

MR. NELSON'S ROSES, 1856

In *The Southern Cultivator*, Robert Nelson, a nurseryman of Macon, Georgia, listed the roses he considered best for Southern gardens:

China Roses

Arch Duke Charles; of very luxuriant growth, and a most prolific bloomer. The flowers are very different in color, varying from light pink to deep crimson, with all the intermediate shades, sometimes, also, marbled and spotted; grows 4 to 5 feet high.

Camelliaflora; light rosy purple, in very large clusters; grows about 4 feet high.

Carmine Superbe; flowers medium, in great profusion, of a very dark crimson hue, and of a globular form; foliage dark reddish; it forms a neat little hedge.

Duchesse of Kent; flowers of medium size, beautifully formed, and in great clusters; color, light pink, or nearly white, with a cream colored centre. It is almost a never-ceasing bloomer, but during the droughts, in summer, the white flowers look as if sprinkled with blood. It grows very compact and bushy--almost dwarfish.

Madam Breon; bright rosy crimson, very large and brilliant flowers, which, in the fall, assume a still more brilliant hue.

Marjolin; an immense bloomer of a brilliant dark scarlet color and velvety tint. This variety, planted close to "Duchesse of Kent," or planted promiscuously in a hedge, will form a most beautiful object.

Lawrenciana; also called the "Picayune" is remarkable for its very small flowers and foliage; it forms a neat edging around beds.

Lawrenciana Viridis; the "Green Rose," is a botanical curiosity. The flower, if it can be called so, consists of a great [*sic*] tuft of leaves, or, more correctly, in a double calyx, destitute of petals. It blooms, however, in this way, from early spring until Christmas, and is almost indispensable for bouquets.

Tea Roses

The Tea Roses (*Rosa, indica odorata*), so called on account of their fragrance, somewhat resembling the odor of fine tea. The light colors, as well as the yellow hues, are predominant in this class; no dark colored Tea Roses being known yet. Some of the best are:

Abricote; fawn color, tinged with pink; a very pretty rose.

Adam; light pink; very large and splendid flower; a good bloomer; middling growth; and improvement on Lyonnaise.

Antherose; white, with creamy centre; very double; fine habit; 2 feet high.

Bon Silene; one of the deepest colored Tea Roses; of a coppery hue and delightful fragrance; the flower often very large; 2 or 3 feet high.

Bougerie; a singular rosy bronze color; fine shaped flower; good bloomer; 2 or 3 feet high.

Clara Sylvain; white with a creamy centre; rather dwarfish growth.

Devoniensis; who would not know this beautiful rose of a pale flesh color, tinged with buff, and exceedingly fragrant? It is of very luxuriant growth, with dark wood and strong thorns. On poor soil, however, this splendid rose grows weak, turning, also, pure white and almost single; 4 or 5 feet high.

Gaubault; another highly fragrant rose, resembling somewhat "Bon Silene" in color and habit; one of the earliest in the spring.

Julie Mansars; yellowish white; beautiful in spring and autumn, less so during the heat of the summer. Its growth is very compact, bushy and very dwarfish; 1 or 2 feet high.

Lady Warrender; a beautiful little rose, but of very dwarfish growth. The flower opens pale pink, but soon turns white; the petals are finely imbricated.

La Sylphide; very light pink, often nearly white, with a buff centre and fine form. It is a fine bloomer in autumn, the flowers at that season coming to their greatest perfection; strong grower.

Alexandra d'Arnoux: "Of all garden tools, the magic wand is the worst, and patience is the greatest virtue."

Christopher Buckley: "Dirt, though dirt, does not necessarily come cheap."

Madame Desprez; pure white, but rather small flowers; dwarfish growth.

Marachal Bugeaud: a very large and fine rose of a pale pink color, tinged with light buff; strong growth; 4 feet high.

Nyphetas; a splendid pure white rose, buds remarkably long and pointed; growth somewhat straggling; 1 or 2 feet.

Pauline Plantier; yellowish white; a very good bloomer; robust growth.

Princess Maria; beautiful rosy pink, with a creamy tint; very double, so much so, even, that it does not always come to full perfection during the droughts of summer; but in the spring, and still more in the autumn, it is splendid.

Saffrano; very deep buff, a most remarkable color. It is magnificent while in bud; it does not, however, show itself to an advantage when fully open. But if a person will take the trouble of tying a little sewing cotton around the bud, it will be prevented from expanding, and keep for many days in its highest beauty; vigorous growth, the stem often measuring two inches in diameter.

Triumphe de Luxembourg; also often called "Luxembourg Tea," is a magnificent flower, with thick leathery petals of pale rosy color, tinged with pale buff.

Virginie; clear pink; a beautiful shape and a great bloomer. It always forms a neat, close and round bush; about 2 feet high.

The Bourbon Roses

Were first discovered in the Island of Bourbon, on the east coast of Africa, whence their name. By hybridizing and cultivation they have reached a high degree of perfection. Their colors in the deep crimson shades are very brilliant; their flowers luxuriant and profuse; their growth stout and very thorny. Nearly all of them are very constant bloomers. Some of the best are:

Acidalie; nearly white; of a globular, regular form and a splendid waxy appearance; growth very robust; 3 or 4 feet.

Crimson Globe; also called "Dr. Roques;" a rather small, but very regularly imbricated flower of an exceedingly rich, vivid crimson hue. It is one of those few roses which will have to be mulched during the hottest part of the summer. It always does better when grafted than on its own roots; 1 to 2 feet high.

Cardinal Fesh; violet crimson; very double; a fine bloomer; of rather low growth.

Edouard Desfosses; dark pink; very distinct; the flower rather expanded and flat, but very regularly imbricated and star-shaped; growth, low and bushy; will do much better when mulched.

Enfant d'Ajaccio; also called "Souvenir de Anselme;" brilliant scarlet crimson, in large clusters; a constant bloomer, of luxuriant and slender growth, almost climbing; excellent for pillars.

General Dubourg; a rather insignificant pink flower, which properly does not deserve a place in a fine collection were it not for its delicious fragrance, the pure "Attar of Rose;" strong, slender growth.

Hermosa; pale rosy color; very fine; globular form; a great bloomer; of luxuriant growth.

Lady Canning; rosy lilac; in large clusters; very fine.

Lavinia Costa; flower but of medium size, but produced in very large clusters, and of a brilliant deep crimson color.

Leveson Gower; a very large and fine flower of bright rose color; in shape somewhat resembling "Souvenir de la Malmaison."

Madame Angelina; white, tinged with fawn; flower rather small.

Madame Bosanquet; pale cream color; of fine globose form and waxy appearance; profuse bloomer; makes a stout bush.

Madame Desprez; deep pink, turning rosy lilac; blooms in very large clusters; a profuse and constant bloomer, when grafted; on its own roots, however, it is of rather feeble growth and bloom.

Paul Joseph; a very rich crimson rose, but of feeble growth, and rather difficult to cultivate.

Pourpre de Tyre; dark purple of rather dwarfish growth.

Queen or Queen of Bourbons; a fine rose of pinkish fawn color, of globose form, grows stout and bushy.

Souvenir de la Malmaison; this pale flesh colored rose, though not very fragrant, stands perhaps at the head of all roses. It is, indeed, a worthy representative of the splendid garden of "Malmaison," the celebrated garden of the Empress Josephine. The flowers are very large, often from 5 to 6 inches in diameter, and produced in clusters; growth low, say about 2 feet, but very stout and bushy.

Sully; flowers small, star-shaped and in large clusters; of a bright deep crimson color; a constant bloomer.

Triumph de la Ducher; pale rosy blush, with deeper colored, star-shaped centre; profuse bloomer, and of luxuriant growth.

Noisette Roses

Noisette Roses are said to have originated in Charleston, S.C., and to have taken their name after Mr. Noisette, of that city, a cousin of the celebrated French rose grower in Paris, of that same name. The characteristic is a profusion of flowers produced in large clusters. The predominant color is bright, and comprises more shades of yellow than any other class of roses. The Noisette roses may properly be subdivided into two families:--1. Those that are low and bushy. 2. Those that are climbing. Some of the best are:

Aime Vibert; pure white, but rather small flowers; growth quite dwarfish.

Augusta; so much has been said of the new yellow climber that it may not be out of place to say a few words about it. It was raised a few years ago in Ohio, and is a very fine yellow climbing rose. It resembles, however, the "Solfatara" so much that is hardly worthwhile to raise both varieties. Its chief merits in preference to the "Solfatara" is, that it is perfectly hardy in the North, where the climate is entirely too severe for the "Solfatara."

Caroline Marniesse; this new rose, which ranks among the best roses in Europe, is, in spite of its beauty, not likely to be fully appreciated here in the South, where everybody goes for "size." In fact, "mighty big" is the description that is sure to enchant every person. It has a very peculiar appearance. True, the flowers are quite small, not much more than an inch in diameter, with recurved petals; opening light pink, but soon changing to pure white. The flowers are produced in great profusion, and in large clusters, besides, it is a most constant bloomer. I hardly know a more suitable rose for a grave.

Chromatella or Cloth of Gold; but few roses have caused such an excitement in the floral world as this. It is a climber of the most luxuriant kind; for I have seen it trained up to the very top of a chimney of a two story building; but, at the same time being one of our most tender roses, it is easily understood why all Northern horticulturists are complaining of its blooming qualities. In the South, however, it blooms well, producing a very large, cup-shaped flower of the deepest chrome yellow. In order to show itself in its highest beauty, it must be planted in very rich soil.

Felleberg; this is a very strong growing, bushy, variety, producing very large clusters, of a color approaching to scarlet. It is a great bloomer; particularly in the fall, and at a distance.

Jaune Desprez; light buff, slightly tinged with pink, and deliciously fragrant. It is a climber, though not of the strongest kind.

Lamarque; this is another very luxuriant climber, producing splendid, pure white and large clusters of flowers. A very good bloomer.

La Pactole; few roses bloom so constantly and profusely as this variety, producing immense clusters of pale sulphur colored flowers; bushy; 3 feet high.

Octavie; one of the few dark colored climbers, of late introduction; fine reddish purple and a good bloomer.

Ophire; a trailing rose of a rather awkward habit; the flower is small, but of a remarkable deep salmon color. It shows its highest beauty in the morning, the colors fading very soon.

Smithii or Smith's Yellow; it is a beautiful yellow rose when grown in perfection; in order, however, to show its full beauty, it ought to be grafted and planted in a rich and damp situation; not a very good bloomer, and rather dwarfish.

Solfatara; a luxuriant climber, somewhat resembling the "Chromatella," but flowers of a more pale yellow than that variety. It is a profuse bloomer, with an exquisite fragrance.

I am now coming to the last class of everblooming roses, or the

Hybrid Perpetuals

They are a cross between the varieties of the old Provence and Damask roses, and the everblooming varieties of the Bourbon, Tea, and China Roses. Most of them have sprung up in France, where they are called "Remontants," or roses which will "bloom again" in the same season. They are very hardy, and, therefore, invaluable in the North, where the winters are too severe for the finer, everblooming roses, which are grown to such a perfection in our Southern gardens. Many of them are very fine; all of them of a luxuriant growth and rich colors, ranging from pure white to deep purple and crimson. Some of the best are:

Amanda Pattenotte; pale rose; very large and full; excellent for pillars.

Baronne Hallez de Clapparede; brilliant deep carmine; very double and of a most regular and imbricated form; petals a little recurved and very thick. Very fragrant.

Baronne Prevost; deep, brilliant rose-color; flowers very large, often measuring 5 inches across. It is of a most luxuriant growth.

Blanche Vibert; this is, as yet, the only pure white rose of this class; the flowers are rather small, but produced in large clusters, and of delicious fragrance.

Caroline Sansal; this magnificent new rose is worthy of a place in even the smallest collection. It is very large, double, of a fine form and a delicate blush, with an exquisite satin tint.

Comte Bobinski; a new rose of the nearest approach to scarlet, brighter in color than the "Giant of Battles;" the most showy autumnal rose.

Duplesis Mornais; another new rose of high merit. It is large, expanded, with a most beautiful shaped centre; brilliant rosy scarlet; middling growth.

Giant of Battles; this is a splendid variety, opening deep scarlet, velvety, changing to purple; deliciously fragrant and quite distinct.

La Reine; deep rosy lilac; very double and fragrant. This beautiful rose, an improvement of the well known old "cabbage or hundred-leaved" is worthy of a place in any garden, and will, by good culture, bloom three or four times during the summer.

Madame Laffay; rosy lilac; beautiful form.

Pius the IXth; light crimson; very fine.

Prince Albert; a magnificent variety, and a great bloomer, of a rich, deep purplish crimson color, which is particularly showy late in the fall.

Queen Victoria (Paul's); this rose is also called the "White La Reine," and has commanded a high price in the Northern Nurseries. It is pale blush; very double and a very fine flower.

Rivers; very brilliant, rosy crimson; exceedingly thorny; a fine variety, which is most showy in the fall.

William Griffith; superb pale rose of the most perfect globular form; worthy of a place in the most limited collection; grows very luxuriant.

Many more and fine varieties could be added to this list, but the above named ones are the most distinct.

Before concluding this schedule, I must mention a few spring roses, or such as only bloom in the spring, and are well adapted to the South, where they are great favorites.

Moss Roses

There is an opinion prevailing that Moss Roses will not thrive in the South, and, in fact, several of the varieties may require more attention than most persons may feel disposed to bestow upon them. Fortunately some of the finest will succeed admirably by proper treatment and very little trouble. Let it, however, be borne in mind that they always require a deeply worked and very rich soil, where moisture is within the reach of the roots. Wherever such a location can be found, or artificially prepared, a judicious pruning as well as mulching during the heat of the summer are the means by which success may be insured. The most suitable for the South are:

Princesse Adelaide; rosy pink; in large clusters, and of very luxuriant growth. This is, perhaps, the most profuse bloomer of all the Moss roses in a Southern climate; it often will make standards, 6 feet high, on its own roots.

Pink Moss; this is the world renowned Moss Rose of the poets, the emblem of loveliness, and the finest of all. The flower is beautiful pale rose, with a most delicate tint, surrounded, while in bud, with a very mossy calyx of the finest texture. When well mulched, there is no difficulty in raising it in perfection.

Scarlet Moss or Luxembourg Moss; deep red, approaching to scarlet, while in bud, but of a more purple hue when fully open; calyx very mossy. It has long and slender branches.

Perpetual White; every person combines with a white moss rose the idea of something very beautiful; and, in fact, if the flowers were so perfect as those of the pink moss, it would excel all other roses. But it is only beautiful while in bud. Some white moss roses, as "Unique de Provence" and "Maiden of Bath," have more or less perfect flowers, but are seldom seen in their glory in our hot and dry climate. The "Perpetual White," though by no means perpetual, will stand our climate well, and bloom twice during the season. It is of vigorous growth and produces large clusters of flowers, which, however, as mentioned before, are always sure to give disappointment when fully open.

Miscellaneous Roses

Banksia Alba; often called the "White Multiflora," is as fragrant as the violet.

Banksia Lutea; yellow; is not fragrant. Both are of a most vigorously climbing habit, with long, slick and slender thornless vines, growing from ten to twenty in a season. What a contrast to behold this rampant climber in our "Sunny South," when a Northern horticulturist never has seen it otherwise than a little miserable spring in a pot! The flowers are very small, not large than a dime, but produced in bunches and in great profusion.

Fortune's New Yellow; a climbing rose (from China) of late introduction. Notwithstanding all that has been said respecting the merits of this rose, together with many *beautiful* drawings presented thereof, I will try to give a true description of it, as it blooms for me. It is true, the color is remarkable, being a nankeen buff, the edges slightly tinged with pink; but the flowers are but *half* double; of short duration, and beautiful in the morning only, before fully expanded. Its blooming season is also very short.

Persia Yellow; this is, as yet, the deepest chrome yellow rose. The flower is below medium size, globular and often marked with a deep crimson stripe on the back of the petals. The bark is dark glossy brown; the foliage small, and of a peculiar fragrance, like the "Sweetbriar."

In order to grow these last four varieties, as well as the Moss Roses, in their perfection, and to have them to bloom abundantly they must (particularly the two last ones) be pruned severely immediately after finishing their blooming. It is the nature of these varieties to produce their flowers on the growth of the past season, wherefore their blooming would also be prevented if the pruning was delayed till winter. The treatment will cause them to throw out many new shoots, which will produce an abundance of flowers by next spring.

It is a well-known fact that nearly all roses obtained from Northern nurseries are budded, often on high, unsightly stems, and are, consequently, almost worthless.

All roses for the South should be strong, bushy plants on their own roots; though there are a few varieties which never succeed well unless they are grafted on the roots of some other strong growing kind, and this operation may be done by a practiced hand, in such a way that it never be noticed

See *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South* by James R. Cothran, published in 2003 by the University of South Carolina Press, for more information about Robert Nelson and his work.