

# Gardening with Species Roses

Jonathan Shaw

Each year as winter settles over New England the latest rose catalogues appear in my mailbox, featuring the newest and gaudiest hybrid teas and floribundas. Several of these grow in my own garden, but over the years I have replaced them with species roses and shrub roses. Species roses are the wild roses that grow naturally throughout most of the northern hemisphere, and shrub roses are for the most part primary hybrids or selections of species roses. Neither group is commonly grown in gardens but both should be, for in addition to bringing diversity and a refreshing natural grace to a garden, they need much less spraying and maintenance than most cultivated roses. Spraying roses is a chore that I have gradually come to dislike, a dislike mixed of equal parts of laziness and a fear of casually used chemicals. Summer pruning is also not part of my work ethic, and with wild roses I can forget summer pruning.

What have I lost in abandoning hybrid teas and floribundas? The roses I grow tend to be tall, five feet and up; most bloom only once; the color range, particularly in the reds, is limited; and most have single flowers. What have I gained? My species and shrub roses

associate well with the other shrubs in my garden; they are easy to care for; and for sheer flower power they have few equals.

The rose family (Rosaceae), of which the rose genus is only a part, contains many garden-worthy plants. These include bush and tree fruits — apples, pears, and raspberries — as well as other woody plants, such as shadbush (*Amelanchier*) and flowering quinces (*Chaenomeles*); and herbaceous perennials, such as lady's mantle (*Alchemilla*) and meadowsweet (*Filipendula*).

Depending on which authority is recognized, the number of rose species is between 150 and 300. Like certain other genera, the genus *Rosa* poses a challenge to botanists. Many of the species are not distinct, because they hybridize easily both in the wild and in cultivation. Others have been so long associated with humans that their origins are no longer certain. This may explain why taxonomic problems abound and why the most recent monograph on roses (*Rosarum Monographia or A Botanical History of Roses* by John Lindley) is 163 years old.

The latest edition of Bean's *Trees and Shrubs* (1973–1980), prepared with the assistance of Graham Thomas, a horticultural authority on shrub roses, estimates the number of valid species at no more than 150 but lists only 82 primary entries. Alfred

Rehder in his *Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs* (1940) lists 38 species.

Wild roses are found only in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere. None are found south of the equator. With few exceptions they bear single, five-petaled flowers, and the colors tend to be mauve, white, pink, or yellow, with just a few displaying flowers of brilliant red. There are no blues. Some are enormous, so-called climbing roses that can grow 20 feet in a year. Others are low shrubs, prostrate or up to a foot and a half high.

### Landscape Uses

Species roses have far more potential landscape uses than hybrid tea roses or floribundas. Some are adapted to extremely harsh sites where few similar plants will grow. They are for the most part medium to tall shrubs and therefore can be placed in shrub borders or wherever a shrub will thrive. The suckering species will fill gaps between other shrubs, and the taller species will permit bulbs and smaller plants to thrive beneath their branches. The so-called climbing species can be trained into trees and draped over nearby shrubs or tip pruned to form shrubs. Species roses are graceful, easily placed near other shrubs, and do not require a formal setting. In traditional rose gardens species roses can provide diversity, stature, and grace.

A few species roses prefer wet sites; others require dry, almost arid positions; and some tolerate semishade. This adaptability has not been utilized extensively in gardens. The following are some of the landscape uses of species roses.

*Groundcovers:* *Rosa wichuraiana* is often used in this fashion, the trailing canes lying flat upon the ground.

*Colonizers:* *Rosa pimpinellifolia*, 3 to 5 feet high, will quickly spread to stabilize large areas or fill in spaces between other shrubs. *Rosa rugosa* will do the same but with larger canes and more "rugged" leaves. *Rosa nitida* is the lowest of the colonizers, a compact 18 inches.

*Hedges and Windbreaks:* *Rosa rugosa* will perform this function, as will *R. hugonis*. There are others, but few so tough.

*Canopies and Archers:* These are roses whose canopies spread widely but not densely and can be underplanted. *Rosa moyesii* is magnificent in this way, providing high shade for bulbs and low perennials beneath its own spectacle of brilliant geranium-red flowers and scarlet hips.

*Summer and Fall Foliage:* Throughout the growing season the leaves of *R. glauca* Pourr. (*R. rubrifolia*) are a pale reddish purple, a flower arranger's delight, and *R. alba* and several others have foliage of a lovely gray-green color. In the fall the leaves of most species roses are inconspicuous, but *R. nitida* exhibits shades of deep purple-red, as do several other American roses.

*Flower Color and Size:* For pure reds *R. moyesii*, for pure yellows *R. primula* or *R. hugonis*. The flowers of species roses are single and generally of medium size. For those who like their flowers small and abundant, there is no more graceful rose than *R. elegantula* 'Persetosa' (*R. farreri*), known as the threepenny bit rose, which is covered in early June with single pale pink flowers, each no more than a half-inch in diameter.

*Fruit:* Rose fruits, commonly known as hips, are among the greater assets of the species: one-inch red marbles on *R. rugosa*, two-inch orange-scarlet vases on *R. moyesii*,



*Rosa elegantula* 'Persetosa'  
Drawings by Emily Osman

(*Eurosa* or true roses). The first of these contains a single (or perhaps two) species. Although the flower is said to be striking, the plant is rarely found in botanical or private gardens because it is so lacking in vigor and so difficult to grow. The second subgenus, *Hesperhodos*, includes several species from the western United States. These, too, are rarely found in cultivation, primarily because their characteristics are unspectacular. The third subgenus, *Platyrrhodon*, contains only one species, *R. roxburghii*. It is a marvelous tall shrub, and for convenience it has been included below with other roses of similar stature.

All remaining species roses are found in the subgenus *Rosa*, and because it contains 95 percent of the species roses, this subgenus has been further divided into 11 (or perhaps 10) sections. Species and hybrid roses from eight of these sections appear in my selected list beginning on page 6. Species in the other three sections (*Chinenses*, *Banksianae*, and *Bracteatae*) were not included because they are not hardy in the Northeast. The eight sections are:

and half-inch black, shining drops on *R. pimpinellifolia*.

**Fragrance:** Flower fragrance is not strong in most species roses, because in roses the fragrance is emitted from the petals, and species roses rarely have more than five petals. Many species are especially outstanding for leaf fragrance, for example, *R. eglanteria* and *R. primula*. To pick flowers and leaves from these roses is to perfume one's hands and even the clippers. The scent is strong but not cloying.

The genus *Rosa* is divided into four subgenera: *Hulthemia*, *Hesperhodos* (roses of the west), *Platyrrhodon* (flat roses), and *Rosa*

*Laevigatae*, shiny-leaved roses: contains only one species, *R. laevigata*, with large, solitary flowers, shiny leaves, and a climbing growth habit. Plants with long, flexuous stems; flowers, large, white; branches with scattered, hooked prickles; sepals erect, entire, persistent; leaves usually with 3 leaflets, deciduous; stipules nearly free; styles free.

*Synstylae*, roses with united styles: contains most of the roses that are called climbers. This section is characterized by long canes and white flowers in clusters. Plants usually climbing or trailing, with many-flowered inflorescences; branches with hooked prickles; outer sepals pinnate or entire, deciduous; leaves with 5–9 leaflets, evergreen or deciduous; styles united into a slender column.

*Pimpinellifoliae*, anise-leaved roses: a most useful group with many graceful species bearing yellow and white flowers on vigorous bushes. Medium to low shrubs with solitary flowers; branches with straight prickles and bristles; sepals entire, erect, persistent; leaves with 7–9 small leaflets, deciduous; styles free.

*Gymnocarpae*, naked fruited roses: similar to the section *Pimpinellifoliae*, but in this section the apex of the flower axis (which contains the seeds) as well as the sepals drops when the fruit is ripe.

*Cassiorhodon*, cinnamon roses: hardy plants bearing pink or red flowers and distributed throughout the northern hemisphere. Upright shrubs; inflorescences usually many-flowered; branches with straight, infrastipular or scattered prickles; sepals entire, erect after flowering, persistent; leaves with 5–11 leaflets, deciduous; styles free.

*Carolinae*, Carolina roses: exclusively American roses that are noted for their adaptability and suckering habit. Upright, often strongly stoloniferous shrubs; inflorescences few-flowered; branches with straight, paired prickles; sepals entire or few-lobed, spreading after flowering, soon deciduous; leaves with 7–9 leaflets, deciduous; styles free.

*Caninae*, dog roses: contains most of the roses of Europe, including many hybrids, both wild and cultivated. At one time this section was thought to contain hundreds of species. Plants with upright or arching stems; inflorescences many-flowered; branches with numerous, stout, hooked prickles; outer sepals lobed, reflexed after flowering, deciduous (rarely erect and persistent); leaves usually with 5–7 leaflets, deciduous; styles free.

*Gallicanae*, French roses: contains only one species, *R. gallica*, and is recognized more as a horticultural than a botanical group, because of its numerous forms and cultivars and the long association of *R. gallica* with humanity. Upright shrubs, with few-flowered inflorescences; branches with hooked prickles mixed with bristles; sepals often lobed, reflexed after flowering; leaves with 3–5 leaflets, deciduous; styles free.

The species on the following list have been chosen to demonstrate the diversity

and adaptability of species roses and their primary hybrids. All but a few I have grown in my own garden or observed in private or public rose collections. Many of the species can be seen in the Arboretum, and others are currently being introduced.

### Species Roses Recommended for the Northeast

*R. blanda* Ait. Eastern & Central North America. Introduced into cultivation in 1773. Section *Cassiorhodon*. Flowers 1½–2 inches, solitary or in clusters. Blooms in early June.

This is a native American rose and for that reason alone deserves to be cultivated more often. It grows about five feet high and is almost entirely without thorns. Although it has been said to have no unusual garden merit, *R. blanda alba*, the pure white form, is lovely in early June, and for health and vigor it is unsurpassed. Like other native plants, it is hardy on the East Coast and disease resistant.

*R. ecae* Aitch. Afghanistan/Pakistan. Introduced in 1880. Section *Pimpinellifoliae*. Flowers ¾–1 inch, solitary. Blooms in early June.

With the exception of *R. foetida*, this has the brightest yellow flowers of any species rose. It is not vigorous, but one of its hybrids, 'Golden Chersonese' (1967), has preserved *R. ecae*'s color and dainty leaves while increasing its vigor. 'Golden Chersonese' is covered in late May with single bright yellow flowers. These bloom just above the delicate leaves, giving the whole bush an unusually dainty look.

*Rosa ecae*

*R. eglanteria* L. (*R. rubiginosa*). Eglantine rose. Europe. Cultivated prior to 1551. Section *Caninae*. Flowers 1½–2 inches, solitary or in clusters. Blooms in mid-June.

This is the sweetbriar or eglantine rose. The flowers are pale pink and abundant, and the shrub grows to six or eight feet high. Its greatest asset is its fragrant leaves, which release their fragrance when crushed. It grows wild in Great Britain, and references to its apple fragrance are common in English literature.

*Hybrids:* Numerous hybrids of this rose exist. One of the best, which preserves the fragrant leaves, is 'Gold Bush' (1954), a wide, arching shrub with amber semidouble flowers. Disease-free leaves make 'Gold Bush' a special asset in the garden.

*R. foetida* J. Herrm. Austrian briar rose. Asia. Introduced before 1590. Section *Pimpinellifoliae*. Flowers 2–3 inches, usually solitary. Blooms in early June.

The flowers of this rose are a deep yellow. Unfortunately, in the eastern United States the plant is susceptible to blackspot, but fungicides, such as benomyl, may be an effective treatment. In its native Iran the dry climate no doubt protects it from fungi attacks.

*Hybrids:* Because of its brilliant flowers, *R. foetida* has been hybridized frequently, and its genes have entered indirectly into most modern roses. An older hybrid is × *harisonii* ['Harison's Yellow' (1830)], an outstanding rose. It is vigorous, up to six feet high, and sometimes suckers slightly so that it renews itself by finding fresh soil. The flowers are semidouble and a bright yellow, a softer color than that of *R. foetida*. Its other parent is *R. pimpinellifolia*.

*R. foetida* 'Bicolor' is an outstanding cultivar known as the Austrian copper briar. What a rose! The petals are a brilliant orange on the inside and an equally brilliant yellow on the outside. (An unusual form of this cultivar, with sectored petals, is shown on the front cover.) When in flower this rose is visible at several hundred feet.

*R. gallica* L. Red rose. Europe/Asia. Cultivated prior to 1500. Section *Gallicanae*. Flowers 1½–2½ inches, solitary or in clusters. Blooms in mid-June.

This rose has been cultivated for so long that it is difficult to know which is the species and which the hybrids. The only member of its section, it is a suckering shrub up to four feet high and has unusually large (up to 3½ inches long) leaflets.

*Hybrids:* The selections and hybrids of



*Rosa gallica*

*R. gallica* are extraordinarily numerous. In the mid-19th century one nurseryman listed 400 varieties. In my own garden I have grown many hybrids of *R. gallica*, two of which I have found to be especially successful: 'Tuscany Superb' (1848) and 'Scarlet Fire' (1952). The former is a vigorous and disease-free shrub about four to five feet high with large maroon-crimson double flowers, set off by a center of bright yellow stamens. It is a stunning plant.

'Scarlet Fire' is a modern hybrid of *R. gallica*, and although it does not resemble its parent it is one of the most outstanding shrub roses. The petals are pure scarlet and the center of each rose is yellow. The flowers bend in great wands along arching branches reaching 8 or 9 feet in height and spreading as much as 10 to 12 feet. The leaves are somewhat susceptible to blackspot, but because of the plant's height and vigor the upper leaves are not affected. (Blackspot usually begins on the lower leaves and branches of most roses and then ascends.) This ability to "outgrow" fungus enemies is characteristic of several of the strongest

shrub roses. This is a marvelous rose. In my garden I have three bushes two to three feet apart, forming a dense clump.

*R. glauca* Pourr. (*R. rubrifolia*). Europe. Introduced in 1814. Section *Cassiorhodon*. Flowers 1–1½ inches, in clusters. Blooms in early June.

This rose is valued for its foliage, a faintly dusky maroon, resembling in early summer the color of a ripening plum. This unique foliage color enhances its value in the landscape. Reaching six or seven feet in height, the plant branches gracefully and the pink flowers with small white centers unobtrusively complement the foliage.

*Hybrids*: *Rosa glauca* has one outstanding hybrid (with the species *R. rugosa*), 'Carminetta' (1923), which shares *R. glauca*'s rosy foliage. From *R. rugosa* it has inherited great vigor and larger flowers. It is a less delicate plant than *R. glauca* but unique nonetheless for its foliage.

*R. helenae* Rehd. & Wils. Helen's rose. China. Introduced in 1907. Section *Synstylae*. Flowers 1–1½ inches, in many-flowered corymbs. Blooms in mid-June.

Named by E. H. Wilson for his wife, and introduced by the Arnold Arboretum, this handsome rose is difficult to obtain. Like those of other roses in section *Synstylae*, the flowers are white and rather small but compensate for their size by their abundance. The hips, which are an attractive red, are conspicuous in the fall. Like many shrub roses, this one is sometimes classified as a climber. Since no rose is a true climber (roses have no tendrils and do not twine), all this means is that *R. helenae* makes long annual growths and will grow beyond six or

eight feet high if not pruned at the tip. A particularly lovely variety of this rose, *flora plena*, grows in the rose collection of the Arnold Arboretum.

*R. hugonis* Hemsl. Father Hugo's rose. China. Introduced in 1899. Section *Pimpinellifoliae*. Flowers 1½ inches, solitary. Blooms in late May.

This rose ought to be in every garden. It forms a graceful arching shrub six to eight feet high. The growth is dense and the foliage is delicate. The medium-yellow flowers appear in late May in the Northeast and in most years precede all other roses that I know. It is no wonder that this rose is obtainable from just about every nursery and is

*Rosa wilmottiae*



probably the most popular species rose grown in the United States.

*R. laevigata* Michx. China. Cherokee rose. Introduced before 1780. Section *Laevigatae*. Flowers 2½–3 inches, solitary. Blooms in late May.

Although native to southern China, *R. laevigata* has become naturalized in the southern United States and has an American name, the Cherokee rose. The flowers are large, white, and fragrant. This very beautiful rose is not fully hardy north of the Carolinas.

*Hybrids:* For those who would like to capture the beauty of this rose in a hardier form, 'Silver Moon' (1910), a probable hybrid, would be the choice. The flowers are similar but larger, and the fragrance is very strong. The leaves are a dark, glossy green. The canes are long and thick, and 'Silver Moon' is best grown as a climber. Because of its origin, it is hardy in New England only along the coast.

*R. moyesii* Hemsl. & Wils. China. Introduced in 1894. Section *Cassiorhodon*. Flowers 1½–2 inches, solitary or in pairs. Blooms in early June.

This is my personal favorite among wild roses, a huge shrub reaching 15 feet high after many years of growth. Its flowers are brilliant red, verging on geranium-scarlet in the selection 'Geranium' (1938). In the fall the arching branches are covered with unusual bottle- or vase-shaped hips that are bright red. Because this shrub forms a high canopy, bulbs and other shrubs can be planted underneath, making this rose ideal for the shrub border.

*Hybrids:* There are relatively few hybrids

of *R. moyesii*. Most of these have been created in England, but one of the best is 'Eddie's Crimson' (1956), hybridized by a West Coast nurseryman. It shares all of its parent's fine characteristics and, if anything, is slightly more vigorous. It has numerous hips that are somewhat less vase-shaped than those of *R. moyesii* itself.

*R. multiflora* Thunb. Japan. Introduced before 1868. Section *Synstylae*. Flowers 1 inch or less, in many-flowered panicles. Blooms in mid-June.

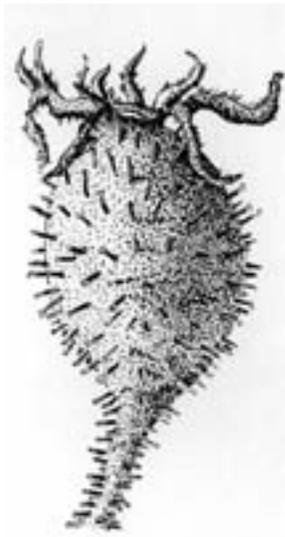
This is a beautiful Japanese shrub with tiny white flowers in large clusters. By fall the flowers have been replaced by equally small red hips, which are excellent in arrangements. This plant has been touted as a turnpike barrier. It spreads very easily, as birds carry its small seeds a considerable distance. It has been much used in hybridizing, particularly in the polyanthas and the floribundas. Because of its phenomenal vigor

and adaptability, this species is an understock for most roses in this country. Multifloras may reach a height and width of 10 feet, and many have in my garden. Approximately one-quarter of all the multifloras that have seeded themselves in my garden are thornless, a nice Mendelian ratio. The thorny remainder are larger and may have trunks one foot thick at the base. When removing one of these roses, I found it necessary to use a chain saw! The thornless forms are best. They are adaptable to all soils and situations and have attractive hips. The hips are the most beautiful feature of this plant. Many hybrids of this rose have been created, but few duplicate its extraordinary vigor.

*R. nitida* Willd. Eastern North America. Introduced in 1807. Section *Carolinae*. Flowers 1½ inches, usually solitary. Blooms in early June.

This is a dwarf rose with attractive autumn foliage color. Growing to approxi-

Hips of (left to right) *Rosa moyesii*, *R. roxburghii*, and *R. pimpinellifolia* (*R. spinosissima*)



mately two feet high in the best forms, this shrub extends rapidly underground, forming a low thicket that is covered with deep pink flowers early in the rose season. It is an outstanding native rose suitable for both dry and damp sites along driveways and highway islands and near houses. It is my belief that this rose will eventually become very common in the cultivated landscape. At present it is rarely seen but deserves to be sought out for its special qualities.

*R. palustris* Marsh. Eastern North America. Introduced in 1726. Section *Carolinae*. Flowers 1½ inches, in corymbs or solitary. Blooms in mid-July.

This rose is unique in that it grows in wet places, even in sunlit swamps. It also will grow in ordinary garden soil. The flowers are light pink and the leaves are light green and shiny. It grows up to six feet high in thickets and increases by suckers. Like many other native plants, *palustris* is shamefully neglected by gardeners. Related species sometimes grown are *R. carolina* and *R. virginiana*. Like most roses, *R. palustris* needs full sun.

*R. pimpinellifolia* L. (*R. spinosissima*). Scotch rose. Europe/Asia. Cultivated prior to 1600. Section *Pimpinellifoliae*. Flowers 1½ inches, solitary. Blooms in late May or early June.

A vigorously suckering type of which there were at one time many dozens of selections, the Scotch rose can be found in shades of pale pink, white, and pale yellow, although the latter may be the result of hybridization. This rose is usually three to five feet high and is thoroughly hardy and adaptable. Because it suckers so easily, it must be planted where it will not overwhelm smaller

plants. It grows best in full sun and is excellent in dry sites. A superbly adaptable rose, it should be planted wherever its special characteristics make it useful. All its varieties are outstanding; the one known as *altaica*, with cream yellow flowers, is especially handsome and grows up to six feet high.

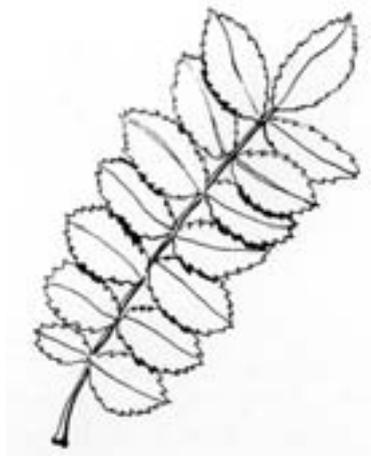
*Hybrids: R. pimpinellifolia* has produced many outstanding offspring. Most bloom once only. One of the best is 'Golden Wings' (1956). This rose resembles a floribunda but has much greater vigor. Its medium-yellow flowers are large and single, covering the bush all summer long. It is somewhat susceptible to disease, and in my damp Cape Cod garden I find it necessary to spray it with a fungicide twice during the summer. Another very satisfactory hybrid is 'Stanwell Perpetual' (1838). All summer this produces medium-sized double pink blossoms on a four- to five-foot disease-resistant bush.

*R. primula* Boulenger. Central Asia. Introduced in 1910. Section *Pimpinellifoliae*. Flowers 1–1½ inches, solitary. Blooms in late May.

This is a lovely yellow rose, and it is the most fragrant-leaved of all roses. The scent permeates the air, particularly after rain. The leaves are small and delicate and disease resistant, making this a choice plant.

*R. roxburghii* Tratt. Chestnut rose. Japan/China. Introduced in 1880. Subgenus *Platy-rhodon*. Flowers two inches, usually solitary. Blooms in early June.

This Chinese rose is a special favorite of mine. Named the chestnut rose because its hips are covered with chestnutlike prickles, it forms a stout, round bush 8 feet high and 10 feet wide. One specimen in the collection

*Rosa roxburghii*

of the Arnold Arboretum has a trunk 10 inches in diameter: this is the variety *hirtula*. An attractive feature of *R. roxburghii* is the peeling bark. The leaflets are large for a rose and their very regular pinnate arrangement is particularly conspicuous. The flowers of *R. roxburghii* are single and pink. This rose commands respect if only for its impressive armor.

**Hybrids:** Of the few hybrids of *R. roxburghii*, the most well-formed and most beautiful is 'Coryana' (1926). It produces large single pink flowers in great profusion, set against attractive foliage. In one garden I visited, a jacket had been draped to dry on the strong branches of 'Coryana'.

*R. rugosa* Thunb. Russia/Japan/China. Introduced in 1845. Section *Cassiorhodon*. Flowers 2½–3 inches, solitary or in few-flowered clusters. Blooms between early June and mid-June.

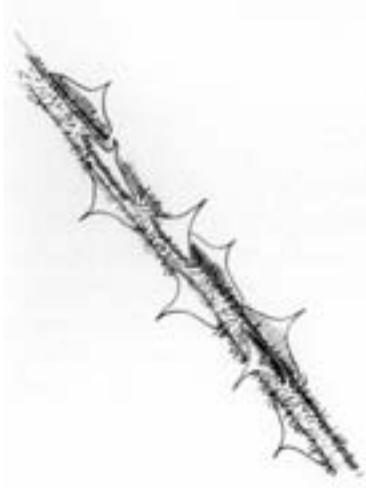
Naturalized all along the east coast of the United States on dunes to within a few feet of the high tide mark, this is a shrub rose without peer. It is extraordinarily hardy and

adapts to every soil, from clay to sand. The wild forms bear single flowers of white, pink, or purple-red, while the hybrids broaden the color range and flower form without losing the vigor and adaptability of the parent. The canes are thick and covered with spiny thorns. Like those of many roses that sucker, the canes are almost consistent in diameter throughout their length. *Rosa rugosa* is unaffected by salt spray, and if the locations where it grows along the coast are an indication it can take some flooding from saltwater as well.

**Hybrids:** All the hybrids are good and because of *R. rugosa*'s vigor are almost always recognizable. Most do not sucker with the freedom of their parent, and because they are heavysset seem more like stevedores than like the ballerinas among roses such as 'Golden Chersonese'. The hybrids are numerous, and it is difficult to suggest selections. Two hybrids I have grown are particularly outstanding: 'Blanc Double De Coubert' (1892) and 'Jens Munk' (1974). The former is a fragrant double white from the turn of the century which blooms repeatedly throughout the summer. The latter is a recent hybrid with excellent pink blooms on a dense, disease-resistant shrub.

*R. sericea* f. *pteracantha* Franch. (*R. omeiensis*). China. Introduced in 1890. Section *Pimpinellifoliae*. Flowers 1½ inches, solitary. Blooms in late May.

Here is a wild rose whose most attractive feature is its thorns. A brilliant translucent red during the first year, they are poised along the branches like miniature delta-winged airplanes. The sight of this rose, with the sun shining through its thorns, is spectacular. During the second year the prickles darken to gray. The four petals, instead of



Thorns of *Rosa sericea* f. *pteracantha* (*R. omeiensis*)

the usual five, are a unique feature of this rose.

*Hybrids:* A hybrid that may be superior to its parent is 'Red Wing' (date of introduction unknown). This has been selected for its extraordinary thorns, a luminous red, and its vigor and resistance to disease.

*R. wichuraiana* Crép. Japan. Introduced in 1891. Section *Synstylae*. Flowers 1½ inches, in panicles. Blooms in mid-July.

*Rosa wichuraiana* is the best of the prostrate roses. It is vigorous and adaptable and sends out long canes, which sprawl a few inches above the ground. Like those of other roses in the *Synstylae* section, its flowers are white with a lovely boss of yellow stamens in the center. *Wichuraiana* is widely available from nurseries and is often extolled as a groundcover. It should be realized, however, that it does not make a thick carpet of leaves and should be planted on a mulched site so that weeds do not come up between the canes. This shrub is also disease resistant.

*Hybrids:* Numerous hybrids of *R. wichu-*

*raiana* have been created. These are ramblers, thick sprawling bushes three to five feet high that are even more vigorous than *R. wichuraiana*. The best known is 'Dorothy Perkins' (1901), which is now found growing in the harshest and most unlikely locations because it roots from the tips of the canes and is therefore easily transplanted. It blooms once in early summer with small pink double flowers. Although it is often afflicted by mildew, its vigor is not significantly diminished by the disease. Some years ago 'Dorothy Perkins' sported a more compact shrub, 'The Fairy' (1932). This is a wonderful plant that needs no attention at all and has pale pink flowers similar to 'Dorothy Perkins'.

*R. willmottiae* Hemsl. China. Introduced in 1904. Section *Gymnocarpae*. Flowers one inch, solitary. Blooms in early June.

For balance of flower and leaf, there are few roses that equal this unaccountably neglected Chinese rose. Though long admired in England, it is rarely seen in the United States. The pale pink flowers have cream-colored stamens, and the foliage has a fernlike texture. The shrub grows to eight feet and is exceedingly graceful. I know of no source of this shrub in the United States at present. Discovered in western China near the Tibet border by E. H. Wilson, this rose merits widespread cultivation.

### Diseases, Insects, and Other Disagreeable Matters

Conventional roses — hybrid teas and floribundas — are by necessity pampered plants. Often ravaged by disease, especially blackspot, most require spraying every 10 days to 3 weeks. Cynthia Westcott, Ph.D., a

longtime admirer of roses who made her living as a counselor to suburban rose enthusiasts near New York City, wrote that "possible enemies of the rose are legion. There are 500 insect pests and perhaps half as many bacteria, fungi, and various virus-caused diseases. Rodents are often a menace and pets occasionally." In her book, *Anyone Can Grow Roses* (1965), 65 pages out of a total of 199 were devoted to rose diseases and pests.

Conventional roses usually are not long-lived plants. Failure to spray these roses for a few months or failure to prune for a year produces scraggy and charmless plants. If they are without care for a longer period, they deteriorate to leafless stems, defoliated by blackspot. For the most part the species roses listed above are not severely affected by insects or diseases. Some are susceptible on occasion to blackspot or mildew but because of their vigor will outgrow or resist an attack. On the rare occasions when blackspot appears, I spray once or twice a summer with Benlate, a systemic fungicide. This is necessary for only a few specimens and even then is not necessary every summer. As for pets, the abundant thorns of most species discourage most of them.

### **Planting and Pruning**

With few exceptions all roses require full or almost full sun. In choice of site, this is the first requirement. Ample room for roots is necessary for strong-growing shrub roses. Although a suckering species such as *R. nitida* would do well between the sidewalk and the street, the larger species would find the location too cramped. With regard to soil, the species roses and their hybrids are

far more adaptable than most hybrid teas and floribundas, but if the soil is poor some manure placed below the roots and separated from them by a layer of soil is useful. A large hole obviously is better than a small one.

Throughout the world most commercial roses are grafted. In this country the understock is *R. multiflora*. Grafting is a commercial necessity, since it produces large plants in a short time and because it encourages growth in the many weak commercial roses that would die if they were dependent on their own roots. Although species roses obtained from nurseries are the result of grafts, they are capable of growing on their own roots. It is my practice when planting species roses and their hybrids to set the graft-point four inches below ground to encourage the rose to grow its own roots. This method leads in the long run to increased vigor, and if the plant should be damaged in the future it will send out new shoots from below ground. These new shoots will be part of the graft and not the understock.

In the field of horticulture nothing is more controversial than the pruning of roses. Pruning species roses is not difficult, however, if one point is kept in mind: these are hardy shrubs and should be treated accordingly. This means that after a number of years the very oldest stems should be cut to the ground in early spring in the same way that one might renew a lilac or a mock orange. No further pruning is necessary except to cut off dead branches. Since species roses require many years to develop their flowering capacity, yearly pruning can be severely damaging.

There are a few species roses that are climbers but can be grown as shrubs if desired. If the canes of these become too long, they can be pruned by cutting off the tips.

**Author's Note:** Other interesting hardy species roses, in the collection at the Arnold Arboretum, are:

<i>R. acicularis</i>	<i>R. koreana</i>
<i>R. afzeliana</i>	<i>R. longicuspis</i>
<i>R. agrestis</i>	<i>R. luciae</i>
<i>R. amblyotis</i>	<i>R. malyi</i>
<i>R. amurensis</i>	<i>R. micrantha</i>
<i>R. arkansana</i>	<i>R. nitidula</i>
<i>R. arvensis</i>	<i>R. nutkana</i>
<i>R. beggenana</i>	<i>R. omissa</i>
<i>R. belgrandensis</i>	<i>R. oxyodon</i>
<i>R. bella</i>	<i>R. pendulina</i>
<i>R. brunonu</i>	<i>R. pisocarpa</i>
<i>R. calocarpa</i>	<i>R. pomifera</i>
<i>R. canina</i>	<i>R. prattii</i>
<i>R. carolina</i>	<i>R. pruhoniciana</i>
<i>R. centifolia</i>	<i>R. pteragonis</i>
<i>R. cinnamomea</i>	<i>R. roopae</i>
<i>R. chinophylla</i>	<i>R. rubiginosa</i>
<i>R. coriifolia</i>	<i>R. schamkeana</i>
<i>R. corymbifera</i>	<i>R. schwinkeana</i>
<i>R. davurica</i>	<i>R. sertata</i>
<i>R. ditrichopoda</i>	<i>R. setigera</i>
<i>R. dumalis</i>	<i>R. setipoda</i>
<i>R. elasmacantha</i>	<i>R. sino-wilsonii</i>
<i>R. fedtschenkoana</i>	<i>R. spaldingii</i>
<i>R. giraldii</i>	<i>R. spinulifolia</i>
<i>R. hibernica</i>	<i>R. tomentosa</i>
<i>R. highdownensis</i>	<i>R. tuschetica</i>
<i>R. horrida</i>	<i>R. waitziana</i>
<i>R. huntii</i>	<i>R. webbiana</i>
<i>R. inodora</i>	<i>R. wintoniensis</i>
<i>R. jundzillii</i>	<i>R. woodsii</i>
<i>R. kochiana</i>	<i>R. zalana</i>

### Nursery Sources for Species and Shrub Roses

High Country Rosarium, 1717 Downing, Denver, CO 80218

Joseph J. Kern Rose Nursery, Box 33, Mentor, OH 44060

Lowe's Own Root Nursery, 6 Sheffield Road, Nashua, NH 03062

Mike's Roses, 6807 Smithway Drive, Alexandria, VA 22307.

Pickering Nurseries, 670 Kingston Road, Pickering, Ontario L1V 1A6 Canada.

Roses of Yesterday and Today, 802 Brown's Valley Road, Watsonville, CA 95076.

Wyant Roses, Route 84, Johnny Cake Ridge, Mentor, OH 44060.

Not all roses listed in this article are available from the above sources. For further sources consult the current edition of *Combined Rose List* (roses in commerce and cultivation, rose registrations since *Modern Roses 8*, and hard-to-find roses and where to find them), compiled and available from Beverly R. Dobson, 215 Harri-man Road, Irvington, NY 10533.

An English source, for which an importation permit is required (write Permit Unit, USDA, PPQ, Federal Building, Room 638, Hyattsville, MD 20782), is: Peter Beales Roses, Intwood Nurseries, Swardeston, Norwich NR14 8EA England.

### For Further Reading

The following are the recent major publications on species and shrub roses:

Bean, W. J. 1973–80. 8th ed. *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles*. London: Murray. The fourth volume contains an updated listing of species roses as well as a section by Graham Thomas on the major hybrids.

Edwards, G. 1975. *Wild and Old Garden Roses*. New York: Hafner. Like most of the other publications in this list, this is British in origin, and therefore much of the information needs to be adjusted to American climatic conditions.

Gault, S. M., and P. M. Synge. 1971. *The Dictionary of Roses in Color*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap. Outstanding color photographs of many species and shrub roses as well as hybrid teas and floribundas.

Gibson, M. 1973. *Shrub Roses for Every Garden*. London: Collins. A most comprehensive and readable account of shrub roses.

Kordes, W. 1964. *Roses*. London: Studio Vista. First published in Germany, this is a first-person account by the major breeder of shrub roses in the 20th century.

Krussman, Gerd. 1981. *The Complete Book of Roses*. Portland, Oregon: Timber Press. Inadequate editing and layout mar a remarkable book, which has an excellent section on species roses. The original German title, *Rosen, Rosen, Rosen*, better captures the spirit of the book.

Shepherd, R. 1978. Reprint. *History of the Rose*. New York: Coleman. This is the major American reference for those who wish to grow species roses and their hybrids. First published in 1954, it is not a history of the rose but rather a horticultural and botanical survey of the entire genus.

Thomas, G. S. 1956. *The Old Shrub Roses*. London: Phoenix House.

———. 1962. *Shrub Roses of Today*. London: Phoenix House.

———. 1965. *Climbing Roses Old and New*. London: Phoenix House. Thomas is an authority on shrub roses and for accuracy and a graceful style has no equal. The three works above have been republished several times and contain the most comprehensive horticultural descriptions of species roses ever published.

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