

Heritage Rose Garden in Bloom

Susan Price, UCCE Master Gardener of Amador County

It's amazing to consider how far the Heritage Rose Garden (HRG) has come in such a short time. The project, a partnership between the Master Gardeners of Amador County and the Motherlode Land Trust, has become just what the project team had envisioned just over two years ago.

The idea was to create a public garden that would showcase the old roses that were lovingly collected and nurtured over the years by Judy and Bob Dean of Mountain Ranch. The 2015 Butte Fire burned part of their property making it evident that a "backup" garden would be needed to ensure these old and rare varieties could be enjoyed by future generations. These roses, unlike many modern roses sold today, are grown on their own rootstock. They are easy care plants, with many offering intense fragrance, cold tolerance, and disease resistance with little need for chemicals.



Overview of the Heritage Rose Garden.

Besides these special roses, the garden is home to a selection of California natives and pollinators, as well as other historic plants that have been found throughout the region. The HRG's mission is to use these plants to educate the public on sustainable gardening practices. It will be the perfect place to host workshops and tours, promoting integrated pest management, propagation and energy-conserving gardening practices.



Joasine Hanet

All the weeks of workdays have culminated in a garden that has become a true destination. The blooms started in late April and every week since there have been new and wonderful things to admire like Joasine Hanet's exquisite pink, scented blooms or "No Name San Andreas", a "found" rose with seemingly non-stop clusters of white flowers. Master Gardeners and other generous souls have donated wild strawberries, irises, flax and yarrow to fill out the garden and extend the season. A happy surprise was the discovery of a CA native wildflower, Contorted Suncup, growing freely in our garden beds.

Our first open garden day was planned for May 16. We were looking forward to showing off the garden, highlighting special roses and their stories as well as the

many handcrafted features of the garden. With the Coronavirus-19 restrictions, we could not hold the event. We were, however, able to host a virtual tour that day which was widely attended. To view the virtual tour, use this link:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/Amador_County_MGs/Heritage_Rose_Garden/

Since then, we've made even more progress in the garden. Naturally, more roses are blooming and becoming established, along with their CA native and pollinator neighbors. The browns and grays from the bark and rocks have given way to lush greens!

The weeds are finally under control, due to the diligence of regular work parties, including lots of volunteer hours from new trainees. Donated mulch has been applied to the garden beds and weed cloth placed around the perimeter to prevent weeds from encroaching into the garden.



"No Name San Andreas"

Aphids were seen in large numbers early in April but by mid-May were mostly gone. Spraying the leaves with a strong burst of water from a hose did the trick. Rose slugs presented more of a problem. They are the larvae of rose sawfly which feeds on leaves, making them almost translucent. We learned that this pest was particularly prevalent this year. We removed the damaged leaves and noticed just a month or so later that the problem had resolved itself.

The last few months have presented many learning opportunities for the HRG team. Some of our propagated roses were mislabeled (or the labels lost altogether). Now that they are blooming and we can see their form, we have a better chance of correctly identifying them. What we discovered, however, was that we had multiple "Russellianas" and "Old Red Runarounds" --both robust roses that probably will need more space than we had allocated.

The duplicate roses will be pulled up and potted for sale, along with other roses we have propagated along the way. Added to this collection for sale, will be roses donated by the late Kay Polk, a long-time rose enthusiast.

More roses will be added to the garden when the weather cools. First up for planting will be the 15 or so roses donated to us by the Sacramento Historic Cemetery rose garden, who like us couldn't have a plant sale this spring. Anita Clevenger, former curator of the garden, generously delivered the roses to us. We gave her a tour of the garden, while throughout the visit, she shared her extensive knowledge and experience of growing roses with us.

Until we can offer an open garden day to the public, we will continue our garden journey, keeping up with the weeding and deadheading and taking notes of when plants bloom and how they grow. We'll deepen our heritage rose knowledge and learn which roses need supports and which ones ramble and sucker. Our pruning timing and techniques will need to be tailored to accommodate the forms and growth patterns of these unique roses. We are looking forward to the day when we can physically gather in the garden to share the roses and our growing knowledge with the public.