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Make 2001 A Sporting Event With Roses

By Bob Whitaker

There is something for everyone in rose introductions from multipurpose landscaping to exhibiting, both large and small. Here are some tantalizing ideas from which to select your personal project for 2001.

There are a number of new rose cultivars on the market today that have come to us, not by the hands of a hybridizer using cross-pollination techniques between two distinct cultivars, but by a process of plant or bud mutation: “An abnormal shoot (caused by genetic change) that can be propagated only asexually”. A mutation is the sudden appearance in a single generation of a new type of plant, not the result of cross breeding or plant hybridization. It must be propagated by budding or stem rooting from portions of the shoot or branch showing the new characteristics. It must be determined that it will remain true to the changes displayed and not revert to its original form.

The origination of new rose cultivars by mutation goes back far in the history of rose development. ‘The Rosa Mundi’ (*R. Gallica Versicolor*) c. 1610 ± is a striped sport of the ‘Apothecary Rose’ c 1310-1608 (*R. Gallica Officinallis*). This beautifully colored, pink and white striped, spring blooming old garden rose, highly rated and widely grown, has found its own place in my garden.

Brilliant Pink Iceberg – 1999 Sport of Iceberg, Weatherly

Roses can and should be grown in more ways than just a formal bed of mixed cultivars. The new ‘**Brilliant Pink Iceberg**’ (pictured below) gives you just the right opportunity to have a continuous hedge of whatever length fits your location. It is a sport of the world famous white Iceberg Floribunda and was found in Tasmania. It has all the attributes of its parent plus color mutation: wonderful flower production, good disease resistance, attractive plant habit, and nearly thornless stems (an added bonus). It brings with it a new color blend of deep pink and cream, as though it were hand painted onto each petal.



Brilliant Pink Iceberg

Weeks Roses

Cliff Cleage of the Nashville Rose Society had for many years a hedge of Iceberg alongside steps leading from his parking area to the rear of his patio. This was a show of white all season – an ever-blooming hedge. Eric Yount of Orlando, Florida, has a similar hedge effect in front of a white picket fence to set off his home and rose garden consisting of **Summer Snow and its pink sport, Pink Summer Snow** (pictured below).



Summer Snow and Pink Summer Snow

Robert Whitaker

This year, the writer plans to add a run of ‘Brilliant Pink Iceberg’ along the front entrance drive as a preview of coming attractions further into the property.

You can break out of the mold by doing something like this for 2001. Make a spectacular entrance to your home that conveys “Roses To You” to every passerby. Just pick out your own particular selection and don’t “hedge” on this approach any longer. The new AARS 2001 winner, ‘Marmalade Skies’, a hot red toned, free blooming floribunda, is also being touted for this use.

Pearly Gates – 1999 Sport of Climbing America, Louis Meyer

During the ARS National Convention at St. Louis, Missouri, the registrants visited the rose garden of Louis Meyer and all of the interesting things he was doing with roses. At the entrance to the main garden area in the rear was a curved, overhead wood arbor and a climbing rose on each side of the structure. It was a new sport of the AARS 1976 coral ‘Cl America’ but in a pearly pink coloration. Louis must have decided to plant it there so that all of us excited rosarians visiting his garden would think we were entering the ‘**Pearly Gates**’ (pictured below) into rose heaven – and so we were.



Climbing Pearly Gates

Weeks Roses

Weeks Wholesale Nursery has '**Cl. Pearly Gates**'(pictured above) in its 2000/2001 catalogue, so it should be widely available at local nursery outlets this year. It has all the good attributes of '**Cl. America**': strong spice and rose fragrance, blooms on both old and new growth to offset winter die back, and good-sized blooms of 35 petals. Even more, it has that heavenly hue of color that is rare among climbing varieties on 10- to 12-foot canes for your own entrance arbor or trained horizontally to screen off or give a spectacular backdrop for a fenced pool, as registrants from the ARS National Convention in Nashville, May 1999, observed by the pool at **Ray and Faye Vandiver's** Columbia, Tennessee, garden with their **Climbing America** (pictured below) plants. A protected location would be a better choice for survival of last year's growth.



Climbing America
Ray and Faye Vandiver

Crowd Pleaser – Sport of Lynn Anderson-Greenwood 2000

Last spring, Tom Carruth sent me a new plant to try out in my area simply labeled “Pink Sport of Lynn Anderson”, which they were evaluating. This year a limited supply is available in the Edmunds Roses catalogue under the registered name ‘**Crowd Pleaser**’ (pictured below), which could well be applicable to its ‘Lynn Anderson’ parent. All who attended the 1999 ARS National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, remember the crowd pleaser the real ‘Lynn Anderson’ was. “I Never Promised You a Rose Garden” came on with a bang.



Crowd Pleaser

Weeks Roses

Slow to get started in my garden due to the plant itself, not the cultivar, ‘Crowd Pleaser’ (as now known) soon raised its head up high among the limbs of its companion plants and parent ‘Lynn Anderson’. Here was ‘Lynn Anderson’ clothed in its large, impressive foliage, same vigorous growth habit, but clothed in an entirely different costume for this performance – deep glowing cerise pink with cream reverse. The color stability of this new sport seemed to be better than its parent after many days on the plant and had very good substance. If it follows the curtain call of its parent, it will be an excellent show rose in the spring in all areas and a redwood forest in the fall, its best climate performance in my experience. The pink color has a glowing quality that makes it more than just another pink. If the ‘Lynn Anderson’ cultivar is one of your favorites, here is an opportunity to try her in another change of costume. The same need to be aggressive in your pruning tactics will apply for this tall new hybrid tea sport.

Full Sail – Sport of New Zealand, McGredy 1999

If you are looking for a very fragrant, disease resistant, white HT alternative to ‘Crystalline’, this new introduction in Edmund’s catalogue offers another sport port to sail into. My first glimpse of ‘Full Sail’ came at the fall Atlanta ARS Convention garden tour of the Ryan Tilley’s garden where we had a one or more of everything in a spectacular display. The blooms reminded me of ‘Crystalline’, but on a much sturdier plant with a fragrance hard to find in white HTs. Its climate performance will probably mirror its parent, ‘New Zealand’, and so will its exhibition potential.

Tempie Lee – Pink Blend Sport of Elizabeth Taylor, Whittington 1999

Parent cultivar, ‘Elizabeth Taylor’, has long been an exhibition standout in the south and midwest, and this two-toned pink blend sport of it (found by J. O. Whittington on a plant of ‘Elizabeth Taylor’ that mutated) gave him an exciting new version of an old standby to name in honor of his wife, Tempie Lee. Reasonably hardy, it mimics its parent in liking warm nights, needing protection from mildew. Here is your chance to get two versions for the price of two. Only Edmund’s Roses catalogues this new sport.

Brooks’ Red – Sport of Signature HT Warren Brooks

By now you may be thinking this article is about some sporting event and not roses. There are a number of new roses being talked about and sought after that have resulted from a natural mutation of color, size, or form on the same plant rather than the hybridizer’s handiwork that, when found on a sporting stem, cuttings can be taken, producing a new cultivar – in rose language, a “sport”. Johnny Becnel, who specializes in potential exhibition HTs, is propagating ‘Brooks’ Red’ (the sport of ‘Signature’) on fortuniana understock as one of his new offerings. Warren Brooks told me about his new “find” at an ARS convention recently where he received the ARS Gold Honor Medal for his long devoted years of service to the American Rose Society. John Mattia has grown Brooks’ Red up in his northern Connecticut climate and confirmed it is like its parent – not a harsh climate rose, as he has hardiness problems with it even with protection. For him, it is a deep pink and yellow reverse color; not a true red. As a coincidence, John himself has a striped sport of ‘Signature’, which he has appropriately registered as ‘Autograph’, the listing in a 2000 issue of our ARS magazine. The sport is being evaluated for introduction. If ‘Signature’ is a well performing cultivar in your particular climate zone and one you can winter protect, then ‘Brooks’ Red’ now, and ‘Autograph’ in the future, may well be varieties you need to sign on the dotted line to try in 2001 or beyond.

Standing Ovation – HT Tucker 2000 (not a sport but new Elizabeth Taylor x White Masterpiece for 2001)

Though not a sport, I am entitled to discuss this new introduction also offered by Edmund’s Roses catalogue for 2001 because it is illustrated right next to ‘Tempie Lee’.

The coloration and other characteristics to each other have a common thread, as you can see from the catalogue description. The Nashville Rose Society received a leg up on this new cultivar due to the generosity of Phil Edmunds in furnishing 60 plants to Robbie Tucker, hybridizer, for a fund raiser in February 2000 to our members. Robbie tempted us with the idea he only had one to offer before telling us there were 60 on hand to buy in the back of the room. I got three for my garden and one each for our three children and their gardens and didn't mind being trampled upon in the process.

In their old catalogues, Roses by Edmunds used to refer to the HT, 'Winnie Edmunds', as "good on the bench but better in the bed". My experience with new plants of this 2001 year introduction, 'Standing Ovation', has been "good in a rose bed but better in a large container" using a light friable mix in getting off to a quick start. The plant blooms well right on through hot weather, with size varying naturally into the fall. The high centered form is there to stay with the stark color contrast being maintained by the use of some shading if trying for exhibition purposes, but not needed for garden display. 'Standing Ovation' should be sprayed regularly for mildew during the cool spring and fall seasons, but the mildew disappears during hot weather. Bloom size and short stems have been early exhibitor's complaints, but my container-grown plants have performed very well in that category all season long. Needlepoint-form judges will love this cultivar as they tend to their craft at rose shows. In summary, if you are the impatient type, you can try a "pot luck" technique or be patient and wait for the banquet in the rose bed that the accurate catalogue description depicts.

Cliché – HT Deep Pink/Yellow Reverse, Fryer 2000

This is another new introduction from Edmunds that is getting talked about in the south and is an anomaly as it is an English bred rose that likes hot weather. Our friend John Mattia reports it as a good garden rose but not an exhibition rose in his cool Connecticut garden. This may be playing right into the hands of southern climate exhibitors, as John experiences hot weather about as often as polar bears do in Alaska. Would it be a cliché to say this could be a different color version of 'Uncle Joe' or just an excellent new garden cultivar for warm weather climes? Who wants to find out? John Mattia has already crowned the 1998 cultivar 'McMillan's Pink' HT ('Affirm' is the synonym) as an excellent exhibition rose with the cliché a "pink Uncle Joe" (available from only limited sources). Your task for 2001 is to find out which prediction is closest to the truth.

Amber Star – 1998 Sport of Glowing Amber, J. B. Williams

Miniatures can be the source of very unique and interesting sports from the parent plant and add a different face to a very good cultivar. ‘Glowing Amber’ has made a dramatic entrance in George Mander’s breeding efforts to produce miniatures named for semi-precious stones. The striking scarlet and gold bicolor with pointed quilled petals and stripes has produced a soft orange and yellow sport with all the other characteristics identical. The stripes or streaking, which has bothered some of our judges in the parent cultivars, are subdued in the new sport because the contrast is more subtle. Robert Martin of Pasadena, California, stunned us all at the spring 2000 Houston ARS convention by combining six ‘**Glowing Amber**’ with six ‘**Amber Star**’ to win the **National Miniature Dee Bennet Challenge Class** (pictured below) with this beautiful and unique grouping. I purchased this new cultivar this spring, because I enjoy ‘Glowing Amber’ so much. This type of grouping must have been contagious at Houston as one of the international trophies for a bowl of floribunda specimens was won by a wonderful blend of only two cultivars – ‘**Playgirl**’ and its mauve sport, ‘**Charlotte Anne**’ (pictured below). This could be a preview of even more look-alike matchings in the future.



Glowing Amber and Amber Star
ARS Spring 2000 Dee Bennett Trophy
Robert Whitaker



Playgirl and Charlotte Ann
Robert Whitaker

Sweet Melody – 1998 Sport of Perrine, Fisher

This new sport of ‘Perrine’ is a creamy white, but classified as an apricot blend, and is already making its mark as an exhibition specimen with a queen award at the Houston ARS National Show and could make beautiful music for you in 2001. My new plants of this sport are already showing promise as they are getting established and should give you a good alternative to ‘Fairhope’ with less blackspot. ‘Sweet Melody’ will occasionally revert to its parentage on the same bush.

Angie Heatwole – Floribunda 1996 Sport of Dreamer, Miniature, Heatwole

This one is really unusual in having a miniature sport into a floribunda cultivar rather than one of its own kind, just like the movie “Honey, I Blew Up The Kid”. ‘Dreamer’, the dusty pink, free blooming miniature, which grows so well as a container plant, produced an all blown up floribunda sized bloom and foliage, but everything else is the same. Harold Baker of Lakeland, Florida, was so gracious to propagate a cutting of this very successful Florida-grown exhibition variety found in the rose garden of the rose’s namesake, ‘Angie Heatwole’. While not commercially available, this sport can make your dreams come true of having the miniature ‘Dreamer’ in a grownup format.

Moonstone #1 or Moonstone #2 - Carruth 1999

Johnny Becnel of Belle Chasse, Louisiana, created quite a frenzy of discussion at the Atlanta ARS Convention, Fall 2000, with his statement on the cultivars he was offering on fortuniana understock. “Which ‘Moonstone’ do you want? Moonstone #1 or Moonstone #2?” He is propagating ‘Moonstone’ from two different bud wood sources that have identical stems and foliage characteristics but different form in the bloom formation itself. He has discovered one of his sources has a much higher centered form to the blooms than the other source. This brings to us a new version of the “Toro versus Uncle Joe controversy” of many years ago as to the question: Are the two the same cultivar or has there been some subtle genetic change by mutation as to have twins but not identical twins?

Of course our keen exhibitors are asking for the high centered version that Johnny says has superior form. Is it possible we have some very subtle mutation between the two or just superior bud wood source variations? Sports are usually characterized by significant color variations from the parent plant that remain constant, but form is a much higher variable that is affected by climate and other factors. Judges are now going to be expected to judge whether we have a half moon or a full moon ‘Moonstone’ at each rose show in addition to their other duties!

Other Notable Parent/Sport Combinations

Other notable sports of selected cultivars, which have found a permanent place in my rose garden due to their own merit are ‘Charlotte Anne’ (Blankenship 1994), a mauve

sport of 'Playgirl' and 'Cl. Iceberg' CLF Cant 1968, which I brought back from the last ARS Boston Convention on an airplane as a tiny cutting to be rooted. It now stakes out a claim of space some 16'-0" in diameter and can be mistaken for a dogwood tree at a distance in its spring blooming glory.

Other notable Parent/Sport Combinations include:

'Touch of Class' HT ob – 'Classic Touch' HT lp
'Peace' HT yb – 'Chicago Peace' HT pb
'Crystalline' HT w – 'Natasha Monet', Pink Crystal HT m
'Swarthmore' HT rb – 'Sweetie Pie' HT pb
'Popcorn' min. w – 'Gourmet Popcorn' min. w

As you can see from these new sport introductions, they can mutate not only in color but in size and form as well. This year is your opportunity to be a good sport and grow some of these new cultivars, which have come to us via the hands of Mother Nature and her rose plant's ability to recreate itself by spontaneous mutation into another beautiful and distinct form and coloration. It could happen in your own rose garden as it has in others.