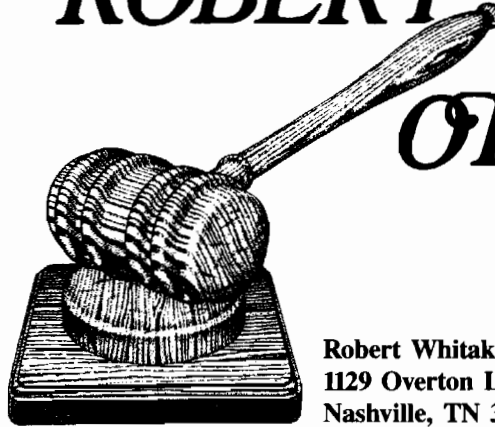




ROBERT'S RULES OF ROSES



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THE BAKER'S DOZEN MINUS TWO

This year I had the task of selecting a baker's dozen of large flowered roses to offer to our Nashville Rose Society members and the general public for planting this spring of 1988. If you had the task of selecting 11 cultivars from all those on the market, what would you place on the list? I am going to roll with the punches and tell you my list and why I selected each one. My hope is to give you a few ideas for your last minute shopping list.

Here are my choices:

1. **Double Perfection:** Here is a real alternative to *Double Delight* which could be seen at the Rose Center in Shreveport last fall. The cream to strawberry red contrast is a real eye catcher. The plant habit appeared to be okay. Try it for the color — vigor unknown.

2. **Red Perfection:** All of us are still looking for a good red rose. This new introduction from McGredy is dark red with lighter reverse, tall growing, and does have the *Mister Lincoln* fading habit. High-centered exhibition form with fragrance. Exhibitors take note, as you can shade for color fade.

3. **Mikado:** I personally like all-purpose rose cultivars. This may be one of those. It has bright red blend color that holds, dense growth for mass planting purposes and disease resistant, shiny foliage. The exhibitor may even find a way to get long stems with the butcher block hard pruning treatment. Need I say more? AARS 1988.

4. **Prima Donna:** Bill McMahon is always trying to find a new grandiflora to exhibit, so don't tell him about this one. Put it in the back of your rose bed as it is TALL. To me, the color is a deep dusty pink, not a brilliant hue. It has long stems no matter what you do. Getting good size will challenge the exhibitor. It has the needlepoint center many like. AARS 1988.

5. **Amber Queen:** All of us are looking for a good cultivar in this color range. We have passed out trying *Glenfiddich*, *Whiskey Mac* and *Brandy*. By this time, anything would look like a Queen. It has landscape possibilities with excellent disease resistance and winter hardiness, according to AARS reports. The amber color is not going to hold up any better than you do in the hot sun, but the bloom lasts. Grow it and let the exhibitor hunt for an exhibition spray among the mass of bloom clusters. AARS 1988.

6. **Pelé:** Ever since I saw an arrangement of 12 blooms of this cultivar by Whit Wells in a Memphis Rose Society show, I have wanted to see more of this rose. The blooms were ivory white

kissed with a touch of honey color in their high-pointed centers. The variety blooms on new wood like *America*, which is an asset. I think we all ought to find out if it will do for us what it did for Whit.

7. **Toro (Uncle Joe):** We have to placate the exhibitors, and this HT will wherever it is HOT. In July when our tongues are hanging out, this many-petalled rose is just getting started. It has ugly wide-spaced foliage on long stems. However, Ed Griffith has informed us 80% of the point total is in the bloom. There is a reward out there for anyone who has ever seen the stamens on this cultivar. This would amount to indecent exposure.

8. **Gold Medal:** Let's face it: this grandiflora is the best all-around yellow to grow in this clime. It is hardy for its color class, the most color stable for a yellow, and the blooms last and last on the plant. They almost reach the dried flower state without being ugly or unattractive. Pin a medal on yourself and order one. Exhibitors will find it on the Court of Honor table fighting for Queen among its larger flowered friends. Don't tell Bill McMahon about this one, either.

9. **Olympiad:** I was not impressed with this HT cultivar at first but am changing my opinion. The color is red and very stable. You will be glad you have this one when the mildew season comes on. Give the plant time to establish and lots of fertilizer and watch out.

10. **Touch of Class:** The secret is out on this HT. You can get excellent blooms on this one all summer long with a little shade help for part of the day. Exhibitors love its high-pointed center, and it reblooms quickly. However, you will have to have your mildew spray materials in action to control its tendency to flirt with this disease. If you conduct a judging school in July, this will be your Queen. Good everywhere. How it got passed over by the first patent holder, I'll never know.

11. **Summer Fashion:** Versatility is this floribunda cultivar's strong suit. In the spring, eye-popping, large sized, high-centered blooms show up in an ivory color with an intensifying coral pink petal edging. Left on the plant, the bloom keeps getting larger with the color change very attractive. The plants rebloom quickly. The foliage is not as attractive or the stems as long as other cultivars, but who is looking at it anyway? Mildew is a problem with a liberal fertilizer program, which it needs. So plant it in front of *Touch of Class* and spray both of them for mildew!

Now that you have bought these roses, how are you going to arrange them for color, size, and height? Here are a few ideas to try:

Prima Donna	Pelé	Pelé	Gold Medal
Touch of Class	Mikado	Red Perfection	Olympiad
Summer Fashion	Amber Queen	Double Perfection	Mikado

This leaves the question of what to do with *Toro*. The answer is simple — put it in a pasture by itself. That's what you do with a bull.

Robert Eskew, the Deep South District Chairman of Consulting Rosarians, alerted attendants to their Winter Workshop to watch for a new type of landscaping rose coming to the market. Last year's winner, 'Bonica,' is the first of a series of carefree cultivars bred for the mass planting market. They are being produced on their own roots and are disease resistant. This year some of the first will be mass planted on the Canadian highway system, designed to be pruned with a bush hog and left to themselves after establishing the plants by an initial watering program. The other cultivars are *White Meidiland*, *Pink Meidiland*, and *Scarlet Meidiland*. Ralph Moore's new *Ralph's Creeper* and yellow hybrid rugosa fall into this same category. Also new to the market this year is the *Bloomin' Easy* hedge cultivar from Armstrong. Soon we may be able to recommend rose types to the general public able to be grown as shrubs, much like forsythia. How often we have heard our friends tell us, "I can't grow roses because they take so much care." Now we may have an answer.

I'd better close this report so you can get out there and complete that last minute shopping list for roses you had forgotten to include. See you there!