



My Favorite Roses

by Priscilla Girard, Master Gardener

Not all flowers are created equal, and for me nothing surpasses the beauty of the hybrid tea rose. Available in nearly every color or color combination imaginable, hybrid teas can provide long lasting bouquets and fill a room with their heady fragrances.

My home garden is in Springville. Because I have a large collection of roses and garden in a battlefield of contentious critters (deer, gophers, raccoons, squirrels, and snakes), I don't have time to pamper demanding, disease-prone plants. Most of my favorite roses are easy to grow and disease resistant. A rose either survives, or it is uprooted and replaced with a more carefree, hardier variety. Here are some of my tried-and-true favorites.

The classic red rose was a favorite of my dad's and his gift to me as the first rose I ever planted. Although they have been around for decades, you can't beat the majesty and intense fragrance of a Chrysler Imperial (1952) and Mister Lincoln (1964). Chrysler Imperial features large velvety red petals (45-50) and an intense spicy fragrance. Hardy and vigorous, it can be used for beds and borders, cut flowers, or exhibition. Related to Chrysler Imperial through breeding, the fragrant Mister Lincoln boasts a powerful damask smell and 5" large full petals (26-40) in pure red velvet. These two hybrid teas can be susceptible to black spot.

If you don't want to deal with the disease problem, but still want the color and fragrance, a newer alternative might be the 9/11 Flight 93 rose (2010). This rose offers dark red blooms and moderate scent. For each of these roses sold, a donation will be given to help build the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Here is a link: <http://www.flight93rose.com/>.

Another favorite red rose is Legends (1993), created for Oprah Winfrey as a tribute to the famous women honored during Oprah's Legends Weekend. Bright cherry red blossoms open to a huge 6 1/2" diameter with 26-40 petals.

Also heavily scented, the rich mauve blend of Barbra Streisand (2004) presents lavender pink petals (25-30) with darker lavender edges. The strong citrus, rose scent and strong stems make this an excellent cut flower.

Two outstanding pink hybrids are Gemini (2005) and Aromatherapy (2005). Gemini embraces blended shades of palest coral pink and cream with pink edges on a strong stem, making this a good cut flower. It has a mild papaya fragrance. Aromatherapy, on the other hand, has a strong fruity smell and abundance of perfect pink buds and blossoms. Its long-lasting 4 1/2" blooms make it an excellent cut flower.

Two old standards are Peace (1945) and Double Delight (1977). Peace features large perfectly formed double flowers (40-45 petals) of golden yellow rimmed with pink edges. Its sweetly perfumed fragrance is light and fruity. Double Delight incorporates strong spicy fragrance and a striking color combination to make it the most popular rose of the last thirty years. It embraces large creamy white double flowers (30-35 petals) edged with bright red.

If you are looking for a traditional yellow rose, then Radiant Perfume (2005) or Julia Child (2006) might be contenders. Complementing its delicious lemony scent, Radiant Perfume's deep golden yellow flowers are large and long-stemmed, making it a spectacular choice for a fragrant bouquet. Julia Child's buttery golden petals exude a distinct licorice aroma. The 3-inch blossoms with 30-35 petals embody an old-fashioned bloom form.

If you are seeking an unusual yellow, then St. Patrick's (1996) novel chartreuse color will fit the bill. This rose incorporates a light yellow blend with green undertones, deep gray-green foliage, and a mild fruity fragrance.

To round up the list are two white roses, Pope John Paul II (2007) and John F Kennedy (1978). Although JFK is greenish white in the bud, it turns a near white blend as it opens. It radiates a strong fragrance. Pope boasts nearly perfect white luminous blooms 5-inches in diameter and a fresh citrus scent.

Winter is the perfect time to plant bare root roses. They are less expensive and will promise to bloom this spring. Many garden catalogues, internet sources, and local nurseries offer bare root roses. The Master Gardener website contains more local info on planting and care: http://ucanr.org/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/UC_Gardening_and_Pest_Info/.

Upcoming Rose Pruning Demonstrations: Bring your pruning shears and gloves for a free rose pruning demonstration by the Tulare-Kings Master Gardeners. Come learn more about planting bare root roses, pest management, tool care and general gardening information. All demonstrations are from 10 am to 2 pm.

January 19 - Tulare County Courthouse Roses in Visalia (Mooney Blvd and Burrel Ave)
January 21 - Old Grangeville Church near Hanford (on Hackett St, 14th St & Grangeville Blvd)
January 26 - Ralph Moore Rose Garden in Visalia (W. Main St and Hall St)

January 10, 2013