



Visalia's Heritage: The Miniature Rose

by Rosie Bonar, UC Master Gardener

As you travel north from Hwy 198 on Mooney Boulevard in Visalia, you pass the County Courthouse on the left. Surrounding the Courthouse are several rose beds containing a variety of types and colors of roses. As you continue northward and merge onto Main St. you soon pass over Mill Creek at Fairway, where a narrow drought tolerant garden showcases several California natives. Continuing east you happen upon the Ralph Moore Memorial Garden on the corner of Main Street and Hall. All three of these gardens are demonstration gardens maintained by the county or city and the Tulare/Kings Master Gardeners. The Master Gardeners use these gardens to learn, demonstrate, and share that knowledge with the public. In January there are two Saturdays when the public can come to the gardens and learn more about roses, especially pruning.

The Ralph Moore Memorial Rose Garden

The Ralph Moore Rose garden was established in 2003 and dedicated to Ralph Moore. Ralph Moore is considered by many to be the "Father of the Modern Miniature Rose". Mr. Moore bred over five-hundred new miniature roses and has been honored by the Royal National Rose Society of Great Britain and the American Rose Society for his accomplishments. Some have compared him to Luther Burbank because of his innovations. Because of the hybridizing program that he developed he was able to develop new lines of roses that others thought were impossible. The Ralph Moore Rose garden has over 300 of his roses, from climbers, tree roses, bushes, and creepers. Since he was the one who developed the roses, he had the privilege of naming them. When you come to the rose garden take the time to smell the roses and notice their names. They are named after his wife, daughters, friends and others he chose to honor. His "Ann Moore" was one of his award winning roses. Rosarians from around the world know his name and know of his accomplishments. To rosarians, Ralph Moore put Visalia on the map!

Visalians should be proud of Ralph Moore's accomplishments. We are proud to be the guardians of his roses.

What is a Miniature Rose?

So, what is a miniature rose and why is it so special? Miniature roses are members of the rose family but they are dwarf (miniature) in every respect. The leaves, flowers, roots, thorns, bushes, and even the space between the leaves, are all miniature. They can resemble the floribunda roses that have clusters of flowers or, they can resemble tea roses, which have a single flower on a stem. They can climb or creep or be a bush or tree. There are even teeny dwarf miniatures!

How to Care for Miniature Roses

Because miniature roses are still roses, their care is similar to the care that you would give to a regular-size rose. They require sunlight, proper irrigation and some pruning. Because of their smaller root systems, proper irrigation is very important. Dry dusty conditions are an invitation for mites to attack. So miniatures should be monitored carefully during our hot summer months.

Because they are smaller, pruning is a little easier on the hands. The method of pruning is similar to pruning larger roses. Roses should be pruned in the winter (between Christmas and Valentine's Day) by cutting out dead wood, cutting overlapping and crowded branches, and creating an open or vase like structure that allows air circulation into the center of the plant. You should not prune away more than about one third of the growth.

Upcoming Rose Pruning Demonstrations:

To learn how to prune and to get some hands on experience in rose pruning, bring your pruning shears and gloves for a free rose pruning demonstration by the Tulare-Kings Master Gardeners. You will also learn more about planting bare root roses, pest management, tool care and general gardening information.

Upcoming Master Gardener Rose Pruning events:

HANFORD: January 16, 9:00-11:00 am - Rose pruning Demo at **Old Grangeville Church** near Hanford, 14060 Hackett St. (Hackett St & Grangeville Blvd)

VISALIA: January 21, 10:00 am - Noon - Rose pruning Demo at **Tulare County Courthouse** (Mooney Blvd and Burrel Ave), and **Ralph Moore Rose Garden** (Main St. & Hall)



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