

## MINIATURE ROSES - THE SPARKLERS OF THE ROSE WORLD

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With the very first miniature roses I planted in the early 1960's, these petite marvels enchanted me. The good substance of the blooms backed up by color, repeat bloom and casual endurance as they grew with some neglect in the corner of the back yard made their presence a joy each time I weeded and watered them.

At that time a rose grower could just about manage to identify most all miniature rose varieties by name. What a change today. The enormous selection of varieties available is nearly distressing. How can you choose which variety to plant when it is desired to add a few red and white blooming bushes in that corner - a single, or fully double one; exhibition type bloom, informal touse headed sprays, or a delightfully old garden rose form; a shorty braving eight to ten inches up and out, or a steroid sized two to three feet shrub, or even a climber allowed to up and arch on its own?

When I think about miniature roses, first I think about landscaping and how miniatures can best be put to use in the landscape. People often want to plant miniature roses but at first find it difficult to get past the charm of the small plant and on to thinking of the whole picture -- how can this little bush be made to work and become important in the overall set up of my yard.

Here are a few ideas using some of my favorites: Try a knee high hedge of 'Popcorn' planted 18" to 24" center to center depending upon the area of the county in which you live. Here in the Denver metro area, 18" apart will produce a bright spot of an ever blooming hedge looking like boxwood sprinkled with white airy trusses of bloom. 'Popcorn' grows so densely that I often have had to cut out wedges just to open the bush to better air circulation. It seems quite disease resistant and needs no spraying.

Grouping a number of miniatures in a border along a sidewalk or patio edge will bring an everblooming line of color into play. Varieties selected could be in a similar color range of brights and bi-colors, or perhaps blushes and whites to fit whatever the preferred landscaping repetition needs. There is such a wide selections of just reds and whites available - 'Dreamglo' for elegance, 'Magic Carrousel' for big and bold size, 'Strawberry Swirl' for fat buds of older charm, or if more red is desired with just a hint of white, try 'Debidue'.

In a larger scale landscape, consider planting the front row in 'Gourmet Popcorn' on a center to center spacing of about four feet. This way, a two and a half to three foot high hedge will be blooming in white along the chosen line of design. Then in a back row, spaced about every six to eight feet apart, plant the exuberant 'Ruby Pendent' which shoots up in a vase shaped rush of ever blooming, perfectly shaped ruby colored blossoms. They come in both long stemmed one bloom per stem and in few flowered clusters. 'Ruby Pendent' consistently produces exhibition shaped blooms every time.

Although I prefer to have my hybrid tea, grandiflora and floribunda beds planted without underplantings of groundcovers, herbs or miniature roses, I do like miniature roses used as

underplantings for special effects. Where I have a trellis of the climbing Bourbon 'Zephirine Drouhin', a couple of 'Cupcake' plants placed at its base would both set off the color and would bloom repeatedly echoing the color in a softer tint.

Unless miniature roses are in raised planters, fragrance often seems like an unexpected bonus. I do feel that certain varieties are so deeply scented that I think of their fragrance as soon as I think of the names. In fact I once won the special challenge class in fragrance with a miniature - 'Baby Ophelia'! And 'Sweet Chariot' always brings delicious sensations to anyone's nose. The mossy miniatures come equipped with the added bonus of sweetly resinous frills around each bloom so both nose and eyes gain an added treat.

If you live in an area where wintering over container grown plants is no problem, growing various miniatures in containers is a splendid way to always have bright spots of color to excite any chosen spot. As a container grown plant slows down its cycle of heavy blooming, it can be tucked back into a resting area while a budded plant beginning to open its flowers can be substituted for a fresh burst of color. From half barrels, through stacked planters and into round, square or classic clay pots of varying sizes, miniatures can bring color, form and texture to brighten a people place with their presence. If winters are so cold, dry or windy that bringing containers through the winter season is unpredictable, then plunging the pot and covering it over with evergreen boughs might be a possibility for winter protection. Watering must be checked all through the time of dormancy, enough water to bring the plants through but not enough to encourage too early a growth. In some areas it may be safer for bringing plants through if the containers are hauled into a carport and watched over in that manner. Moisture content and some protection against coldest temperatures are the consistent worries.

However you serve up miniatures, they are delicious treats in the landscape.

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