



## Contribution Information Sheet

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Abstract: This article chronicles the development of a public rose demonstration garden in Sarasota, Florida. Over 20 years ago the County of Sarasota Parks Department and the Bradenton-Sarasota Rose Society worked with Dr. Malcolm Manners to create a public garden displaying Old Garden Roses with many Bermuda Mystery Roses. Since the creation of the garden it has mostly grown on its own.

In March of 2009 the Bradenton-Sarasota Rose Society again became involved with the garden and developed a program to invigorate and expand the showplace. The society decided to make it not only a beautiful display of roses but a teaching place for the community to learn about "Environmentally Smart" new ways to fertilize, irrigate and control pests. New OGRs were selected to double the size of the existing garden. Members of the society had classroom sessions and then went into the garden to complete specific tasks. Many went on to install improved gardens with micro irrigation systems in their own homes. The article lays out the basics of a program that can be adopted by other societies looking for a good community outreach program with learning experiences for the membership.

This article was an American Rose Society Award of Merit Winner in 2009.

# Creating the Environmentally Smart Public Demonstration Garden

## Defining the concept

**Philip Paul, CR**

Rose Societies are chartered to find the ideal way to make a positive impact on the community through roses.

The Bradenton-Sarasota Rose Society in Florida is no exception to that rule. Our search for a “location of impact” in early 2009 lead us to a Public Garden maintained by the County of Sarasota at a beautiful historic home located on 60 acres along Phillippi Creek which runs into the Intercoastal Waterway. The home was built in 1916 and in 1986 the voters of Sarasota County bought the property for \$5.2 million. About 20 years ago Sandy Tipton, then President of the Bradenton-Sarasota Roses Society, teamed up with Ron Mallory who is the current society President and was then the Curator of the John and Mable Ringling Museum’s Mable Ringling Rose Garden. They took a trip over to Orlando where they persuaded Dr. Malcolm Manners, local university professor and famed Florida rose grower to provide several cuttings of Old Garden Roses to help Sarasota start a garden on the historical property.

Late in 2008 we found the garden still producing great roses with limited care. We approached the staff at the Phillippi Estate Park and asked if there was any interest in rejuvenating what all ready existed and perhaps adding some more roses. At this point in time Florida is having the most severe drought it has experienced in the last 10 years. The thought occurred to us that the best way to work with this garden would be to turn it into a “Demonstration Garden” for the community. The question was what would we demonstrate? The answer was quite straight forward. In 2008 we had conducted several seminars on what we called “Easier Care Roses” which included the EarthKind™ Rose Program for the southeast developed by Texas A&M University and heavily supported by the Houston Rose Society lead by Gaye Hammond. It also included easy care lists from around Florida and also included a study which I had conducted in my own gardens last summer to test the disease resistance of my collection of roses-some old and some more modern. It turned out that many of the roses already in the Phillippi Estate Garden were on the EarthKind™ list. The second element of the program would be to add more “Easier Care Roses” with a continued emphasis on the EarthKind™ list for the southeast. The third ingredient was to convert the garden from the stream bubbler type irrigation to a very efficient micro watering system. The fourth ingredient gave us an opportunity to feature some slow release nitrogen fertilizer that had become the law in both Sarasota City and County in 2008. A fifth idea was to expand the garden slightly to return it to its original “oval” shape and make room for more roses. The County is planning on some brick boundaries to both better define the garden and make the entrance quite attractive.

The incorporation of ecologically smart features captured everyone’s interest.

- Use of Existing Old Garden Roses

- Addition of more EarthKind™ roses

- Conversion of an “irrigation smart” approach that better targeted the irrigation to the plants and reduced irrigation usage

- Use of fertilizer that reduced use of excessive nitrogen and phosphorus and complied with current legislation (which may soon become statewide in Florida)

- Redefinition, expansion and bricked boundaries of the space by the County

- Braden-Sarasota Rose Society willing to reconstruct the garden and maintain the garden

- B-SRS to conduct seminars and workshops on the property to educate the community

- The above approach has provided us the fundamentals for a smart demonstration garden.

After presenting our concept, our next step was to start meeting with various members of the county staff to add further details on our proposal. The first meeting was with the garden staff lead by E.G. Bennington relative to the redefinition of the garden and the workability of the overall concept. The second step was to talk about how to best provide borders to the beds, and the third was to meet with the Manager of County Irrigation to both understand the existing irrigation system and gain approval for conversion to the micro watering approach. Our fourth step was to tie our demonstration into the organization responsible for the new fertilizer laws.

After gaining the appropriate county approvals we went to a local garden center in Sarasota, Wayne Hibbs Farm and Garden to approach them about partnering on the project in return for advertising and publicity. We also went to the major irrigation supplier in the area, Ace Pump and Sprinkler House. We asked them to also partner on the same basis. This gave us the irrigation and plant supplies to be able to initiate the project.

Now it was time to present the full program to our members. Our president had been giving us all monthly updates as we started the effort so there was no surprise. We wanted to accomplish one specific thing for the members. With the drought we had given a complete briefing at one of our meetings on micro irrigation, but many weren't sure how to install it. We wanted to give them an opportunity to learn by doing and the Phillippi Project was the perfect place to learn. Other opportunities presented themselves in the areas of pruning, bed maintenance, planting, etc. With a great many new members as a result of our 2008 & 2009 membership drive, this is the perfect training ground.



Existing Phillippi Estate "Nettie Keener Keith Rose Garden" April 2009 At Project Start  
With the structure of the venture complete, we have started to lay out plans for cleaning up the existing roses and for bringing in complementary new roses. Several members were growing out OGRs collected from all over Florida with plans to contribute them to this garden.

The initial garden has the following roses (in some cases up to 4 of each):

Name	Classification	Characteristics	Introduced	ARS
'Archduke Charles'	China Rose	Red Blend Double	~1837	8.5
'Old Blush'	China Rose	Medium Pink semi-double	1751	8.7
'Louis Philippe'	China Rose	Red Blend Double	1834	8.7
'Pink Pet'	China Rose	Medium Pink Double	1928	8.6
'Rose de Rescht'	Portland Rose	Deep pink very double	~1880	8.8
'Mrs. Dudley Cross'	Tea Rose	Yellow Blend Double	1908	8.4
'Duchesse de Brabant'	Tea Rose	Light Pink 45 petals	1857	8.6
'Marie Van Houtte'	Tea Rose	Pink Blend Very Double	1871	8.1
'Belinda's Dream'	Shrub	Medium Pink Very Double	1992	8.5

There are several other roses that have been added but not all are identified yet. As you can see, there are some great roses already here and there will be more to come soon.

At this point the irrigation system parts have been ordered and work on that project area is expected to start in early May 2009.

If you would like to contribute time, roses, learn how to do some of the tasks mentioned above or help us out in any way please contact Phil Paul so we can include you in what we are doing.

It is expected that additional articles will be published by team members as we move forward with this project. Part II of this series is a revised copy of an article I did last year on Sarasota Fertilization and the new laws. It is in this month's Extended Edition. This is relevant to you individually and is the basis for the fertilization part of the Phillippi project.

NEWS FLASH: As we started this project we received a call from a member of the South Venice Garden Club who attended one of my talks last year, she is on the "Beautify Sarasota Committee" for Venice and she and the Venice Parks Department have met with Ron Mallory, Lat Farr and myself to consider a similar effort in a totally new space in Blaylock Park. Lat Farr is leading our team to help define and start construction of a 12 rose garden. We will hear more news from Lat as the project gets started. Let Lat know if you can contribute to this effort. It will follow the same principals as Phillippi Estate Park.