

MUST-HAVE ROSE BOOKS

On a chilly April day, conversation on the Gold Coast Internet Discussion Group turned to rose books. What books did the assembled group consider to be “**Musts**” for a useful Old Rose library.

This may have been one of the most useful of many useful discussions held on this active List! It’s inspired a buying frenzy, rapidly expanding our book collections. Don’t worry, though! There are more copies out there. Most, if not all of these books may be found most easily and most economically on the Internet’s USED book lists. So, for your pleasure, I am pleased to share with you “**A Sifted Few**”:

A BOOK ABOUT ROSES, by S. Reynolds Hole, Dean of Rochester Cathedral, England. Still one of the world’s favorite writers on roses, Dean S. Reynolds Hole was born in 1819, served as the vicar of his local parish church, and as the Dean of Rochester Cathedral. A Founder of the Royal National Rose Society in 1876, Hole was its first President, serving so until his death in 1904. No first edition copies seem to be readily available, but a second edition can be had for just over \$100. Quite a treasure! I found my copy of the 10th Edition for a thrifty \$25. Chapter One begins, famously, with: “He who would have beautiful Roses in his garden must have beautiful Roses in his heart.” Yes, the text can be a bit flowery, in a 19th-Century way, but Hole’s love for roses, and his knowledge of them, shines through clearly. Don’t disregard Hole’s advice – particularly when he speaks eloquently of manures. This is a lovely little book. It’s easy to see why it ran to printing after printing.

THE ROSE: A Treatise ON THE CULTIVATION, HISTORY, FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS, ETC., OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF ROSES, WITH ACCURATE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VARIETIES NOW GENERALLY GROWN, by H.B. Ellwanger, Mount Hope Nurseries, Rochester, N.Y. Pub. New York, by Dodd, Mead & Co., 1882 Ellwanger knows his subject intimately, and provides details on growing, cultivation, propagation, and more. A catalogue of varieties lists 956 varieties, each with habits, description and hereditary data. Some of Ellwanger’s information is – eye-opening. The son of immigrant nurseryman George Ellwanger, H.B. Ellwanger operated the Mount Hope Nurseries, Rochester, NY. This book is, indeed, a: "Valuable treatise not easily found and an extremely useful survey of the international scene in the world of roses" [Fisher, *The Companion to Roses*].

THE ROSE AMATEUR’S GUIDE by Thomas Rivers Reaching back a few more decades, we find Thomas Rivers – proprietor in the 19th Century of the first English Nursery (Est. in 1725) to specialize in roses. Thomas grew up with the roses his family grew and sold. I bought the 1979 reprint – Leonie Bell wrote the introduction – reason enough to buy the very reasonably-priced reprint, rather than indulge in an original copy (though those were, I thought, affordable at not much over \$100.). Unlike Ellwanger, Rivers writes of roses in England – and he does have a very masculine preference for big red Hybrid Perpetual roses (which might not be the best choices for our coastal climate). We can forgive Mr. Rivers that prejudice, I think.

EVERBLOOMING ROSES, by Georgia Torrey Drennan, Pub. 1912 by Duffield & Co.

Georgia Torrey Drennan was born in 1843 on Round Hill Plantation, in Mississippi. Married at 17, she was the young wife of a serving officer of the Confederacy. Her husband's letters to her give us a clear picture of the 1863 Siege of Vicksburg. Mrs. Drennan's book, published in 1912, speaks of an intimate acquaintance with the Tea, Noisette, and Bengal (China) roses that filled the gardens of the Old South – the same roses that excel in Southern California – making Drennan's book a particular treasure for us. She also covers Climbing Tea Roses, early Hybrid Teas, Hybrid Perpetuals, Polyanthas, Bourbons, early thornless roses, and Hybrid Eglantines. A descriptive list of roses by class and color is made more valuable by personal comments. Sixteen fine black and white photos illustrate the book. ALAS! We cannot buy a copy of EVERBLOOMING ROSES at any price. Nevertheless, we have access to this Important book — albeit in an unusual way -- as a .pdf file, on a CD, from the Heritage Rose Foundation. I found reading a book in this format cumbersome, at best, so I printed it, and put it in a 3-Ring Binder. It's not perfect, but it's easier than reading the book on my computer screen. I'd STILL prefer a print copy, but unless or until one is reprinted, I am grateful for the opportunity to own this treasure. To order a copy of EVERBLOOMING ROSES in .pdf format, Send \$45.00 Cash, Check, or Money Order to: Kent Krugh, 6356 Georgetown Road Fairfield, Ohio 45014 kkrugh@goodnews.net

OLD ROSES by Mrs. Frederick Love Keays (Ethelyn Emory Keays) Pub. 1935, Macmillan Co., NY., Mount Pleasant Press, J. Horace McFarland Co., Harrisburg, PA. Reading Rivers, Ellwanger, Hole, and Drennan we hear the voices of those who knew today's "Old Roses" when they were the Newest and Most-Exciting. Mrs. Keays takes us to the next generation – when a few older gardeners yet remained to be questioned. In her introduction, she says: “. . . We look upon a study of the old roses of our neighborhood, and the scattering additions from all over the country as merely a wicket-gate into the ancient ancestral estate of a queen whose reign has no ending. . . .” Do you sometimes think you began too late to learn about Old Roses? Keays didn't begin her adventure with Old Roses until 1928. She was close to 60! She's among the first to open our eyes to the signs by which roses may be classified and identified. She wrote in a clear, colloquial style that's a pleasure to read. No wonder McFarland tapped her talents for the American Rose Annuals of the 1930's! She did, indeed open the wicket gate, and lay a path for others to follow.

ROSES OF THE WORLD IN COLOR, by J. Horace McFarland, L.H.D., Publ. Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1936. President of the American Rose Society, McFarland was something of a Renaissance man. One of the first Americans to sound the call for environmental and scenic protection, McFarland was also a master gardener, famous for his books on, and photographs of roses. Roses Of The World In Color is one of a dozen books he authored. In 1878, at age nineteen, McFarland opened his printing business and began to publish gardening and seed catalogs. By 1894, he was experimenting with color photography! His innovations made his company premier publisher of gardening catalogs, with what may have been the first color photographs produced in the US. Along the way, he brought the American Rose Society to a position of stature in the world. In his introduction to Roses Of The World In Color, McFarland professes himself “incurably in love with the rose.” It shows. His text is spare, but very readable, and his information is as valuable today as it was in 1936. Of course, it is the illustrations that

make this book a major treasure. It's an easy treasure to own, too -- easy to find, reasonably priced at anywhere from \$20. to \$40.

MODERN ROSES, The first edition of what came to be the "bible" of the American Rose Society was compiled by J. Horace McFarland, and published in 1930. That original publication included by the Editor's count 2,511 roses. The second edition, entirely rewritten, presented 4,833 roses. Modern Roses III, issued in 1947, listed 5,284 roses, including 296 species. (McFarland notes that the information on species roses for MR III was prepared by Prof. Alfred Rehder, of the Arnold Arboretum – familiar to some as the author of the MANUAL OF CULTIVATED TREES AND SHRUBS.) Eight subsequent editions of Modern Roses have been issued, and MR XII is under construction. We have MR X and MR XI. We will buy MR XII, when it is released. However, increasing distance from the time when Old Roses were New increases chances of errors, mis-interpretations, and inappropriate changes. For accuracy, therefore, we recommend a visit to the past. Copies of MRI and MR II aren't thick on the ground, but MR III through MR VII can be obtained without breaking the bank, and are recommended.

HENNESSEY ON ROSES, by Roy Hennessey. (Self-published, multiple editions) Originally sold for \$3.50., now widely available from Internet-based booksellers, at prices range from the mid-\$20's to the mid-\$80's. In an article written for the Ventura County Rose Society, Jim Delahanty tells us that Hennessey “. . . despised academics, rose experts, everyone who looked abroad for guidance in matters rosarian and those who abused his bare root roses by cutting them. In fact, he made his purchasers promise not to cut the roots of his roses as a condition of sale. The 'he' in question is Roy Hennessey, a rose grower in the middle of the 20th century in a place called Scappoose, Oregon, about twenty miles outside the city of Portland. He seems also to have been an anti-tax crusader of some single-mindedness. Although he published essays and articles, he is primarily known now as the author OF HENNESSEY ON ROSES. In it he distilled and justified his beliefs about roses in prose sufficiently dense to require his wife to chase him about the property demanding that he explain further, give examples, and make the prose accessible to the average reader. For this reason he dedicated the book to her on behalf of 'the readers of the book.'" Jim recommends Hennessey's book "Partially because of the stances that he took, but also because he countered the conventional wisdom of his day with his own lived experience, much the same way that most of us have had to learn how to garden--despite what was being offered as gospels in the mainstream churches." See Jim's article at: <http://www.venturarose.org/article-hennessey.htm>

HISTORY OF THE ROSE, by Roy Shepherd, Publ. Macmillan, 1954 Considered to be one of the most important American references on the genus Rosa, the book contains much information on rare species roses. Shepherd Chaired the ARS Old Rose Committee from 1939 to 1962. He also introduced more than a dozen new roses during his lifetime.

IN SEARCH OF LOST ROSES, Thomas Christopher, © 1989, Pub. Summit Books, This is a classic. It opened many eyes to the history and charm of Old Roses. "Through ghost towns, graveyards, wildernesses, -- even other people's backyards – an intrepid gardener joins the quest for the great old roses of the past." If you haven't read it, you should. If you read it long ago, it's worth revisiting. Soft-cover reprints are available on line for as little as \$1. REALLY! But a First Edition hard-cover can be had for as little as \$10., and it's more satisfying in your hands.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GARDENS: An Illustrated History, by Victoria Padilla, Pub. University of California Press, 1961—Branch out a bit, and include an overall history of gardening in our state. Generously illustrated (albeit in black and white) this book covers every phase of ornamental horticulture in southern California, beginning with the early work of the Franciscan fathers first mission garden at San Diego de Alcalá, through the middle of the 20th Century. This is a real exploration of the development of gardening in Southern California, and the flora – both native and naturalized – which surrounds us. Here are stories you may have never heard about the people who created or imported some of the plants we take for granted. The story of Ventura’s Theodosia Burr Shepherd is here, along with Dr. Francheschi/Fenzi, and even Ventura County’s own Senator Bard. The great gardens of Santa Barbara are covered, along with others you’ve never heard of. Roses, of course, are included – covering the development of that great California industry. Copies are available on line for as little as \$15., or as much as \$120.

OTHER GREAT RECOMMENDATIONS:

THE MAKERS OF HEAVENLY ROSES by Jack Harkness?

ROSES, by Jack Harkness

ROSE GROWING COMPLETE, by Edward LeGrice

A ROSE ODYSSEY, by J.H. Nicholas

ROSES, FROM DREAMS TO REALITY, by Herb Swim

The Old Rose Advisor, Dickerson