

Understanding Different Types of Roses, by Brenda Viney, Vancouver Rose Society

Brenda Viney offers some basic rose information on the difference between Old Garden Roses and Modern Roses, for those novices who want to understand Rose Show Categories.

An Old Garden Rose (OGR) is anything that was introduced prior to 1867 and also includes those roses that are new introductions but have been bred out of the early cultivars.

Examples of OGRs include Gallica, Portland, Centifolia, Damask, Bourbon, China, Moss, Noisette, and Species (a whole set unto themselves) plus many more obscure names that even I tend to forget about without a reference book at hand! The majority of these roses only bloom once a year for four to six weeks in June but are usually highly fragrant and totally cover the bush with blooms. Many then produce beautiful "hips" in late summer/fall for a second flush of enjoyment. A lot of the OGRs tend to grow fairly large but form lovely landscape plants perfect for the back of the border or as a specimen by itself...and are usually in colours of white, pink and burgundy. There is the odd yellow but NO orange!

Orange was not bred into roses until the modern roses were introduced. Many OGR-only rosarians are rather snobbish about never allowing "harsh" peach, orange or yellow colours into their gardens because they will clash with their beloved OGRs. These growers' gardens mainly include companion plants in white, pink and blue/mauve colors to compliment the roses.

OGRs usually grow with many blooms on one stem rather than just one bloom. Some also have very short stems which can present problems with cutting and exhibiting because the stems are not long enough to highlight the full beauty of the rose. But on the bush, these traits can be quite endearing.

In comparison to OGRs, **modern roses include**: hybrid tea (HT), floribunda (FI), grandiflora (Gr), miniatures (Mini), hybrid rugosa, hybrid musk, polyantha, David Austin English, and "shrub" roses, to name most of them.

Shrub roses encompass a huge number of different varieties as more people are going away from the fussier HT and FI roses and growing the "easier to grow - fit better into the landscape" shrubs. Today's hybridizers are concentrating quite heavily on introducing new disease resistant, easy care 'shrub' roses.

Very different from a shrub rose that produce multiple blooms per stem, but obviously fussier, the HT roses usually produce one bloom per stem. FIs give you a handful of blooms on top of one stem. Minis grow both ways. Austins usually grow multiple blooms but some produce single blooms per stem.

All of the modern roses bloom repeatedly throughout the growing season - May to October in Vancouver, depending on how cold it gets. Luckily we quite often have lots of bloom in October. Some roses, however, have a main flush in June and then there is a long wait until their second flush in late August or September. Others seem to be continually in bloom as new growth sets buds while the old growth is still blooming.

Modern roses come in every colour EXCEPT blue.