

Consulting Rosarian Chair Report

Deep South District – 2025 Highlights

The 2025 year showcased the **depth, creativity, and resilience** of the Deep South District’s Consulting Rosarians. In a year marked by extreme weather, pest pressure, health challenges, relocations, and rebuilding after personal losses, CRs consistently rose to the occasion—serving as educators, mentors, leaders, and the public face of credible rose culture across the region.

Education and Professional Excellence

Consulting Rosarians remained deeply committed to continuing education, earning credits through District and National conventions, CR Schools, Exhibitors Schools, and a wide range of online and in-person programs. Topics included chemical safety, integrated pest management, soil and water stewardship, propagation, rose classification, exhibiting, and adapting rose culture to challenging Southern climates.

Notably, many CRs went beyond participation to **teach, mentor, and lead**—serving on CR School faculty, developing new courses, and offering hands-on training that strengthened the District’s future leadership pipeline.

Standout Outreach and Community Impact

What truly distinguished 2025 was the **breadth and originality of public-facing outreach**:

- **Living Classrooms:** Multiple CRs opened their *private gardens* to members and the public, offering immersive learning experiences that combined design, horticulture, and practical problem-solving.
- **Public Garden Stewardship:** CRs served as curators, advisors, and regular volunteers at public rose gardens, including high-traffic botanical gardens and historic sites—providing consistent, knowledgeable presence where thousands of visitors encounter roses.
- **Hands-On Education:** Pruning clinics, planting demonstrations, propagation workshops, and “make-and-take” floral projects transformed passive audiences into active learners.
- **Innovative Digital Reach:** CRs expanded education through hybrid meetings, recorded programs, Facebook resource libraries, and online consultations—significantly extending reach beyond geographic limits.
- **Media and National Visibility:** Articles and features appeared in newsletters, District publications, and national media outlets, reinforcing the CR role as a trusted authority and elevating the visibility of rose culture well beyond traditional society boundaries.
- **Modernized Engagement:** Several CRs introduced online registration, digital payments, QR-code access to resources, and e-commerce tools for fundraisers—modernizing society operations and making participation easier for new audiences.

These efforts ensured that rose education reached **gardeners who may never attend a traditional rose meeting**, fulfilling the CR mission in contemporary, relevant ways.

Leadership and Service

Consulting Rosarians provided essential leadership throughout the District—as society presidents, officers, editors, CR Chairs, show chairs, committee members, and District volunteers. Their steady guidance sustained societies facing limited resources, membership challenges, or recovery after natural disasters.

Fundraising initiatives—including rose sales, fertilizer programs, garden tours, and rose shows—not only supported society finances but also served as highly visible outreach opportunities that sparked public interest and attracted new members.

Practical Knowledge from the Garden

CRs shared invaluable real-world experience gained from growing roses under demanding Southern conditions. Disease-resistant and climate-adapted roses such as *Louis Philippe*, *Mrs. B.R. Cant*, *Rosa roxburghii*, *Belinda's Dream*, and *Peggy Martin* were widely noted for performance and reliability. Equally important were candid discussions of failures—black spot, chilli thrips, scale, spider mites, and cultivar sensitivity—helping gardeners make better, more sustainable choices.

Resilience and Dedication

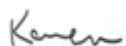
Perhaps the most compelling theme of 2025 was **resilience**. CRs rebuilt gardens after hurricanes, started over after relocations, navigated health challenges, balanced demanding careers, and still found time to teach, write, mentor, and serve. This perseverance underscores the strength of the Consulting Rosarian program and the deep commitment of those who serve within it.

Closing

The Deep South District is exceptionally fortunate to have such a knowledgeable, generous, and forward-thinking group of Consulting Rosarians. Through education, outreach, leadership, and innovation, CRs ensured that accurate, compassionate, and practical rose guidance reached gardeners across our region—often in entirely new and impactful ways.

On behalf of the District and all the newbies that you supported, **thank you** for your dedication, adaptability, and enduring love of roses. I look forward to learning what you are doing for 2026!

Rosy Regards,



Karen W. Barnes

Consulting Rosarian Chair

Deep South District