

Old-Fashioned and Tough Modern Roses

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Roses are the overall favorite flower of gardeners and non-gardeners. The blooms are beautiful. Have you ever thought of roses as a Xeriscape plant? You can, because there is a group of old-fashioned and tough modern roses that can survive and even bloom over a long period of time without irrigation. They also prosper without pesticide sprays and with minimal pruning. Of course, occasional watering, fertilizing, and pruning makes them even more productive. Plant them in full sun and enjoy the blooms, often over a long season.

The Knockout series of landscape roses has emerged as the most commonly used tough rose but here are others to consider for your landscape.

Belinda's Dream grows to 6 feet tall and 6 feet in diameter. It is listed first of the xeriscape roses because the light pink blooms are floral shop quality and even offer a light fragrance. Use them for cut flowers and or as a specimen plant in the landscape. Expect the blooms to be produced for 6 to 9 months during the year.

My favorite variety of the group is the Carefree Beauty Pink (also called Katy Road). The Carefree Beauty Pink bloom does not make a tight bud for cutting like Belinda's Dream, but it has a darker pink color, produces a large flat flower, and produces rose hips over the entire 6 to 9-month bloom period. Katy Road is 6ft. by 6ft. like Belinda's Dream.

Mrs. Dudley Cross Rose was identified as the San Antonio rose during a promotion in the 1980's. It produces crème colored blooms over a long season as a specimen plant in many landscapes for years and continues to be a popular old-fashioned rose. It is a little larger than Katy Road and Belinda's Dream growing to 7 ft. tall and 7 ft. in diameter. Mrs. Dudley Cross is popular for its blooms and toughness plus it is also thorn less.

Martha Gonzales rose is another popular old-fashioned rose that blooms for 6-9 months per year. It has quarter sized blood-red blooms and the new foliage is reddish. Martha Gonzales is especially valuable as a traffic-directing rose. It only grows to 3ft. tall and 4ft. in diameter so it fits in planting areas in between sidewalks. The thorns are not savage, but they are prominent enough to keep pedestrians on the sidewalks and out of the garden.

Mutabilis is also called butterfly rose. It is a huge (10 ft by 10 ft.) rose that produces flat petaled blooms that change color from yellow to pink to red on the plant. In addition to producing a very large plant the butterfly rose blooms over a longer season even than the long season blooming produced by the other tough roses. It will bloom long into the winter if the weather is mild.

Lady Banks rose only blooms for 3 weeks, but it is blooming right now. It is available in white or yellow half dollar sized compound blooms. The older selections often had thorns, but the newer varieties are usually thorn less. Planted in full sun with plenty of space it forms a weeping plant about 8 feet tall and 8 feet in diameter. Lady Banks roses are long lived and versatile, it is not unusual for plants that have been over grown by mesquites or oaks to grow right into the shading tree to reach the sun and bloom 30 or 35 feet into the shade tree.