



Unnamed 'Lyda Rose' seedling (one of mine!)

Singularly Beautiful Roses

A Publication Dedicated to Single,
Nearly Single, and Semi-Double Flowered Roses
Volume 4, Issue 2
Spring 2013

Contents

Down the Banksiae Trail	Page 2
Old Spice – New Spice	Page 7
A Budding Hybridizer	Page 8
More 'Mutabilis'	Page 9
From the Editor	Page 12
Sources and Contact Information	Page 12

Down the Banksiae Trail:

At the same time western nations were pursuing lucrative opportunities to expand trade with China in the 18th and 19th centuries, plant hunters were eagerly seeking new and exotic horticultural specimens to augment public and private plant collections. China, Japan, India, and other eastern Asian countries were botanical wonder lands. The reluctance particularly of China's leaders to allow Westerners to explore the interior of its vast land mass was like a carrot on a stick to avid plant collectors.

The *Rosa banksiae* story begins in the early 1790's. Captain Robert Drummond followed his father Colin Drummond's footsteps in military service. The adventurous Scotsman captained the *General Elliot* on six voyages from Britain to India and China and back again. After retiring from service in the Royal Navy due to ill health his younger brother Adam became captain of the *General Elliot*. Adam would later become Sir Adam Drummond and an Admiral in the Royal Navy. The family owned the historic Castle Megginch in Perthshire, Scotland. Financial difficulties forced Robert's father to entail the castle to his oldest son John who in turn entailed the residence to his brother Robert in 1795 (Robert later entailed the property to his brother Adam). Based on the word of English plantsman E. H. Woodall, Robert is reported to have brought a specimen of what is now known as *Rosa banksiae normalis* back from China and planted it on a wall at Megginch. "Capt. Drummond [Capt. Malcolm Drummond, 1856 -1924, grandson of Admiral Adam Drummond] told me it was a rose his ancestor Robert Drummond had brought with other plants from China in 1796. This old rose had been repeatedly cut to the ground by severe winters and rarely if ever had been known to flower. The impression, however, was that it was white and very small. Capt. Drummond kindly gave me cuttings, which I took to Nice, and this year [1910] flowered, proving themselves to be the typical single white Banksian rose so long sought for and hidden away in this nook of Scotland for more than a hundred years (*Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, Vol. 35, 1909-1910, p. 218).

Another account is given in an article entitled "The Gardens of Megginch Castle" authored in 2008 by Charles Duplin. He writes the following, "The first White Banksian rose to come to this country is planted in the Stableyard [at Castle Megginch], having been brought from China by Captain Adam Drummond in the East Indiaman, the *General Elliot*, in 1796." He also reports that there is still a rose garden there featuring a number of David Austin roses, one of which is 'Lady of Megginch.'

Whichever of the accounts is true is subject to speculation, however, the rose was "rediscovered" in the mid 1870's by German botanist Eduard von Regel who published a description of it in a monograph published in 1877. French missionary and botanist Pierre Delavay collected specimens of *R. banksiae normalis* and sent them in 1884 to the Paris Museum of Natural History.

By the first decade of the twentieth century documented accounts show the rose was being cultivated



R. banksiae normalis

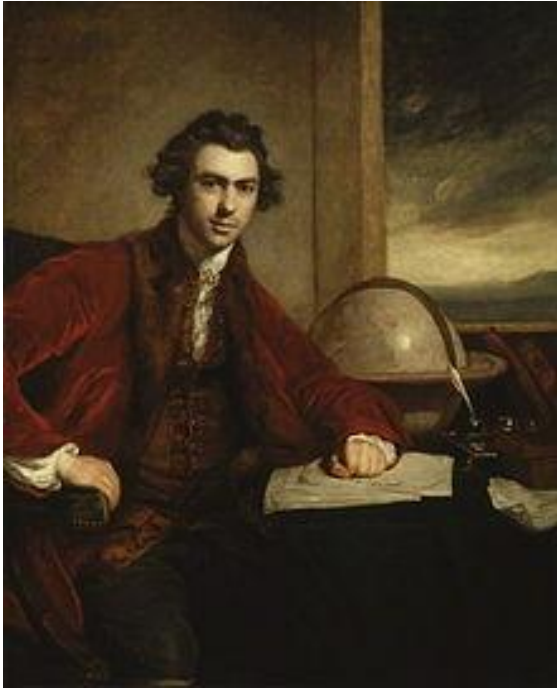


FIG. 171.—ROSA BANKSIAE, WILD FORM, GATHERED BY DR. HENRY.

"Rosa Banksia, Wild Form, Gathered by Dr. Henry"
Gardener's Chronicle, Vol. 31, 1902, p. 439.

in Europe. Sir Henry Augustine described it and published a line drawing in an article written for the *Gardener's Chronicle* in June of 1902 (Vol. 31, 1902, p. 439). He postulated that the rose had been cultivated in Chinese gardens from the mid sixteenth century.

Even if the single white form was the first to arrive in Europe, its naming/botanical classification only occurred after the discovery of the double white form. *Rosa banksiae alba plena* or as it is now known *Rosa banksiae banksiae* was introduced to England as the result of a plant collecting voyage that began in 1804. Sir Joseph Banks, a wealthy English patron of the natural sciences and an avid plant collector, had solicited the help of William Kerr, a young Scottish gardener employed at Kew Gardens, to travel to China. In a letter dated April 18, 1803 he wrote; "As his majesty has been previously pleased to select you from among your fellow gardeners & appoint you to the very desirable office of collecting plants of foreign countries for the use of the Royal Gardens [Kew] . . . (Papers of Sir Joseph Banks, Draft Instructions received by William Kerr from Banks, 18 April, 1803)" Kerr would remain in China for the next eight years but sent back to England a treasure trove of plants, some two hundred specimens new to science (*Kerria japonica* was named in his honor). Among plants sent to Kew in 1807 was the white double-flowered form. Robert Brown, an English botanist, named it in honor of Banks' wife, Lady Dorothea Banks.



Above – Sir Joseph Banks

Right – *R. banksiae banksiae*

Below- Lady Dorothea Banks



In 1814 William Carey published William Roxburgh's *Hortus Bengalensis* a catalog of plants growing in the Calcutta Botanic Garden where Roxburgh had served as superintendent. In it he notated the existence of two forms of *Rosa inermis* (thornless rose) a double white form known in China as Pah-mo-li, discovered by William Kerr, and a double yellow form known as Wong-mo-ne-he-vong. Apparently, the work in an unpublished format made its way into the library of Sir Joseph Banks who had employed a young botanist in or around 1819 by the name of John Lindley. Lindley wrote a work relying heavily on information obtained from Banks' library entitled *Monographia; or a Botanical History of Roses* that was published in 1820. Lindley noted that, "*R. inermis* of Roxburgh's unpublished *Flora Indica* [part 2 of Roxburgh's *Hortus Bengalensis*] is probably this species; and if so a variety of it called Wong-moue-heuong, with double yellow flowers, is cultivated in the Botanic Garden, Calcutta (p. 131)." The dissemination of this information prompted London's Horticultural Society to send John Damper Parks to China to procure the double yellow form. Parks was successful and returned to England in 1824 with several plants of what would be named *R. banksiae lutea* (along with numerous other horticultural specimens).

The fourth member of the family, the single-flowered yellow form, is reputed to have been collected by Dr. Clarke Abel who accompanied Lord Amherst on a mission to establish formal diplomatic relations with China in 1816-1817. All the plants he had collected were lost in a shipwreck and subsequent pirate attack on the return journey. However, Roy Shepherd indicates that Abel had sent dried specimens of the rose to England in previous voyages (I could find no written record of Abel's discovery). The second earliest reference (and one that is verifiable) exists in *Das Buch der Rosen*, by German botanist Frederick von Biedefeld, published in 1847. He described a single, yellowish flowered form of *R. banksiae* and named it *Lutescens simplex* (p. 522). Its introduction into European gardens can be traced to the efforts of Sir Thomas Hanbury. Hanbury, a merchant and plant enthusiast, had traveled to China as a young man residing in the city of Shanghai. As a remarkably fair-minded Westerner he enjoyed friendly relations with the local population. After his return to Europe in 1867 he purchased an estate midway between Mentone and Ventimiglia on the French/Italian Riviera in the village of La Mortola. There he established a substantial terraced garden overlooking the Mediterranean that was home to innumerable trees, shrubs, and flowers from all over the globe. The single, yellow *banksiae* existed in Hanbury's garden there.



Above – *R. banksiae lutea*
(Rosier de Bancks var. a fleurs jaunes – Redoute)

Below – *R. banksiae lutescens*



The following brief letter penned by Hanbury appeared in the English horticultural publication, *The Gardener's Chronicle*, in January of 1878. “. . . I have had it growing for the past nine or ten years, but can give no satisfactory information as to its origin. It is now a large and vigorous plant in full bloom, and covering as it does, an old arch, the entrance to my pergola, is at once a picturesque and striking object in my garden (p. 85).” From his garden specimens were sent to Kew.

For those unfamiliar with the *banksiae* family of roses here is a wonderful description provided by Roy Shepherd that doesn't require a degree in botany to understand. “The major characteristics of all members of this group are very similar, the differences occurring only in petalage and color of blossoms and fragrance. All are trailing or climbing with distinctive 3 or 5-foliolate leaves that are lustrous on both surfaces. Thorns are few or scattered, or they may be entirely lacking. The blossoms rarely exceed 1 inch in diameter and are produced in large close umbels rather early in the season. The small round hips are quite rare on the double forms, but are produced freely by the single ones. Those having white blossoms have a fragrance similar to that of the common violet, but the yellow forms are practically scentless (*History of the Rose*, p. 87, 88).



Until recently very few offspring of the *banksiae*s existed. After numerous attempts Dr. Attilio Ragionieri created one plant that reached flowering maturity in 1924, a cross of the single yellow form and ‘Lamarque’ named ‘Hybride Di Castillo (flower white, double, 2.5-3” in diameter, very fragrant; climbing habit; generally once blooming).’ The next hybridizer to succeed was Quinto Mansuino. He outlined his efforts in an article written for the 1960 *American Rose Society Annual*. On a quest to create healthy miniature roses Mansuino made reciprocal crosses of ‘Tom Thumb’ and *R. banksiae lutescens*. The semi-double white flowered ‘Purezza’ was one of the most successful of this pairing. Still in commerce, it is a very fragrant, almost prickly free, once flowering climber. Another variety, the semi-double, white flowered ‘Letizia Bianca,’ was only recently imported to the U.S. from the Fineschi Gardens in Italy. In contrast to the former cultivar, this rose is compact growing, to three feet, and is remontant. Eventually Mansuino was able to create around a half dozen repeat flowering miniature hybrids, but their commercial success was limited.

The story now shifts to California rose hybridizer Robert Rippetoe. As a young horticulture student he had considered working with the *banksiae*s, but had put the idea on hold. In a chance correspondence with New York hybridizer A. C. Tunningley Robert discovered that A. C. had made some crosses between *R. banksiae banksiae* and ‘Old Blush.’ The lone survivor was an incredibly vigorous, double-flowered, once-blooming, cerise colored rambler. Tunningley kindly shared pollen from “The Monster,” his nickname for the plant. When the pollen arrived it was applied to the only rose blooming in Robert's Palm Springs garden – ‘Lilac Charm’ – a *R. californica* hybrid created by Edward Legrice in 1962. Roughly twenty seeds were harvested from the cross some months later, but only one germinated. When it flowered it was a lilac colored single with the slender foliage of the *banksiae* family. Robert named it ‘Lila Banks’ and registered it in 2002. It has the repeat blooming habit of its seed parent and is a small plant growing to about three foot by three foot. Although the blooms may be viewed by some as unremarkable, the cross was a stepping stone that opened the door to further opportunities.

Above left – ‘Letizia Bianca’

Left – ‘Lila Banks’

Photos by Robert Rippetoe



Robert then crossed ‘Antoine Rivoire’ (a light pink HT introduced in 1895) with ‘Lila Banks’ and in 2005 a lightly double, violet pink, fragrant seedling germinated clearly demonstrating *banksiae* characteristics. Robert states on the HMF page dedicated to ‘Riverbanks,’ “I chose an early prototypical evergreen Hybrid Tea as a seed parent in order to stay as close to early evergreen species crosses as possible while focusing on a more modern flower form.”

In 2006 a cross of ‘Sweet Afton’ and ‘Riverbanks’ produced a very fragrant, yellow blend, single-flowered seedling. This first yellow colored hybrid was named ‘Golda Banks’ and has proven to be remarkably resistant to black spot, powdery mildew, and rust.

Robert has been successful in making numerous crosses with all three *banksiae* hybrids and has a significant number of seedlings, both single and double-flowered, in the evaluation stage. As he continues to work with these roses and their offspring he hopes to create evergreen, disease resistant roses suitable for cultivation in warm weather climates.

A glance at the Rose Hybridizers Forum will show that a handful of hybridizers have some interest in working with *R. banksiae*, particularly the single yellow *lutescens*. The dramatic beauty of all four forms and their resistance to black spot continue to inspire.



Above left – ‘Riverbanks’

Left – ‘Golda Banks’

Photos by Robert Rippetoe

Below left- ‘Golda Banks’ seedling

Below – ‘Lila Banks’ seedling



Old Spice – New Spice:

A number of years ago Ashdown Roses, owned by Paul Zimmerman, offered several new rose introductions from the Delbard family, a family that has been serving up gorgeous roses to rose enthusiasts for over fifty years (one of their relatively new florist varieties has recently taken the Deep South by storm – ‘Red Intuition’). A quick look on the internet will reveal that the Delbards, like a number of other European firms, are marketing their roses in unique themed groupings – the Painters Collection, Border Collection, Grand Perfume Collection, etc.

One of three I purchased from Ashdown was ‘Olivier Roellinger.’ Released in 2003 this shrub rose is named for a very famous French chef. Several years after suffering a gang-related assault that left him in a coma he made a decision to leave his then current avocation and follow his passion - cooking. In 1982 he opened Les Masisons de Bricourt in Cancale, France featuring the flavors and cuisine of his native Brittany. His interest in new flavor combinations led him around the world. In 1984 he earned the first of three Michelin Guide stars. Mssr. Roellinger retired in 2008 as a result of the injuries he sustained as a young man. He and his wife now run a cooking school and hotel in Cancale and have an internationally known business, Épices-Roellinger, specializing in spices, herbs, aromatics, and flavored cooking oils.

The rose, ‘Olivier Roellinger,’ although registered as a Shrub must have been marketed at some point as a Hybrid Tea; some web references hint that customers purchased it as such. Several websites suggest that it has the same breeding as another Delbard rose ‘Guy Savoy,’ although none state what that is. The nearly single blooms are yellow at the base transitioning to white and then to pink at the edges and often exceed four inches in diameter. Frequently the pink blend flowers give the impression of having white stripes. Although its fragrance is modest the plant’s iron constitution may overwhelm you. Many Delbard roses have thick, disease resistant foliage and ‘Olivier Roellinger’ is no exception. In my garden it is very, very resistant to black spot. My own-root plant is medium sized, maybe forty inches in height, but the blooms can arrive on nice long stems.

For some reason the rose seems to have disappeared from the market. Several American nurseries that are licensed to sell Delbard roses have never heard of it. It’s a rose that needs to be distributed more widely.



‘Olivier Roellinger’

The rose
&
The chef



A Budding Hybridizer:



Growing roses has opened the door to many friendships. I feel privileged to have a veritable botanical garden full of such friends, all as different as night and day. One such friend, Al Whitcomb, shares my interest in single-flowered roses and photography and has in the last two years been bitten by the rose hybridizing bug. We met as competitors in our Deep South District photo contest and have each kicked the other's butt over the years:) A look at some of his photos will confirm that Al knows his way around his camera, grows great roses, and has a great eye for capturing that elusive "most perfect phase of beauty."

We also share a military background. Al retired from the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel with twenty-five years of service. His career took him around the world; perhaps most notably to the hotbed that was Viet Nam. While serving in Iran and years before he began his own venture into the garden he got a very interesting first-hand look at the cultivation of roses for the attar of roses industry.

Al and his lovely wife Sharon live an hour or so north of Tampa, Florida and are members of the Marion County and Tampa Rose Societies as well as the Heritage Rose Society in Lakeland, Florida. Al and Sharon have three children and in August will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary! I have enjoyed their gracious hospitality in person.

In this, his second year of hybridizing, Al has had some wonderful success and has some beautiful seedlings (read bitter jealousy here). Some of his favorite seed parents include 'Fashion Statement,' 'Summer Wind,' 'Excite,' and 'First Kiss.' To the admirer of single-flowered and nearly single-flowered roses many look like winners. I can't wait to hear more about mature bloom size, fragrance, plant architecture, disease resistance/susceptibility, and so forth, but here are some that have caught my eye.





Previous page: top left – ‘Excite’ seedling; middle left – ‘Excite’ x ‘Dainty Bess,’
bottom left – ‘Fashion Statement’ seedling; bottom right – ‘First Kiss’ seedling

This page: top left – ‘Fashion Statement’ seedling; top right – ‘Excite’ x ‘Francis Dubreuil’
Center – ‘Excite’ seedling

Photos by Al Whitcomb

More 'Mutabilis':

As my own interest in hybridizing has grown I have spent a good bit of time on the Rose Hybridizers Forum. While there I've come across some relatively new first or second generation seedlings of 'Mutabilis.' Since I wrote about this historic Hybrid China my interest in them and attention to them has arisen. Here are a few newer members of the family – “'Mutabilis;' et al.” Pictured are the efforts of two Australian hybridizers, Warren Millington and Simon Voorwinde, and Californian Kim Rupert.



Left – 'Whiz Kid' x 'Mutabilis'
Australian hybridizer Warren Millington
Compact, very floriferous
Photo by Warren Millington

Bottom – 'Willow' ('Temple Bells' x 'Mutabilis')
Australian hybridizer Simon Voorwinde
Very low growing, trailing habit
Photos by Simon Voorwinde





Left – ‘Frier’ x ‘Mutabilis’
Simon Voorwinde

An attempt by Simon to recreate the Louis
Lens hybrids ‘Plaisanterie’ and ‘Apricot
Bells,’ unavailable to Australian rose
growers. Photo by Simon Voorwinde.



Right – ‘Rayon ButterFed’
Kim Rupert

A cross of Kim’s ‘Rayon Butterflies’
and a hybrid of *R. fedtschenkoana*.
Photo by Kim Rupert



Left – ‘Rayon ButterFed’

Photo by Kim Rupert

From the Editor:

This edition has been delayed by a crazy-busy beginning of the rose season. Soil problems required me to dig up fifty or so mature plants and replant them in containers and completely redo another bed. Most are now in #15 gallon pots, a return to how I gardened after my liver transplant. A soil toxicity issue resulted in the loss of my precious 'Isobel' which now seems unobtainable since Vintage has closed. Let that be reminder to have a backup or two of some of your rarer cultivars. Anyone who can help me with cuttings will be the recipient of my undying gratitude and/or whatever else is required. HELP!

I'm thrilled to report that about one hundred rose seedlings have survived or avoided being culled as of this date. Most notably I have a number of seedlings from one of my seedlings - a line is born.

The seedling featured as the opening photo has been shared with a friend in Florida - I'm awaiting feedback. In the past I named and registered two roses a little too quickly and didn't have a firm grasp of their merits or lack thereof. So the trial period for this seedling will go on a little longer. I believe its pollen parent was 'Fourth of July,' but am not certain.

Thanks are in order for the generosity of Robert Rippetoe, Kim Rupert, Warren Millington, and Simon Voorwinde. Since this newsletter goes to growers in Australia and New Zealand I felt no reserve in sharing the work of two successful Australian rose hybridizers Warren and Simon. What a pity those of those in the U.S. can't import their remarkable roses. For more in-depth info about Robert's work with *R. banksiae* read, "Banksia Hybrids - A New Beginning" - April, 2006, *The American Rose*, pp. 38-41.

Sources:

R. banksiae normalis - Roses Unlimited, www.rosesunlimiteddownroot.com

R. banksiae banksiae - Antique Rose Emporium, www.antiqueroseemporium.com; Rogue Valley Roses, www.roguevalleyroses.com; Roses Unlimited, www.rosesunlimiteddownroot.com

R. banksiae lutea - numerous sources!

R. banksiae lutescens - Antique Rose Emporium, www.antiqueroseemporium.com; Rogue Valley Roses, www.roguevalleyroses.com

'Tifa Banks' - Rogue Valley Roses, www.roguevalleyroses.com; Roses Unlimited, www.rosesunlimiteddownroot.com

'Riverbanks' - Roses Unlimited, www.rosesunlimiteddownroot.com

'Letizia Bianca' does not appear to be available to U.S. growers.

Contact Information:

Singularly Beautiful Roses

Editor: Stephen Hoy
223 Sentry Oaks Dr.
Warner Robins, GA 31093
hoy127@cox.net

Please feel free to share this newsletter! Unattributed photos are by Stephen Hoy or from resources in the public domain.