

Breeding Miniature and Other Roses

Ralph S. Moore

2519 E. Noble Avenue, Visalia, CA 93292

Breeding miniature and other roses: To get to where you want to go, it's best to know where you are and where you have been.

BEGINNING

First of all, most of us who breed roses and other plants usually begin with what we have and where we are. We may have no long-term plans or projects in mind. We learn the simple basics of pollination, seed harvesting and planting. We anxiously wait to see what comes up. But the serious breeder of roses (and other plants) will learn about different cultivars being grown now and in the past, the different rose types or classes, species, etc. He or she will study what has been done and keenly observe not only his/her own work, but that of other breeders.

In my own case, it was the little roses - Cecile Brunner, some of the polyanthas and rambler roses of the day plus certain old tea, china and other roses, that grew in my mother's and my grandmother's gardens that caught my interest. First, I grew self set (bee pollinated) seeds from a large plant of 'Climbing Cecile Brunner' and also seeds of several other roses to see what would happen. Thus, I got an introduction to rose seed harvesting, planting and propagation at the early age of 14! So I have been at this rose breeding a long time. But I really got started in serious rose breeding about 60 years ago (in the mid-1930s) Through the years I have studied and observed the work of Luther Burbank, Dr. Walter Lammerts, Kordes, Jack Harkness and others.

"IMAGINEERING"

Several years ago Dr. Howland of the University of Nevada used a word which I think describes the breeding of roses. That word was "imagineering". In any creative endeavor we must imagine or dream of what is desired and then devise or discover ways to achieve that end. Along the way always be ready for surprises. Little things, variations in plant habit, flowers color, size and shape may be observed. Disease resistance, ease of propagation, tolerance of heat and cold and other factors all enter into any successful long term breeding project. In short, this is what rose breeding is all about.

ROULETII

Now, for some specifics from my own work and observations over the years. The story usually told is that a little rose called Rouletii (*Rosa* 'Rouletii'), discovered in Switzerland in 1918 is the cultivar from which all present day miniatures are descended. This is only partially true as there is another "found" rose, named 'Oakington Ruby', which was introduced by Robinson (England) in 1933. I did not use Rouletii directly in my breeding, but used one of its offspring named 'Tom Thumb' (Peon in Europe). When 'Carolyn Dean' (a seedling from 'Etoile Luisante'

[polyantha]), a small cluster flowered climber was crossed with 'Tom Thumb' the tiny miniature 'Zee' was produced. When 'Zee' was crossed to other roses I got a whole array of miniatures and larger roses. From the seedlings, several were selected and introduced, among them a very fine yellow named 'Yellow Doll'.

In the meantime I had acquired another dwarf polyantha rose of European origin called 'Éblouissant'. When 'Éblouissant' was crossed with 'Zee' two cultivars of importance resulted. 'Fairy Princess', a mini climber to about 3 ft., was used on crosses to produce my well-known 'Mary Marshall' and by Dr. Onodera in Japan to produce his 'Nozomi'.

The other selection, a medium-red mini-climber, was named 'Magic Wand' and its "magic" helped to develop many of today's miniatures, among them 'Sheri Anne', a popular orange-red that has been used by many breeders.

Another one of Magic Wand's crosses produced a very bushy, compact pink miniature we named 'Little Chief'. And 'Little Chief' became the seed parent of the first striped miniature named 'Stars 'n Stripes'. This one has also been grown worldwide and used by numerous breeders to produce, directly and indirectly, several of the striped roses in commerce today.

OAKINGTON RUBY

The other side of the story is about 'Oakington Ruby'. Among some of my earlier crosses were two which would prove to be of great importance. One, a cross of the species, *Rosa wichuraiana* × 'Floradora' [a very new cultivar of the time and later used by Dr. Walter Lammerts at Germain Nurseries in Los Angeles, CA to produce his famous Queen Elizabeth[®] rose ('The Queen Elizabeth Rose')] was selected for further breeding. Several plants of this rose, #O-47-19, were grown and over the years thousands of pollinations were made of many different combinations.

At about the same time I crossed 'Oakington Ruby' with 'Floradora', one plant of this cross with very double 1-1/2 in. red flowers produced pollen that was then used on our O-47-19 seedling. From this cross we got several new miniatures that were named and introduced. Among them were 'Little Buckaroo', 'Dian', 'Westmont', 'Red Germain' and others.

But, it was 'Westmont' and 'Red Germain' that would prove the "value" of this cross and parentage. Crosses of 'Little Darling' × 'Westmont' produced two important miniatures, 'Over the Rainbow' and Magic Carrousel[®] ('Moorcar'). When I made the cross of 'Little Darling' × 'Red Germain' three seedlings were selected and named. They were 'Windy City' (pink), 'Janna' [pink and white bi-color, similar to Magic Carrousel[®] miniature rose ('Moorcar')] and 'Peachy White' (a lovely white, blended with soft pink and an 'Award of Excellence' winner from the American Rose Society Miniature Trials). When 'Peachy White' was crossed to 'Golden Glow', (a Brownell sub-zero yellow climber) four good yellow miniatures were produced, 'Yellow Magic', 'Yellow Jewel', 'Golden Angel' and 'Calgold'. All these roses have been used by me and others.

'Little Darling' × 'Yellow Magic' gave two selections, # 1-72-1 (a yellow mini Climber) and 'Rise 'n Shine', an Award of Excellence miniature. # 1-72-1 ('Little Darling' × 'Yellow Magic') × Gold Badge[™] ('Meigronuri') produced Golden Gardens miniature rose ('Morgogard') and the award (AOE) winning Cal Poly miniature rose ('Morpoly'). More recently we have introduced a tiny yellow offspring of Cal Poly named Cinderella Gold miniature rose ('Morcingold') (1996). So all these roses, and

more, owe their miniaturization to 'Oakington Ruby' and not 'Rouletii'.

RUGOSA AND OTHER ROSES

But there is more. I firmly believe the miniature rose of today will be employed more and more in the breeding of roses of all types. Species and other crosses, difficult or not ordinarily possible, will be successful when some of the miniatures are involved in the breeding. Also, I have learned that it is not difficult to move up and down the scale from large to small or small to large.

A few cases in point. I have made many crosses of rugosas on miniatures. Topaz Jewel rose ('Moryelrug') is a cross of 'Golden Angel' × 'Belle Poitevine', and is the first repeat flowering yellow rugosa. Linda Campbell ('Morten') is a cross of 'Anytime' (miniature) × *R.* 'Rugosa Magnifica'. Both are full-size shrub roses even though the seed parent was a miniature. And we have many more roses of unusual crosses being developed and tested here at Sequoia.

Out of my work with miniature roses has come an array of miniature, floribunda, climbing, striped, mossed and groundcover roses. The latest is my new line of HALO™ roses. These mimic the difficult *Hulthemia (Rosa) persica*. Near the base of each petal is a red to lavender area giving the flower a halo effect.

There is so much more to be done with roses, so many untapped possibilities. We need more "imagineering". I have been at this for many years and am still excited about the possibilities!

"General Propagation Topics" Question-Answer Period

No recording.