

Celebrate the Year of the Rose with Miniature Roses!

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With 2002 being the Year of the Rose, exploring the diversity and versatility of miniature roses can be an exciting way to celebrate. Miniatures are a diverse group of roses that share one distinguishing feature- they are dwarfed in size. Their reduced stature allows them to be suitable for the potted plant and bedding plant markets, where consumers find them welcome additions to container gardening and the landscape. Confined urban situations were where miniatures first became popular in the 19th century in Europe where they were widely used in window boxes. They fell out of favor thereafter, until regaining in popularity recently.

The small stature of miniature roses is a dominant trait, which means that in crosses between miniatures and other classes of roses, miniatures can be found among the seedlings in the first generation. Through repeated crosses with full-sized roses, miniature roses are now available in a wide variety of colors, flower forms and plant habits which can resemble dwarfed versions of hybrid teas, floribundas, and even

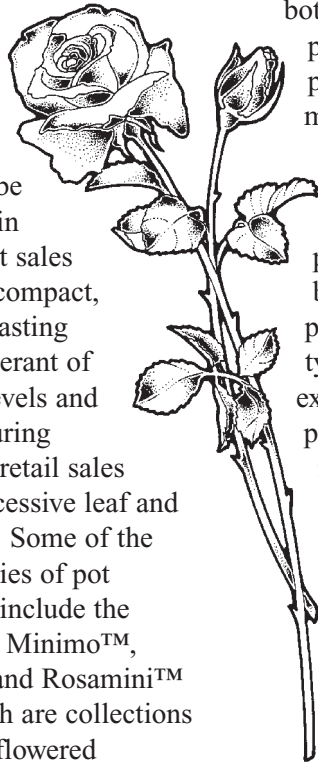
climbers! Miniatures range in size from a few inches for micro-miniatures to several feet for the tallest of the miniature climbers.

During the past couple decades there has been considerable divergence among miniatures for cultivars better suited to specific production and end uses. For instance, for a cultivar to be successful in potted plant sales it must be compact, have long lasting blooms, tolerant of low light levels and ethylene during transit and retail sales without excessive leaf and petal drop. Some of the popular series of pot miniatures include the Cupido™, Minimo™, Parade™, and Rosamini™ series which are collections of smaller flowered miniatures and the Festival™, Hit™, and Sunblaze™ series which have larger flowers.

Miniatures suited for the garden, however, should be proven performers outdoors under a wide variety of climatic extremes. Garden cultivars can accommodate

a wide array of cultivars such as those with relatively long stems for cut flowers or unique plant habits such as trailing growth for use in baskets or as climbers.

Many retail nurseries and garden centers offering miniature roses tend to offer the same cultivars for both blooming potted plant and bedding plant sales. Rooted miniature rose cuttings of cultivars for potted blooming plant sales produced by large wholesale propagators are typically less expensive than propagules of miniature roses better suited to the garden from smaller scale propagators. However, miniatures best suited to the potted flowering plant market often are less than optimal performers for the garden. Pot cultivars tend to be overly compact and/or do not grow vigorously outside of the greenhouse environment. The same trend is seen in hybrid teas,



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which are grown for cut flowers in the greenhouse. Buying miniature rose propagules from different sources to have cultivars better suited to each market is something that growers should consider to boost bedding plant sales and satisfy customers.

Miniatures selected for garden performance offer a tremendous amount of variability and novelty that will draw the retail customer. Many have incredible exhibition flower form with wide petals and spiraling centers, beautiful color combinations, and vigor. While flowering potted plant cultivars are selected to look full and symmetrical as very young plants, garden cultivars are often selected as mature plants. As young developing plants garden

miniatures often have longer stems than pot cultivars and can look asymmetric. Growers have solved this concern through buying in established bareroot miniatures and forcing them for spring sales like hybrid teas in the greenhouse, buying in propagules and growing them on in gallon pots for 8-12 weeks before sale, or by selling them in smaller pots and using techniques like shearing, cool temperatures and high light, and/or plant growth regulators to encourage compact and full plants that look more like finished miniatures for the potted plant market.

The American Rose Society sponsors an awards program for garden miniatures called the Award of Excellence (AOE). It is

much like the All-America Rose Selection (AARS) award which is designed for primarily full-sized roses where dozens of unnamed selections are entered annually by breeders and are trialed across the nation. The best and most reliable performers across the seven AOE test sites over two growing seasons are recognized with the award. There have been 86 AOE award winners since 1975. In addition, there are miniatures with good garden performance having unique characteristics that may not have won an AOE award. One such characteristic is fragrance in roses of the Scentsation® series including ‘Scentsational™’, ‘Overnight Scentsation™’,

Recent Award of Excellence winning miniature roses and selected garden miniatures which are highly fragrant.

Cultivar name	Year of AOE Award	Bloom Color	Mature Plant Height
Ralph Moore™	2000	Red	16-24"
Applause™	2000	Coral	12-16"
Lemon Gems™	2000	Yellow	20-24"
Ruby™	2001	Red	24"
Sun Sprinkles™	2001	Yellow	18"
Michel Cholet™	2001	Apricot	24"
Merlot™	2002	Red	24-30"
Best Friends™	2002	Orange/Yellow Blend	16-20"
Sweet Diana™	2002	Yellow	14-18"
Apricot Twist™*		Apricot	24"
Overnight Scentsation™*		Pink	36"
Scentsational™*		Light Mauve	24-30"
Seattle Scentsation™*		Mauve Blend	30"

*Miniature roses with exceptional fragrance.

and 'Seattle Scentsation™'. In fact, 'Overnight Scentsation™' is so fragrant that it was selected for fragrance studies and went up in the US space shuttle. Exploring miniatures with proven garden performance for spring bedding plant sales is a wonderful way to help set your business apart. Perhaps there is no better time than this spring to try some garden miniatures with the many publicity events surrounding 2002 being declared the Year of the Rose.

Wholesale Sources for miniatures selected for garden performance.

Michigan Mini Roses
45951 Hull Rd.
Belleville, MI. 48111-3507
(734) 699-6698

Nor'East Miniature Roses,
Inc.
P.O. Box 307,
Rowley, MA 01969
(800) 426-6485

The Mini-Rose Garden
P.O. Box 203
Cross Hill, SC 29332
(888) 998-2424

Sequoia Nursery
2519 East Noble
Visalia, CA 93292
(559) 732-030

