

Reprint from:
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ROSE OF THE MONTH:
Dortmund (KORDES: 1955)

A number of years ago, Cliff Cleage gave me an own-root cutting, which he had rooted in his misting bed of ‘**Dortmund**’ (pictured below), noting I had admired it as a freestanding plant in his front yard. He handed me the tiny, fragile plant with the admonition “Try it, you’ll like it!” I set it out next to the patio where I could nurse it along until it could be moved. When it began to grow and grow, Glenda asked me to move it to another location. I responded, “I can’t -- it likes the spot too much.”



Dortmund
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Wilhelm Kordes introduced this cross of an unknown seedling x R. Kordeseii in 1955 in his development of a whole new race of hardy, disease-resistant, remontant (repeat blooming) shrubs and climbing roses, of which ‘Dortmund’ is an outstanding example.

Our plant bears large clusters of single-type, brilliant red-colored blooms that open progressively rather than at the same time. In the spring, the blooms cover the entire plant and turn it into one big red blanket of color. The blooms have a spicy fragrance and

start ahead of the hybrid teas. Bloom will continue in our area from early May through October until frost if spent bloom is regularly removed. The foliage is hollylike and attractive unto itself. There is very little black spot with a minimum spray program.

It is important to grow the plant in full sun as a single specimen and let it take its own shape, preferably horizontal, which will allow more new laterals to develop at optimum viewing levels. Its plant habit is adaptable from freestanding, trained on a fence, or on a latticework wall or pillars. We like ours as a freestanding specimen next to our patio where it stands off all competitors for attention during its first flush. Trouble free and dependable: its first and last name.

Our single, 12-year-old, freestanding plant (pictured below), left to spread horizontally, is 8'-0" wide and 10'-0" long and about 7'-0" high. It started as a young cutting in a rose bed. Now it is the rose bed, as it has outstripped and outperformed all its rivals with which it once shared the space. Literally, it has put all its competition in the shade and pays its way the entire season. On October 25, 2000, as I write this article, I can go out and cut multiple blooms from this single plant with multiple trusses of buds yet to open. It is not particularly an exhibitor's rose; it is, however, a rose garden lover's rose for all time.



Dortmund
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If you think roses are difficult to grow, add 'Dortmund' to your collection and feel success. You will be pleasantly surprised as Cliff Cleage predicted when he gave it to me years ago. It may take two years to get up to full speed, but after that, watch out! Try to get it on its own roots rather than on a graft. We voted it as our favorite rose of the century because it is so easy and dependable to grow year after year. It is beautiful, whether for its shiny, ruffled foliage, its sharply pointed green buds waiting to open, or its brilliant red clusters of bloom that say "Look at me -- I'm beautiful."

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