayensis* group; these are generally climbers or vigorous shrubs, often very fragrant. We are not very familiar with this group but have one that was given to us by Dr. Wang which we believe is 'Zi Hua Fen Tuan', a once-flowering climber with clusters of large purple flowers, probably closely related to 'Turner's Crimson Rambler' (or in China 'Ten Sisters').

Here is a more comprehensive list of the various Chinese Heritage roses that we have acquired:

CHINA TYPES

5 yuan

Fen Zhang Lu

Holiday Home climber

Kakinada Red

L19 Laos

N 92 Nanjing

Qing Yuan Blush China

Rosa bracteata x chinensis

Schenzen Cramoisi Climber

Schenzen Dogs

Schenzen Front Red

Schenzen Second Red

White Pearl in Red Dragon's Mouth (Chi Long Han Zhu)

Yue Yue Hong

Yuki's Dream

Zi Yan Fei Wu

TEA TYPES

Chang Zhou Rose Garden
 Chun Shui Lu Bo
 Hume's Blush (Laos form)
 Ji Nang
 Jin Pin Fan Lu
 Mt. Omei Sichuan
 Pale China from Nanjing
 Ping Dong Yue
 Red China from Nanjing
 Sui Mei Ren (or Shui Mei Ren)
 Telengana Pink – found in India but of this type
 Tian Nu Guang
 Topsy Imperial Concubine
 Xiang Fen Lian

The Lioness and the Musk Rose Benjamin Whitacre

In summer, 1987, an Ivy League educated garden writer traveled to the Philadelphia suburb Conshohocken to meet the subject of his first book. He expected a scene from a British soap opera, with tidy displays of roses and a grande dame in a wind-swept gown. Instead, he found a museum's worth of savage flowers scrambling to the top of a ruined abbey, guarded by a Richard Nixon-headed gargoyle. Behind the gothic ornaments, his jean-clad hostess presided over a historic farmhouse where she had raised seven children after trading in thoughts of life as a nun for a career as a botanical illustrator and author.

Léonie Bell, then 63 years old, invited Thomas Christopher to her home to discuss *In Search of Lost Roses*. Christopher planned to use her as the lynch pin for stories about a group of American rose collectors — "rose rustlers" who investigated graveyards and abandoned landscapes for forgotten

roses. Christopher was unanimously referred to Bell as the head of the movement.

But Bell's new protégé struggled to earn her trust. As Christopher would write, the cut-throat tactics that crept into the convivial society of rosarians matched those of art, business, or politics. He quickly learned how far a devotee might go for a flower if it were a missing relic of Rome, Islam, and European monarchy, or a subject of Shakespeare and an ornament of Christ, as Bell's, and her rivals', quarry had been.

It had taken more than a year for Christopher to earn permission to visit. Bell spent three days with him discussing the rediscovery and spread of old roses, and how she had struggled for them. Her careful style and musical voice, which friends describe as "Joan Crawford without the rough edges," was all romance, but she tried to stick to science.

"I seem at last to have succeeded in getting people to look at the green parts of the rose, those botanical parts underneath that are so important to an identification," Bell told Christopher in response to a question about her most important achievement.

But another narrative seized Christopher's imagination. Bell had spent the past 20 years at war with the eminent English botanist Graham Stuart Thomas, a former mentor and fellow rose rustler who failed to credit her for research on *Rosa moschata*, the Musk Rose of the Renaissance and the Elizabethans, Coroneola to the Romans and Nesrin in Arabic.

A few months later, Christopher sent Bell a draft of what would have been the first chapter of his book.

"This is a serious invasion of privacy," she wrote over a psychoanalytic passage,

before changing her mind. Descriptions of her smoldering black eyes could stay. But she wanted to dictate changes, often through imperious attacks on Christopher and his writing.

It did not work. Christopher dropped Bell. *In Search of Lost Roses* remains the classic on American rose rustling and the Musk Rose. Instead of a chapter on Bell, it features Thomas, credited with Bell's work.

Three decades earlier, the drama that concluded with Christopher's book began with another letter from protégé to mentor. On October 9, 1956, Bell wrote Thomas with her unpublished findings on the Musk Rose — the species that parented the first repeat-blooming old garden roses over 3,000 years ago, and later the first American rose class.

Bell wrote: "I do not know what you will think, from the various references quoted as to the blooming time of the ancient Musk Rose, but I feel certain that what you have called 'Moschata autumnalis' is Parkinson's 'Moschata multiplex.' Never having seen any reference to August bloom of Musk roses in any modern books, you can imagine my astonishment to find it repeatedly in these old books ... I cannot help wondering what is sold these days for Moschata. In this country, *Rosa Brunonii* is the musk rose, and far too vigorous for small gardens."

A separate attachment included references to the Musk Rose in old herbals.

Thomas responded: "First let me say how delighted I was to get your letter. It was good of you to write at such length... I am most interested to have your findings on the Musk Rose. I think you have undoubtedly found the answer. Over here at Kew and elsewhere we have undoubtedly again the true old musk; the Kew plant was planted so far

as my memory goes in 1780 ... but don't rely on me yet regarding moschatas! I will try to check your careful description next summer."

Thomas followed up on Bell's letter. The monstrous plant at Kew was *Rosa brunonii*. Six years later, Thomas located a specimen of *R. moschata* Herrm., the true Musk Rose. In his accounts, he took credit for Bell's contributions in addition to his own. By the time Thomas took Bell's place in Christopher's book, the recovery of the Musk Rose ranked as the greatest rose find of the century.

For years, Bell refused to acknowledge Thomas' recovery of *Rosa moschata*, writing as late as 1967 that it probably went extinct. But she continued to correspond with Thomas, noting her 19-year-old protégé Douglas Seidel's discovery of the Musk Rose in a 1480 Italian painting. Thomas added a photo of it to later editions of his book, again with no mention of Bell.

Then the felt gauntlet came down. Bell finished her first book as a writer. *The Fragrant Year* featured dozens of plants Thomas exported to her, some of them ordered in the Musk Rose letter. Thomas published a review, splicing praise with criticism, ignoring a private note that outlined Bell's dilemmas with classification. The reasonable critique on botanical points affected Bell more than superlative praise for her illustrations, which Thomas called "faultless."

On July 9, 1968, she sent a copy of the review to Seidel, along with a letter.

"Dear Douglas - ... As for 'Fantin Latour' and 'Du Maitre d'Ecole,' they are precisely where I wanted them, following an explanation of the Hybrid China classification. I thought this rather snide of him, but had to smile when he stated that both are 'well documented roses' — HIS documentation! He doesn't realize I do my own, and that he has

CROSSED SWORDS. I do not consider him to be a botanist."



Léonie Bell with Douglas Seidel, 1968.

In addition to the velvet-gloved review, Bell noticed that Thomas removed her from new editions of his books, which formerly listed her as a general correspondent.

The slight may have been what Bell needed. Thomas had been her idol. She identified her first rose using his essays. Without him, she became her own authority. From 1968 on, Bell published a stream of essays in American and British journals, culminating in a position as editor of a series of fresh editions of rare rose books. In an attempt to bring scientific rigor to the rose rustling movement, she began a text on rose morphology and identification, which she hoped to arouse enthusiasm for through Christopher's *In Search of Lost Roses*. When Christopher ignored her focus on botany in favor of anecdotes, she scolded him — "I could not

understand how you could have left that out, the one truly relevant thing I had to say!"

With fellow rose rustler Carl Cato, Bell restored another part of the Musk Rose story: *Rosa moschata*'s American children. Cato found 'Champneys' Pink Cluster,' the first Noisette, on an old farm in Virginia. Bell identified it. The deliciously fragrant, profusely reblooming rose kicked off the American tradition of rose breeding at the beginning of the 19th century. But by Bell's era, the founding cultivar was as mixed up as the Musk Rose. Until Cato and Bell sent their rose to the Huntington Botanical Garden, experts agreed with Thomas that the first Noisettes only bloomed once. Today, most commercial specimens are clones of Cato and Bell's rose.

Despite Bell's success as what she called "an old roser," her uncredited role in Thomas's *Rosa moschata* triumph haunted her. Rosarian friends made the first American sightings of the Musk Rose, all hailing Thomas as their inspiration. They did not know the person exploring old gardens and cemeteries with them had given Thomas almost everything but the Musk Rose itself. Bell kept the story from all but her most devoted disciples.

During her last years, Bell was reminded of *Rosa moschata* more often. "I am still furious with Graham [Thomas] ... we could have settled the matter amicably," Bell wrote to her protégé Arthur Tucker in 1989, a month after she found out Thomas had replaced her in *In Search of Lost Roses*. "But over the years I have discovered with Graham that what he wants most is to appear right in print." A few paragraphs later Bell gushed over a new edition of Basilius Besler's 1613 *Hortus Eystettensis*, which included an illustration of the Musk Rose

and an intriguing twist to its history — Besler considered it ancient even in 1613, writing that it had been lost before and recently rediscovered.

Bell died in 1996, four years after suffering a brain aneurism. Her family and protégés established a Noisette garden in her memory, complemented with every form of *Rosa moschata*.

Thirty years earlier, in her first article, "An Artist Looks at a Rose," Bell wrote that she had "the soul of a terrier." Thomas Christopher took that as the title for his unpublished chapter. But those who knew her upgraded the epithet to "the soul of a lioness" — a better fit for her personality and a play on her name Léonie, which means lioness.

"[Bell] would grab a hold of something and she wouldn't let it go until she found a solution — and she was good at hunting. Rose hunting. She could look at an area from 200 yards away and tell if there was anything worth rustling," said Seidel, who took up Bell's interest in the Musk Rose, identifying a specimen that may be the oldest in America.

But nobody praised Léonie Bell more eloquently than Graham Stuart Thomas. In the same review of *The Fragrant Year* that raised lack of attribution to hostilities, Thomas, also a highly regarded botanical illustrator, called her drawings "the best I have seen for many a year, if indeed they have ever been surpassed for exquisite botanical detail combined with consummate artistry."

Special thanks to Rev. Douglas T. Seidel and Dr. Arthur O. Tucker for providing unpublished documents and to the curation and archives departments of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.



Bell's drawing of "Kazanlik" ('Bella Donna') was considered by Graham Thomas to be the best of the *Fragrant Year* illustrations that he praised as "faultless" and "the best I have seen for many a year, if indeed they have ever been surpassed for exquisite botanical detail combined with consummate artistry."

Select Historical References to the Musk Rose, *Rosa moschata* Herrm.

ca. 1000 BC. According to C.C. Hurst and Gerd Krussmann, *Rosa damascena bifera*, a hybrid of *R. moschata*, appears in the Greek cult of Aphrodite.

331 BC. In late October, Alexander the Great enters Babylon. Supporters shower him with an autumn-blooming rose, probably *R. damascena bifera* or *R. moschata*.

ca. 29 BC. The Augustan poet Virgil rhapsodizes over "the Paestan rose with two springs," another reference to *R. damascena bifera*.

ca. 77. In *The Natural History*, the Roman philosopher Pliny the Elder describes a fragrant autumnal rose, *R. coroneola*, considered by Dodoens and Parkinson to be *R. moschata plena*.

before 900. Muhammad ibn Zakariy al-Razi references *R. moschata* by its Arabic name, Nesrin. His medical tome, *al-Hawi*, entered Europe as a Latin translation in the 13th century. He considered the Musk Rose a wild species cultivated by selection. The Musk is listed as Nesrin over the next 200 years in Arabic texts by Johannes Mesuë the younger, Avicenna, and Serapion the Younger.

ca. 1292 and ca. 1313. European authors Simon Januensi, followed by Matteo Silvatico, also use a form of the Arabic name for *R. moschata*. Januensi may have adopted it from Serapion, whom he translated.

ca. 1480. Madonna and Child with Angels. Cosimo Roselli's painting displays the single form of *R. moschata* in a bowl with *Jasminum officinale*. One angel presents the bowl to the infant Christ, while another places two Musk blossoms at his feet.

1513/1522/1540. Thomas Cromwell, later Henry VIII's chief minister, imports the Musk Rose to England from Italy. Three dates are often given for the import. The last, 1540, reflects uncertainty — Cromwell was beheaded for treason in 1540, so, the thinking goes, if he brought the Musk to England, it would be safe to say it was by 1540. English school books into the late 1800's mention the introduction of the Musk Rose as one of Cromwell's most significant achievements.

1543. *R. coroneola*/*R. autumnalis*. In *A New Herbal*, Rembert Dodoens gives the French name as Rose Musquée and the English as Musk Rose. Dodoens appears to have been one of the first authors to emphasize the Musk's ancient Roman heritage over its citation in middle eastern herbals.

1554. *Rosae italicae moschettæ*. In *Sinensis Medici*. Pietro Mattioli's wording suggests he may have considered *R. moschata* an Etruscan rose.

1550's. João Rodrigues de Castelo Branco, known as Amato Lusitano, lists *R. moscata*/*R. alexandrina*/*R. damascena*, which produces musk scented blooms much of the year. Lusitano writes that the true *R. moscata* was rare in Spain and often confused with another species.

1561. *R. muscata simplex* and *R. muscata multiplex*, Conrad Gessner, *Horti Germaniae*. Gessner also notes that the Musk is called Nesrin in Arabic and that it is often grown by monks and aristocrats. Gessner saw *R. moschata* in the garden of Matthias Curtius, a merchant from Lindau, Germany.

1576. *Rosa moscata*/Nersin, Matthias de Lobel, *Plantarum seu Stirpium icones*. The first illustration of the Musk in an herbal.

1597. *R. moschata simplici flore* and *R. moschata multiplex*, John Gerard, *The Herball*. Gerard notes a larger third Musk that flowers in summer with a hint of blush in the flower, perhaps referring to de Castelo Branco's false Spanish Musk.

1613. *R. damascena flore pleno albo*, Basilius Besler, *Hortus Eystettensis*. Besler writes of *R. moschata plena* as an ancient rose recently rediscovered and sought out as

the most beautiful and fragrant.
Pictured.

1629. *R. moschata simplex* & *multiplex*, John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris*. In 1640, Parkinson referred to *R. moschata plena* as Pliny's *Coroneola* in *Theatrum Botanicum*.

1724. *R. muscata simplici flore* and *R. muscata flore pleno*, Phillip Miller, *The Gardeners and Florists Dictionary*. Miller also mentions a separate "Spanish Musk Rose."

1785. "Single Musk"/"White Cluster," James Dodley and William Marshall, *Planting and Ornamental Gardening*. The authors found *R. moschata* to be "scarce and valuable."

1864. *R. ruscinonensis* Grenier & Déséglise. In 1915, Alfred Rehder and E.H. Wilson of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard considered this the northernmost wild form of *R. moschata* and *R. abyssinica* the southernmost wild form.

1883. François Crépin takes *R. brunonii* as the species type of *R. moschata* Herrm. The new name *R. moschata* Crép. for *R. brunonii*, combined with a growing preference for *R. brunonii* as a superior garden form of the Musk, builds up confusion about the historical Musk Rose.

1915. Alfred Rehder, E.H. Wilson, and C.S. Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard publish *Plantae Wilsoniae* after having discovered and classified a large portion of the Asian Musk Rose group. They knew that *R. brunonii* had taken over the Musk Rose identity.

1956. Léonie Bell writes Graham Thomas. Please see main article.

1963. Graham Thomas relocates *R. moschata* Herrm., generally accepted as the historical Musk Rose. The reintroduction helps catalyze a movement of rose rustlers. Just a year earlier, The Royal National Rose Annual featured an article erroneously arguing that *R. wichurana* was the Musk Rose of the herbalists

1976. *Hortus Third*. Speculates that *R. moschata* naturalized in zone 7 in North America. Over the next 25 years, collectors find the majority of Musk Rose specimens in Virginia and North Carolina.

2000. DNA analysis confirms that *R. moschata* is a parent of *R. damascena bifera* and the Damask roses, placing the Musk Rose's origin further back than could have previously been argued.

Chill Units and Flowering of Non-recurrent Roses Malcolm Manners

It is well-known that many types of old roses, such as Gallicas, Albas, Centifolias, Ramblers, most Mosses, etc., typically flower only once, in the spring or early summer. These types often fail to flower at all in consistently warm climates (e.g., central Florida). The exact physiological process whereby a rose decides when or if it will flower has not been determined. We tend to speak of a rose needing "chilling" or "chill units" to stimulate flowering, borrowing a concept from deciduous fruit growers. In such fruits as peaches, cherries, plums, apricots, and apples (all members

of the rose family), the process of collecting "chill units" is reasonably well-understood. In those species, winter dormancy is ended through the collection of chilling, and the trees flower soon after they break dormancy. In such fruit trees, there is a requirement that they drop all their leaves before the chilling process can begin, and many of the once-flowering roses don't naturally drop their leaves until/unless they get a hard freeze. Also, some fruit species have an absolute requirement for chilling to break winter dormancy; they will waste away and die if they don't get adequate chilling (e.g., peaches), whereas even extreme high-latitude roses may grow with great health and vigor for many years (albeit without flowering) in consistently warm climates. So the comparison is not perfect; yet it seems obvious that something about spending time at low temperature is what triggers flowering in those roses. So an understanding of how a fruit tree works may be helpful in understanding what is happening in a rose. The following is a quick description of the series of events that occur specifically in peach trees. Other fruit species seem to work in pretty much the same way, but perhaps with slight variations in the actual temperature limits.

In summer, the peach tree is not collecting chill units. Once it drops its leaves, it begins collecting. The plant "collects" a "memory" of how long it spent at certain temperatures. We don't understand how this happens — it's quite a complex process, to accurately measure temperature without a thermometer, and then to keep a record of how much time it spent at certain temperatures -- but we know it happens very specifically in the meristematic areas of buds, and that the signal is not

passed up and down the stem -- each bud must collect its own chilling.

- At temperatures below 32°F/0°C, no chill units are collected.
- At temperatures between 32° and about 45° (7.2°C), the plant collects one unit per clock hour. (so for peaches specifically, a "chill unit" is defined as "the amount of chilling received during one hour spent between 32° and 45°F")
- At temperatures between 45° and 55° (12.8°C), the plant continues to collect units, but as the temperature rises through that range, it takes longer and longer to collect a unit. So at 45°, it's collecting a unit per hour. At 50°, it may take 5 or 6 hours, and at 55°, collection has virtually stopped.
- Between about 55° and 65° (18.3°C), no chill units are collected or lost.
- Above 65°, the plant begins to lose units, and the warmer it gets, the faster the loss occurs.

In a climate like ours (Lakeland Florida) we may pick up 5 or 6 units at night, but then lose 3 of them the following afternoon, with a net gain of 2 or 3 for the 24-hour period.

Each plant is pre-programmed, genetically, to need a certain predetermined number of chill units to tell it that spring has sprung, and it's time to grow. So for example, a popular peach variety here is 'Flordawon', which requires 150 units. Upon collecting that many units, it bursts into growth. If you were to plant that variety in the North, it might collect enough units by Thanksgiving, burst into bloom and growth, and then freeze to death since winter is not over. On the other hand, if you planted a 1000-unit peach that does well in Tennessee, here in Lakeland, it would go into winter dormancy, but

then never come back out of dormancy, since its chill clock says it's not yet spring, after we've received our 150 units. So in peaches, it's really important to plant varieties appropriate for your chill units area (always published by state departments of agriculture and extension service). This requirement is genetically pre-programmed, and the plant will *not* adapt to a new climate over time.

Roses, as mentioned earlier, don't truly go winter-dormant. In a climate like ours, we can force a growth flush on any class of rose with a light pruning and some fertilizer, even in December/January. So it is not "classic" chill that they're doing. Still, for some classes, such as Albas, Gallicas, Centifolias, Ramblers, etc., the decision of whether to make flowers or not, on any given growth flush, seems to be based on something similar to the chill-units model. So roses really are quite different in what they're doing, but for lack of a better term, we refer to what they need to flower as "chill units," which for them, doesn't seem to have a very precisely defined meaning.

The problem with roses being different from the "official" (peach-based) model is that a peach tree will not begin counting units until it is totally leafless and dormant, a thing that a rose won't do at all, in a warmer climate. And in consistently cool climates, some so-called "once-flowering" roses may flower repeatedly, based on some sort of chill accumulation. So it's a similar process, but not identical. And because of that, we don't know if the exact temperature ranges, or the methods of counting "units," all of which are based on the peach model, are precisely valid for roses.

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The Heritage Rose Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit foundation with this mission:

- To collect and preserve heritage roses and promote their culture
- To establish one or more gardens where heritage roses may be grown and displayed
- To conduct and contract to conduct investigations and research in heritage roses
- To publish and disseminate information and research about heritage roses
- to establish and maintain a library to facilitate investigations and research in heritage roses
- To foster public knowledge and appreciation of heritage roses and their preservation

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