



'Mrs. Oakley Fisher'
Photo by Rita Perwich

Singularly Beautiful Roses

A Publication Dedicated to Single, Nearly Single, and Semi-Double Flowered Roses
Volume 16, Issue 1
July 2025

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Edward Burton le Grice - Botanical Artist

"To grow roses is easy. To grow roses well is not hard, but to grow the best roses demands and repays all the care and skill we can lavish upon them." E. B. Le Grice

The early 20th century was a time of amazing growth in the British rose industry. Giants like the Dicksons, the McGredy clan, the Cant family, George and Arthur William Paul, the Chaplin Brothers, George Prince, the Rev. Joseph Pemberton, and a host of others, were conclusively establishing the value of roses created and grown on their side of the English Channel. In 1910, Robert F. Felton, British expert on floral decoration, boasted, "During the last twenty years so rapid have been the strides of English raisers and growers that it may be safely said that we are well ahead of any other nation in the world, both in production of new varieties and the perfection of their culture" (*British Floral Decoration*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1910, 39).

In 1920 young Edward Le Grice (1902-1977), having apprenticed with rose specialists Henry Morse & Sons, launched what would become Roseland Nursery on ten acres of land in his home town of North Walsham. Although he began by selling roses created by others, an encounter with Sam McGredy at a rose exhibition inspired him to breed his own varieties.

The first of his own introductions, a cherry red Hybrid Tea named 'Mrs. F. J. Jackson,' was released in 1933. Commercial success came in 1937 with 'Dainty Maid,' initially classed as a Hybrid Polyantha but later reclassified as a Floribunda (more on this classic in a few paragraphs). Edward married Ellinor Margaret McLinon in 1938 and eventually named one of his yellow Hybrid Tea seedlings for her. He related the following fascinating story about its release;

"It was not until the outbreak of the Second World War, when we were digging up and burning roses to make way for the food drive, that one bloom on three plants [of 'Lilian' x 'Yellowcrest'] solved the problem [of retaining both non-fading color and foliage], but the war years had to pass before this rose was named 'Eleanor Le Grice' and introduced."



E. B. LE GRICE in his hybridizing house in England



Indeed the war had a devastating impact on rose growing all across Europe. It would force the closing of a number of rose specialty nurseries. However, Roseland Nursery was able to reopen and continue advancing the development of the rose.

Le Grice struck gold, literally, with the introduction of 'Allgold' ('Goldilocks' x 'Ellinor Le Grice') in 1956. The gold medal winning Floribunda was a real breakthrough at the time in retaining the yellow of its flowers. Many considered it the first of its color to overcome the drawbacks *R. foetida* had brought into the gene pool.

'Allgold' - Photo by Vivai Iazzaro



'Kathleen Mills' - Photo by Stephen Hoy

He informed Jack Harkness that he raised 8000 seedlings from the cross before discovering this most important variety. HelpMeFind/Roses lists over 1500 unique descendants!

Articles written by Le Grice indicate that had been studying research done by Professor J. B. Harborne of Liverpool University and contemplating how to use that research to hybridize for color more purposefully. His titles reveal that in addition to continuing his effort to produce good yellows, he was contemplating the creation of roses in new, previously unexplored colors ("Inheritance of Color," "The Development of Modern Yellow Roses," and "Unusual Colours in Roses").

We are fortunate that Edward Le Grice saw value in the simplicity and elegance of the single and lightly petaled seedlings that appeared on his benches. It's not a stretch to believe that he was inspired by the commercially successful varieties bred by W.E.B. Archer and Svend Poulsen.

The earliest is what I consider a very collectible Hybrid Tea. Introduced in 1934, 'Kathleen Mills' is a rose to rival 'Dainty Bess' in

beauty and fragrance. Its very tall rose-pink buds unfurl to reveal eight to ten almost iridescent silvery pink petals. The darker rose pink of the reverse also appears as a "coloring book" border on the edge of the petals. This little-known Hybrid Tea was the favorite single rose of Will Tillotson of *Roses of Yesterday and Today* fame, perhaps because of its dramatic wine-red stamens. Their 1960 catalog carried this description, "When the four to five-inch blooms are fully open the pattern of pistils and stamens is like an exquisitely wrought piece of jewelry." I consider myself very fortunate to have it in my garden.

As mentioned above, 'Dainty Maid' was released a short number of years later. The following quote bears repeating; "Dainty Maid' is one of the most attractive single pink roses ever raised; the petals reflect the colour softly, and the yellow stamens illuminate it discreetly. The plants are vigorous, their dignity well served by their leaves. Its five petals are fairly large, deeper pink on the outside; one of its great advantages is resistance to rain damage." Another plus is its wonderful fragrance. Although it received a National Rose Society trial ground certificate, some regarded it as just another pink single-flowered rose. As such it may have been relegated to obsolescence if not for the eventual value placed on it by David Austin. Crossed with the Gallica 'Belle Isis,' Austin used it to create his very first introduction, 'Constance Spry,' sometimes described as the "dowager of the English rose dynasty."

'Dainty Maid'

Photo by David Austin Roses



Another Le Grice Floribunda, 'Dusky Maiden,' also had a dynamic impact in Austin's breeding program. Bred near the end of WWII and released in 1947, this five to eight petaled rose has deep blood red blooms inherited from two members in its family tree, 'Daily Mail Scented Rose' and 'Etoile de Hollande.' Its flower form and petal count come from 'Else Poulsen,' one of the great Poulsen Hybrid Polyantha/Floribundas. Regarding it he wrote, "Every hybridist, as far as I see it, considers that his "Masterpiece" lies hidden in the future rather than revealed in the present..... With these preliminary remarks I would unhesitatingly place 'Dusky Maiden' as my best yet. It is a hybridist's dream....." David Austin used it in 1965 to create 'Chianti,' and from there many amazing reds were developed. On occasion I get hints of its touted fragrance, but my sense of smell is somewhat compromised.

A cross made in 1953 with Charles Mallerin's 'Guinée' produced a vibrant red, repeat flowering, five petaled climber named 'Soldier Boy.' Though classed as a large-flowered climber it may as well be thought of as a climbing Hybrid Tea. Reaching eight feet or more in height, it is quite suitable for growing as a pillar. Le Grice wrote that it was "sufficiently vigorous to grace the second story of a house." The bright scarlet red blooms are decorated with flashy yellow stamens. Unfortunately, it is becoming quite rare except perhaps in Great Britain.

The release of single-flowered introductions continued in 1957 with 'Dairy Maid.' A dose of 'Ellinor Le Grice' in its background added a touch of pale yellow to this otherwise white Floribunda. Golden stamens are glowing red at their base and dramatically enhance blooms that emit a sweet fragrance. 'Dairy Maid's' flowers are fairly large, four to five inches in diameter, and arrive both one to a stem and in nice sprays. Additionally, perhaps due to strong Hybrid Tea influence, the plant grows rather upright.



'Daily Mail Scented Rose' - Patricia Routley



'Dusky Maiden' - Photo by Stephen Hoy



Above: 'Soldier Boy'

Photo by Stephen Hoy

Left: 'Dairy Maid'

Photo by Patsy Cunningham





'Grey Pearl'

Photo by Kim Rupert

caramel, or honey are great descriptors for the color of *'Amberlight'*, a nicely fragrant semi-double to double flowered Floribunda. An unnamed seedling, *'Lavender Pinocchio'*, and the dark purple red *'Marcel Bourgoquin'*

'Amberlight'

Photo by Beth Hana



Varieties began appearing in the 1960's that revealed his success in breeding lavender, purple, coffee, and russet colored roses. The use of Sam McGredy III's *'Grey Pearl'*, Gene Boerner's *'Lavender Pinocchio'*, and several cultivars that he determined had *R. foetida bicolor* in their family tree played a big role in their creation.

In 1961 two of his first uniquely colored roses were released. Words like buff, gave him this novel color (one that was perhaps about six decades too early!). In an article he wrote for the 1965 *Canadian Rose Annual*, he stated that he thought brown shaded roses might have a future and that *'Amberlight'* was a good example of what had already been accomplished.

The second of his two 1961 introductions, *'Lilac Charm'*, is a five petaled lavender Floribunda featuring striking



'Lavender Pinocchio'

Photo by Ross Roses

'Lilac Charm'

Photo by Museo Giardino



burgundy filaments topped with gold anthers. Originally bred in 1957, seedlings raised from *'Lavender Pinocchio'* and *Rosa californica* are listed as parents. Upon its introduction it was the only rose in commerce with this combination of petal and stamen color, making it quite unique. That novelty likely accounts for the gold medal it received from the National Rose Society Trials in the year of its introduction. Repeat bloom is excellent on a fairly compact plant. Le Grice would use it to create several other unusually colored hybrids. [Ed. note; my friend Robert Rippetoe used it to create his first repeat blooming Banksiae hybrid – the similarly colored *'Lila Banks.'*] Unfortunately, it has become very difficult to find in the U.S. at present.

If electric purple is your color then the 1969 release *'News'* is for you. Its parentage is listed as *'Lilac Charm'* x *'Tuscany Superb'*, however there is some speculation, based on its reblooming nature, that the actual pollen parent may have been an F1 seedling of *'Tuscany Superb.'* Australia's David Ruston wrote, "*'News'* is well named for its new colour in floribundas—a rich beetroot purple I think is the aptest description. The full blown flowers show gold stamens that lighten the effect very well." It won a gold medal from the National Rose Society and trial ground awards from Belfast and New Zealand. Le Grice considered *'News'* a real breakthrough in his quest for novel colors.

The last single to lightly petaled introduction still available to growers is 'Ripples.' This 1971 introduction is an unfading lavender purple variety with roughly fifteen petals. The name was likely inspired by the rippled appearance of those petals. Although fragrant and fairly vigorous, I am guessing it didn't become as popular as it might have in the U.S. because of the release of the similarly colored Swim and Weeks introduction, 'Angel Face.'



'Ripples' - Photo by Stephen Hoy



'News' - Photo by Rogue Valley Roses

Fortunately, the legacy of "botanical artist," Edward Le Grice, has been and continues to be preserved. In addition to his rose creations, a short list of accomplishments includes: fifty years of membership in the National Rose Society and a period as vice-president, the 1965 publication of *Rose Growing Complete*, mentoring renowned British rosarian Peter Beales, and being awarded a Queen Mary Commemoration Medal by the Royal Horticulture Society. Furthermore, sons Bill and Jim took over and ran the business until 2018 and introduced several cultivars of note.

Although garden critics may not have fully appreciated his work in the past, his roses are evidence of crosses that today can be described as genius, especially in light of the vast number of purple, lavender and brown roses marketed today. His determination to pursue his goals is recorded in a remark once made, "People have to play for safety if they want to make a living; and that is quite the wrong way for a hybridist." In the words of his son, "How nice to be remembered as the man who brought more colours to roses than any other."



Left: 'Tom Brown' - FL
Photo by Kathy Strong



Right: 'Vesper' - FL
Photo by Juralas Rozes



'Jocelyn' - FL
Photo unattributed



'Grey Dawn' - FL
Photo by Natalija Samgard



'Victoriana' - FL
Photo by Beth Hana

Gardening is awesome because it is one of the only ways an ordinary person can be persuaded to buy actual bags of poop.

Yann Arthus-Bertrand: A Rose, A Man, A Statement

Years ago I purchased a rose from Cliff Orent's EuroDesert Roses that was completely unknown to me. It was something new, it was single-flowered, and a unique blend of colors. When it arrived it was potted up and placed in my grow-it-on area. I noted that the foliage was healthy, and the color of the first bloom was indeed as pictured. Not long after, I received one of those emails we all get advertising "Amazing photos!" Frequently I delete these emails, but for some reason I opened the email and attachment and found that the

photos really were amazing. At the end of the slide show I noticed the name of the photographer. The wheels started turning, "Isn't that the name of . . . ? I walked out to the garden and looked at the tag on my young Eurodesert rose and indeed it was – 'Yann Arthus-Bertrand.'

'Yann Arthus-Bertrand' was introduced in 2007 by Meilland and is registered as an orange blend shrub. Its 2.5-3" blooms are a color riot of coppery pink and yellow. Pronounced red venation is often a prominent feature of newly opened blooms. Maroon filaments topped with gold anthers provide an attractive contrast. Stick your nose into the blooms and a faint citrusy orange scent is detectable.

Yann Arthus-Bertrand
Photo by JeanClaudeH



The foliage is glossy medium green and the plant is predicted to grow about 3' in height. Its ADR designation is a testament to the health and vigor it exhibits in the garden.

The gentleman for whom the rose is named is a French photographer and environmental proponent. After spending several years in Kenya he decided to specialize in wild life and aerial photography. In 2000 he created a Paris exhibit of over 150 4' x 6' poster-sized photos entitled "Earth From Above." It consisted of pictures taken from helicopters and hot-air balloons of breathtaking landscapes from every corner of the earth. After the exhibit traveled world-wide it was made into a book in 2008. Arthus-Bertrand is also the founder of the GoodPlanet Foundation, an organization dedicated to promoting environmental awareness and sustainable development. A 2009 documentary film entitled *Home* focuses on the ecological challenges and environmental concerns facing planet Earth. The list of films and books featuring his photography is extensive and should be explored! Hundreds of his photos are viewable at <https://www.yannarthusbertrand2.org/>. Permission to download is given by the photographer. Amazing photos indeed!



'Yann Arthus-Bertrand' - Photo by Meilland International

Whitehaven Beach, Queensland, Australia





Region near Antananarivo
Madagascar

Yellowstone
National Park
Wyoming

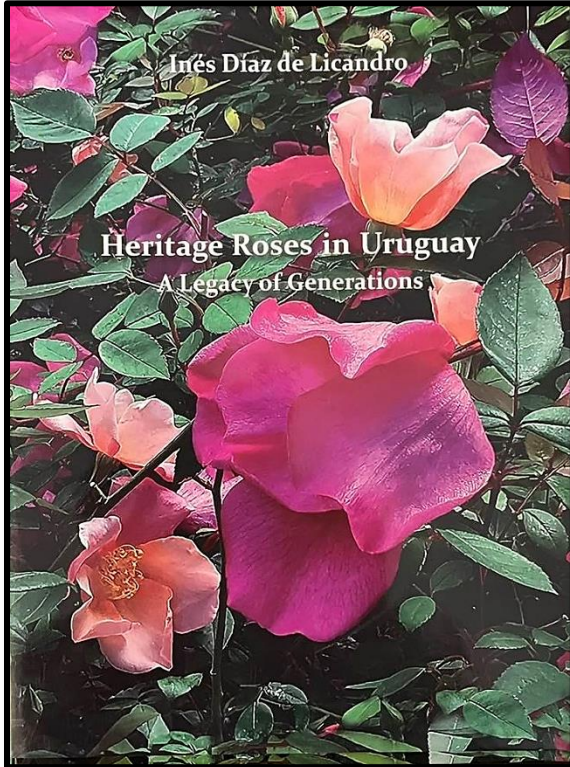


From the Editor

I had the opportunity to attend the Heritage Rose Foundation Conference in New Jersey/New York in June and had an amazing time. Leon Ginenthal presented a program entitled “A Romance With Ramblers” and talked about the initiatives associated with preserving Anne Belovich’s amazing collection. He demonstrated an outstanding method of how to prune Ramblers using different colored pipe cleaners . . . thinning out old canes, pruning laterals, etc. . . a very creative visual illustration and easy to follow!

Another great presentation was given by Ines Díaz de Licandro chronicling her effort to identify and preserve the heritage roses of Uruguay. She has traveled her native country, noted the location of, observed and recorded botanical characteristics, and attempted to identify those she has encountered. Utilizing photography and detailed Excel spreadsheets (revealing her professional background in finance and economics), Ines has created a meticulous accounting of each rose in what would eventually become *Heritage Roses in Uruguay: A Legacy of Generations*. Many rose books are just encyclopedias or glorified catalogs. In my opinion she has

created the equivalent of texts like *Tea Roses: Old Roses for Warm Climates*, Brent Dickerson's volumes, and even the older multi-volume sets like *The Genus Rosa*, and *Les Roses*. The book was awarded the prestigious World Federation of Rose Societies literary award at their convention in Japan (I bought the English language version!).



As you've noticed, I've included a number of photos of Edward Le Grice's unique, double-flowered Floribundas. They deserve mention because many are quickly disappearing from commerce other than perhaps in Great Britain. By the way, if anyone can help me reacquire 'Lilac Charm' I'd be glad to pay a pretty penny. Greenmantle does offer it, but the last time I checked with Marissa she said there were so many folks ahead of me awaiting custom propagation there was little chance of me ever getting it. I've attached one more photo here of a great Le Grice Hybrid Tea I grew years ago and highly recommend, 'My Choice.' A great mid-20th century rose!



'My Choice'

Photo by Beth Hana

Several roses created by Bill Le Grice also deserve mention, continuing his father's legacy of breeding several unusually colored roses. One in particular, 'Nimbus,' stands out as being an offspring of his dad's 'Grey Dawn.' The second rose pictured below is officially named 'Pearl Drift,' but also masquerades as "E. B. Le Grice." A friend just recently graciously gifted me a rooted plant of the latter.

'Nimbus' - Photo by Zuzu



'Pearl Drift' - Photo by Peter Beales Roses



Sources and Contact Information

It appears that very few North American sources exist for many of the Le Grice roses. Several can be found at:

Angel Gardens - <https://angelgardens.com/>

Burlington Roses - <http://www.burlingtonroses.com/>

Greenmantle Nursery - <https://www.greenmantlenursery.com/>

Rogue Valley Roses - <https://roguevalleyroses.com/>

Roses Unlimited - <https://rosesunlimitedsc.com/>

Rare offerings often appear at seasonal sales from The Friends of Vintage Gardens and Coastal California Rose Society's Rare and Unusual Rose auctions.

Numerous European, Australian, & New Zealand sources are listed on HelpMeFind/Roses for my friends that have access to ordering from them.

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Please feel free to share this newsletter!

