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OF ROSE TRADITIONS AND TRADITIONAL ROSES IN FINLAND

A cold, northern country like Finland may not immediately spring to mind in connection with roses, but a little delving into the literature and exploration on the ground reveal a surprisingly rich historical tapestry and an outstanding living heritage. Our location, sandwiched between Russia and Sweden, has been the source of much hardship, but the influences from both east and west have enriched our traditions and, in the case of roses, the gene pool as well.

The Mediaeval Period: Mainly utilitarian cultivation but renaissance awakenings in the seventeenth century

As elsewhere in Europe, wild and near-wild roses adapted to the local climate - ours is considered sub-boreal - have been cultivated since time immemorial for medicinal or nutritional purposes. We find very few written records prior to the eighteenth century, but we may safely surmise that, following the spread of Christianity into the country from the twelfth century onwards, forms of the coastally distributed glaucous northern dog-rose known in Scandinavia as *Rosa dumalis* (syn. *R. caesia* subsp. *glauca*) would have been cultivated in southern Finnish monastery gardens for its medicinally used petals and bark, and for its hips rich in Vitamin C. Bedeguar galls, furry growths induced on wild rose leaves and stems by the gall wasp *Diplolepis rosae*, were also gathered and extracted for their curative properties. Other native roses almost certainly introduced to monasteries are the widespread cinnamon rose, *R. majalis* and, in Eastern Finland, the arctic rose, *R. acicularis*. These bushy, pink flowered plants would probably have been grown for their leaves and flowers, infused for a tonic tea, as well as for hips.

In subsequent centuries, the thorny *Rosa dumalis* was also planted around coastal fortifications to impede the advance of invaders.

The first references to Finnish-grown roses known to this writer are in lists of medicinal plants found growing in the south-western Turku (Swedish: Åbo) region, compiled in 1673 and 1683 by Prof. Elias Tillandz. He mentions white, pink and red-flowered forms with single or double flowers, probably growing in the Physic Garden of the Åbo Academy. We can only surmise that these may have been alba or gallica roses. Finland, and Turku in particular, had strong links with other Hanseatic cities, and wealthy German merchants had already settled in the city. Several of the city's burghers imitated the merchants and created well-stocked gardens around this time.

Recovery after Devastation: the Aristocracy find Tender Roses ...

Towards the end of the seventeenth century and well into the next, gardens fell into rack and ruin and documents pertaining to them were lost as wars, disease and famine ravaged the country, battleground in the struggle for power that dragged on into the 1740's between Russia and Sweden. After this began a much more stable period of economic recovery. Horticultural records resume in 1750 when, we learn, Major C.F. Nordenberg of Mäntsälä Manor, just north of Helsinki, started planting roses in his garden. Having being conferred the aristocratic name of Nordenskiöld and after taking up a post that necessitated protracted stays in Stockholm, he continued to send rose bushes home for his wife to plant. These included a "large, double white rose", probably *Rosa alba* 'Maxima'. A few years later Per Kalm, best known for his botanical expeditions to North America, wrote in 1761 that several people were cultivating roses in their gardens. Per Gadd, for example, was growing in Turku forms of *R. alba*, *R. americana* (*carolina*?), *R. centifolia*, *R. eglanteria* (*rubiginosa*) and *R. gallica*. By 1790, the park of the Monrepos Estate near the then Finnish city of Viipuri (Sw: Vyborg) boasted a vast number of rose bushes, probably centifolias and gallicas.

As elsewhere in Europe, a rose mania gripped the fashion-conscious as the number of new varieties grew astronomically. Well-heeled Finnish enthusiasts could order plants from J.H. Zigra's nursery in Riga, which by 1824 was stocking over 200 rose varieties, as well as from J.G. Haetge's nursery near Tallinn, Estonia. Many of their roses were dignified with aristocratic, high-flown names such as 'Grand Monarque' and 'Duchesse d'Angoulême', which must have appealed to the high society customers who patronised these nurseries. Their assortment of varieties included the mainstream of older albas, centifolias and more recent gallicas, many of which were hardy enough to perform reasonably well in the southern and western parts of Finland - where most of the wealthy folk resided anyway.

Enthusiasts quickly learned that the ever-shifting range of novelty tea roses, bengals, bourbons, noisettes and hybrid perpetuals flowing from the hands of the French breeders during the course of the nineteenth century were far too tender to succeed outdoors even in the mildest localities, so these were exclusively grown as potted plants either in orangeries or in the cool, well-lit drawing-rooms of manor houses. As well as giving much pleasure, the plants would have provided cut flowers with which to delight (or impress?) one's social peers.

... and, later, much Hardier Roses

Most roses were planted from imported stock, as Finland's severe climate was not conducive to propagation by grafting. As hinted above, the spectrum of varieties offered changed rapidly, and the vast majority of new varieties proved ephemeral. In time, however, efforts began in Finland to cater for local demand. One of the earliest examples of domestic enterprise was "Finska Trädgårdsodlings-Sällskapet", the (Swedish-language) Finnish Horticultural Association based in Turku, consisting of members from the local aristocracy, landowners and professionals. During the 1840's the association offered, in addition to some dozens of roses of the types mentioned above as suitable only for indoor cultivation, a number of varieties intended to be grown outside. By 1849 a handful of centifolias and gallicas were augmented by the following:

present name, if different

Rosa alba, white

alpina, red, vigorous *R. pendulina*

capreolata, white rambler *R. arvensis*

carolina, red

cinnamomea, red *R. majalis*

Eglanteria bicolor, red-yellow *R. foetida* 'Bicolor'

Eglanteria lutea, yellow *R. foetida*

fecundissima, red *R. majalis* 'Foecundissima'

ferex, red *R. rugosa*

lucida, red *R. virginiana*

muscosa rubra, red *R. centifolia* 'Rubra', a moss rose

noisettiana rubra, red *R. 'Noisette rubra'*, *R. pendulina* 'Elegance'

pensylvanica *R. palustris*

pimpinellifolia, red

pimpinellifolia, white

rouge royal, red *R. alba* 'Royal Rouge', Prévost 1835

villosa, white

volvata, red ?

Note that the Finnish and Swedish terms for 'red' often embrace a whole gamut of tints from fairly pale pink through to deep magenta-purple.

There are one or two accounts of roses nurtured indoors by ordinary folk, but by and large the roses grown during this period by the "proletariat" would almost certainly have been forms of the native cinnamon and arctic roses. Sometimes wild, single-flowered roses were transplanted to homestead yards (we can hardly call them gardens), but more ornamental forms were favoured whenever such appeared. Several double-flowered, possibly native variants of *R. majalis* are still to be found as extensive stands around the sites of former homesteads up and down the country; these roses have very likely been in cultivation since at least the early nineteenth

century, and must have been appreciated for their ornamental as well as their utilitarian properties. One of the best known is '**Tornedal**' whose name indicates the Tornio (Sw: Torneå) River Valley that divides Finland from Sweden in the north; the rose is believed to have originated in this locality. Very similar is '**Foecundissima**': these both produce very double, pink pom-pom flowers on sparsely thorned, reddish stems. The suckering ability and almost indestructible constitution of these roses would have endeared them to people with little time or money for serious gardening, and allowed these plants to be chopped up easily and passed from neighbour to neighbour.

'**Tornedal**' (*R. majalis*). This double form of the cinnamon rose never fails to give a brave show in the North. Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.



The Tough Burnets

As the century progressed, the very hardy native roses mentioned above were diversified with equally hardy and tough exotic forms. An especially valuable category was, and still is today, that of the burnet roses, forms of *R. pimpinellifolia* (*R. spinosissima*). The natural distribution of this species does not quite extend to Finland, but many forms are well adapted to our climate. The most frequently found burnet today is the semi-double, fragrant, creamy white-flowered rose whose Finnish name translates as "midsummer rose", but which appears in some catalogues as '**Finnish Double White**' or *R. pimpinellifolia* 'Plena'. This rose actually seems to be a cluster of similar forms rather than a single clone, a fact that suggests that it is of considerable age. (Microvariation is a feature common to many roses that have been around for a long period, but whether it arises from the accumulation of somatic mutations in a single clone or because gardeners are constitutionally incapable of resisting the temptation to raise seedlings from an original clone, is a question that can only be resolved through DNA analysis, principally that of the roses).

'**Plena**' (*R. pimpinellifolia*) Photo: Pirjo Rautio.



The epithet of "Finnish" is most appropriate for this rose, as it would be hard to imagine any other plant that the Finns have taken so much to their hearts. It is the epitome of summer for Finnish people. Like the midsummer celebration with which its blooming usually coincides, the "midsummer rose" has assumed an almost Arcadian aura of national identity.

Another not uncommon burnet is a dense, very thorny, neat-leaved plant with small, cup-shaped fragrant, semi-double shell-pink flowers fading to white soon after opening. This exquisite little rose is known as '**Papula**' after a rectory of that name, presently on the Russian side, where it allegedly grew. Both of these roses are somewhat obscure in origin. The white one may be Prévost's 'Blanche Double' (1830), and/or perhaps one of the seedlings produced by the Brown brothers in Scotland towards the end of the eighteenth century. 'Papula' was formerly thought to correspond to the Scottish 'Staffa', but the the origin of "our" rose now seems traceable to Germany where (as indeed in Finland) several burnets were available by the mid-nineteenth century. Dr E. Regel, director of the Imperial Botanic Gardens of St Petersburg, listed several burnets bred by Freundlich of Zarskoje Selo near St Petersburg around this time, but over subsequent decades no further record is to be found of Freundlich's roses. The flowers of '**Papula**' open a delicate shell-pink, later fading to nearly white. Photo: Pirjo Rautio.



Rosa pimpinellifolia '**Papula**' (*R. pimpinellifolia*) displays its fragrant flowers on a compact bush. Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.



Better documented is '**Poppius**' with large, rose-pink, semi-double blooms about a week later than the preceding two. Its rather lax habit, relative lack of thorns and certain other features suggest that 'Poppius' may be a hybrid of the *R. x reversa* (= *R. pendulina x pimpinellifolia*) group. It originates from the trial field of the Swedish Royal Academy of Agriculture near Stockholm whose director, Carl Stenberg, wished to commemorate his friend and patron, (the Finnish) Dr Gabriel Poppius by naming a rose that had appeared on the site under Stenberg's watchful eye. The rose must have received its name near the middle of the 19th century. The origins of the burnet and the putative *R. pendulina* parents remain obscure.

Photo: Kaarina Bäckman.



The lax habit of '**Poppius**' (*pimpinellifolia* hybr.) reflects its *R. pendulina* ancestry.

Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.



Other Stalwarts of the Nineteenth Century

Catalogue lists (such as that of a company known as Finska Trädgårdsföreningen i Helsingfors, the Finnish Horticultural Association in Helsinki, who listed 13 gallicas in 1891-92) reveal that a considerable number of gallicas were grown in Finland during at least the latter part of the 19th century, but the only forms to have survived from such old

plantings until the present day belong to a small group known with us as Francofurtanas. These poorly documented roses appear to represent spontaneous crosses between *Rosa gallica* and one or more very hardy species from Section *Cassiorhodon* (formerly *Cinnamomeae*), probably *R. majalis* or *R. glabrifolia*. The best known of these is the cultivar (or rather a cluster of closely related forms that may have been raised from seed of the original) known here as '**Splendens**' and in Sweden as 'Frankfurt', a very hardy, erect and moderately suckering shrub with reddish stems to about 1.5m (5ft) with medium-sized vivid red, slightly double, well scented blooms in July. It performs well as far north as Oulu (Sw: Uleaborg) at latitude 65°N. It may be synonymous with *R. gallica* 'Grandiflora' which appears in the catalogues of Regel & Kesselring near St Petersburg at the turn of the century, but we know nothing further of the origin of this rose. It is also very similar to the single rose known as 'Alika' in the United States, and which was taken there from Russia by Prof. Niels E. Hansen in **1906**.



'**Splendens**' (*gallica* hybr.) must surely be the most vividly flowering hardy rose we have.

Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.

The rose that best typifies the francofurtanas is '**Agatha**' or Redouté's 'Rosier de Francfort', *Rosa turbinata*. This is very close to, but perhaps not identical with the rose popularly known in Sweden as kyrkogårdsrosen, the "**churchyard rose**", since the Swedes have traditionally used the latter for ornamenting cemeteries. The Finnish name is of similar meaning, but in Finland this rose is usually found in the grounds of old manor houses and rectories. It grows into a fairly erect, freely suckering shrub to 1.8m (nearly 6ft) with light green, deeply veined leaflets, rather messily double, unevenly pink flowers and pear-shaped (turbinate) hips. The appearance of the shrub is often marred by an indeterminate stem and leaf-blotch disease that can result in dieback. The "churchyard rose" has obvious affinities with 'Empress Josephine' but the latter is much less hardy than "our" rose, with better formed flowers though much less fragrance. As in the case of several old roses, we appear to be dealing with a cluster of closely related clones, since plants similar to, but distinct from southern Finnish possibly-Agathas can be found in northern-central Finland. Some of these northern types, which may be even hardier than the main type, have been given local names.

'**Agatha**' (gallica hybr.) is very close to the "churchyard roses" found near old manor-houses in Finland.

Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.



Rosa rugosa and its hybrids

Like the burnet roses, the rugosas are well adapted to Finland's rather dry, semi-continental climate, but these latter only started to become common here after the middle of the nineteenth century. Serious hybridisation involving *R. rugosa* only began in central Europe towards the end of the century, but at least one spontaneous hybrid had already reached Finland by this time: a cultivar variously known as

'Tsaritsa Severa', 'Kaiserin des Nordens'

and corresponding names in Finnish and Swedish denoting "Empress of the North". It arose as a distinctive seedling grown by Regel in St Petersburg from *R. rugosa* seed sent from Japan in the 1860's by K.J. Maximovicz, and was first named *R. rugosa* 'Rubra Plena'. It was promptly propagated and, before many years had elapsed, Regel & Kesselring were exporting plants to Finland.

'Tsaritsa Severa' superficially resembles the well-known 'Hansa', but the flowers of Regel's rose are smaller, darker in tone and with milder fragrance. It forms a more attractive, elegantly branched shrub than 'Hansa', and spreads aggressively by suckering, soon forming an viciously spiny barrier. It is not so strongly remontant as 'Hansa', even though it seldom sets hips. Old, extensively suckered colonies of this extremely tough rose occur sporadically around old habitations upto at least 65°N in Finland. It seems to be rather common in Estonia, too.

Its pointed, light green leaflets and general habitus indicate that 'Tsaritsa Severa' very probably resulted from the natural crossing of *R. rugosa* with the far-eastern taiga rose,

R. davurica. **'Tsaritsa Severa' or 'Kaiserin des Nordens'** (rugosa hybr.) Photo: Anneli Tervonen.



Seed-raised lots of the type species, *R. rugosa*, are used routinely in Finnish roadside and parking area plantings, some would say *ad nauseam*. Several attractive seedlings have been salvaged from such areas and - a mixed blessing - fieldfares, crossbills and other berry-loving birds have helped single magenta or white rugosas frequently to colonise waste ground and, more seriously, our sea coasts.

The fragrant flowers of "**Katri Vala**" (*rugosa* hybr.) are carried on a luxuriant bush in July. Photo: Pirjo Rautio.



The earliest Finnish varieties

By the late nineteenth century, several rose growers in Turku and Helsinki were engaged in mass sales of pot-grown roses. For instance, in 1890 V.F. Sagulin of Helsinki stocked 200 000 plants, including some 200 hybrid perpetuals and 75 teas. A few growers propagated roses by grafting, but most still imported stock grafted in Lübeck or St Petersburg and grew the small plants on for sale. Around this time two Finnish cultivars appeared. One apparently arose as a sport of a then widely grown variety used for forcing and was named '**Elisabeth**' after the mother of rose grower M.G. Stenius, but another nurseryman, Franz Grümmer, regarded the new variety as 'Rovelli Charles'. The other newcomer, named '**Johan Ludvig Runeberg**' after one of Finland's best loved poets, has better credentials: Björn Lindberg, proprietor of the SOLhem nursery near Lohja, raised it from the cross 'Isabella Sprunot' x 'Horace Vernet' and released it in 1905. Even then, eulogising skills were not foreign to advertisers: " ... with its cherry-red flowers of almost incomparable fragrance carried on sturdy, upright stems forming a bell-shaped plant ... *J.L. Runeberg* flowers with absolutely infinite abundance ... it repeats without fail and even the weakest stems flower ..." to give a loose translation of some of the boldest claims. Alas and alack! As far as we know, these cultivars have long disappeared.

A more lasting breakthrough was achieved by Harald Wasastjerna, whose '**Polstjernen**' ("Pole-Star"), from the cross *Rosa begeriana* x the polyantha 'Orleans Rose' and released in 1932, is still widely grown today. With its clouds of tiny, fragrant white flowers carried on the vigorous, thorny stems (upto 3m, 10ft long) of what has been claimed as the hardest climbing rose in existence, this rose has yet to

be bettered for its ability to survive Finnish winters without being removed from its support and protected.

'**Polstjernan**', claimed as the world's hardiest climber, produces clouds of minute fragrant flowers. Photo: Päivi Mikola.



Widespread in Finland, Sweden and, apparently, Estonia but virtually unknown elsewhere is a beautiful, hardy rose with alba affinities. In Sweden it was long named *R. x suionum* or svearnas ros, implying a Swedish origin, while in Finland it was termed the Mustiala rose since, during the early part of the twentieth century, it was widely distributed by Mustiala Agricultural College near Turku. The question of its origin was not resolved until the 1980's, when it was observed that the Mustiala rose was identical to '**Minette**' (J.P. Vibert, France, 1819) growing in the collections at Sangerhausen.

'Minette' forms a well-branched, green-stemmed shrub to about 1.5m (5ft) with singly borne, pale shell-pink, large, fragrant and beautifully formed flowers throughout July and often into early August. Its only real fault is the susceptibility of its soft-textured and very double flowers to balling in wet weather; given a hot, dry summer this is a perfect rose. Its hardiness and suckering ability account for its popularity in the Nordic countries. The pale green, slight glossy rounded leaflets suggest that *R. carolina* may be involved in its pedigree, which would also account for its relatively good winter-hardiness; the stems show some dieback after hard winters, but as a rule this does not prevent 'Minette' from flowering well.



The sumptuous and fragrant blooms of '**Minette**' tend to spoil in wet weather. Photo: Pirjo Rautio.

Closer to our own times, Finland's Grand Old Plantsman, Bengt Schalin, was head gardener of the city of Helsinki during the 1950's. He had numerous international contacts and introduced many valuable woody ornamentals, including roses, to

Helsinki's public gardens. Unfortunately, documentation on most of his introductions is lacking, no doubt the corollary of a kindly but autocratic approach to his work. He left a fine legacy of beautiful shrub roses, but the task of identifying several of these since his death in 1982 is still incomplete. Schalin also turned his skills towards breeding: he produced several varieties of *Phlox paniculata* as well as some roses, but the fate of these is unknown.

In Schalin's honour, Wilhelm Kordes named a rose after him. '**Bengt M. Schalin**' was raised from the cross *R. kordesii* x *R. 'Eos'* and named by Kordes in 1956. Some years ago I grew it in my garden just outside Helsinki where it sometimes produced its small, bright cherry-red, semi-double flowers on 1.5m (5ft) stems, but these often froze back too severely for the plant to flower satisfactorily.

During the 1980's, the Horticultural Department at Helsinki University made a three-year field survey of hardy woody ornamentals, mainly found in the Helsinki area. The KESKAS study, as it was called, revealed several interesting roses (the name is abbreviated from the Finnish for 'hardy plants': *kestävät kasvit*). The study was followed up with field tests involving some of the cloned accessions, carried out at several sites. It was interesting to observe within a rather even trial field how much morphological variation existed between different local accessions of what we had previously assumed to be a single rose, such as the 'Old Finnish White' burnet. There were also minor but appreciable differences in adaptational characters such as winter-hardiness, vigour and in how different accessions performed both within and among the various sites.

The Finnish Rose Society was established in 1989, a time when roses started to become increasingly popular and, in particular, interest in old, hardy but long neglected roses began to awaken. The society, which works in close cooperation with societies in the other Nordic countries, seeks to foster interest in all aspects of roses and their cultivation by arranging excursions and through members' articles contributed to the quarterly bulletin *Ruusunlehti* (Sw: *Rosenbladet*).

I believe that the new-found interest in the hardy roses to be found in Finland's parks and gardens reflects the frustration that many people feel over failures in growing the "mainstream roses" sold on mass markets: the floribundas and hybrid teas, selected in and bred for much milder climates. Only a few roses in these categories are even marginally suited to our conditions, and most are patently unsuitable. This experience, combined with the revelations of the KESKAS study, may have opened our eyes to the country's surprisingly rich heritage of hardy roses of many kinds. Our rose society's bulletin provides a forum to describe and promote rose foundlings that

keep springing from Finland's seemingly inexhaustible fount. Such of these old roses as fitted in with the historical outline above I have already touched upon.

It remains for me to describe briefly some of the most interesting roses that have turned up over the past ten years or so, but before I start outlining certain forms of *R. pimpinellifolia* I shall pay a small tribute to Mrs Aila Korhonen. Throughout the 1990's Mrs Korhonen dedicated most of her spare time to studying, identifying and documenting the considerable wealth of forms of *R. pimpinellifolia* that Finland holds. Sadly for us, our Grand but not-so-old Lady of burnet roses died after a short illness in 2001; she was only 61. A substantial part of her extensive and well-documented legacy survives in two booklets: her posthumous "Juhannusrusu ja muut pimpinellat" ('Old Finnish White' and other burnets) of 2002 and "Pimpinella: kylämaiseman ruusu" (English summary: Finland finds her Scotch roses) of 2004.

Unless otherwise stated, the following roses produce only a single flowering. The names used are unofficial, often based on the name of the locality where the rose was found; hence the use of inverted commas.

"Ruskela".

A burnet. Collected some 20 years ago by a Mr Henriksson, lorry driver, and still growing in his garden in Ruskela, Vihti, some 40km NW of Helsinki. Mr Henriksson kept no record of when or where he found the rose, but has kindly donated suckers to several people, including some nurserymen, and the rose is becoming more available. It forms a vigorous, freely suckering bush of similar size to the 'Old Finnish White', but with slightly larger leaflets than usual for a burnet, lightish green. The flowers are a clear shell-pink with more petals than 'Poppius' but opening to a flat 6-7cm wide flower with the yellow stamens well displayed. The colour does not fade appreciably. The flowers are scented, though not so strongly as those of the 'Old Finnish White'. The hips ripen to dark wine-red in September. Winter injuries seldom occur, even near Tornio at 66°N.

We have not managed conclusively to match this rose with any of the officially registered pimpinellifolias, but Mrs Aila Korhonen has hazarded that it may be 'Lady Hamilton'.

The beautifully shaped flowers of "Ruskela" (*R. pimpinellifolia*) appear on a vigorous, healthy bush. Photo: Pirjo Rautio.



"Kerisalo" . *R. majalis x pimpinellifolia*?

Another "bone-hardy" rose found a few years ago in Kerisalo, eastern Finland. The flowers are shell-pink, slightly double and cup-shaped, 6-7cm in diameter and moderately scented, held in pleasing contrast to grey-green foliage. The bush suckers rather freely to form a 1,5-1,8m (5-6ft) high bush and in the Helsinki area flowers from late June into July. Dark red hips appear in September.

'Kerisalo' is a beautiful and valuable addition to our trouble-free roses. Nothing has been revealed about its history, but its general appearance and leaf-form in particular suggest that this variety arose from a spontaneous between a form of the burnet rose and the a local wild-growing cinnamon rose.

"Kerisalo" (*pimpinellifolia* hybr.) is valuable addition to our hardy, trouble-free roses.

Photo: Inger Kullberg.



"Ristinummi" . *R. pimpinellifolia x rugosa*?

Around 1995, a rose superficially resembling 'Fru Dagmar Hastrup' grew on the railway embankment at Ristinummi station, 30km north of Helsinki. Close examination revealed a vigorous rose with characteristics intermediate between the burnet and rugose roses. The single light shell-pink flowers are very large, upto 12cm (5") in diameter, well scented. This rose usually repeats well in September. Dark red hips are occasionally produced.

The original colony was destroyed some years ago when the line of rail was widened, but in the meantime several enthusiasts had moved suckers into their gardens and the rose's continuation is assured. In good soil "Ristinummi" romps away, growing upto 1.8m (6ft), but overfeeding with nitrogenous fertilisers can result in sudden dieback of the entire bush. "Ristinummi" is best suited to a more spartan regime; on poorer soils its thuggish tendencies will be curbed and it will form a neater, more restrained plant. Under such conditions it is very hardy in northern Finland.

Hybrids between the putative parents were produced in Russia near the beginning of the twentieth century. We have no idea how such a rose could have found its way onto the railway embankment.

"Ristinummi" (*rugosa* hybr.). This beautiful foundling may get out of hand in a small garden. Photo: Pirjo Rautio.



"Pori". *R. pimpinellifolia* x *rugosa*?

This rose grew in a park in the city of Pori on the west coast of Finland. The bush is of an erect, somewhat gaunt aspect to about 1,6m (5ft), with more burnet-like leaflets than in "Ristinummi". The flowers are pale pink, very double and almost globular in form, sometimes mis-shapen and susceptible to balling in wet weather, but this is a very showy rose in a good July. The fragrance is strong and heady.

The habit of growth and cultural recommendations are as for 'Ristinummi'. The rose has not been widely tested, but no over-wintering injuries have been observed.



The heavily fragrant, double flowers of **"Pori"** (*rugosa* hybr.) may ball in a wet summer.

Photo: Peter Joy.

"Iitin Tiltu". *R. gallica* x *rugosa*?

Another rose that may have arisen in Russia. The general aspect brings to mind 'Splendens'. On good soil this rose forms an erect, moderately suckering bush to about 1,6m (5ft), with large (10cm) single, red flowers in July. The shade of red varies somewhat from season to season; in "good" years the almost scentless flowers are a strong, pure brick-red, but in some seasons magenta shades creep in. When transferred to sites in northern Finland, the stems sometimes suffer slight injuries.

This rose has grown at Iitti in eastern Finland for some time, but nothing is known of its history. The slightly rugose leaflets and thorniness suggest that one of the parents may be *R. rugosa*.



"Iitin Tiltu" (*gallica* hybr.). The colour of the flowers varies somewhat from season to season. Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.

"Olkkala".

Seemingly a *Francofurtana*. In the early 1990's, an attractive and healthy, vigorous rose with dark reddish, sparsely thorned stems bearing 6-8cm wide, showy mid-pink flowers was found growing in the grounds of a manor house 40km north-west of Helsinki, where it still holds its own against nettles and wild raspberries. No mention of any such rose can be found in the manor's documents, so for want of a better name this rose has been unofficially named after the name of the village where it grows. It generally stays in flower for most of July, and a good crop of showy hips ripens to deep red by mid-September. "Olkkala" appears to be at least as hardy as 'Splendens', and in good soil suckers freely. It may be a hybrid between a form of *R. gallica* and *R. glabrifolia*. A very similar rose but with semi-double flowers of a slightly deeper shade of rose-pink was found still more recently in an abandoned plot of land in a residential area (Pakila) in Helsinki. Neither of these roses has yet been found elsewhere than in a single locality.



"Olkkala" (*gallica* hybr.)
Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.

'Tarja Halonen'. *R. blanda* x *californica*?

This rose was found growing in Bengt Schalin's garden some years after his death, but its origin and identity remain a mystery. Schalin is known to have made experimental roses crosses, of which this one may be a well chosen outcome. On good soil it grows into 2m (7ft) high shrub with arching branches. The stems are reddish brown with slightly hooked thorns. The leaflets are light green, pointed and

slightly crinkled. The mid-pink, slightly double and faintly mottled, mid-pink flowers are 7-8cm (3") wide, showily borne in an elegant wild rose style throughout July. The orange, rounded hips ripen from mid-September. It is very hardy in southern Finland, but sometimes suffers light to moderate injuries further north.

In 2002, the Finnish Rose Society decided to name this rose after the Finnish President, Mrs Tarja Halonen. On the basis of morphological characters, the Russian taxonomist Dr Buzunova has opined that 'Tarja Halonen' is a hybrid of *R. blanda*, possibly with *R. californica*.

'Tarja Halonen'

Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.



"Toukoniitty". *R. blanda* hybrid?

Seemingly another part of Schalin's legacy. The working name of this rose denotes the Helsinki park where this rose has suckered into an extensive and luxuriant thicket.

The almost thornless, well branched reddish stems grow to nearly 2m (7ft) on good soils. The medium-sized flowers are light pink, loosely double; many of the petals have a pale central stripe. The foliage colours to a splendid orange in autumn, and the dark red hips are produced in abundance. This rose is extremely hardy, and seldom suffers winter injury as far north as Oulu.

This rose was previously thought to be 'Betty Bland' (Skinner, Canada 1925), but "Toukoniitty" is distinguished in several respects, including its good crop of hips.

"Toukoniitty" also displays showy hips against bronzy autumn colouring.

Photo: Sirkka Juhanoja.



Conclusion

There remain considerable gaps in our knowledge of Finland's founding roses. DNA analysis of morphologically similar forms and comparison with accessions in well documented collections will go a long way to clearing up confusion in the origins of our roses.

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