



EXCITING ROSES IN TRIAL GARDENS AT M. D. ANDERSON

by Gaye Hammond

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The Houston Rose Society has partnered with Texas AgriLife Extension's Harris County Office and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer to evaluate a collection of modern hybrid tea and floribunda roses under minimal input conditions on the MD Anderson South Campus. In this Earth-Kind Modern Rose Trial, none of the roses will be treated with pesticides or fungicides and will not receive applications of fertilizers over the course of the 4-year study. The trial site will be one of the stops on the Society's spring 2015 garden tours.

Especially exciting roses: Based on our work in the above research program, there are several rose cultivars that bear watching: Beverly (pink hybrid tea - very fragrant), Wedding Bells (hot pink hybrid tea), Winter Sun (golden yellow with apricot tinged hybrid tea), Plum Perfect (mauve floribunda). Unlike other roses to come out of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Houston Rose Society's work on the Earth-Kind Rose Research Program, the roses currently being trialed have true "rose form".

Really unusual roses/new colors: KoKo Loko (what I call the chocolate milk rose) probably leads the pack when it comes to unusual colors. It is a floribunda rose that starts off the color of chocolate milk and fades to a dusky orchid. Fire Opal Kolorscape, is a recent introduction by Kordes & Sohne (photo attached). It is a floribunda rose with blooms that are a blend of cream, coral and pink on a bush that stays a compact 2 - 2 1/2 feet tall and wide.

Unusual sizes of plants/blooms: Many of the roses being trialed in the Earth-Kind Modern Rose Trial produce huge flowers - some up to 5" across. In fact, last fall some of the blooms were so large that they broke the stems upon which they were formed simply from the weight of the blossom. We suspect that this

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condition will resolve as the diameter of the stems increase with maturity. Cultivars in the "Drift" series of roses continue to be the groundcover roses of choice and these are easily and quickly maintained with an electric hedge-trimmer, are non-invasive and tend to stay true to their stated heights and width.

Questions: The gardening public continues to be interested in roses that can be maintained with minimal care and in absence of the traditional chemical treatments that have been associated with rose care for decades. The Houston Rose Society is elated that it has been a part of the largest environmental rose research project in U.S. history and that our work has resulted in identifying roses that meet the homeowners demands - and which also make beautiful landscape plants. See attached for a photo of one of the roses in a trial recently concluded.

If you can grow weeds....you can grow roses. Let us show you how!

(Address questions to Gaye Hammond at gayeh@lpm-triallaw.com)



Left: Savory is the 2015 Herb of the Year! Exciting roses from study: left to right, 'Sunrise Sunset' (Gaye Hammond photo), 'Fire Opal Kolorscape'(Chamblee's Rose Nursery photo) and, a new unusual rose color, 'Koko Loko.'

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