

## WINTER ROSE READING

### Consulting Rosarian Report

By Gus Banks, Master Rosarian

Forced inside by the cold weather and shortened days we have more time away from our gardens. We can use this time to benefit our hobby by reading about roses. Winter is a great time to increase your rose knowledge through reading. With thousands of books available you can choose an area that interests you. Culture, Old Garden Roses, climbers, miniatures, arrangements, rose identification, exhibiting, organic gardening and others have books that discuss that subject. I would like to share with you some of the books that I have found useful and enjoyed.

Not all of the books I discuss are available for sale at your local bookstore. However, many may be obtained through the internet or interlibrary loan at your local library. Another source that I have found useful is used bookstores. You can sometimes find good, out of print rose books in them.

“He who would have beautiful Roses in his garden must have beautiful Roses in his heart. “This famous statement was made by S. Reynolds Hole, the Dean of Rochester, in his 1896 book *A Book About Roses*. This is a very interesting book to read and feel the passion he had about growing roses at the end of the nineteenth century.

A book put out in great quantity and a number of editions is *How to Grow Roses* by Robert Pyle, president of the The Conard and Jones Company of West Grove, Pennsylvania. This book is a guide for the amateur rose grower. My 1915 edition lists 150 of what are considered the best roses. It is nice to realize that we continue to grow roses today that were growing then like Crested Moss and R. rugosa.

A great way to track the development of the rose through the last century is to read the *American Rose Society Annuals*. Issued each year the annuals started in 1916 and continue through the present. What we know as Roses in Review was started as the proof of the pudding; which gives the current view of the best roses to grow for that year rated by amateur growers that grows them. They have many interesting articles on rose culture and rose growers.

We are always looking for a better way to grow roses and there are many different ideas in use. Almost every rose book has something in it about growing roses. When I was starting to grow roses and started looking at rose books I found Rayford C. Reddeu's *Growing Good Roses*. It was an excellent guide for a beginner rose grower and gave me the culture guidance to be successful. The only problem with it is that he grows his roses in California. Not everything he suggested worked here in the Delaware Valley. So as my knowledge has increased and my interest in rose culture has deepened, I find myself using and recommending two books. The first is the American Rose Society's *Consulting Rosarian Manual*. As the name implies it is a manual about rose growing. It covers all aspects of growing and has been updated and revised recently. It is a manual all rose growers can use. It is not restricted to or only for Consulting Rosarians.

The second book I have found very useful is *A Year of Roses* by Stephen Scanniello. It gives month by month guidance on what to do in your garden. Living in New Jersey and growing roses here adds to his expertise for me.

For those interested in organic gardening I recommend *The Organic Rose Garden* by Liz Druitt and Judith McKeon's *Encyclopedia of Roses*. Both are written to provide information on growing roses using an organic approach. You will find an interesting recommendation to add urine to your compost in Liz Druitt's book. If you are interested in companion plantings, Judith McKeon also wrote *Gardening with Roses*. In this book she describes many plantings she has used and that work well with roses.

Three great books that describe the historical development of roses and are filled with outstanding photography are Peter Beales' *Classic Roses*; its companion *Twentieth Century Roses* and *The Heritage of the Rose* by David Austin. These all make very good references to help find and identify older roses through their descriptions and pictures.

Taylor's *Guide to Roses* is another good reference to help find and identify both older and modern roses. It is filled with rose pictures and descriptions.

A fun book to read is Thomas Christopher's *In Search of Lost Roses*. He describes his adventures as a rose rustler. He searched for old roses in many places trying to find and identify lost roses and taking cuttings of them. This way they would be available to future rose growers.

Anyone that has an interest in exhibiting must read *Showing Good Roses* by Robert Martin Jr. This is an outstanding book on how to grow and show winning roses. It is full of answers about selecting roses to grow, transporting them to a show and preparing them for entry. Other books exhibitors should read are the *ARS Guidelines and Rules for Judging Roses* and *Guidelines for Judging Rose Arrangements*. These are very useful to understanding what the judges are looking for as they judge an entry.

I know that there are many great rose books that I haven't mentioned. Every book has something that can help add to your gardening knowledge and rose enjoyment. One last book that I recently obtained is for our arrangers. Not strictly a rose book but enjoyable reading is *Ikebana* is better than *Therapy* by Susuma Uyeda. Whimsical and fun thoughts lift the spirit.

To end, I would like to share a quote from *Roses and A Few Others: A Book of Verse* by Lincoln Atkiss. Lincoln was a member of the Philadelphia Rose Society and a leader in our Penn-Jersey District.

"When once the rose has touched you, you will never be the same." Enjoy your books and reading this winter.

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**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:**

Two other rose books you might consider are:

*The Rose Doctor, A Key for Diagnosing Problems in the Rose Garden*,  
Gary A. Ritchie, PhD, Copyright 2019 by Gary A. Ritchie.

Complete Guide to Roses, ORTHO Books, Copyright, 2004, The Scotts Company, Meredith Corporation.

Roses Without Chemicals, Peter E. Kukielski, Copyright 2015, Timber Press Inc.

*Old Rose Survivors--Wild and Untamed*, A special edition of Rosa Mundi, Published by the Heritage Rose Foundation, Edited by Gregg Lowery, Pat Shanley, and Gene Waering.

*The Sustainable Rose Garden--A Reader in Rose Culture*, Edited by Pat Shanley, Peter Kukielski, and Gene Waering.



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