

VINTAGE GARDENS

AUTUMN 2008 NEWSLETTER
www.vintagegardens.com

Vintage Gardens
4130 Gravenstein Hwy N
Sebastopol, CA 95472
www.vintagegardens.com

707-829-2035

Mail Order Office Hours:
M–F 10 am to 4 pm

Visit Garden Valley Ranch
498 Pepper Road
Petaluma, CA 95452
707-795-0919
W–Sun 10 to 5
to purchase our 1 gal roses

A view of the Old Hybrid Tea garden,
planted with the hard work of the
Friends of Vintage Gardens. This part
of our collection provides a home to
the largest collection of Pernetiana
roses in North America.



Vintage Gardens —a history, a mission...

At a time when few nurseries in the United States offered solid collections of old roses, and own root roses were even harder to obtain, Vintage Gardens, the brainchild of Phillip Robinson & George Matson, began in 1984 as a simple, backyard nursery, selling roses at Heritage Roses Group meetings and holding garage-sale rose events in May. Our collection began with roses that George had gathered from old rose growers and nurseries like Joseph Kern in Ohio, and had shared with Phillip. At the Korb House, where Phillip

renovated a nineteenth century garden, he discovered a treasure trove of early Hybrid Teas that were added to his own prodigious collection. Phillip had collected founding roses from cemeteries and home sites across Northern California, and had begun to identify long-lost roses that had not been in commerce for decades. More roses came from Gregg Lowery in 1983, and before long a collection of about two thousand old and rare roses had come together.

(continued on page 5)

**New Rose Availability on
November 1st—page 2
and December 1st—pg 6**

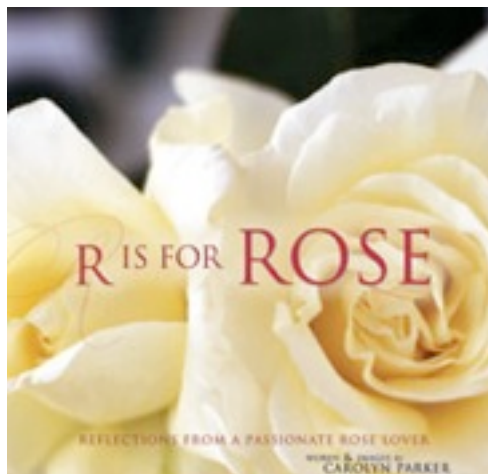
**R is for Roses: Carolyn
Parker's amazing website
—Page 2**

**A Few of my Favorite
Roses; Gregg shares his
secret loves—Page 7**

**Without Vintage...
testimonials from YOU!
—Page 2**

A Very Special Website about Roses

R is for Rose is Carolyn Parker's latest book chronicling her journey of discovery of roses old and new. It is the most beautiful rose book in my library of many hundreds of books. An artist, a photographer, a gardener, and a uniquely inventive arranger of flowers, Carolyn found her palette when she discovered Vintage Gardens. She has been one of our staunchest supporters and has spread the word about what we do through her books and her newspaper columns. Her latest online column puts so eloquently into words what so many of you have shared with us in your letters and emails—that what we do has helped to inspire you in your gardens.



We encourage you to visit Carolyn's website. It's like a warm cup of coffee in a cozy room full of roses with a friend you'll want to get to know. You can find more about Carolyn's books, her photo blog, and her newspaper columns there, and you can sign up to stay informed about roses, gardening and much more.

Just go to her website at: <http://rosesfromatoz.com/roseNotes1.html>

Roses Available on December 1st!

On Saturday, December 1st, we will release a new batch of rose varieties that you can order. These are varieties for which we have custom orders, and those orders have now been confirmed. The extras, in some cases just a few plants, are now available to order. These are very special roses, much in demand, and we think you'll be excited to peruse this list. We recommend ordering right away, as some of these will disappear quickly.

ALBAS

Aennchen von Tharau
Pompon Blanc Parfait

BOURBONS

Commandant Beaurepaire
Le Grand Capitaine
"Maggie"
Mme. Alfred de Rougemont
Mme. Isaac Pereire
Souvenir de la Malmaison
Souvenir de la Malmaison, Climbing
Souvenir de Mme. Auguste Charles

BANKSIAS

Rosa banksiae lutea
Rosa banksiae lutescens

CENTIFOLIAS

Cristata

CHINAS

Old Blush, Climbing

(continued on page 3)



FRIENDS OF VINTAGE GARDENS WEEDING AND MULCHING THE TEA ROSES

Without Vintage... Thank you for your support! – Testimonials

Since our announcement in late September that we might not be able to continue with Vintage Gardens after May of next year, we have received hundreds and hundreds of messages from you. Your expressions of support have touched us deeply. The refrain, 'What would I do without Vintage?' rings in our ears. You have given us the greatest gift,

your heartfelt thanks for what we do, and that has made the past 22 years worth every moment of labor and struggle.

Even more overwhelming has been the tidal wave of orders for roses that we received in October. It has been the most successful season starter in more than five years, and has helped us to reach our first goal, which is to (continued on page 4)

Roses Available November 1, 2008 (continued from page 2)

DAMASKS

Autumn Damask
 Quatre Saisons Blanc Mousseaux

FLORIBUNDAS

Ammonit
 Apricot Nectar VI
 Betsy McCall
 Cathedral
 CoralGlo
 Festival Fanfare
 Fire and Ice
 Heat Wave
 Jocelyn
 Margaret Merrill
 Nimbus
 Pink Chiffon
 Rusty
 Sea of Fire
 Violet Carson
 World's Fair

GALLICAS

Fleurs de Pelletier

HYBRID MUSKS

Cosmo
 Excellenz von Schubert
 Mateo's Silk Butterflies

HYBRID PERPETUALS

"Grandmother's Hat"
 Louise Cretté
 Mlle. Marie Dauvesse
 Prince Camille de Rohan
 Reine des Violettes

HYBRID TEAS

Angèle Pernet
 Antigua
 Antoine Rivoire
 Apricot Silk
 Audie Murphy
 Autumn
 Blue Heaven
 Blue Moon
 Blue Ribbon
 Briarcliff
 Butterscotch
 Candy Stripe
 Careless Love
 Charles de Gaulle
 Charles Mallerin
 Chrysler Imperial
 Cologne
 Condesa de Sástago
 Dainty Bess
 Dame Edith Helen
 Double Delight
 Elizabeth Harkness
 Entente Cordiale
 Etoile de Feu
 Gold Glow
 Grace de Monaco

Green Dynasty

Irene Churruca
 Julia's Rose
 Lady Ursula
 "Legacy of Elizabeth Moore"
 Lemon Spice
 Mme. Jules Bouché
 Mme. Pierre Euler
 Monet
 Mrs. Sam McGredy
 New Yorker
 Night Time
 Oldtimer
 Opéra
 Polynesian Sunset
 Portadown Fragrance
 Red Chief
 Red Radiance
 Royal Airforce
 San Luis Rey
 September Morn
 Shades of Autumn
 Souvenir de Mme. Boulet
 Spiced Coffee
 Sunday Lemonade
 Talisman
 Tantarra
 The Doctor
 Thomas A. Edison
 Twilight Zone
 Uncle Walter
 Whisky Mac
 White Beauty
 White Christmas
 White Wings VI
 Will Rogers

HYBRID TEA CLIMBERS

Charlotte Armstrong, Climbing
 Talisman, Climbing

LARGE-FLOWERED CLIMBERS

Altissimo
 Jactan
 Sombreuil
 Sympathie

MOSESSES

Deuil de Paul Fontaine
 Mme. Louis Lévêque
 Salet

MINIATURES

Baby Betsy McCall
 Perla Rosa
 Pompon de Paris, Climbing

PORTLANDS

Rose de Rescht

POLYANTHAS

Gloire des Polyantha
 Little White Pet

Marie Pavie

Miss Edith Cavell
 Mrs. R. M. Finch
 Verdun

RUGOSAS

Marie Bugnet
 Sarah Van Fleet

SHRUBS

Happenstance
 Mabelle Stearns

SHRUBS/AUSTINS

Cressida
 Ausca (aka Fair Bianca™)
 Ausmas (aka Graham Thomas™)
 Aushero (aka Hero™)
 Ausyel (aka Yellow Charles Austin™)
 Immortal Juno
 Jaquenetta
 Lordly Oberon
 Proud Titania
 Tamora
 The Friar
 Wise Portia

SPECIES

Rosa hugonis
 Rosa macrophylla doncasterii
 Rosa pendulina

SPINOSISSIMAS

Stanwell Perpetual

TEAS

"Angels' Camp Tea"
 "Arcadia Louisiana Tea"
 "Beauté Inconstante"
 Clementina Carbonieri
 Etoile de Lyon
 Général Galliéni
 "Huntington Pink Tea"
 "Miss Atwood"
 Mme. Antoine Mari
 Paul Nabonnand
 "Rock Hill Peach Tea"
 Souvenir de Pierre Notting
 Susan Louise
 William R. Smith

TEA CLIMBERS

Lady Hillingdon, Climbing
 Maman Cochet, Climbing
 Souvenir de Mme. Léonie Viennot
 White Maman Cochet, Climbing

TEA-NOISETTES

Belle Lyonnaise
 Bouquet d'Or
 Comtesse de Noghera
 Kaiserin Freidrich
 "Pilarcitos"

TESTIMONIALS (continued from page 2)

end the year in the black. With your continued support we believe we have every reason to begin planning our production for the summer of 2009. These are tough times for all economically, and none of us knows just what lies ahead. Our thoughts are for each of you steering a steady course in your own lives, and we hope that our roses will offer cheer, solace and encouragement to you.

Here are a few of the kind thoughts you have shared with us this month:

- I so appreciate what you have done over the years and I am so sorry to hear that you might have to close. I think the drought and the economy are changing so many things, and the world will be less beautiful without you. -Edy
- Though I am sure that you will make the right business decision, I can only hope that you will continue to propagate, even if in only a limited way, the oldest and hardest roses. Of all the many roses that you have attempted to preserve, some like the species really are treasures. -Henry
- This is a very trying time for the whole country, and it will take who knows how many years to work our way through to a better place. But the people of our nation are not known for quitting when the road gets rough. When you think about it, there really is no choice: one has to keep on going. My money (though now much smaller than before) is on you. Besides, I like your roses! -Katharine
- I am sorry to hear of your possible decision to cease doing business. I love the opportunity you provide to build my legacy/remembrance rose garden for my daughter who passed away Nov 2007. I have also started a new gift giving idea. I now send roses to my loved ones on special occasions. I sent the "Cecile Brunner" rose to my sister on her 40th birthday. I sent an Audrey Hepburn rose to my niece Audrey on the 8th. I sent a "Mother's Rose" to my Mother on Mother's Day. People love getting a gift that is real and full of life. Something they can nurture as they watch it grow and bloom. My Mother says she never knew a "Mother's Rose" existed and each bloom has been slightly different in color and depth. She calls it her "surprise" rose. I haven't ordered all my roses from you as it depends on whether you carry what I am looking for on each occasion, but you are always my first pick. -Anita
- I just wanted to write to you and let you know how much I hope Vintage will continue. I truly know how tired and stretched you must be. I am getting there myself. For all of us who love the whole world of roses, Vintage has been the vast ocean. Your catalogue alone is an amazing achievement without mentioning the Heritage Rose Foundation and all the outreach you have led. -Janet
- I have been waiting to buy from you because my rose garden still is not ready but I will let my husband know we must build it so I can keep you in business. I hope you are able to go on. Your love for the business is so palpable and your online catalogue is heaven. I have bought a few from you. Very best wishes! -Beth
- I felt terribly sad to see your letter to your rose friends. Girija in India showed it to me. I have no word to say, but please take care of yourself. Your collection is really important for the rose world, and I believe some good things will happen to help you. With my very best wishes -Yuki

Vintage Gardens—a history, a mission.

by Gregg Lowery continued from page 1

Sharing Heritage Roses

The depth of our collection was shared through presentations that Phillip made to Heritage Rose Group meetings and at Heritage Rose conferences at the Huntington Gardens. In an era when Tea roses were seldom grown, and Hybrid Perpetuals only vaguely understood by gardeners, Phillip's thoughtful overviews of Teas, Hybrid Perpetuals, Damask Perpetuals, Bourbons, Noisettes and Old Hybrid Teas helped to build interest in these garden-worthy plants. This period of the blossoming of interest in old roses in America drew thousands to visit our garden, and to see these rare roses growing to their full potential in combination with other old and beautiful plant companions.

A Mail-Order & a Retail Nursery

While Phillip and I were both occupied in our professions as garden-makers, and both equally tied to the responsibility of maintaining the collection of roses, we saw the need to expand the nursery and to make these rare plants available to a larger audience of gardeners. In 1990 I increased our production and began offering our roses via mail order. Our first catalogue was released to a very receptive audience across the nation.

By 1994 demand for Vintage Gardens' plants had increased so dramatically that we launched a retail store along the main highway to our rural town of Sebastopol. And, in 1996 when an opportunity arose for us to purchase an old nursery site nearby, we moved our retail nursery of old roses and heirloom plants to this new site. Our offerings had grown to include a superb collection of historic hydrangeas, antique Iris, Coleus and Canna collections, and a wealth of old fashioned plants many of which we had gathered, along with roses, in old cemeteries, home sites and waysides.

Our retail nursery had begun its life in a time when most nursery plants were offered only by plant

nurseries, just prior to the great expansion of home improvement centers and mega-stores like Walmart. With these came the advent of a nursery in every corporate retail center, and with that era came a new attitude that money cannot be made on plants, but only on related products like tools and fertilizers. As plants became cheaper and cheaper in these stores, the family nursery business began to falter and die, unable to compete with corporate retailing of dry goods or with the treatment of plants as loss-leaders, priced below their wholesale cost. After twelve years we too were unable to continue to operate a retail nursery.

Back to Basics

Blessed with a loyal following of old rose lovers, who have supported our mail order nursery from the start, we made the choice to return to where we began, and to concentrate on growing and sharing our splendid collection of roses, old, classic and modern with our mail order customers. In 2006 we sold the retail nursery site and moved our operations to the nearby property of our partner, Gita Phy. Our own garden on Pleasant Hill Road in Sebastopol remains the repository and garden of our rose collection, and, as we have over the past 25 years, we continue to open it to our friends and customers each weekend in the month of May when roses reach their first peak.

A Garden and Collection of Roses

Our garden is a two-acre haven for old roses, a place of great beauty and an encyclopedia and treasure trove for lovers of roses. Its creation has been a work of love, blessed in its early years by the youth of its creators. Be-deviled now by a less agile body, I strive to maintain the garden, sort through and keep alive the thousands of cultivars, and work on the daily operations of the nursery along with Gita. Phillip who suffers from a disabling illness is no longer able to attend to the garden or the roses, or to maintain the database of roses.

Vintage Gardens—a history, a mission

continued from page 5

Dirt Days and the Friends of Vintage Gardens

The challenges we face would be dispiriting indeed were it not for an amazing group of friends who have rallied round us during the past five years. These friends were customers to our retail nursery and great supporters and admirers of our garden. When they saw that we had begun to fall short in keeping the garden at its best, they stepped in and created the 'Friends of Vintage Gardens'. They appear two or three times each year, like a posse of rose deputies, with gloves and tools and a magnificent spread of pot luck food and wine. These 'Dirt Days' go by with extraordinary feats of work and accomplishments, including the complete planting of our Old Hybrid Tea garden, and massive weeding and mulching efforts. Thanks to them, the garden continues to be worthy of a visit each May, and the collection of roses gains another year of life.

Without Vintage...?

Our most recent challenge has come with the unstable economy in 2008, as our customers begin to cut back on spending and on purchasing roses. The nursery business—the real business of propagating and selling plants—is an industry with a very tiny margin of profit; most nursery folks just make enough to live a modest life and pay their bills. The loss of a small percent of business can spell the end of the nursery, and we have faced that during the past months. Our aim is to continue, and with the wondrous good will of our customers, and the phenomenal influx of orders that have come from you during the past weeks since we announced the possibility of closing, we now have a strong hope that Vintage Gardens will continue.

We thank you all for the hundreds of expressions of appreciation and support for what we do. We go forth each day spreading the beauty of each rose in honor of you.

Vintage Gardens
4130 Gravenstein Hwy North
Sebastopol, CA 95472
707-829-2035



The workers feast on Dirt Day

New Rose Availability December 1

Our final release of rose varieties propagated this year will take place on December 1st, 2008 when we upload nearly 500 varieties of roses to our online store. This will complete our new season's availability of roses for you to select from for 2008.

In December of this year we will be propagating a very large number of our old European roses for release in May and June of 2009. As we did not root many of these this past summer, we want to be sure to get as many of these into your hands in the event that we are not able to continue propagating in the coming summer.

A Few of my Favorite Things Roses Worth Keeping!

-Gregg Lowery

I'm often asked what my favorite rose is. How could I limit it to just one? While I have no intention to go to live on a desert island with just one book and just one rose, I do sometimes imagine that a day may come when my body will rebel against the four months of pruning roses in the cold and wet, and it will decide for me that I can't continue to care for 4000 roses. I think about what some of my favorite roses are, and what I could not imagine parting with. Here are a few...

Le Grand Capitaine. This is widely known under the name 'Eugene de Beauharnais' which was a China rose. I admire this little flower factory, a compact Bourbon with fragrant, full, flat blooms of deep purple-crimson with slate-gray and white reflections.

Mme. Isaac Pereire. Can there be another rose so reliably fragrant in every season? I think not, at least not in my climate. Raspberry-purple, buxom blooms appear every season of our year, elegantly poised against the steely green foliage. I've grown this as a climber, lopped it short to make a 4' shrub, and left it free-form to arch as an dancing diva, lording her superiority over others of her type.

Rosa banksiae lutescens. The single yellow form of the Lady Banks rose holds a unique charm for me. Broad petals, extra petaloides and shimmering golden stamens add a touch to the yellow beauty that sparkles.

"*Mableton Agrippina*". For years we have grown this dwarf red China, collected from the gardens of an 1870 mansion in Santa Rosa, California, by our friend George Matson. It has the luxurious velvet red coloring of Cramoisi Superieur, a rose that is often considered its larger sport parent. The wiry delicacy and small stature of Agrippina are irreplaceable in the garden. I'll never be without it.

Autumn Damask. Fragrance, fragrance, fragrance. Such things are not to be undervalued when they come in such abundance. But here too is history, and

a rather long one, arcing back to the Romans. I love Roman London, Roman Paris, Roman Rome, and Roman roses!

Orangeade. Those of you who know me know what a pushover I am for orange roses. Blame it on Tropicana, the first rose I ever knew the name of. But Orangeade has some subtler facets that make it appeal to many; single petaled flowers and a swarm of fat, round, orange hips, flattened and ribbed like tiny pumpkins!

Gruss an Coberg. I'm often criticized for liking really temperamental roses; they don't grow well, get diseases, are finicky about needing just the right conditions to form perfect blooms. Not so with Gruss an Coberg. This robust Pernetiana with creamy buff flowers is fragrant, floriferous, happy in most any climate and blooms its head off.

Etoile de Hollande. Bush or climber, take your pick, if you garden near the coast this is your answer to a fragrant crimson rose that blooms generously, cuts superbly and scents the household, if not just the computer room! This is the rose I would take to Alcatraz if they locked me up.

Eugénie Guinoisseau. Moss roses send me! And the rarest are the reblooming reds. I've spoken admiring words about some that are much in demand, like James Vietch, but lovely as that is, it lacks the strength and reliability that we all love in a rose. Eugénie Guinoisseau is closer to heaven on that score. It grows like a weed, spreading like a Gallica, holds its large round blooms high on mossy-thorny stems that are elegant for cutting, and breathes a rich and complex perfume of Damask rose, pine needle and potpourri.

White Cécile Brunner. This lemon-white sport of the Sweetheart Rose has my complete devotion. I've always loved the Brunner form and scent, but can't resist this lemon-meringue pie version.