

### THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF



An Organic Guide to Growing and Enjoying the World's Favourite Flower

## Judith C. McKeon

Australian Consultant: Frances Hutchison



#### A FRIEDMAN GROUP BOOK

First published in Australasia in 1996 by Simon & Schuster Australia 20 Barcoo Street East Roseville NSW 2069

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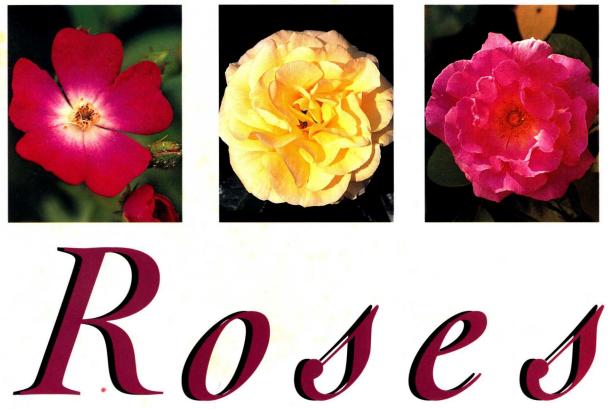
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## Part One

# Growing Roses



'MARJORIE FAIR'



'LOUISE ODIER'



'GOLD MEDAL'

◀ Roses are the perfect way to welcome family and friends to your garden. Adorn an entrance with masses of showy, fragrant flowers, or train a climber up a pillar to create a charming garden scene. Here, the opulent blooms of 'America' cover an arbour.





### WHAT IS A ROSE?

Sooner or later, every gardener gives in to the urge to plant some roses. Somewhere in the back of our minds is the idea that the garden won't really be complete without a rose bed, an arbour, or a fence ablaze with fragrant blooming roses.

Roses are the most irresistible of all flowers. There's no other plant with the history, allure, and mystique of roses. They bring to the garden the sublime combination of everything we could want from a flower: colour, fragrance, form, and class.

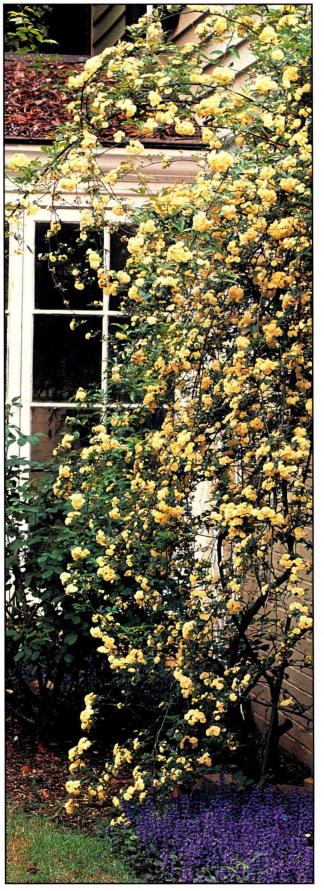
◆ Few flowers are more appealing to the senses than the rose. An old-fashioned rose like this stunning 'Crested Moss' bud invites us to enjoy its sweet scent, delicate colour, and soft silky texture. History is full of allusions to roses. Legend tells us that they were present at the birth of Venus. It's said that Antony and Cleopatra reclined on sofas stuffed with rose petals. Taken as the emblems of British noble houses, roses have even precipitated a war. (That's why it was called the War of the Roses.) The image of the rose is found on ancient coins and in paintings by the masters. Its praises are sung in the verse and prose of almost every author, including Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dante, and Burns. Roses are glorified in song, from Tin Pan Alley tunes to stirring anthems such as "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

The rose represents romance. It seduces us with its fragrance and delicate petals. It intrigues us with its prickly stems. It reminds us that sometimes we have to put up with sharp barriers when we reach out for beauty.

Above all, the rose is known for its perfect flower form. Its blooms are at home in a formal border or a cottage garden, clambering up the side of a house or barn, and, especially, indoors in a vase. There its fragrance may perfume an entire house. It's a practical plant as well. Roses have been used as a herbal remedy for ages. Its fruits, called hips, are rich in vitamin C.



The hips of the Moyes rose



Yellow Lady Banks' rose

Whenever you plant a rose, you bring some of its history and mystique to your landscape. Roses are versatile. They can be used as climbers, ramblers, bushes, hedges, and groundcovers. They can even be used in rock gardens. Some are best in the perennial, shrub, or mixed border. Others are at home in the herb, cutting, or cottage garden.

So why doesn't everyone grow roses? Unfortunately, these gorgeous plants have another reputation, too. They're known as finicky, difficult children—prima donnas, suited only for formal settings. They're said to need constant attention and tricky pruning. Fortunately, none of that is true.

Roses are easier to grow than you might think. Many are virtually care-free. Some are hardy to Zone 3 or 4, the northernmost plant hardiness zones of the United States, and disease-resistant roses are not difficult to find. Some need very little pruning.

The secret to successful rose growing is taking the time to find out which rose is which and then picking the right plant for the right place. That may seem to be a daunting job. Rose classification appears to be a briar patch of classes and subclasses. But it's not as complex as you might fear. In this chapter, we'll sort out the classes of roses to help you find good candidates to suit your climate, soil, and taste.

Botanically speaking, roses belong to the plant family Rosaceae, the rose family, which is comprised of more than 100 genera, or types, of small trees, shrubs, and herbs. Characteristic family traits include flowers with five separate petals—often appearing in showy masses—and edible or eye-catching fruits. Familiar members of the rose family include such well-known fruit-bearing relatives as apples, pears, apricots, plums, cherries, peaches, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries, as well as ornamental fruit trees such as



'Rosa Mundi'

flowering cherry, crab apple, and Bradford pear. Yet the member of the family most prized for its fragrance and ornamental, medicinal, economic, and symbolic properties is the rose.

The rose family derives its name from its largest genus, Rosa, which is represented by approximately 150 species of wild roses distributed throughout the Northern Hemisphere, where they have prodigiously produced flowers and set fruit for thirtytwo million years. With the exception of species, or wild, roses, which are referred to by botanical as well as common name—rugosa rose (Rosa rugosa), for example—most roses are cultivars, often called horticultural or cultivated varieties. Rose cultivars generally result from selective hybridization, or breeding. New varieties also occasionally arise from a genetic mutation, or sport—usually a shoot from a single bud different in some way from the rose variety that produced it. Rose cultivars are referred to by their registered trade, or accepted, name and placed in single quotes, such as the 'Peace' rose. In addition, because trade names often change from country to country, rose cultivars are also given a code name, represented by a few uppercase letters of the hybridizer's name, followed by a few lowercase letters indicating the specific cultivar. For instance, 'Tropicana', known as 'Superstar' in Europe, is registered with the code name TANorstar, because the hybridizer is Mathias Tantau of Holstein, Germany. These code names are the same the world over. Finally, trade names of roses are often registered with a trademark, such as Pearl Meidiland<sup>TM</sup>.

Classified according to their ancestry, roses are divided into classes and subclasses. Species, or wild, roses and old roses with their many subclasses belong to the antique group, generally called old roses. The continuous-blooming hybrid tea rose celebrated its debut in 1867, when tea roses were bred with hybrid perpetual and China roses, and that year marks the inauguration of the modern rose era. Other classes of modern roses include polyantha, rambler, climber, miniature, floribunda, now reclassified as cluster flowered, grandiflora, and shrub roses.

#### Species Roses

Species roses and their hybrids enhance the garden with scent, colour, texture, and seasonal interest. The easy-care shrubs and scramblers are valued for their delicate single flowers and colourful hips. They look attractive with full-flowered old roses and perennial companions in an informal setting. Undemanding species roses and their hybrids are among the easiest flowering shrubs to grow. The adventurous gardener will find much to appreciate, savour, and enjoy about the wild roses.

Whether gracefully arching, mounding, or scrambling, species roses are deciduous shrubs characteristically armed with prickles, which are commonly called thorns. Five-petalled or single flowers cover the shrubs in spring, often followed



'Tausendschon'—You can see why this flower's name means "thousand beauties." For more on this lovely rose, see page 160.

by colourful rose hips that attract birds into the garden in late summer and autumn. Individual flowers vary in size. With fragrant, deep pink flowers and scarlet autumn foliage, the low-growing New England shining rose (*Rosa nitida*) is a rounded shrub that seldom exceeds 3 feet (1m) in height. Whereas *Rosa filipes*, a Himalyan rambler, can easily climb 30 feet (9m) into a neighbouring tree.

Most species roses are tough, hardy, diseaseresistant shrubs. Plant them with perennials and flowering shrubs in mixed borders, cottage gardens, and herb gardens. Species roses are also suitable for naturalizing in the wild garden. Native American species, including the pasture rose (Rosa carolina), New England shining rose, the swamp rose (Rosa palustris), the Virginia rose (Rosa virginiana), and Rosa woodsii, are at home in the wild garden, interplanted with wildflowers and shrubs or placed to arch gracefully over edges of ponds or streams. Most provide autumn interest with their superb foliage display and colourful hips. Although all roses are sun lovers, many species roses, including redleaved rose (Rosa glauca), eglantine (Rosa eglanteria), and Scotch rose (Rosa pimpinellifolia, also called R. spinossissima), will readily accept a position in the high or dappled shade of deciduous trees.

Species roses are tailor-made for difficult land-scape situations such as erosion-prone banks, beds flanking paving, boggy areas, and poor rocky sites in full sun. Many species roses and their hybrids are good choices for these conditions. Bog roses such as the swamp rose and New England shining rose grow and flourish in wet sites, while the prairie rose (Rosa setigera) and wingthorn rose (Rosa sericea var. pteracantha) readily tolerate rocky, barren soils. Virginia rose and naturalized rugosa rose (Rosa rugosa) colonize the seaside, and few shrubs are better adapted to urban "hot spot" plantings that

border paving and parking lots than hybrid rugosa roses such as the compact 'Frau Dagmar Hartopp'.

#### Old Roses

The antique group, or old roses, with its many subclasses basically divides into the mostly once-flowering roses with a common ancestor, Rosa gallica—gallica, damask, alba, centifolia, and moss—and the China and China-influenced roses of the nineteenth century, which are mostly repeat-flowering, and include the Bourbon, Noisette, perpetual damask (Portland), hybrid perpetual, and tea roses. The old roses available to gardeners today represent only a fraction of the thousands of cultivars once catalogued.

Today, with a renewed appreciation for antique flowers associated with informal gardening styles, a growing interest in the fragrant, long-lived old roses, and a greater awareness of organic gardening techniques, care-free old roses appeal to everwidening circles of gardeners.

#### Modern Roses

Asian tea roses descended from *Rosa odorata* were bred with hybrid perpetual and China roses to create continuous-blooming hybrid tea roses. The hybrid tea rose celebrated its debut sometime after 1850. 'La France' was introduced in 1867 and is considered by many to be the first hybrid tea; the year 1867 was later chosen to mark the inauguration of the modern rose era. The hybrid tea, however, did not suddenly replace the hybrid perpetual; both lines continued, weaving a trail often difficult to follow, until 1900, when the final stage of hybrid perpetual development, represented by 'Frau Karl Druschki', 'Georg Arends', and similar cultivars, became indistinguishable from hybrid teas. At this point, the hybrid perpetual line was