



# CEMETERY ROSE

## *Old City Cemetery Historic Rose Garden Preserving California's Heritage Roses*



Volume 10, Issue 2

December 2010

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***Cemetery Rose  
Garden***

***Activities and  
Dates***

**Pruning Clinic  
December 11  
10 a.m.**

**6th Annual  
Pruning Party  
Invitational  
January 15, 2011  
10 a.m.**

## Here We Go Again—Sharpen Your Tools

Pruning time is here again. We've finished shaping and nipping to encourage more bloom and begun pruning in earnest. Volunteers are encouraged on Tuesday and Saturday mornings (around 10 a.m.) Bring your tools and wear warm, protective clothing.

A **Pruning Clinic** will be held Saturday morning, December 11 at 10 a.m. Here you can learn about

pruning antique roses. These roses are not pruned like Hybrid Teas—come and learn something new.

The **Sixth Annual Pruning Invitational** will be held on January 15 and you're invited. We'll begin around 10 a.m., work in teams and enjoy a hot lunch. Come and join in the fun. (Rain date: January 29)

## Volunteering—Adventure or Investment?

By Delphine Cathcart

Have you dreamt about an escape from your everyday routine? While magazines recommend you walk a labyrinth, take horse therapy and drumming, or join a laughing club, you might find volunteering at the Old City Cemetery Rose garden is your magic carpet.

For those interested in the romantic history of the rose, the Historic Rose Garden's collection involves rose hunters in coastal China, the Himalayas, Japan, and the Middle East; plus gardeners of European nobility, English vicarage gardens, and the

plantations, nurseries, and homesteads of early America.

You might find adventure by wrangling with the health, propagation and identification issues of the cemetery's collection of antique, gold rush, and classic roses. One volunteer who labeled plants for our open garden sale in 2009 went to China to see the roses in their original habitats.

I was introduced to the cemetery rose garden nearly twenty years ago, when I met Barbara Oliva and her band

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## Talk, Talk



**HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS**

Those who know me well, know that one of the things I like to do is talk. (You think?) I learned this early. Not only did I enjoy reading aloud to my elementary school classmates when others quailed at the prospect, but I was praised for doing it well. However, I was even more often chastised for talking in class during lessons. Just a regular blabbermouth.

Recently, I've been putting my propensity for chit-chat to good use, speaking to various groups throughout Northern California, mostly about the Historic Rose Garden and the Cemetery in which it is located.

I've had the good fortune to speak to groups in San Mateo, Chico, Redding and Emeryville as well as closer to home in Rancho Murietta, Elk Grove, and right here in Sacramento. I thoroughly enjoy spreading the word about our very special garden to those who

## *editorial*

haven't yet had the opportunity to visit with the hopeful result that more people plan to do so.

Many are surprised to learn of the extensive nature and purposeful preservation of roses in our garden, plus our careful documentation of these special plants. And how many times have I heard the phrase, "I've driven by there many times, but never visited..."? More than I can count. Sharing photos and information about the Historic Rose Garden is a good way to bring new visitors.

Another positive thing that comes of these opportunities is what I learn from others who know and love roses. Each question, comment and discussion leads to something new—a rose, a technique a new tool or other useful item. Thank you.

Contributions, complaints, greetings: [verlaine@citlink.net](mailto:verlaine@citlink.net) or call me at 685-6634.  
*Judy Eitzen*

## Meiss plot

The Historic Rose Garden covers approximately three acres in Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery, much of it on part of the original ten acres donated by Capt. John Sutter. Many plots have been abandoned as families died out or moved away, and have become part of the Historic Rose Garden.



*by Judy Eitzen & Pat Hutchings*

One of these includes a wooden headboard from early in the Cemetery's history and is the final resting place for members of the Meiss family, (Rose Garden plot 475). Pat Hutchings (on the OCCC Board) is acquainted with the descendents of this family and has conducted some research into the family history.

The original owner of the plot was Henry Daniel Meiss, Sr. who was born in Germany in 1829. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1841, sailing by ship from Bremer to New York. He worked as a butcher with his brother Louis in Reno, Nevada before coming to California around 1851. He owned some 680 acres near Clay Station in Alabama Township (northeast of Galt). The US Census lists him as a farmer in 1870 and 1880. He was a widower (wife Sophie died in 1877 shortly before two of their sons died of diphtheria).

Today, there are remains or cremains of 14 people buried in the plot, the most recent being Howard H. Meiss

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## Repeater or Once Blooming?

### *All China Roses Aren't the Same*

Old Garden Roses have the reputation of blooming only once, usually in late spring or early summer. That's true for roses with European ancestry, such as Damasks, Gallicas and Albas, with rare exceptions such as 'Autumn Damask' and other Damask Perpetuals.

Everything changed suddenly, when the first continuously-blooming Chinese roses were brought to Europe at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These very different roses became the ancestors of a group of repeat-blooming classes of Old Garden Roses, including Teas, Chinas, Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals, and Noisettes. Our familiar repeat-blooming modern classes, including Hybrid Teas, Polyanthas, Hybrid Musks and Floribundas, also descend from repeat-blooming Chinese roses.

Not every Asian rose is repeat-blooming. Asian species such as *R. gigantea* and *R. chinensis spontanea* bloom once. So do garden hybrids such as the famous 'Fortune's Double Yellow,' the rootstock 'Odorata,' and "Phillips and Rix Pink China Climber," all of which grow in our collection. Crosses of repeat-blooming China hybrids with European roses may or may not repeat.

The once-blooming gene is dominant while the gene for repeat-bloom is recessive. Mendel's Laws of Inheritance state that if you cross a repeat-blooming rose with another repeat-bloomer, the offspring will repeat. If you cross a once-blooming rose with a repeat bloomer though, the results depend on whether or not the once-bloomer has that wonderful, recessive remontancy gene. If it does, Mendel's work shows us that half of the offspring will repeat, and half will

not. (see p. 5) If the once-blooming parent has no repeat-blooming gene, none of the offspring will repeat. Second or later generational crosses increase the chance that a rose will inherit two repeat-blooming genes, one from both parents.

Roses haven't studied Mendel, and sometimes they behave unpredictably. It's possible that more than one gene causes remontancy, or that other factors can suppress or prompt repeat bloom. Sports of repeat blooming roses, such as Climbing Queen Elizabeth, can be once-bloomers. 150 years ago, William Paul noted that some crosses of remontant Hybrid Perpetual roses bloomed only once. Much about rose genetics remains unknown.

In The Historic Rose Garden there are a number of once-blooming roses born from crosses of European and China roses. Hybrid China and Hybrid Bourbon roses have vigorous, arching growth, thick, rather matte foliage, considerable hardiness and disease resistance. They bear fragrant, full, complex flowers in tones of pink and purple. "Little Red Runaround" (AKA "Old Red runaround") is one example of a Hybrid China. Others include 'Cardinal de Richelieu,' and 'Paul Ricault.' 'Coupe de Hebe' and 'Gypsy Boy' are once-blooming Hybrid Bourbons. These roses display more European characteristics than Asian, but you'll usually find a tell-tale red streak on their stipules, and they often have the ability to bloom and thrive in milder climates.

Hybrid Chinas and Hybrid Bourbons are very unlike the tender China roses. The old Chinas are less fragrant. They have much thinner, glossier foliage, red new growth, and a twiggy growth habit. De-

(Continued on page 5)

By Anita Clevenger

Roses haven't studied Mendel, and sometimes they behave unpredictably.



## Volunteers, cont.

*(Continued from page 1)*

of volunteers at lunch in the garden. Since then I have been privileged to show up, choose a project, and share tools and enthusiasm. A volunteer can be anyone who wants to contribute to the garden (all levels of skill and commitment are needed). There are plenty of mentors to guide the beginner.

Weekly work sessions at the cemetery garden are challenging, calming and centering. (Go to the website at [www.cemeteryrose.org](http://www.cemeteryrose.org) for dates and times for volunteers and events.)

Potential volunteers complete an application form so the city will know who is in the garden (the Cemetery is part of the City's Convention, Culture & Leisure Department). Our maintenance manager puts together a project list which she sends to us by email. Sometimes I arrive with a particular wish, or sometimes another volunteer needs a hand. It might be a task I have never seen before, or something at which I have become expert. It could be menial or skilled. The project of the day might be pruning, deadheading, training a rose, labeling, hosing, or planting perennials, pulling elm starts or nut grass, or spreading compost. Just as working with roses perfumes your hands, volunteering sweetens your outlook by allowing the mind and the body to interact with nature.

As volunteers grow in experience, naturally some take on more challenging assignments. In the past few years some volunteers have become remarkable propa-

gators of our heritage roses. They share their secrets in classes in rose propagation they give to the public. Others give interpretive tours of the garden. Still others maintain public information in the kiosk, website, and newsletter.

In August I enjoy my personal quest to coax extra flushes of bloom by deadheading our reblooming roses: Hybrid Perpetuals and Damasks, Chinas, and Teas. "Malespina Red China", growing at the top of the West Bed, has produced an inexhaustible supply of ruby red blooms. How far will it go? How long will "Grandmother's Hat," "Benny Lopez", and "Miriam's Pink Powder-puff" keep responding with flowers? I can't resist trying to get another bloom with my shears.

Sometimes volunteers work independently focusing on a particular task to get more done. Lately, a team approach has grown in popularity since it is conducive to the discussion of the rose at hand, its problems and history, and possible courses of action.

There's plenty to give a sense of accomplishment, whether it's the pile of cuttings and weeds on the roadway, the new silhouette of the well-pruned shrub, or the newly functioning automatic irrigation system, a successful open garden or tour, or abundant blooms. As I get to know the garden and its contents better, the feelings of comfort and joy deepen, especially knowing it is a beautiful public place that will be there when I am gone. I think of it as one of my best investments in the future.



"Two Americorps volunteers (15 in all) tackling the rose stump in Plot 484SW, "Betty Prior" (removed due to crown gall). Others helped remove numerous tree seedlings in the rose plots. Dan and Brendan (shown here) also attended the Cemetery Lantern Tour that weekend and helped take down the setup afterwards.

Many Thanks to All!"

*Photo: Courtesy of Chuck Hatch*



## Maintenance Report

Our mild summer quickly turned into a hot autumn, with late September's triple-digit temperatures prompting the usual October flush to bloom and fade quickly. Any flowers still lingering got a good soaking of rain in mid-October, leading to an unusual amount of botrytis spotting the petals and turning spent blooms into furry, moldy balls.

Even if the fall display was not as good as we'd hoped, the garden looks healthy and well-tended. Everybody put in a concerted effort to tidy up Cypress, the carriageway to the east of the rose garden, prior to the Lantern Tours so that visitors could see our garden at its best. Chuck Hatch brought in his own weed eater to trim the paths, and Pat Schink planted flowers by the Historic Rose Garden sign.

Americorps removed weed trees throughout the cemetery, including the rose garden. Barbara Oliva surveyed the rose garden for unwanted seedlings and suckers, made a master list, and marked a plot map. It was a good, efficient approach which we should use in the future, although we volunteers will continue to uproot weed trees whenever we see them. Especially in the Broadway Bed, it seems that every rose has a tree in the middle of it (except for those that have two or three).

The garden continues to evolve, as always. We removed two roses with crown gall. Very few people ever ventured up to the north edge of Plot 3 in the Broadway Bed to see 'Souvenir de Graton,' which is possibly 'Souvenir d'un

by Anita Clevenger

Ami.' We discovered it was almost dead, with large galls at its crown. Fortunately, we have another specimen of this rose in Plot 464. 'Betty Prior,' on the other hand, was a prominent feature in the rose garden for many years. A modern Floribunda introduced in 1933, it grew to be a massive shrub, putting on a magnificent display of single, bright pink flowers. It began to decline in recent years, and we spotted tell-tale corky galls at its base. Chuck worked with Americorps to remove it. We thought it might be nearly impossible to dig out, but the roots were badly damaged by galls and came out fairly readily (easy for me to say).

Our collection continues to expand. We added a few more species and Hybrid Spinossissimas, including roses from Miriam Wilkins's garden. We are running out of space. The Valley Oaks are maturing and casting more and more shade. Additionally, we must wait several years to replant in spots where we've removed diseased roses. We also don't want to plant where roses will block monuments or pathways, or in plots still infested with weeds such as Bermuda grass, nut sedge or bindweed. What to do?

To the west of the rose garden, there are sunny open areas irrigated by overhead sprinklers. These plots are unadopted and poorly maintained. Perhaps it's time to add a few to the rose garden area, convert the irrigation to bubblers, and grow some more roses?

## GROW, cont.

*(Continued from page 5)*

opportunity to hear a broad selection of the greats of the rose world, men and women of the caliber of Peter Beales, Ralph Moore, Roger Phillips, Miriam Wilkins, Wilhelm Kordes, David Austin, and Marilyn Wellan.

Two days of lectures and workshops are designed for everyone from novice to experienced rose growers to learn more about the flower we all love. It is also a great place to meet fellow gardeners and exchange tips on growing roses. *(And, of course, the January weather in SoCal is usually great—jve)*

### Did You Know?

GROW East is held each June in New York City. Events include the Great Rosarian lecture, garden tours, and recognizing the Great Rosarians Hall of Fame Gardens.



## Meiss Plot, Cont.

*(Continued from page 2)*

who died in 1993. Howard was a survivor of the 1944 sinking of the USS St. Lo (formerly USS Midway) during the battle of Leyte Gulf in the Pacific in WWII. The St. Lo was a Casablanca class escort carrier and was the first to be sunk due to a kamikaze attack. Howard was an Aviation Machinists Mate who, after some hours in the water, was rescued by remaining US ships in the area.

Although individuals in this plot may seem pretty ordinary at first glance, and are certainly not famous, their stories are interesting, giving us a glimpse into earlier times and helping to keep our own lives in perspective. Both men mentioned here demonstrated courage and fortitude—one emigrating to a new and rough country and his descendent surviving a war-time shipwreck.

All four roses in this plot are found roses – that is, they were rescued from sites around California and

preserved in this garden. They are: “Camptonville Cemetery Noisette”, “Light Pink Semi-Double”, “Cream Pink” and “New Oldfield HT”. Camptonville is a small mountain community in Yuba County between Marysville and Grass Valley/Nevada City. The noisette rose was found in the Cemetery there where, like the Historic City Cemetery, residents include those from the Gold Rush era. “Light Pink Semi-Double” and “Cream Pink” were brought here from an El Dorado County Cemetery. We’re not sure where “New Oldfield HT” grew originally; nor which named hybrid tea it is as it was donated more than 15 years ago. As with all our plants, these roses were grown out (grown up?) to see what they would become and will be thoroughly researched to determine their provenance (if we can do so) and preserved in the Rose Garden, together with the permanent residents of the Meiss plot.

“Cream Pink” blooms from the Meiss Plot

### GROW Event Details

Saturday & Sunday, January 22-23, 2011  
The Huntington, 1151 Oxford Road  
San Marino, California 91108  
Tickets: \$50.00

(includes both Saturday and Sunday)

Contact: Clair Martin  
phone 626.405.3507  
email [cmartin@huntington.org](mailto:cmartin@huntington.org)

#### *Saturday*

- 11:00 a.m. Early Registration, Botanical Center
- 12:00 p.m. Workshop 1: Composting and Mulch
- 2:00 p.m. Workshop 2: Transitioning to a Sustainable Rose Garden: Giving up the Chemicals

#### *Sunday*

- 9:00 a.m. Registration, Friends' Hall
- 9:30 a.m.—Gregg Lowery, proprietor Vintage Gardens, Sebastopol, CA
- 10:30 a.m.—Peter Kukielski, The Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden, The NY Botanical Garden
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch on your own
- 1:15 a.m. Book Signing: The Sustainable Rose Garden: A Reader in Rose Culture, Edited by Gene Waering
- 2:00 p.m. GROW lecture Ruth Knopf
- 3:30 p.m. Reception





## CEMETERY ROSE



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WE'RE ON THE WEB  
[www.cemeteryrose.org](http://www.cemeteryrose.org)



Historic Rose Garden volunteers receive more benefits than one might think. Not only are volunteers able to spend time working on a project that benefits the entire community, they get to spend time learning about roses with gardeners interested in antique roses, their history and horticulture. Volunteers are good company! Volunteers are the first to try growing roses from the Rose Garden in home gardens. Join in!

### *Before Pruning:* **Clean & Sharpen Your Tools**

Why? Because clean, sharp tools make the work easier and a clean cut means less damage, disease and pests.

1. Lubricate tools regularly—makes less work throughout the year.
2. Clean with stiff brush & soapy water. Dip in solvent to remove sap & in oil to protect. Wipe dry.
3. Determine cutting angle on blades of by-pass pruners (only one blade on anvil pruners).
4. Use whetstone with oil (water dries very quickly) and move the beveled side of the edge in the same direction across the whetstone.
5. Clean & lubricate after sharpening.



**Garden quote:**  
*“Good pruning is invisible. It looks as if everything grew to the right size and stopped.”*

*Cass Turnbull  
(founder of Plant Amnesty)*