EARTHKIND™ ROSE VARIETY DEMONSTRATION

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SUMMARY:

Five EarthKind™ trial rose cultivars or varieties were planted April 3, 2007 and managed under the EarthKind™ production minimal management system. They were visually evaluated with Carefree Beauty (the control rose) and Winter Sunset varieties performing the best in the first year.

OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the characteristics and adaptability of new trial roses to earn the EarthKind™ rose distinction for home and commercial landscapes. To identify roses that can be grown with minimal inputs yet possess a high level of landscape performance and outstanding disease and insect tolerance/resistance. For further information, see the following website: http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu/.

MATERIALS and METHODS:

Six rose varieties were planted April 3, 2007 in three randomized plots (one of each variety in each plot) for the EarthKind™ rose trial. One variety, Carefree Beauty, already an EarthKind™ rose, was used as a control to establish a base for growth and production performance. Prior to planting, the existing turfgrass was sprayed with Roundup to kill vegetation. Seven to ten days after spraying, the soil was tilled with a rotor tiller and 2-3 inches of compost was incorporated over each site.

Varieties are monitored and evaluated by Victoria County Master Gardener volunteers. Varieties will be evaluated on foliage health - quantity and quality, flower - quantity and quality, and growth habit – form and shape. Reports will be made monthly during the active growing season with a annual report and a final report at end of the three year program.

A description of the trial varieties/cultivars are:

Carefree Beauty – A shrub type rose from 1977. It is a cross between a seedling x 'Prairie Princess' and is a repeat bloomer from spring till frost. It grows 3 – 4 feet, is adapted to zones 4 – 9, has a mild-apple fragrance, and has a 4 inch light rose blossom.

Winter Sunset – A shrub type rose cross from 1997 between 'Serendipity' x ('Country Dancer' x 'Alexandra'). It is a repeat bloomer, growing 3 – 4 feet, adapted as far north as zone 4, has moderate fragrance, and has a yellow blend with an orange base colored flower.

Malaguena – A shrub type rose cross from 1977 between 'Tickled Pink' x 'Country Music'. It is a repeat bloomer with single and clustered flowers. It grows 3 - 4 feet, is adapted to zones 4 – 9, has a mild-apple fragrance, and has a 4 inch light rose blossom.

Pipe Dreams – A shrub type rose from 1984. Buds of crimson-carmine open to double, cupped, open, 4.5 - 5 inch two-tone blooms of dark spinel red on the petal reverse and light spinel red on the petal ace. The blooms are borne in clusters of 5 - 10 and have an intense cloverose fragrance. The abundant, leathery foliage is medium olive green with good tolerance to foliar disease, The compact, 2.5 - 3 feet plant is bushy and blooms from early June until killing frost.

Soncy – A shrub type Bermuda, found rose of unknown introduction year. It is a repeat bloomer with nice tea fragrance flowers of pale yellow to ivory. It rarely produces thorns on its stems and grows to 3 - 5 feet

Souvenir de St. Anne – A Bourbon type rose from prior to 1916. It is a semi-double sport of 'Souvenir de la Malmaison'. It is remontant (flowering more than once in successive bursts), grows 3 – 4 feet, adapted to zones 6 – 9, and has a fragrant, light pink blossom.

RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS:

Overall appearance ratings of the roses were what could be expected given that these had just been plant in April 2007. Several were just freshly grown and released by the grower for the test trial and not yet even offered to the commercial trade. These were quite small. In fact, according to the EarthKind™ rose trial program, no performance rating or progress evaluations were called for the first year so that the plants could first get established. Unofficially, the best looking roses so far are: Carefree Beauty (the control cultivar) and Winter Sunset.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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