



# CEMETERY ROSE

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



Volume 7, Issue 1  
September 2007

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## Autumn In The Garden

*by Judy Eitzen*

We think of Spring as the prime time for roses in the Historic Rose Garden, and it is, but Autumn also has its attractions. When the roses begin their fall flush (usually sometime in September) they often bloom with brighter colors and stronger scents. It's a great time to visit the garden. It's also a great time to photograph plants that often have colorful foliage, hips or stems as well as brighter blooms.

A number of activities are planned for this fall at the garden, so check your schedule and plan to visit.

### *Propagation Clinic*

Barbara Oliva will conduct a class in the propagation of roses on Saturday, September 8, at 10:00 a.m. Come to the Historic Rose Garden to learn techniques for taking cuttings and successfully propagating roses grown on their own roots. Barbara will give a short demonstration of techniques for taking cuttings and successful starting of new rose plants and attendees will have an opportunity for hands-on training.

### *Garden Tours*

Anita Clevenger will conduct two *What's Blooming in the Cemetery?* tours on September 15 and November 17.

*(Continued on page 5)*

*Cemetery Rose  
Garden*

*Activities and  
Dates*

**Propagation Clinic  
September 8**

**Rose Garden Tours  
Sept 15 & Nov 17**

**Pruning Clinics  
Dec 1 and Dec 15**

*Details in this  
newsletter*

## Weeds, Weeds, Weeds!

*by Anita Clevenger*

We have spent much of the spring and summer fighting weeds. Weed growth is much worse wherever there is overhead spray, so we are removing several overhead sprinklers that are not needed to irrigate grass or roses.

We are constantly pulling weeds, too. One volunteer quietly comes in on his own schedule and efficiently clears large areas by hand, leaving piles of weeds on the corners of the plots for us to admire and throw away. Other volunteers and the Sheriff's Work Crew have tackled

some other weedy plots. We've solarized three more plots, having observed from our efforts last year that solarization is very effective against annual weeds, and discourages the re-growth of Bermuda grass and burr clover. We will be making a final push to put down weed barriers and mulch before the winter rains begin.

What kind of weed barriers work best? At first, we invested in professional-quality weed fabric. We have learned not to use it in beds with colonizing

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Madam President  
A One-Day  
Symposium  
on the Future of  
Heritage Roses**

Sunday,  
October 21st, 2007  
9 am to 4:45 pm  
In the Rose Fields at  
**Garden Valley  
Ranch**  
498 Pepper Road,  
Petaluma, CA

*Additional info at:*  
[http://www.  
heritagerosesfoundation.org/](http://www.heritagerosesfoundation.org/)



*“It looks  
Like  
Spring!”*

## People Stay Green and Growing by Learning *editorial*

It's hard to believe that I've been editing this newsletter for six years. I recently looked back through old newsletters and learned that while we've talked a lot about the Historic Rose Garden, we've also encouraged readers to join in and attend various events, conferences and seminars where there is an opportunity to learn from those who have been concerned with these treasured roses for many years. It may seem like a lot of effort to travel to another city or state (or even country) “just” to learn about roses, but it is often well worth it.

Many of my rose friends and acquaintances have connections quite literally around the world and it's always enjoyable to discuss what's right or wrong with my garden with someone who not only understands, but who may have worked out solutions to my problems.

The recent International conference in France was a perfect example. At one luncheon, Kasuko (*from Japan*) asked

Roberto (*from Italy*) about a particular rose he mentioned having grown on an arbor. The question was asked and answered with help from Isa (*from Chile*) who had enough English and Italian to help the query along. Speaking with Judy from *Australia*, I learned that our climate challenges are similar, and Viru from *India* had some great ideas for garden structures though his focus is presently on hybridizing.

People from 22 countries got together for a few days to learn and see and talk about something we all love; roses. We didn't talk politics or nationalities much, just roses. It amazed me to see language and cultural barriers disappear as we argued the merits of this or that rose or growing technique. Attending such events is a great way to expand your horizons and well worth the effort.

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

## Maintenance Report

*by Anita Clevenger*

At the August deadheading party, one of the participants looked around in wonder. “I've never seen so many roses in bloom here in the middle of summer,” he said. “It looks like spring!”

At least a few roses are always in bloom in the Historic Rose Garden, but in July and August, most of them take a break. Usually, our most colorful hot-season plants are the oleander and crape myrtle, briefly outshining their rosy companions. This summer has been the exception. The roses are holding their own.

What makes the difference this year? There are so many variables that it's hard to tell. We believe that our winter pruning, removing unproductive or dead wood, shaping the plants, and defoliating, has resulted in healthier roses. The weather is certainly a factor, with the cold winter followed by a dry, mild spring and a relatively mild summer. We spread manure on many of the

roses this spring, and think that it may have encouraged some additional growth. Our roses are also getting more sunlight. The city is continuing to remove old, diseased elm trees, and much more of the rose garden is now sunny. We often talk about shade-tolerant roses, but the fact seems to be that nearly all roses will perform better in full sun.

The roses are getting more regular water, and they are responding with lush growth and more flowering. Water pressure is a problem throughout the cemetery, so we water our roses in the evening, leaving maximum pressure during the day for the city to water the grass and plantings in the rest of the cemetery. The rose garden's irrigation system is operated manually, which means that someone needs to come out every evening and turn on a few valves. Barbara Oliva has borne this burden by herself for many years, but Lonnie Ratzlaff now shares the duty. The two of them ensure that each section of the garden is watered once every six days.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## A Little Trip To France

by Judy Eitzen

The 11th International Heritage Roses Conference sponsored by Rosa Gallica was held in Chaalis, France the 13-15 of June, 2007. Anita Clevenger and I were fortunate enough to attend the three-day event along with a few other Californian rose lovers. We spent a few days in the town of Senlis, about a half-hour north-east of Paris.

The event was the project of the Rosa Gallica organization and specifically of its president, Francois Joyeux, who took on the sometimes enormous task of handling all our tours, problems, busses, luggage, injuries, speakers, logistics, hotels, etc. etc. It was a marvelous few days, thanks to Francois.

We attended a two-day pre-conference tour which included Reims (visiting Notre Dame Cathedral & Pommery Champagne caves), Napoleon & Josephine's palais in Compiègne and Monet's home and garden in Giverny.

The formal conference was held in the Orangerie of the Abbaye Royale in Chaalis (near Senlis) and was divided into three broad topics; history of European roses, Botany and horticulture, and Conservation of rose gardens & roses. Specific topics included; therapeutic uses for roses, history of Scots and French roses, colors and fragrances of roses, information about the restoration of old rose gardens in Italy and details about the roses grown by Empress Josephine in the 18th century. Each morning's lectures were followed by a buffet lunch on the grounds of the Abbaye and afternoons included tours of Rosarie l'Hay and Baga-

## Weeds, cont.

*(Continued from page 1)*

roses, since suckers run to the edge of the plot, and are very difficult to remove. Nutsedge has been discouraged by the fabric, but it does poke through. Bermuda grass also grew right through the fabric in several beds. We have used several different kinds of fabric, and have not tracked which kind has been more effective. However, we have learned that there are other, cheaper ways to block weed growth.

We tried putting down thick layers of newspaper. It held down annual weeds, but did nothing to block Bermuda grass and St. Augustine grass. We also found that the skunks and other critters will dig through the newspaper, leaving little piles of it on the surface in their search for underground edibles.

Cardboard seems pretty effective, but it must be overlapped 6-8 inches, or the grass grows through the edges. It's better to use big pieces of cardboard, so we've stopped dumpster diving and have started to ask local recycling and box-

telle gardens in Paris and a visit to the Condé Palais in Chantilly.

Some of us continued on a post-conference tour that included a private visit to the Institut de France (including the French Academy where the next edition of the French dictionary is being prepared), a tour of Malmaison and a private tour of Gallica roses in Commer. One of the highlights of the trip was lunch in a small hotel with members of Rosa Gallica. The food was wonderful, the wines superb and we were entertained by two sopranos and a chanteuse who's songs were translated for us non-French speakers.

Sherri Berglund of B & B Roses and I had five days in Paris during which we crammed in as many touristy activities as we could, walks and boat trips on the Seine, visits to three cathedrals several museums, shopping in Momartre & on the Champs Elysees, dinner in the Latin Quarter, etc. etc. We even visited the top of the Eiffel Tower where we ran into tourists from around the world. Cliché or not, it was c'est magnifique.

Meeting other rosy-minded conference-goers from around the world (22 countries were represented) is a great experience. Discussing the merits of this climate or that rose and sharing propagating techniques and ideas for rose structures, etc. etc. is exhilarating. Can't wait for the next one!



making companies to donate big sheets.

UC Davis recommends the use of black plastic as a way to block Bermuda grass. We don't want to use that in plots with roses, because it prevents water absorption and air flow. However, we tried it last summer in one plot with no roses. We have had a little penetration of Bermuda grass and nutsedge, but not much. We plan to remove the plastic at the end of the next growing season, and see how permanently the weeds have been controlled.

At this time of year, it's easy to believe that we've defeated the weeds. The amount of progress that we've made will really show next spring, when seeds germinate and perennial weeds come back to life. It's a constant battle.



## The Prettiest Stud Rose?

by Judy Eitzen



Why do many roses bloom nearly continuously and others bloom just once a season? Going back to the beginning is one way to learn about the character of the roses we grow. Of course, it can be difficult to find the “beginning”.

Old Blush is one of four China roses who’s DNA can be found in many of our more modern roses. Okay, so what’s a “China rose” and why four? Roses from China were brought to Europe in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century via the tea trade. They were very different from the popular European roses of the day. Chinas are twiggy, woody and relatively compact plants that bloom in every shade of red as well as white and pink and some yellow and apricot with blossoms *darkening* with age. The popular European roses of the day were large, rangy plants with large, splashy flowers in white, pink and purple that bloomed for a short time in spring or early summer and who’s flowers *faded* with age. The most significant thing about the introduction of Chinas was the fact that they bloomed from nearly every joint in the plant, even from spent blossoms, and they bloomed continuously from spring into fall. Four of these new Chinas were used as stud roses throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century—Old Blush is used to this day. The four stud roses are known today as; ‘Old Blush China’, ‘Slater’s Crimson China’, ‘Parson’s Pink China’ and ‘Hume’s Blush Tea Scented China’.

Old Blush was grown in Holland as a pink form of *R. chinensis* in 1781 and soon traveled to England. (Some sources say it reached Europe earlier in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but 1781 appears to be the earliest documented date). Eight years later a red form was found in Calcutta and brought to England and eventually became known as ‘Slater’s Crimson China.’ These two roses are responsible for remontancy in most of the roses we saw in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and in many bred today.

The advent of breeding remontancy (reblooming or continuous blooming) via these China roses is arguably the most significant development in the history of rose breeding. It certainly had a profound effect in the

development of roses hybridized after their introduction.

Old Blush is one of the most enduringly popular old garden roses, not just because of its legacy of remontancy, but for itself. The medium-sized bright pink flowers bloom continuously in loose clusters throughout the summer. The plants are long-lived, can grow to more than 6’ and, while not immune to pests, are pretty resistant to most of them. Old Blush is also happy in hot climates, grows in a variety of soils and tolerates neglect as can be seen by the many survivors found climbing old fences and barns and cemeteries throughout the south and west.

Old Blush has been known by many names (see box) in various places and at different times. As with many historical objects, tracing its origins becomes impossible without a time machine. It is possibly the rose depicted in Song Dynasty paintings of the 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> century. The Chinese were certainly hybridizing roses at that time. That’s right, Old Blush is a hybrid, not a species and of course one might assume that Chinese hybridizers bred for remontancy, color and vigor just as breeders do today.

Once in Europe, Old Blush was bred with Autumn Damask to form the Bourbon class of roses. It quickly found its way to the Americas and by 1800 John Champneys developed the first Noisette roses by crossing the Musk rose (a European rose from Shakespeare’s time) with Old Blush. Many hybridizers have used Old Blush and in fact, some do to this day including Ralph Moore of Sequoia Nursery in Visalia. (‘Mr. Bluebird’ and ‘Pink Poodle’ are two of his modern minis with Old Blush as a parent.)

Though Old Blush is not the best for cut flowers (the blooms wither fairly quickly so the next buds can open) it is popular with gardeners because of the ability to tolerate many conditions, a vigorous growth habit (it can cover an arbor in just a couple of years) and the beauty it adds to the garden all season long.

*Old Blush in the Cemetery is located at the Southeast corner of Plot 515.*

### Alternate Names For Old Blush:

- Parson’s Pink China
- Common Blush China
- Old Pink Daily
- Old Pink Monthly
- Common Monthly
- Diversifolia
- Rose Semi-Double
- Rosier a Feuilles Variables

## Fall Events, continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

Her focus will be on the Rose Garden and the two tours should be very different as fall heads toward winter. A *What's Blooming?* tour will also be conducted by Sharon Patri- cian that will cover the entire ceme- tery on October 20. All of these tours begin in the area near the 10th Street entrance at 10:00 a.m.

### *Propagation*

Each year a group of volunteers work together to take cuttings of Rose Garden plants, and grow them for sale during our spring Open Garden. We plan to take the cut- tings to the greenhouse at Consum- nes River College where we will propagate and grow out the young

plants. Dave Andrews of the Horti- cultural Department has permitted us to use the greenhouse to help give our cuttings a generous start. Volunteers are needed for this pro- ject; please call Barbara Oliva (443- 2146) if you wish to help.

### *Pruning Clinics*

Barbara Oliva will conduct two clin- ics on pruning historic roses, using the roses in the Cemetery for her demonstration. The clinics will be held on December 1 and December 15 at 10 a.m. in the Rose Garden. These are always popular events. Bring sturdy gloves and wear warm, long-sleeved clothing if you want hands-on practice.

### *Pruning*

Rose Garden Volunteers will begin winter pruning in the gar- den the last week in December and will continue until (a) we finish (b) the weather is too warm or (c) the sap rises, which- ever comes first.

## Maintenance, continued

*(Continued from page 2)*

We have continuing problems with the irrigation system. The most sig- nificant issue is lack of water pressure at the top of the Broadway bed, even at night when there is no other com- petition for the water. Throughout the rose garden, individual bubbler heads often malfunction, which we don't notice until we see that a rose seems to be suffering from stress. Barbara constantly works with the city and the Sheriff's Work Crew to re- solve these problems.

Constant deadheading has also helped the appearance of the rose gar- den, both by removing spent flowers and encouraging more rapid rebloom. We've had four deadheading parties to augment our contingent of

Wednesday and Saturday volunteers who deadhead and prune throughout the sum- mer. We have used the "bend and snap" technique for most of our deadheading, removing spent blooms at the abscission point, leaving the foliage and canes in- tact. We are still evaluating the suitability of this approach for all types of roses, and will report on this in a future newsletter article. Overall, we've observed that the roses need to put out less vegetative growth in order to bloom again, but some cluster-flowering roses leave spent flower stems that need to be trimmed away for the best appearance of the roses.

Usually, September is the time that the rose garden starts to come back to life, and the fall bloom often has the most voluptuous, deeply colored flowers. Since the garden is looking so good al- ready, we can hardly wait.

**Volunteers  
Needed**

**Propagation**  
Call Barbara Oliva  
443-2146

**Winter Pruning**  
9 a.m. Wed & Sat  
mornings, beginning  
late December  
weather permitting.  
Bring clippers, wear  
protective clothing &  
a hat for warmth.  
Large tools will be  
provided.

**General  
Maintenance**  
Wed & Sat mornings  
or by arrangement  
Call Anita Clevenger  
455-7561





OLD CITY CEMETERY  
HISTORIC ROSE



CEMETERY  
ROSE

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Judy Eitzen  
8698 Elk Grove Blvd.  
Suite 3, #271  
Elk Grove, CA 95624

Email: verlaine@citlink.net

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

*Quick Garden Tip:*  
**Propagation Time**

**If you want additional plants of roses you already have, fall is the time to take softwood cuttings.**

**Read up on propagating techniques before attempting this (or attend our clinic on Sept 8.)**

**The most common cause of failure with rose cuttings is dehydration which can happen when too much of the cutting protrudes above the soil even when it is well watered.**

**Providing cuttings with semi-shade while they develop roots also helps avoid this problem.**



*Garden quote*

**Health Warning**

A passion for Heritage Roses is strongly addictive and no remedy short of poverty is available.

*Colonel Richard  
Gilbertson*