

KORDES ROSES

History:

In 1887 in a small town north of Hamburg, Germany called Elmshorn, 22 year old Wilhelm Kordes founded a nursery for the production of rose plants called W. Kordes' Sohne. He collected roses from many sources for propagation, and became known as a leading rose expert of his time. His business prospered, and in 1918 it was relocated to Sparrieshoop, Germany, where it remains to this day. In time, Wilhelm II and his brother Herman joined their father in his business. Herman focused on marketing and production, while, in 1920, Wilhelm II began a program to breed new rose varieties. This brotherly partnership resulted in vastly expanded production, reaching over one million plants yearly in the late 1930s. And it also resulted in world-wide breeding successes such as Crimson Glory, which came to market in 1935. The company continued to expand into the 1950s and 60s with new greenhouses, modern cold storage facilities and increasing production. In the late '50s, the third generation began to lead the company; Reimer Kordes, Herman Kordes II and Werner Kordes, introduced roses such as Iceberg (1958), Lilli Marleen (1959), Color Wonder (1964) and Westerland (1969). Production reached a peak of over 4 million rose plants a year, making W. Kordes' Sohne one of the leading rose nurseries in Europe. The '70s brought such superstars as Sunsprite (1973), Rosarium Uetersen (1977), (both of which grow in our garden), and Helmut Schmidt (1979). Another change in management to the 4th generation began in 1988 with Wilhelm Kordes III, Bernd Helms-Kordes, and Tim-Herman Kordes. Currently, the 5th generation is in training, a new sister business in the cut rose trade is thriving, employment totals 150 people, and production totals 2 million plants annually, sold world-wide. Agencies in more than 30 countries around the world market Kordes Roses, and they are now readily available here in the United States.

The Kordes Breeding Program:

The W. Kordes' Sohne breeding program is one of the largest in the world. Before introducing a new rose, Kordes carefully evaluates it for such qualities as color, size, form, vase life, productivity, disease resistance, and fragrance. Every year more than 100,000 flowers are hand-pollinated at the nursery. The resulting seeds are harvested and planted, yielding more than a half-million seedlings. Several thousand of these are selected for further evaluation and trials. These trials last more than 7 years, with only a handful of roses being selected for release each year to the public. Among these are plants in the Kordes breeding lines called Fairy Tale Roses, Vigorosa Roses and Climbing Max Roses which are specifically bred to be grown without any application of chemicals, being colorful and free-flowering with excellent disease resistance. So although Kordes' marketing slogan has always been "The most beautiful roses of the world," today the word "beautiful" encompasses so much more. The Kordes Catalog lists their "Goals of Rose Breeding." They are: fungal disease resistance, winter hardiness, abundance of flowers, quick repeat bloom, self cleaning (spent flowers drop to the ground), rain resistance, fragrance, unique colors and shapes, good height and branching, suitability as a cut rose, suitability to be grown from cuttings, and suitability for use in containers. This is an all-encompassing and very ambitious program. And 40 years of rose growing experience has taught me that the word Kordes on a rose's label means that the plant is most likely to be one that won't be shovel pruned after one miserable season in my garden. Roses hybridized and trialed in a cold-climate country are likely to be hardy and floriferous on Colorado's front range.

A Word About Allgemeine Deutsche Rosenneuheitenprüfung:

OK, we'll call it ADR. The ADR is both one of the highest awards a rose variety can attain, and one of the most severe trials for roses worldwide. It is a three year evaluation of new varieties in 11 locations throughout Germany. The plants are given no protection in this challenging Northern European climate. No plant protection sprays are used. Of the 102 varieties which have received this designation since 2000, 42 were bred by Kordes.

On to the roses:

Fairy Tale™ Roses are Kordes' answer to David Austin. The plants carry heavily double blooms on vigorous, easy to care for shrubs with great disease resistance. A number of them have received the ADR designation. Among them are:

Cinderella Fairy Tale™ 2003 Healthy foliage; light-pink, abundant, very full flowers; excellent for hedges; can be trained as a small climber; fruity fragrance reminiscent of apples. Gold Medals from trials in Baden-Baden, Geneva and Rome.

Grimm Brothers Fairy Tale™ 2002 ADR; healthy foliage; brilliant, very double, orange/apricot flowers with a yellow reverse; blooms in clusters; slight fragrance; Gold and Silver Medal winner.

Lions Fairy Tale™ 2002 ADR; vigorous, glossy, extremely healthy foliage; upright and elegant plant; cream white flowers age to apricot/pink; slight fragrance; Silver Medal winner.

Pomponella Fairy tale™ 2006 ADR; vigorous, healthy foliage; proliferate bloomer; dark pink, round buds open to cupped blooms borne in clusters; species rose scent; Gold and Silver Medal winner.

Vigorosa Roses are a group of vigorous, continuous-blooming, healthy, landscape and ground cover roses in a range of vibrant colors. Fragrances are slight. All are ADR designated and have won several Gold and Silver medals each. All are suitable for mass plantings, but some would make lovely specimens on their own. Heights and growth habits do vary, so it is best to consult the catalog (which uses centimeters). The catalog lists Apricot, Fortuna (pink), Toscana (raspberry red), Salmon, Ruby, Innocencia (white), and Sweet (crimson pink). Frilly Toscana looks especially interesting.

Climbing Max is a collection of the most beautiful and disease resistant climbers recently created by Kordes. All scored well for health, consistent flowering and outstanding growth and vigor. Three have the ADR designation. All are medal winners. They are:

Kordes Aloha/Aloha Hawaii™ 2003 Very double blooms of apricot, orange, pink and red come in trusses of up to ten blooms with a delicate, fruity fragrance.

Amadeus™ 2003 Classic, brilliant, blood red blooms come continually in trusses of 5 to 7 with a slight fragrance. Gold Medals from The Hague, Lyon and Geneva.

Kordes Golden Gate™ 2006 ADR; Double, golden yellow blooms come in trusses of 5 to 10 with intense fresh citrus scent. Prix de Parfum winner, Paris.

Jasmina™ 2005 ADR; has an abundance of violet-pink flowers with a rich, sweet fragrance.

Laguna™ 2004 ADR; has deep pink, very double old-fashioned blooms with intense fruity fragrance.

Kordes Moonlight™ 2004 Semi-double, copper-yellow blooms in clusters of 4 to 6 have rich fragrance.

Rosanna™ 2002 Brilliant, double, salmon-pink climber with deeply cupped blooms that come in large trusses. Slight fragrance. Gold Medals from The Hague, Lyon and Geneva.

Veranda™ Roses, also known as the Flower Circus series, are a group of compact floribundas for gardeners with limited space. The plants of this series range between 2 and 3 feet when mature, making them perfect for small spaces and patio containers. They come in cream white, cerise, blush pink, soft amber, deep pink, brilliant orange/red and lemon yellow. Forms range from very double and quartered, to old fashioned rosette, to modern tea. All have slight fragrance. Flower sizes appear to be those of large mini-floras.

Balconia™ Roses are low-growing, trailing plants, ideal for hanging baskets and planters placed on walls. All of them have a uniform spreading habit, appealing blooms in interesting colors, abundant one-inch flowers borne in clusters with good repeat, and abundant semi-glossy to glossy foliage. All are wind, rain and disease resistant. Light hail would not heavily damage these plants, and if they are planted in raised beds or in the ground next to retaining walls, they are hardy in zone 5. All have received gold medals in trials and, with the exception of Raspberry Balconia™, all have received the ADR designation. Fragrances are slight. Besides Raspberry, the plants come in white (Innocencia), salmon/pink (Electric), Hot Pink, Apricot and red (Toscana).

Fruitalia™ Roses do double duty. In addition to lovely garden blooms in the summer, these varieties will produce sprays of rose hips for fall and winter cutting. The hips vary in size and color from plant to plant. All of the Fruitalias are productive and easy to maintain with a long vase life, and are available in a choice of colors including coffee, orange and red.

Freelander™ Roses are cutting garden roses, bred for a long vase life. These are beautiful, vigorous and very productive varieties, which will fill your home or your farmer's market stall with an abundance of blooms. Fragrances are moderate to strong. Some of these are:

Caramel Antique Freelander™ is a large-flowered, elegant, buff-yellow variety with a vase life of 12 days.

Cinderella Freelander™ is a moderately fragrant, upright and vigorous variety with classic, high-centered, pink, hybrid tea blooms. Abundant, glossy foliage, good fragrance, and a vase life of 8 to 10 days.

Corrie Freelander™ is a relatively carefree plant with spectacular hot pink blooms carried on long stems. Vase life is 12 days.

Fantasia Mondiale Freelander™ produces large, double, apricot/pink blooms on long stems with semi-glossy abundant foliage. Vase life is 10 days.

Ice Girl Freelander™ is a vigorous, white rose that is extremely weather-resistant. Has intense fragrance, hybrid tea form and a vase life of 6 to 8 days.

Magma Freelander™ is one of the leading cut roses in European markets. It is an eye-catching yellow/red bi-color with hybrid tea form and a vase life of two weeks.

The **Kordes Hybrid Teas** listed below are both beautiful and healthy. So if you are looking for hybrid teas that do not require spraying, you may want to give these a try. While the Kordes catalog lists several types of hybrid teas, I'll list those with which I have experience or have on my wish list.

Berolina 1986 This rose is hardy and robust enough to survive almost total neglect on our back fence. It has long-lasting, high-centered, lemon-yellow blooms with a slight red blush. The centers move fast on this one, and therefore, it is hard to show, but if you want a yellow tea for cutting, this is your rose.

Beverly 2007 This is a recent Kordes release, and is on the Macon wish list. The color is a luscious mix of several shades of pink, and the centers are high. Its intense, fruity fragrance won the Perfume Award at Baden-Baden in 2008.

Grand Amore 2004 ADR. This Gold Medal winner has been in my garden for two years, and is already a favorite. It is a very vigorous, hardy plant that produces large, high-centered, bright red, non-fading flowers contrasted with dark green foliage on long stems that just beg to be cut. From Steve Singer on multiflora.

La Perla 2008 This rose is for you if you aren't interested in showing all of your hybrid teas, but want a vigorous, hardy, gorgeously old-fashioned, ivory/cream-blush bi-color with great disease resistance.

Parole/Buxom Beauty 2001 Depending on where you order this rose, it will be called one name or another. It really is a buxom beauty, and a true show rose. The large, deep-pink blooms with a burgundy edge are consistently high-centered. The plant is very disease resistant and has shiny green leaves, long stems, exceptional hardiness and vigor. To complete this prize package, its rich, intense scent won Perfume Awards in Madrid and Nantes. From Steve Singer at Wisconsin Roses, budded on multiflora.

Valencia 1989 This rose is a high-centered, very large-flowered, apricot show rose. It is also a true garden classic, being very showy in the front of a border, as it is not a tall plant. Mine is on its own roots and has been totally hardy and floriferous for 10 years. Winner of the Henry Edland Medal for fragrance. Compared to this one, Marilyn Monroe's blooms are smaller and flatter, although the plants are about the same size.

If you are growing roses along Colorado's front range, chances are there is already a Kordes rose or two in your garden. Mine include floribundas Nicole, Iceberg (Schneewittchen), Sunsprite (Friesia) and Gold Marie; climbers Summerwine, Rosarium Uetersen, Ilse Krohn and Dortmund; Red Ribbons (Mainaufeuer) shrublet; grandiflora Vera Johns; and hybrid teas Bride's Dream, Folklore, Helen Naude, Liebeszauber and Sandra. All are hardy and disease resistant.

Palatine Roses in Canada carries the largest selection of disease-free Kordes roses in North America. Their website may be found at www.palatineroses.com. You may call them at 905-468-8627. Smaller selections of Kordes roses may also be found at Ashdown Roses Ltd., Edmunds' Roses/Jung Seed Company, Heirloom Roses, Northland Rosarium, Roses Unlimited, Jackson and Perkins and Weeks.

Credit for this article goes to Palatine Roses, which supplied the literature from which much of this article was derived, particularly the information on roses with which I have no experience. I only wish I had room for an all Kordes cutting garden. What a joy that would be!

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