



CEMETERY ROSE

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

Happy Days Are Here Again!
(Make that "Pruning Days")



Volume 8, Issue 2
December 2008

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Volunteers from the Historic Rose Garden will conduct two pruning clinics this month. The first will be a hands-on pruning workshop conducted by Garden Curator Barbara Oliva on December 6 at 10 a.m.

On December 27, at 10 a.m. Garden Maintenance Manager Anita Clevenger will conduct a clinic on pruning climbing roses.

Rosy Research

There are many beautiful roses in the Historic Rose Garden and it seems that some particular roses always catch one's eye. For some it's the spectacular 'Fortune's Double Yellow' with its peachy centered yellow blooms, others marvel at the banksias' climbing high in pines and cedars, and for some it's the many-colors of 'Mutabilis' or the delicate pink beauty of 'Cornelia'. One of the roses that stands out in a garden of such beauties is "Vina Banks"¹.

"Vina Banks" was "rustled"² from a property in Vina, California (Tehema County, east of Red Bluff) by Sherri Berglund. It was one of those promising looking roses that turned out to be a lovely, graceful plant when grown from her cuttings. It's obviously related to the Banksia roses, hence the study name. One was planted

The 4th annual **Pruning Party** is scheduled for Saturday, January 24, 2009. This is a volunteer work party to help get roses ready for their spring show. Bring pruners and loppers, dress warmly and bring strong gloves and we'll put you to work. A hot lunch will be served.

Please call Anita Clevenger (715-7294) to sign-up for the Pruning Party. Rain date is January 31.

by Judy Eitzen

in the Cemetery and has been noted as a rose worthy of preserving and sharing.

It is different enough from the Banksia roses (larger blooms, vase-like growth habit) to be an entirely different variety, though similar enough (few prickles, leaf shape, blooming habit) that some began to wonder if it was deliberately brought to California by someone or is just a chance seedling.³

This is the question that led two researchers—Sherri Berglund and Barbara Oliva—to search archived plant records at Chico State University and the US Forest's Genetic Research and Conservation Center (formerly the Plant Experiment Station under the US Department of Agriculture). The town of Vina is not that far from Chico, and it seemed logi-

Cemetery Rose Garden Activities and Dates:

**Pruning Clinics
Dec 6 & 27**

**Pruning Party
Jan 24, 2009**

SAVE THIS DATE:

**Open Garden
April 18, 2009**

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Editorial—Headed Into Winter

editorial



As we all know, seasons result from the yearly revolution of the Earth around the Sun and the tilt of the Earth's axis relative to the plane of revolution. Seasons are marked by changes in the intensity of sunlight which, in this locale and at this time of year, may cause animals to hibernate or migrate and plants to be dormant.

Astronomically, winter starts with the winter solstice and ends with the vernal equinox. Some define seasons by weather, winter being approximately the whole months of December, January, and February in the Northern Hemisphere. By still another definition, the seasons are spoken of, as elastic periods determined by the weather, winter in being when the weather turns decidedly cold. In the Rose Garden we determine winter by when the roses go dormant, because the most important task at this time must be completed while the plants are dormant.

Overcoming the need to hibernate or migrate, we humans find other activities for this season. We spend time observing some 250 species of birds, many passing through the area on their winter migration. We celebrate Christmas and Hanukkah and the beginning of the end of the long nights and short days. Rosarians prune roses – and we all claim that we LOVE to do it, too!

To celebrate this season, spend time chilling out (literally!) with your roses, then add some seasoning to a cup of hot cider, sit back and watch our little feathered visitors perch on our newly neatened bare branches. Ah, the portrait of a contented gardener.

Contributions, complaints, greetings: verlaine@citlink.net or call me at 685-6634.
Judy Eitzen

Maintenance Report

by Anita Clevenger

Has this been the most beautiful autumn ever? That's how it seems to the lucky volunteers and visitors in the rose garden. While we've had some blessed rain, the temperatures have been near record-setting highs, and roses are blooming everywhere you look.

One of our primary efforts during late summer and fall has been to trim back roses that were blocking the pathways and spilling over monuments. Often, it turns into a major project. It's hard to know where to start on an overgrown rose like *'Souvenir de Mme Leonie Viennot'* or *'Phillips and Rix Pink China Climber.'* We stand and study it, identifying which new canes are keepers, and which woody or crossing canes need to go. In theory, the way to approach a climbing rose is to remove it from the structure, cut out unwanted canes, and tie it back up. In practice, most of our roses are too woody, huge and tangled to cooperate with this approach. We find that it's better to work as a team, cutting out canes one at a time, and extricating it from the mass of growth.

Once we are started on a project rose, it's often just as hard to know when to stop. As we remove the canes, we discover more that are damaged, growing awkwardly, or

just not beautiful or productive. We step back periodically to take a good look, because it's hard to keep perspective when in a thorny thicket. We want to stop before the trim turns into a buzz cut.

We've been attaching climbing rose canes to the structures with foam-covered wire, in addition to our usual nylon stocking ties, to keep them more firmly attached when the North Wind howls through the Broadway fence and down through the cemetery. This wire is easily removed and reused, and holds the canes securely. It's available through mail order gardening supply companies. We got ours from Peaceful Valley Farm Supply in Grass Valley.

We've also been making a concerted attempt to plant more colorful roses along Cypress Avenue. On the east side of this main cemetery road, Adopt-A-Plot volunteers have created a tapestry of grasses, perennials and annuals. On the west side, many of the rose garden plots were paved with concrete or empty, and the once-bloomers in other plots were in their glory only a few weeks each year. What was the answer? Add some irrigation, and plant Chinas, Teas and Noisettes! We've planted at least a dozen new roses, and are looking forward to watching *'Bengal Fire,'*

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Rana Ranch “Rustle”

On a warm day in August, several intrepid Rosarians visited Rana Ranch, a cattle ranch near Valley Springs, located in the foothills east of Stockton.

This property has been in continual use since at least the mid-nineteenth century. It is presently owned by parents of a Rose Garden Volunteer Irina Schabram. She told us there were roses on the ranch that looked like they had been there a long time and we vowed to check them out. With the gracious permission and guidance of the Irina’s family, we spent a day traveling back in history.

Interested rose hunters included Clay and Jeri Jennings from Camarillo, Jill Perry from the Heritage Rose Garden in San Jose and our own Anita Clevenger, Liz Hall, Janelle Michel, Bill Harp and Judy Eitzen.

The home is located on top of a knoll in the midst of rolling foothills in the region where oak savannah becomes oak woodlands. Many of the plants follow seasonal and underground watercourses in the foothills and thus appear in groups where there is water. Native Valley Oaks and Blue Oaks often find enough water away from these sources, but other plants follow the water more closely.

We arrived in late morning and trooped down the slope behind the house to an area with a seasonal stream. One or two lagged behind the rest and the accompanying ranch dogs proceeded to herd us down the hill. It was mostly dry in August, but there were one or two seeps where the dogs cooled off by jumping right in.

The first thing we found was a large *R. eglandaria*. Once we noticed that rose, we found more, each one following the streambed as it traveled down the slope. You could smell this rose’s apple scent long before being close enough to identify it by sight. Mmmmmmmmmmm.

We then returned to our vehicles and drove further back into the property, headed for what was once a stagecoach stop. Later, looking into GoogleEarth and doing some research at the California Room of the State Library, we learned this was a stop along the way from Stockton to Placerville and other mining towns during the Gold Rush. The stage stop would have been about an hour west of the tiny town of Paloma and an hour east of Val-

by Judy Eitzen



Liz Hall and Judy Eitzen riding to the stage coach stop on top of a bale of hay.

ley Springs. We have yet to identify the exact line—it’s hard to sort out the many lines that came and went during the latter half of the 19th century.

We rode part way and most of us walked about a mile along a meandering creek, following the old stage line to the ruins of the stage stop itself. Three of us rode on an all-terrain 4-wheeler to save our joints. It was like riding on an amusement park ride when you can’t tell which way you will jounce next.

When we got to the stagecoach stop, we examined the ruins and found several promising plants. There were at least two different roses growing along a creek, with more *R. eglandaria*. We also noticed, planted close to one of the larger buildings, two ancient plum trees that might very well have been used for making brandy. There were two lime-kilns on the site and we saw that the remains of the buildings were constructed of mortared local stone. It was like stepping back into California’s history...you could almost hear the horses and coach coming down the dirt track toward the station.

We took cuttings from the roses found along the creek and will grow them to see what we found. We are also planning a return visit when these roses will likely be in bloom—perhaps next spring. A lovely lunch followed our foray into the hills at the Kawk Eyed Café in Valley Springs. Good company, a small adventure and a delicious meal. Truly a great day.

Rosy Research, con't.

(Continued from page 1)

cal that if there were records, the local archives would be the place to begin. It also seemed like a simple question, "What's the probable origin of "Vina Banks" rose?" Such questions often lead researchers in unexpected directions and this was no exception.

The second trip to the former Plant Station in Chico was undertaken by four intrepid explorers in July: Sherri and Barbara, plus Jewel Reilly and Judy Eitzen. We were given the opportunity to explore a basement where items no longer needed, but of potential value, were stored. Actually, they were stuffed away out of sight, among rats, spiders and other unnamed vermin. The basement was unfinished with dirt walls, poor lighting and no temperature or humidity controls. It was the perfect place to store potentially valuable documents, filled with old furniture, outdated equipment and boxes and files stacked one upon the other with no particular order. It seemed as if anyone could put something here that was unused and in the way. All subject to damp and dirty conditions.

We had been warned about conditions, so were prepared with flashlights, long sleeves and gloves. First, we attempted to learn if any of the boxed files contained items from the relevant period of the plant explorers. Principally the late 19th and the first decade or so of the 20th centuries. We quickly learned that there wasn't much in the basement older than the 1950's, but a few dusty boxes and file drawers looked worth a more thorough examination of the contents. We found annual reports, statistical analysis of various crops and copies of outdated brochures plus Forest Service information sheets and budget requests. It was all very interesting, but not relevant to the time period before the Forest Service took over the site.

We shifted some boxes and cabinets and began to find older records. A careful examination showed that many boxes contained more of the same, just older documents. And then, in the midst of typed and carbon-copy reports, we unearthed (almost literally) a small leatherette ring binder. It reminded me of the one my Great Grandmother used to record her recipes (but that's another story). Inside was pure gold. Well, pure gold for the researcher. It was a carbon-copy record of the plants that were growing on the site in 1915 with some information as to origin of the plants. Additionally, there were hand-written notes in the margins dated 1925. The hand-written notes often explained what happened to the plant—some of which had already disappeared—during that 10-year period. We set the

book aside for a thorough examination and continued to search through the surrounding boxes. It was disappointing that we found nothing else of interest, but we were so excited about the notebook that we headed straight for a nearby picnic table and began to peruse it in the daylight.

This little gem has since led us in several directions, but that day, we sat together and started searching through it for mention of roses. When we found roses, we eagerly read the information aloud as if we were reading a novel or telling a story. In fact, what we found has become exactly that, a story of the plants brought to California by plant explorers then grown at the Chico station. For many plants, it was the opening chapter in their entry into California's agriculture, floriculture and horticulture.

Each entry in the book is numbered and located on the site. In some cases these locations have become ephemeral, for example, "PINUS BUNGIANA - Tree about due East of hybrid walnut, and distant about 66 feet." This is great if you know where the hybrid walnut was located, but not much help if you were to look for this pine tree today (assuming it's still there). One of my favorite locator lines is for another pine tree. It reads, "Starting with large oak tree on edge of old slough, a little North of East of ash tree taken before, and about 56' distant from it." I wonder what "taken before" means? Perhaps an earlier entry in the list?

More to the point are the entries on roses. This entry is typical: *ROSA SP. (West of F Line, South of R Road) From Shing lung shan, China, through Mr. Frank H. Meyer, Feb. 4, 1908 (No. 862a) Of a very spreading habit, having red colored stems 2-3 ft. high, very spiny; bearing many bunches of large scarlet berries. May be of use as a soil binder in rather dry regions. The seeds may remain dormant for one year. (Meyer). Plant (is) about 12 feet to N.W. of oak - in very good condition.*⁴

That afternoon, sitting around that picnic table, it became apparent that there would be no straight-line search to answer our initial question. Entries such as the one above have led us down several avenues of searching. We have begun to look into plant explorer Frank N. Meyer, the Plant Experiment station in Chico, other individuals mentioned in the book, as well as individual plants. Each of these searches has led us in still more directions. It was apparent just by examining the notebook while still gathered around the picnic table on a smoky summer morning⁵, that we would need to organize our research, cutting off some side-lines while focusing on others. In that way, we could answer our initial question; what can we learn about the rose, "Vina Banks"?

To be continued...

A. P. Smith Plot Update

Anthony Preston Smith died in 1877 and was buried in the Historic Rose Garden long before there was a rose garden. Those who read the original article about him* will remember he was a nurseryman who brought many plants to the gardeners and orchardists of 19th century Sacramento Valley. His experimental gardens along the American River were open to the public and very popular. In fact, his garden was the site of his funeral, and he is buried in plot #547, now part of the East Bed of the Historic Rose Garden

Because water was limited, just one rose has been planted here. It is 'Charles Lawson' a Bourbon rose of 1853 arched over the walkway. It was one of our found roses, coming to the cemetery under the study name "Dr. Peck's 12th Avenue Smoothie".

Working with Sheriff's Work Crews, Anita Clevenger has added two more bubblers to the plot and plans to add roses that Smith had listed in his sales catalog. One of these is 'General Cavignac (available from Vintage Gardens). *Devoniensis* is a possibility for the second site. It is entirely fitting that historic roses are planted at the graveside of this important local nurseryman and we are delighted to do so.

*It appeared in the June 2004 issue of *Cemetery Rose* which is available on our website: CemeteryRose.org along with other back issues of this newsletter beginning with August, 2001.



Maintenance, con't.

(Continued from page 2)

"Shmidt's Buff Giant," "Setzer Noisette," "Ferdale Red China," "Miss Lowe's Variety" and other ever-blooming roses grow into maturity.

We've also removed a few more roses. The biggest change was taking out one of two *R. eglanteria* in Plot 100 of the Broadway Bed. While we miss its great pile of apple-scented foliage and colorful hips, it's very nice to have an unobstructed view into the garden. We knew that this eglantine was crowding out a Hybrid Perpetual, 'General Jacqueminot,' but had no idea how quickly "General Jack" would start to grow once it had the space and sunlight it craved. "General Jack" was one of the favorite red roses of Victorian and Edwardian times, and is often mentioned by garden writers of the time. We are glad that it is back in a place of honor in the cemetery.

Rose Research Article notes:

¹ The name of this plant, "Vina banks" appears in double quotes because this name is a study name. Study names (sometimes called "found names") are used to identify plants for which no named variety has been identified. This rose is located in plot #432 in the Historic Rose Garden

² The term "rustled" is used by rosarians who locate and propagate roses found on abandoned properties, old cemeteries, and along rural roadsides. One of the main purposes of the Historic Rose Garden is to locate and preserve these heritage plants of California.

³ A seedling is a rose grown through sexual propagation - i.e., pollinated. Without going into botanic details; birds eat rose hips and excrete seeds which may grow into a plant that is different from the parent plant as it contains genes from two plants. Thus new roses may appear through nature as well as being deliberately grown by hybridizers.

⁴ Frank N. Meyer was an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture who made several trips to China and the Middle East for the purpose of locating plants that would be useful and productive in the United States. Although Frank Meyer introduced many plants, he is perhaps best remembered today for introduction of the 'Meyer Lemon' and for identifying and bringing to the U.S. fire-blight-resistant pear cultivars which saved California's pear industry in the early 20th century.

⁵ It was smoky throughout the northern Sacramento Valley because some of the June lightning-strike forest fires were still burning. That afternoon we talked with two of the rangers who work at the US Forest Service station in Chico (Genetic Research and Conservation Center) and learned that the conifer seed produced on that property is more than sufficient to grow replacement trees for all of the acreage that had burned in California up to that date. In fact, the current purpose of this site is to grow seed for replacement forest trees and to experiment with various conifers to learn which grow best in California's national forests. Cool.



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ROSE

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WE'RE ON THE WEB
www.cemeteryrose.org



Perks

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 others 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.

Quick Garden Tip:

Pruning Prep 101

Before pruning your dormant roses this winter:

- 1. Use a whetstone and oil to sharpen pruners and loppers. Dull tools make the job harder & ragged cuts will allow disease into canes.**
- 2. Prepare a sanitizing solution & bring it to your garden. Sanitize pruners between each rose. (1 Tbs bleach to 1 pint water works great)**
- 3. Check gloves & replace if ragged. Strong leather gauntlets work best.**
- 4. Cold winter air can be dry (unless it's actually raining). Bring water and lotion.**



Garden quote

If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.

Cicero