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Singularly Beautiful Roses

A Publication Dedicated to Single,
Nearly Single, and Semi-Double Flowered Roses
Volume 2, Issue 4
Fall 2011

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Pernet-Ducher's Daily Mail Conquest

“The late Joseph Pernet-Ducher of Vénisseux was incontestably the greatest rose hybridizer the world has produced.” So wrote J. H. Nicholas in his book *A Rose Odyssey* (p. 6). Joseph Pernet (1859-1928) began his apprenticeship in the world of horticulture at the age of twelve, first working for his father. After two years he went to work for carnation and rose grower Alphonse Alégatière, and later for the great rose hybridizer and grower Claude Ducher. Upon Ducher's death, Joseph, already a successful rose hybridizer was made the foreman of the nursery at the young age of twenty-two. One year later he married Mme. Ducher's daughter Marie, and added the Ducher name to his own to honor his father-in-law's contributions to the rose world.

Alégatière's nursery was located just outside the city of Lyon not far from a magnificent park known as *Le Parc de la Tête d'Or*. In the garden grew a very large specimen of *R. foetida persiana*, the double 'Persian Yellow' (also known as the 'Capucine Rose'). The glory of its golden yellow color planted a dream in the young man's head. Years later, when working for Ducher, the introduction of the color yellow into hardy garden roses became not only a dream, but an obsession. Using the hybridizing techniques advocated by Englishman Henry Bennett, deliberate hand-pollinated crosses, Pernet discovered that although 'Persian Yellow' was sterile as a seed parent, its pollen was occasionally viable. Years of effort finally produced several seeds in 1888. In 1900 he released the orange-yellow *Soleil d'Or*, and in 1910 the yellow splashed red *Rayon d'Or*. But it wasn't until the introduction of *Souvenir de Claudius Pernet* in 1920 that he achieved his goal of hybridizing a pure yellow garden rose.

In 1912 England's leading newspaper the *London Daily Mail*, offered a new award consisting of a silver cup and a £1000 check for the best new rose. The condition was that the new rose be named *The Daily Mail Rose*. Mr. Pernet-Ducher reluctantly consented to enter the contest; he chose a cross between *Mme. Caroline Testout* and a *R. foetida persiana* seedling that he had already named for the wife of the Mayor of Lyon. The semi-double to lightly double rose was such a striking new color that it was the hands-down winner, but to the



consternation of all Pernet-Ducher refused to change the name. A compromise was reached, and it was agreed that in France it would retain its original name, *Mme. Edouard Herriot*, and in England it would be known as *The Daily Mail Rose*. The demand for it was so great that its introduction was delayed until 1913 in order to build up a sufficient stock.

Jack Harkness has written the all-time best description of *Mme. Edouard Herriot*, “To write all its colors down on paper is like a shopping list for an

Madame Edouard Herriot

artist's palette. Imagine a film pan through coral from light to dark with yellow illuminations, and you are somewhere on the way" (*Roses*, p. 82). The 1925 Conard Pyle Spring Catalog describes it in a way that gives new meaning to creative catalog-speak. "This vivid rose, before any other, gets and grips the gaze of visitors as they enter our rose garden. The large buds glow like dusky fire, and the newly opened blooms like red-hot copper which soon fades to a pleasing orange pink." Like many of the early Pernetianas several recurved petaloids are present in the center of the flower (As a photographer it's difficult for me not to remove them when taking a picture). The weight of the flowers is often too much for the stems, giving the blooms the appearance of being a little bashful. The plant has glossy green foliage and is armed with numerous rather intimidating thorns.

Mr. Pernet-Ducher's "Daily Mail" rose quickly became a favorite. In less than a decade after its introduction *Madame Edouard Herriot* was rated one of the top twelve bush roses in France, Great Britain, the U.S. and Australia. Its unique character was so admired it was used extensively by hybridizers - HMF lists three thousand unique descendants.

Over the years 'Mme.' has generated twenty-four sports! So far two have made it into my garden. *Geisha*, discovered in the Netherlands by Gerald Adriian Van Rossem in 1920, is a pale orange-apricot in color with occasional flashes of red. Golden yellow accents at the base of the petals add a warm glow. *Émile Charles* was found by the Bernaix family in 1922 and is slightly more colorful in my garden. Add deeper coral tints and a touch of crushed strawberry to the above description.

Pernet-Ducher's contribution to the evolution of the hybrid teas cannot be overstated. The great Antoine Meilland, father of Francis Meilland (hybridizer of *Peace*) perfected his craft under the tutelage of Pernet-Ducher. Many will point out that the inclusion of 'Persian Yellow's' genes into our modern roses transmitted a more pronounced susceptibility to black spot. That is uncontested, and yet Pernet-Ducher might be excused on this point. Roses growing in this area of France, according to J. H. Nicolas, simply did not suffer from black spot. In *A Rose Odyssey* Nicolas wrote, "The climate of Lyons is what we might call 'anti-black spot.' Why, I do not know. . . He never knew what that accursed disease was until I showed him an infected leaf which took me hours to find." Without the genetic markers inherited from "Persian Yellow" many of the roses we grow today would never have existed. *Madame Edouard Herriot* may have waned in popularity over the years, but her historical significance in the evolution of the hybrid tea class cannot be overstated.



Geisha (upper right)



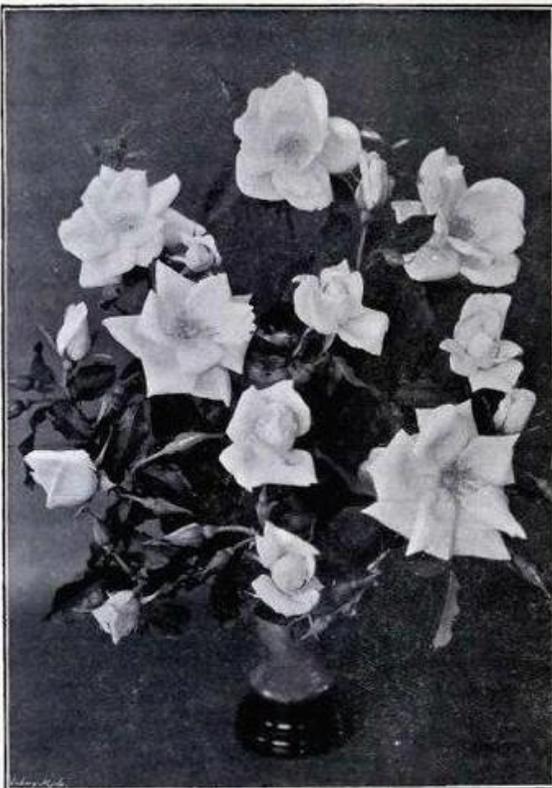
Émile Charles (lower right)

Who's Who?



Hatchell-Brown Yellow:
Photo courtesy of Billy West

My interest in single flowered roses began with what I thought was a very small class – the single and nearly single hybrid teas. Last year I began attempting to put together a “complete” list of these unique roses. As I began pouring over a number of historical resources and using some newly acquired on-line research skills I was amazed to discover that the list was actually quite a bit larger than anticipated. Through HelpMeFindRoses.com a new friendship was struck up with Patricia Routley of Western Australia. Patricia is one of a number of rosarians dedicated to collecting Australia’s mystery roses and identifying them using botanical markers and historic references. With her help I learned that a number of older single hybrid teas considered extinct here in the U. S. are not only familiar to rose growers in Australia and New



Golden Spray:
Photo from 1916 NRS Annual
(used with permission)

Zealand, but are happily growing in numerous gardens there. One of those rose goes by the name of *Hatchell-Brown Yellow*. Rob Peace, a former editor of *Heritage Roses in Australia*, was given a bloom by Laurel Hatchell-Brown, the owner of an historic family homestead in Yea, a small town in the southeastern state of Victoria. The rose had been purchased by her mother labeled as *Mermaid*, but Rob was able to recognize a case of mistaken identity. The rose was shared with others until arriving in Ms. Routley’s garden in 2009.

Patricia has suggested that *Hatchell-Brown Yellow* may be the hybrid tea *Golden Spray* introduced by Hugh Dickson in 1917. Historic references describe the latter, a NRS Gold Medal winner, as having long pointed golden yellow buds that open to apple scented, large lemon yellow single to semi-double blooms with very prominent yellow stamens. The plant produces moderately tall sparsely foliated canes that are somewhat lax or sprawling in appearance in warmer climates. According to the 1916 NRS Annual the growth was a little more self-contained in cooler geographic regions. It made its way to Australia by way of S. Brundrett & Sons, a nursery opened in Victoria by Scotsman and rose specialist Sam Brundrett, making its appearance in their 1918 catalog. Several growers have noted, at the very least, enough similarities to suggest that Ms. Routley may be on to something. Caution precludes a definitive identification. However, the mystery rose challenge prompts speculation and discussion. Whatever the correct identity, the nature of rose collecting and preservation demands that another space be found in the garden. Anyone for a little mystery?

Into the Labyrinth

Disease resistance, remontancy, hardiness. Canadian rose hybridizers have been working towards these goals since the early decades of the 20th century. Using species roses, rugosas, Candian Explorer roses, and kordesii hybrids for disease resistance and hardiness and floribundas and shrub roses for their flower power, southern Ontario resident Joyce Fleming has been hybridizing roses since 1985. Joyce has twenty-eight introductions listed on HMF, all able to withstand temperatures down to -10° F. So how does a rose grower in Middle Georgia know about her roses? Because among her roses are a number of single and semi-double varieties!

I've been growing a 1995 introduction, *Spirit of Canada*, one of the most intensely saturated red roses in my garden, for years. This wonderful floribunda has ten petals, prominent golden yellow stamens, and rich, glossy green foliage. It has reached about four feet in height and width grafted on *R. multiflora* and produces sprays of three to five blooms on long fifteen to eighteen inch stems. *Spirit of Canada* is a cross of *Bambula*, an orange-pink Tantau floribunda, and the single red hybrid kordesii *Rote Max Graf*. Joyce's inspiration for the name drew from the number of petals, ten representing the number of Canadian provinces, and from its color, similar to that of the jackets worn by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I would characterize the rose as quite black spot tolerant. However, our growing season here in Middle Georgia is so long that even very disease resistant roses seem to succumb by late October or early November. *Spirit of Canada* may not be a no-spray rose, but even when infected it retains much of its foliage and recovers quickly. I recently cut several sprays of this showy floribunda for the house. It retains an amazing amount of substance, doesn't close up in the evening, and its stamens stay fresh for several days.

In an article written a number of years ago Joyce wrote, "Rose breeding is like a labyrinth." One enters a labyrinth with the goal of a triumphal exit. The creation of new roses is indeed a complicated journey that can follow numerous paths - I think Joyce's journey into the labyrinth has been a rousing triumph.



Spirit of Canada

Editor's Note: Joyce considers a deep yellow double flowered climber, *Roberta Bondar* (named after Canada's first female astronaut), to be her best introduction to date. Several of her single and semi-double roses include: *Alberta*, *Alexander Leek*, *Amelia Fleming*, *Clarion Call*, *Glee*, *Persian Delight*, *Sheila Fleming*, *Yvonne Alexander*. See all her roses at www.roseroyce.com, HMF, and at Hortico Roses.

From the Editor:

It's catalog time – the mail-order lament has begun! To quote a favorite poem written by John Streed, “My caution goes numb when the catalogs come. No way will it end for the good.” Hybridizer Jim Sproul has three new introductions this year that I just had to have, *Eyeconic Lemonade* and *Pink Eyeconic Lemonade*, the results of years of work with *R. persica* (or *Hulthemia persica*), and *Thrive!*, a cross of [*Marmalade Skies* x *Baby Love*] x *Home Run*. Another ‘hulthemia’ offspring peeking out of the new introduction pages is *Bull's Eye*, bred by Peter James. David Zlesak also has several roses that are going into the garden this spring, *Oso Happy Candy Oh!* and *Oso Happy Smoothie*. I hope you are supporting your favorite rose providers!

Singularly Beautiful Roses

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All photographs by Stephen Hoy
unless otherwise noted.

Please feel free to share this e-newsletter!

Sources:

Hartwood Roses; www.hartwoodroses.com – Mme. Edouard Herriot

Hortico Roses; www.hortico.com – Spirit of Canada

Rogue Valley Roses; www.roguevalleyroses.com – Mme. Edouard Herriot

Roses Unlimited; www.rosesunlimiteddownroot.com – Geisha

Vintage Gardens; www.vintagegardens.com – Emile Charles, Geisha, Mme. Edouard Herriot

Golden Spray appears to be available from a nursery in Poland – Rosarium Szkołka Róz; www.rosarium.com.pl/index.php

Hatchell-Brown Yellow is available in Australia.