



Contribution Information Sheet

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Abstract: Al Whitcomb became interested in single roses as a youngster growing up in western New York. Many years later he and his wife Sharon moved to the Brooksville, Florida area and found a single pink rose that rekindled his interest. It was ‘**Ballerina**’ a 1937 Hybrid Musk Rose. Today Al grows many singles and has become an expert on the subject. He has developed this article to inspire interest in others.

This article goes well with talks by Al or Stephen Hoy and is an excellent complement to a talk on the subject for a newsletter.

Single Roses

In the Deep South

by Al Whitcomb

My interest in single roses began when I was a youngster growing up in western New York. As I was roaming the fields near our home, I found and subsequently grew a single pink “wild rose” whose name I recently determined to be *R. carolina*, aka Pasture Rose.

Decades later my wife Sharon and I moved to Brooksville, Florida. It was there that my interest was reawakened by another single pink rose named **Ballerina**.



Ballerina is a beautiful bright soft pink, Hybrid Musk, with a white eye. It blooms in grape like clusters and has a RIR Garden rating of 8.7.

We did not grow roses at the time, nor had we ever been on a rose garden tour. It was one of Sharon’s co-workers, Donna Graminski, who suggested we sign up for Tampa Rose Circle’s rose garden tour. We did, but had no idea how much it would affect our lives.

I think it was the third garden we visited where we saw Ballerina with her long arching canes for the first time. It was love at first sight. She was the centerpiece in a classic old rose garden designed and maintained by Donna. While there, we learned she was selling her home and moving to Monticello, Florida. After seeing how much we liked Ballerina, she offered to pass her on to us before she moved. Ballerina was the first rose in our garden. Within three years, Ballerina was joined by over 200 more roses.



R. carolina, aka *rosa.virginiana*
Illustration from *Wild Flowers of New York* (Museum Memoir 15), 1918

What are Singles?

If you were to ask someone on the street the meaning of the term “single rose” the response would most likely be “one rose”. In the rosarian world, the definition is quite different. Single rose refers to a characteristic used to describe roses whose blooms typically have a single row of five petals. There are exceptions. *R. sericea pteracantha* and *R. sericea chrysoarpa* are examples of rare four petal single roses. On the other end of the spectrum, you may find roses like La Marne, described as a single in [Modern Roses 12](#), but having up to twelve petals.

Why Singles

If a rose isn’t easy to grow, or more importantly doesn’t provide entries for photo contests, it is not likely to survive long in our garden. We have found many singles meeting that criterion. Single roses allow you to enjoy the full beauty of each bloom at a glance. There are no hidden petals, stamens or flaws. The full length and breath of petals are exposed, revealing both subtle and bold color transitions as well as beautiful pristine stamens. Beyond their beauty, singles have other attractive features. They usually have shorter bloom cycles making them appear to be in continuous bloom. They also seem to perform better than other varieties in partial shade or areas with less than then six hours of daily direct sunlight.

There are literally tens of thousands of beautiful single roses. This article is limited to roses we have grown and photographed in our garden.

Single China Roses



Mutabilis.

Mutabilis produces sprays of 1.5 inch single flowers that are good examples of the phototropic trait associated with many China roses. Sulfur-yellow blooms emerge from crimson buds, changing to orange, red and finally mauve. **Mutabilis** requires a lot of space. It can easily obtain a height of 15 feet and width of 10 feet. Like most China roses it is very tolerant of pruning and seems to be in continuous bloom. It has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.9.

Martha Gonzales is on the opposite end of the size spectrum when compared to **Mutabilis**. This shade tolerant

“found rose” undoubtedly belongs to the china class. A hearty disease resistant specimen, this compact, densely foliated rose can be expected to reach a height and width of 3-4 feet. It is an excellent border or planter plant that will rebloom throughout the growing season. Flowers change with exposure to the sun from red to a deep wine red. Bright yellow stamens emerge from white bloom centers. It has little or no fragrance.



Martha Gonzales

Single Floribunda Roses



Karen Poulsen

In 1932, Poulsen’s Nursery in Denmark introduced a single floribunda named **Karen Poulsen** (aka, Bailey Red). The durability and beauty of this rose is a reflection of the Poulsen family’s dedication and role in early development of floribundas. Their hybridization programs played a major role in establishing floribundas as a rose classification. **Karen Poulsen** was introduced by J&P in 1933, won the NRS Gold Medal in 1933 and Portland Gold Medal in 1935. A vigorous grower, this eye-catching crimson single throws large numbers of sprays from its long arching canes. Its 8 feet height makes it ideally suited to grow on a small arbor or trellis. In my opinion, it is equal in hardiness to the Knock Out family of roses, but is more beautiful.

If you like Orange roses, **Playboy** is a good Floribunda candidate for your garden. This Gold Medal winning floribunda was introduced in 1976. Its color transitions from reddish orange at pedal edges to a golden eye center. Slightly cupped clustered blooms with bright yellow stamens and glossy dark green foliage are characteristic of this moderately sized rose. It performs best in cooler weather and more northern areas of the Deep South. It is a prolific repeat bloomer with a pleasant apple fragrance. It has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.5.



Playboy



Butterfly Kisses

Diann Giles has produced many exceptional roses. **Butterfly Kisses** a Floribunda first marketed in 1999 and pictured here is no exception. Its clustered blooms open medium yellow and with exposure to sunlight fade to near white. While it produces blooms throughout the growing season, cooler weather significantly increases bloom production and beauty. This moderately fragrant rose has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.1. Its characteristics include medium green semi-glossy foliage, few prickles and an upright medium growth habit.

Single Hybrid Bracteata

If you like large creamy white 5-6 inch diameter singles with exceptionally beautiful stamens and glossy dark green foliage consider growing **Mermaid**. Mermaid, a Hybrid Bracteata, is a vigorous large footprint rose well suited for growing on pillars or background trellises. Menacing thorns contribute to its reputation as an excellent security barrier. It has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.6 and won the NRS Gold Medal in 1917.



Mermaid

Single Hybrid Teas

Dainty Bess is an extraordinary example of a Hybrid Tea single. Its large soft pink fringed edged petals are complemented by pale golden stamens that gradually transition in color to maroon. It performs equally well in the garden and at rose shows. A typical bush reaches five feet in height, has dark green leathery foliage and produces both single and clusters of tea scented blooms. It received the NRS Gold Medal in 1925 and has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.5.



Dainty Bess

no fragrance, numerous prickles and semi-glossy medium green foliage. Its bush height and width are about five feet. Excite is both an excellent garden and exhibition rose.

Excite a dark pink Hybrid Tea was hybridized by Diann Giles and entered the marketplace 2000. It is a large single, borne both singly and in sprays. It has



Excite



Mrs Oakley

Mrs. Oakley Fisher, a deep orange-yellow single exudes an unusually intense delicious fragrance. It has a beautiful single yellow bloom accented with coppery undertones. Its foliage is medium green and sometimes has a bronze color cast. Mrs. Oakley Fisher was hybridized by B R Cant Nursery in 1921. This vigorous rose has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.3

Ellen Willmott is a Wm. E.B. Archer & Daughter cross of Dainty Bess and Lady Hillingdon. While Modern Roses 12 describes it as a yellow blend, its subtle undertones of pink and light lemon make precise color identification difficult for me. Its pink petal

edges are complemented by golden anthers atop red filaments. Its leathery foliage is dark green and bush height about four feet.

Single Miniatures



Grace Seward

Grace Seward introduced by Tiny Petals Nursery in 1990, consistently produces near perfect 5 petal single miniature white roses with a mild damask fragrance. She is one of my favorite roses to photograph and exhibit.

Blooms are borne both singly and as sprays. Grace Seward is a fast repeater that produces a plethora of 1.5- 2 inch blooms on each flush. Bushes can easily reach a height of four to five feet. As is the case with several singles, I have found her shade tolerant and easy to grow. She has earned a RIR Garden Rating of 8.2.



Ellen Willmott

My Sunshine was hybridized by Dee Bennett and introduced into commerce in 1986 by Tiny Petals Nursery. This five petal 2 inch flower is medium to bright yellow with bright yellow stamens. If you enjoy taking pictures of roses, you will want to add this rose to your collection. Typically it produces small clusters of blooms on vigorous well branched two foot high upright bushes. Its foliage is semi-glossy medium green. My Sunshine has moderate fragrance and a RIR Garden Rating of 8.5.



My Sunshine



Crazy Dotty

A Sean McCann creation, **Crazy Dotty** produces slightly fragrant clusters of small red-orange singles. Blooms are accented by star shaped yellow centers and bright golden stamens. Because it is such a prolific bloomer, it provides plenty of opportunities to be photographed. Crazy Dotty grows on a small compact bush with medium green semi-glossy foliage. It is an excellent border or potted plant and has a RIR Garden rating of 8.0

Single Large-Flowered Climber

The only single Large-Flowered Climber (LCI) we have grown is **Altissimo**. It is a beautiful blood-red rose borne singly or in small clusters. Bushes can easily reach a height of ten feet. As with many climbing roses, there is a tendency for blooms to only grow at the top of long main canes. Altissimo's main canes tend to be long and stiff, so it is important to peg or pillar them while they are young and pliable. The more you train main canes to grow horizontally, the more lateral canes and roses will proliferate at all levels of the bush. The rose has a slight fragrance and its foliage is characteristically dark green. It has a RIR Garden Rating is 8.5.



Altissimo

Single Shrubs

As you can see from the photo of Charlyne Woods with her **Lyda Rose**, it can produce very large sprays. The close-up photo shows its white petals with soft lavender edges. It performs equally well as a garden or show rose. Lyda Rose has a strong spicy fragrance.



Lyda Rose

It grows well both in full sun and partial shade. It has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.9.



Lyda Rose



Sally Holmes is a gorgeous white single first marketed in 1976. Its parents are Ivory Fashion and Ballerina. No wonder it is so beautiful. Its long pointed apricot buds open to light apricot five petal blooms that quickly fade to a near pure white five petal flower. Long delicate yellow stamens provide a lovely contrast to the rose petals and dark green foliage. This vigorous shade tolerant rose is borne both singly and in clusters and has a slight fragrance. Its long canes allow us to grow it as a climber on a eight foot wide by six foot high arbor. It has an 8.9 Garden Rating and received a 1980 Gold Medal in Baden-Baden, a 1993 Gold Medal in Portland and a 1993 Fragrance Award in Glasgow.

If you have room for a large footprint rose, **Sparrieshoop** is a must have Shrub. This 1953 Kordes single has long arching canes. Its long pointed buds open to light salmon pink five pedal blooms with golden yellow stamens. Its large blooms are borne primarily in sprays. Sparrieshoop has moderate fragrance, large leathery foliage and an upright bushy growth habit. It has a RIR rating of 8.2 and in 1971 won the Gold Medal in Portland.



Not long ago, I asked Stephen Hoy, well known in

the “Deep South”, for his expertise in growing single roses to suggest a rose for our garden. Without hesitation, he recommended a smoky edged, red single rose. The rose was named for **Paul Ecke Jr.**, a preminent poinsettia grower and hybridizer. Within a year of planting, the 5x5 ft. bush was teaming with the unusually colored roses pictured here. It has a RIR Garden Rating of 8.0

While visiting American Rose Society’s gardens, in 2008, we spotted a beautiful pink single named **Summer Wind**. Not long after, she was added to our garden collection. Like

Paul Ecke Jr., she impresses us with her vigor and ability to produce beautiful sprays. It is no surprise Summer Wind, a Dr. Griffith Buck rose, has been designated Earth- Kind ® by Texas A&M. She has ovoid pointed buds that start as orange-pink and gradually age to a rose pink. Blooms range from single to semi-double, are flat and borne singly and in clusters. It has a moderate, spicy clove fragrance, leathery dark green foliage and a RIR Garden Rating of 7.9



Try growing some single roses. You will be rewarded by their beauty, short bloom cycles; performance in partial shade, hardiness and productivity.