

Promising collection of hardy roses discovered

Roses look spectacular in the garden, but they can be a lot of work. First we have to manage black spot and other diseases in the summer, and then nobody likes all of the work involved in getting roses to survive our frigid winters.

For years, the Morden Research Station in Canada has released roses that survive our winters with no or minimal protection. These varieties, which include 'Morden Centennial', 'Hope for Humanity', and 'Cuthbert Grant' are among the best roses for North Dakota.

A new group of roses from Iowa is being discovered and shows great promise, particularly for gardeners in Zone 4. Bred by the late Dr. Griffith Buck, these roses are noted for their hardiness, disease resistance, and beauty.

In the 1950s, Dr. Buck took strains of cold hardy roses and combined them with hybrid teas.

He refused to protect them, letting the cold Iowa winters kill the less hardy plants. He also refused to protect them from disease, and the humid Iowa summers killed the susceptible plants.

In the end, he developed hardy, disease-resistant varieties that have the beauty of hybrid teas. Dr. Buck has been called the "Vincent Van Gogh of roses" since the fruits of his labor were not well known until after his death. Several Buck rose varieties, including 'Prairie Joy' (shown) are sold in catalogs today.

We will have over 60 Buck rose varieties among a group of 140 hardy/semi-hardy varieties on display at the new Dragonfly Garden at United Tribes Technical College this summer. I hope you come to see them when you visit Bismarck.

NDSU
Extension Service

Written by Tom Kalb,
Extension Horticulturist, NDSU
tom.kalb@ndsuh.edu

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For more information, go to the Dakota Growing section of Dakota Media Access at www.freetv.org. We are publishing a video on the roses at Dragonfly Garden and it should be available by November 2011. 

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