



'Basye's Blueberry'
Photo by Stephen Hoy (see Oscar Peterson article)

Singularly Beautiful Roses

A Publication Dedicated to Single, Nearly Single, and Semi-Double Flowered Roses
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Are You Going to Scarborough Fair?

Impossible tasks, unsolvable riddles, mythological quests.

Among the David Austin roses introduced in the US in 2003 was one named for an English folk ballad associated with a six week late summer market festival held in the seaside village of Scarborough. The event attracted merchants from across Europe beginning in the mid-13th century and running for 500 years.

Versions of the song now known as “Scarborough Fair” date back to 1670. Its lyrics appear to be adapted from a ballad known as “The Elfin Knight” in which a knight, with the blast of a magic horn, threatens to abduct a young maiden unless she can perform a series of impossible tasks. Not to be outdone, she in turn challenges him, “Now sin’ ye’ve asked some things o’ me, it’s right I ask as many o’ thee.”

(Knight)

Make me a fine cambric shirt, without any seam or needlework.
Wash it in yonder dry well where no water has sprung, nor drop o’ rain fell.
Dry it on yonder thorn which never bore blossom since Adam was born.

(Young maiden)

Find me an acre of land ‘tween the sea foam and the sea sand.
Sow it all over with one peppercorn and plow it all up with your blauin’ horn.
Reap it with a sickle of leather and tie it all up with a peacock feather.
And when ye’ve done and finished your work,
Then you may come and get your shirt.

By the middle of the 18th century dozens of variations existed featuring slightly altered lyrics, melodies, and titles. The version with the now familiar lyrics and named “Scarborough Fair” (but with a different melody) was published in 1891 in a collection of then popular folk ballads entitled *Traditional Tunes*.



‘Scarborough Fair’

Photo courtesy NetPS Plantfinder

“Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, & Thyme”

This line first appeared in the song in 1784, perhaps as ingredients of a magical love potion.

Parsley was thought to ward off evil spirits.

Sage was thought to bring long life. Rosemary

was thought to prolong relationships. Thyme

was thought to bring luck.

The song as made popular by Simon and

Garfunkel was first included in a new songbook named *The Singing Island* in 1947 and first recorded in 1956. Folk singer Martin Carthy introduced the song to Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, and they in turn recorded their own unique version in 1966. Their recording has made “Scarborough Fair” the most well-known historic English folk ballad.

As mentioned, the rose, ‘Scarborough Fair,’ was introduced in 2003. In my southeastern garden its semi-double, cupped flowers are the softest of pinks with a blush of darker pink toward the petal edges and on the reverse.

‘Scarborough Fair’

Photo by David Austin Roses, Ltd.

Although the blooms lighten in color as they age, when fresh, they display a bicolor effect. Boldly prominent golden yellow stamens are an alluring feature to pollinators, and a sweet, old-rose fragrance is a delight to humans that stick their noses into flowers. David Austin rose enthusiast, Ben Anderson, declares it to be “incredibly free flowering,” and this has been born out in my Georgia garden with blooms appearing from late April through November (if dead-headed!).

The David Austin website describes the character of ‘Scarborough Fair,’ the plant, with the following statement; “Despite giving the impression of utmost delicacy, this is a very tough, healthy and reliable variety.” Its dark green foliage is sufficiently resistant to black spot in my hot, humid 8b climate to retain a spot in my no-spray garden. Relatively compact at 3’x 3’, it may be perfect for a container, or, as Michael Marriott recommends, planted in the garden in groups of three. No parentage is given for ‘Scarborough Fair,’ but a comment on www.helpmefind.roses suggests it may have Alba genes. That may suggest why there are growers that suggest it can be grown in dappled shade.



Above - Photo by Buford Gardens

Below - Photo by Johnno



Oscar Peterson . . . plays all 88 keys

In 2016 Canada's Vineland Research and Innovation Centre introduced a rose named for brilliant jazz pianist and Montreal native, Oscar Peterson (1925-2007). Oscar began playing the piano at a young age, often practicing four to six hours a day. Among the styles he mastered in addition to classical music were boogie-woogie, stride, swing, and bebop. After winning first prize in a local contest at age fourteen, he began to perform weekly on a local Montreal radio station. Oscar recorded his first solo album in 1945 and eventually appeared on more than two hundred albums. He won eight Grammys over his career as well as a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. A who's who of jazz artists collaborated with Oscar, including: bass players Ray Brown and Niels-Henning Pederson, guitarists Joe Pass and Herb Ellis, pianists Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Herbie Hancock, vocalist Ella Fitzgerald, trumpeters



Oscar Peterson in Concert ca. 1960

Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, and Jon Faddis, and saxophonist Coleman Hawkins. Known for his phenomenal technique, he was described as “a true romantic in the 19th century sense, with the addition of the 20th century Afro-American jazz tradition.” He remains one of my favorite jazz pianists to this day.

Bred by Larry Dyck in 2007, ‘Oscar Peterson,’ classed as a Shrub, has eight to ten petals of creamy white with hints of yellow. In cooler weather the palest of pink may be visible near the margins of ruffled petals. Contrasting yellow stamens highlight the 4” blooms which appear singly or in small clusters throughout the growing season. Emerald



‘Oscar Peterson’
Photo by Stephen Hoy

If the name Larry Dyck is not familiar, press “Save.” He is the breeder of two other outstanding roses - ‘Campfire’ (left) and ‘Canadian Shield’ (right) Both very black spot resistant and hardy

to zone 3.



green, extremely black spot resistant foliage clothes the bush. The plant habit is compact, reaching dimensions of 30" x 30" (76cm x 76cm). Its breeding is listed as 'Yellow Submarine' x PO2 (a combination of 'Basye's Blueberry and 'Frontenac') which accounts for cold hardiness to zone 3. Marketed as a Canadian Artist introduction upon its release in 2016, 'Oscar Peterson' was added to the Easy Elegance group in 2020 for its "fuss-proof" ease of growth and lavish flower power. It also won the gold medal that year at the International Rose Trials in Nyon, Switzerland under no-spray conditions.



Above - Photo by J. C. Bakker & Sons

Below - Photo by Larry Hodgson

From the Editor

The weather continues to be unusual here in central Georgia. Several days ago the high was 72°F (22°C), crazy cool for this time of the year! After an early spring some of my roses are putting out their third flush of blooms.

Several seedlings from the last couple years are coming into their own and I'm excited about their potential. One is already registered and will be named for a friend that passed away. A nursery has already committed to growing and offering it. Stay tuned for an article featuring it.



Flowers leave their fragrance on the hand that bestows them.

Sources & Contact Information

'Scarborough Fair' – Angel Gardens/www.angelgardens.com
David Austin Roses/[http:// www.davidaustinroses.com](http://www.davidaustinroses.com) (America & UK)

'Oscar Peterson' – Corn Hill Nursery/<http://cornhillnursery.com>
Easy Elegance Roses/<http://easyeleganceroses.com>
Freedom Gardens/www.combinedroselist.com
Nature Hills Nursery/<http://www.naturehills.com>

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R. banksiae lutescens - Photo by Stephen Hoy

