

Vol XXV, No. 5  
November, 2008

# The YELLOW ROSE



*Rosa moschata*

VOL XXV, NO. 5, NOVEMBER, 2008

THE YELLOW ROSE IS PUBLISHED BY THE  
DALLAS AREA HISTORICAL ROSE SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 831448 RICHARDSON, TEXAS 75083-1448

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*Cover Rose*

***R. moschata***

*White, near white, or white blend Species*

*Tall, bushy, climbing growth habit*

*Height of 8-12'*

*Blooms in flushes, fragrant*

**Photograph by**

**Malcolm Manners**

*For such an ancient rose, this time we shall have an ancient description, this one given by John Parkinson, in **Paradisi in Sole Paradisu Terrestris**, 1629, and quoted on Page 221 in his **Rose Book** by Graham Stuart Thomas:*

"The Muske Rose, both single and double, rise up oftentimes to a very great height, that it overgroweth any arbour in a garden, or being set by an house side, to bee ten or twelve foote high, or more, but more especially the single kinde, with many green farre spread branches, armed with a few sharpe great thornes, as the wilder sorts of roses are, whereof these are accounted to be kindes, having small darke green leaves on them, not much bigger than the leaves of Eglantine...the double bearing more double flowers, as if they were once or twice more double than the single, with yellow thrummes also in the middle, both of them of a very sweete and pleasing smell, resembling Muske."

**Regarding last month's cover, "Acorn House Rose" —**

Victoria Irwin thinks (and I agree) that the "Acorn House Rose" might be 'Summer Dream,' the Hybrid Tea created by William A. Warriner in 1986, introduced in 1987 by Jackson & Perkins. It is a cross between 'Sunshine' (H.T., Chaplin Bros, 1918) and a Seedling, and it is available at Pat Henry's Roses Unlimited, 863 Deerwood Drive, Laurens, SC 29360, Telephone (864) 682-7673. E-mail: roses unlimited@aol.com (Pat tells me their stock of this rose is Virus Indexed, via University of California at Davis. Even better!)

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## *A Note from our President...*

*November, 2008*

I am writing this letter about the Antique Rose Emporium's Fall Festival, which I have just returned from. It is always the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of the first weekend in November. The format includes a schedule of programs each day in the chapel, roses and plants for sale, and seeing old friends and making new ones. The Dallas contingent has dinner together on Friday at the Brazos Belle in Burton (12 miles from Brenham).

As most of you know, the old sales office building burned in February. It has been replaced with a new one that is.....different. In front of the new building they have installed a flagstone dining terrace, and everyone present on Saturday was treated to dinner on the terrace after the last program. I was able to catch up with my old friend John Starnes, formerly from Denver, now returned to his original hometown of Tampa. What a treat!

John is.....different. His program on Sunday was a highlight for me. He gave the most succinct yet complete de-

*(Continued on page 28)*

*Monthly  
Meeting  
Notes*



*October, 2008*

DAHRS President Peter Schaar called the meeting to order and was immediately asked whether the program could be delivered prior to the business meeting. It seems The Jinxed Projector was misbehaving again, and we were very much afraid that it was "now or never." Well, it was almost now. The program, given by Betty Vickers, was in three parts: One part South Africa, one part André Le Notre, and one part cussing the projector. One of the elephants photographed by Betty has now been seen so many times by our members that he is almost the club mascot. So much for technology!

The only new business was a reminder to the members that there is an election of new officers and directors approaching, and a further reminder that the Chili Supper will be held next month in lieu of the regular meeting. Come one and all!

The meeting closed with a very generous drawing of door prizes. We even let Betty have one.

*The Scribe*

*Editor's  
Message*



*November, 2008*

This year I am going to say a special thank you to my roses. Bless their hearts, they have been so sadly neglected the past two years, I should have nothing but a barren desert where my garden used to be. Not so, though, for the roses are a lot tougher than I am! They may be overgrown and not exactly graceful, but they certainly are healthy. And I am grateful.

Over the years that I have gardened, I have observed a great difference in my state of mind when I am actively involved in my garden. It is a very therapeutic, soothing activity. Aside from the visual rewards, there are many "rewards of the soul." Things have been frantic in my/our world for too long. Time to get back to the good dirt.

And I am twice blessed. A good friend has offered to come help clean up the mess! How fortunate am I.

I wish all of you a double blessing—good friends and a good garden. And time to be thankful for both.

*Betty Vickers, Editor*

*(Continued from page 6)*

put back into the bag and the Abbé warns traders to search the bags for signs of tampering, for the Chinese often added small stones or lead to them! This curdled, corrupted blood contained the perfume which was so highly prized and to which the rose perfume was likened when it received its name.

The musk-deer is found in Kashmir, the Himalayas, Siberia and China, and perhaps its home may in some areas have coincided with that of the wild Musk rose, although the habitat of this wildling has not yet been established for certain.

Apart from its fragrance, the Musk rose had its medicinal value; it was thought to 'purge very mightily waterish humors yet safely and without all danger taken in the quantity of an ounce in weight.' So Gerard wrote in 1597, adding however that the Damask was more commonly used for this purpose<sup>1</sup>. Parkinson confirms this, adding that the Arabs knew about such remedies. Lemery gives a more drastic dosage: 'three or four of these roses from a warm climate taken in a conserve or decoction will cause strong purging even to blood.'<sup>2</sup>

John Gerard writes of a third 'vertue' of the Musk rose not mentioned by other herbalists, that the white petals stamped in a wooden dish with a piece of alum would produce a juice which could be used to colour pictures in books or, for that matter, meats or sauces!

While Gerard was writing his *Herball*, Shakespeare

*(Continued on page 9)*

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was painting the scene of a midsummer night:

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.<sup>3</sup>

Not only Shakespeare, but other poets over the next three hundred years were to extol the virtues of the Musk rose. Thus Milton in 1637 was to write of:

The tufted crowtoe, and pale jessamine,  
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,  
The glowing violet,  
The musk-rose and the well-attired woodbine.<sup>4</sup>

Keats, in the early 19th century, dwells on its intoxicating richness:

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;  
And mid-May's eldest child,  
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.<sup>5</sup>

And to its deeply evocative scent, Tennyson was to return later in the century:

Come into the garden, Maude,  
I am here at the gate alone;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the rose is blown.<sup>6</sup>

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

But while there is no problem in identifying the eglantine of the English countryside, the Musk roses forming part of Titania's flowery canopy cause some confusion, for how could the herbalist's garden Musk rose, being tender, have thrived among the wild flowers of the English woodland? Graham Thomas suggests that Shakespeare was probably referring to the only trailing British wild rose, *R. arvensis*, which also has small white flowers but unfortunately not enough fragrance to justify even a poet calling it 'Musk'. Moreover, if Hakluyt is right in giving 1582 as the date of its introduction to England from Italy, it could hardly have naturalized itself in the decade before Shakespeare wrote his play. Shakespeare's Musk rose therefore remains an enigma.

Another mystery which remains unsolved is how the old single and double Musk roses described by almost every English, French and Dutch herbalist up to the beginning of the 19th century, came to be replaced by *Rosa brunonii*, introduced in 1820 and grown from then onwards under the name of 'Musk rose'. Was this relative from the Himalayas more resistant to the cold European winters? Then why is the old Musk not still thriving in the warm Mediterranean countries where it used to grow wild in Lindley's time?

In his search for the old Musk rose, Graham Thomas discovered, in the autumn of 1963, a plant that he believed was a genuine old Musk rose growing in E. A. Bowles' garden at Myddelton House: 'on a cold north-west facing wall of the house was a rose just coming into flower.' These rose blooms were single but plants from the old bush produced double

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

flowers in Mr. Thomas' garden, both of which he illustrates most beautifully in his book on climbing roses.



*Rosa brunonii*, growing in the Chelsea Physic Garden, London

But let me leave the mysteries of the poets' wild Musk rose and Graham Thomas' old Musk growing in the cold, for others to solve and describe instead the Musk roses I have found growing at the Cape.

High up in the topmost corner of the Bovei valley, on the way to Bainskloof, lies the old Retief family farm of Welvanpas where I found my first Musk rose.

It was a sunny spring morning, and in the side court

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(Continued from page 11)

of the old thatched house, shocking-pink oleander and Pride of India made a fine sight as I was taken to see the 'very rare and precious Musk Rose' growing over a fence about 4 metres high. Nobody could tell how long it had been a part of the family scene or where it had originally come from. I was disappointed at my first encounter with such a famous rose, for the sprays of small double creamy pink flowers were unimpressive and totally scentless.

I took a branch of flowers home together with other old roses and it was in the dead of night that I woke with a wonderful feeling of excitement. From the container of roses on a table near my bed a strong perfume emanated which I immediately recognized as musk. I sent fresh flowers to Kew and Mr. Thomas' answer came back, 'Probably a Musk.'

I planted a slip in the Boschendal garden and was surprised after two years with a few flowers in spring and again in autumn exactly as described by the old herbalists.

Two years later I discovered a second Musk rose on the farm Klipfontein in the Graaff Reinet district. It was early evening when we drove into the farmyard, having hastened all afternoon through the dry autumn countryside along a road crawling with numerous large centipedes after a snatch of rain the previous week. As I opened the wooden gate into the old garden, I sensed a whiff of musk, and to my utter joy discovered a large truss of dainty white flowers hanging from the shadow of a very old pear tree. It was a much daintier flower than the Welvanpas one, for the outer petals rolled back while the many small odd-shaped inner ones were

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

curled and mixed up with the yellow stamens. In the older flowers the central petals had turned brown with the stamens, though the outer petals were still white.

Looking again at all the old illustrations of Musk roses I could find, I was intrigued to see how similar Jacquin's Musk rose was to my newly-discovered one, where even the central small petals of his older flowers are tinted light brown!<sup>7</sup> This rose bush has probably been growing in the Klipfontein garden for more than a century.

In the Western Cape the Musk roses are obviously very happy and even in 1940 they were still being highly recommended. Though my searches have revealed no other than the ancient Welvanpas and Klipfontein trees, I am sure that there are many plants hidden away 'to blush unseen' in the byways of the cape, waiting to be found and appreciated.

Notes:

1. In his *Herball*.
2. Nicolas Lemery, *Algemeene Verhandelning der Enkele Droogeryen*. 1742.
3. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
4. 'Lycidas'.
5. 'Ode to a Nightingale'.
6. 'Maud'.
7. *Rosa Moschata* in his *Fragmenta Botanica*, 1800-1809.





## COMING EVENTS LOCAL SOCIETIES

### \*DAHRS Meetings

Monthly, Fourth Tuesday, except December & picnic

### Tuesday, November 25

Chili Supper!!  
and Plant Exchange!

### \* Collin County Rose Society Meeting

Monthly, First Friday, 7:15 p.m.  
Collin County Community College  
Carolyn Hayward, President

### \* Dallas Rose Society Meeting

Monthly, Fourth Friday at Farmers Branch Rec Center  
Kathy Harris, President

### \* Fort Worth Rose Society Meeting

Monthly, First Tuesday  
Program chairman is Ken Leach  
(e-mail: kenleach@cooke.net)

## COMING EVENTS

### *LOOKING AHEAD...*

We know how busy you are!  
(Especially in April and October)  
So here are some dates to save for next year:

### Texas Rose Rustler Spring Meeting *Featuring Felder Rushing!*

The Weekend after Income Tax...  
(Weekend of April 17, 2009)  
Fort Bend Master Gardeners Facility,  
which I believe to be at the offices of  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
14092 Band Road, Suite 100,  
Rosenberg, Texas 77471  
(281) 341-7068

### Rose-Dango 2009

October 17, 2009

Next year the talks will be held in a very special location—  
the old Court House in McKinney.  
After the talks, lunch will be available at the  
Chambersville Heritage Rose Garden; and  
Garden Tours all afternoon.  
(Can you imagine the size of those roses a year from now???)

*(We will verify all this information and advise you  
closer to the date of the event.)*

OUR THANKS TO THOSE  
WHO FEED US . . .



*Chili Supper!*

Bring your own pot of red, made from your own secret recipe. Bring some cornbread or tortillas, a little salad or a dessert—whatever makes your chili sing! Come and enjoy.

Carol Anne passed around a list at the last meeting, but if you weren't there to sign up for a dish, please do not allow that to interfere with your bringing your favorite side or your special Chili.

And don't forget the plant exchange! Five Roses and Five Others!

We would like to offer an apology to Charlene Woods. For reasons known only to the brain termites, we have been referring to Charlene as "Charlotte." Mea Culpa! So sorry, Charlene. We know better.

Election of Officers and  
New Board Members

At the March, 2009, meeting, we will be voting on new officers and new board members.

If you wish to participate in any way as an officer, please speak up. We welcome participation from any and all members of this group, and there is lots of work to go around.

Please give consideration to the manner in which you may contribute to this organization, along with what direction you would like to see our group take, what activities you would be interested in.

Any thoughts or suggestions will be appreciated.

Please pass them on to our President, Peter Schaar.  
Telephone 214-528-7162  
E-mail: peter.schaar@sbcglobal.net

A Nominating Committee has been selected and will be meeting in an effort to find a slate of DAHRS Officers and Directors for the upcoming election.

We are looking forward to some fresh faces on our Board of Directors and among our Officers



Rose-Dango lunch lines at Chambersville

### *Rose-Dango is a Great Success!*

The inaugural Rose-Dango celebration, held October 11, 2008, at the Craig-Heard Hall in McKinney, Texas, and at the Chambersville Heritage Rose Garden and Chambersville Tree Farm, was an outstanding success. Over 200 people lined up for the most excellent barbecue lunch) and the tour of the gardens in the afternoon.

The festivities began with a talk by Mike Shoup of The Antique Rose Emporium, revisiting the history of some of our Found Roses. Mark Chamblee followed,

relating the inspiring story of the Buck Roses, how they were very nearly lost and were found again. In his usual and customary inspiring manner, Dr. Steve George told the tale of the EarthKind Roses. The last speaker was the Heritage Rose Foundation president Stephen Scanniello. Stephen showed us how dangerous it is to be an old garden rose—how roses once found can be lost again in the blink of an eye—and offered inspiration to those who wish to preserve these roses. Stephen also gave us a glimpse into his forthcoming book **A Rose By Any Name**, due out in February, and conducted a brief auction of two rare books, to benefit the Heritage Rose Foundation.

While we realize many people worked to make Rose-Dango a success (Claude and Pam Graves and Tony Dennis, to name but a few), we would like to offer special thanks to Dean and Carol Oswald for their generous hospitality and hard work. Without them there would not only be no Rose-Dango, there would be no Chambersville Heritage Rose Garden!



Floy Darden at DAHRS table, Craig-Heard Hall, McKinney



*Bee- and butterfly-filled beds at ARE*

## The Antique Rose Emporium, Independence 21st Annual Fall Festival

The Fall Festival at The Antique Rose Emporium in Independence, Texas, was its usual splendid self, perhaps a little more splendid this year because of the truly remarkable weather and all the bees and butterflies who attended.

All visitors to the display gardens at The Antique Rose Emporium notice the Chapel and the beautiful borders lining the walk up to the entrance. These borders are always a joy to the eye. This year they were also a joy to the ear. Eupatorium 'White Mist' was growing abundantly. The butterflies were ecstatic, and so were all of those who saw them. Those butterflies stopped traffic all weekend long.

Elsewhere in this journal (see page 3), Peter Schaar discussed some of the speakers. One he failed to mention

was Molly Glenzer, who spoke to us regarding the book **Pink Ladies and Crimson Gents**, written by Molly and featuring beautiful photographs taken by her husband Don. In her talk, Molly shared some of the stories of these roses and even introduced a rose or two to some of us who thought we already knew all of them! Very enjoyable, and beautiful work.

In addition to all of the great speakers, the Fall Festival presents an opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. As always, there was a whole lot of hugging going on!

Mike and Jean Shoup very generously offered soup (cooked by Jean, and absolutely delicious!) and baked potatoes to everyone who wanted to stay after the last speaker on Saturday afternoon. Tables were set up on the new patio, site of the old retail center that burned earlier this year. (I was, of course, located in what had been the book department of the former building.) It was interesting to see the additional layer of history reflected in the posts, scorched by the fire,

*(Continued on page 22)*



*Display garden at ARE*

(Continued from page 21)

supporting the abundant Coral Vine. This vine provided the shade in front of the old building, and these supports narrowly escaped destruction by the fire.

The new building is a bright addition to the traditional style of the other buildings. Everyone was very pleased to find the additional rest room, but the building itself is a joy. The light and air in the retail area is very pleasant, and there is something about the atmosphere of the room that gives me that little nostalgic tug. I haven't sorted this out yet, but it is definitely reminiscent of some other room or rooms I have known. While Mike jokes about his "object lesson in what he did not know about grade," the change in the grade in the area of the building will present design opportunities to the crew at ARE who will develop the site to match the beauty of the other gardens.

It is always a pleasure to tour the display gardens and see what these roses can do. The gardens in Independence and San Antonio are organic and, like many of our gardens at home, are not fussed over by a crew of manicurists. These beds present an opportunity also to see roses used with many companion plants, often very imaginatively. These roses are landscape plants indeed—they are real roses in real rose beds, and Yes, you can try this at home. Please do—it is richly rewarding.



The Musk Rose, by Alfred Parsons

## ROSA MOSCHATA

by Stephen Scarniello

Reprinted from his  
*Climbing Roses*,  
pp 13-14

Rosa Moschata, the musk rose, is a late summer-flowering rose that was brought to England from the Mediterranean region sometime during the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Although some authorities claim that there is a China rose in its heritage, its exact origins are not known, and no species of rose that can be called its ancestor has ever been found. Of the many references to the musk rose in literature, the most famous is probably the passage in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which Oberon describes Titania's bower as being over-canopied with woodbine, sweet musk roses, and eglantine. Shakespeare overlooked the fact that the musk rose starts to bloom only in late summer. Other, more accurate, descriptions appear in herbals of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In his *Herball* of 1597, John Gerard discussed the single musk rose, whose "flowers growe on the ropes of the branches of a white colour, and pleasant sweete smell, like that of Muske, whereof it rook his name."<sup>2</sup> Gerard is explicit about the bloom period: "The Muske Rose flowreth in Aurume, or the fall of the leafe."<sup>3</sup>

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John Parkinson, in his *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* of 1629, said that single and double musk roses “flower not untill the end of summer, and in Autumne...”<sup>4</sup> Parkinson recognized the climbing ability of this rose, for he wrote: “The Muske Rose, both single and double, rise up oftentimes to a very great height, that it overgroweth any arbour in a garden, or being set by an house side, to bee ten or twelve foote high, or more, ...”<sup>5</sup>

In the late nineteenth century the musk rose became confused with a summer-blooming wild rose from the Himalayas, *Rosa brunonii*, which closely resembles it. *R. brunonii* was often sold as the musk rose, and the true musk rose virtually disappeared from commerce until Graham Stewart Thomas pointed out that this “musk rose” that bloomed in early summer had to be an imposter. Thomas subsequently discovered a magnificent specimen of the true musk rose in an old garden in England.<sup>6</sup>

Inspired by Thomas's work, American “rose rustlers” (collectors of old garden roses who search out neglected and forgotten varieties) found other specimens in Virginia and North Carolina. Interestingly, many of the specimens in the United States have been traced to one family, the Burwells, who came to this country in the early seventeenth century. In 1837 a member of this family, a Presbyterian minister named Robert Burwell, founded a women's academy, the Burwell School, in Hillsborough, North Carolina; it is thought that many of the musk roses that have been discovered in this region came either from the grounds of that school or from the graves of members of the Burwell family.

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(Continued from page 24)

Descendants raised from the cuttings of these musk roses still exist today. In her garden at Chatwood, in Hillsborough, North Carolina, the late Helen Watkins grew a musk rose that came directly from the grounds of the Burwell School. Another specimen in the Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, has also been traced back to the Burwell family; this bush produces both single and double flowers, just like the musk roses Parkinson described more than three hundred fifty years ago.

The musk rose holds an important place in the history of climbing roses. Before the nineteenth century, it was one of the few roses that could be used as a climber; although it is not commonly cultivated today its blood lives on in the Noisettes, a class of rose that originated from the accidental crossing of a China rose and a musk rose.

A few specialty nurseries in the United States, England, New Zealand, and Italy now sell the true *R. moschata*.

Unlike most modern climbers and ramblers, which produce flowering laterals all along their canes, the musk rose bears the majority of its flowers at the ends of its canes, a characteristic noted by both Gerard and Parkinson. Each inflorescence is on a continuation, or growth, of the last blooming lateral; new blooms originate from the second or third bud eyes behind the previous bloom. There are also some flowers on the ends of the long canes that spring from the base of the plant. The small white flowers, which are borne in large clusters, open from very long, tapered buds, and they may be both single and double on the same plant;

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(Continued from page 25)

when double, they can have as many as thirty-five petals. Numerous clusters of flowers make up an entire inflorescence. The sweet, spicy fragrance, especially noticeable in the evening, is strong and unforgettable.

The musk rose is a vigorous shrub whose canes can reach ten to twelve feet in length. It is capable of surviving for centuries without pruning or other care, as evidence by the specimens found at old grave sites. Left on its own, it becomes a huge mound, often seven feet high and four feet wide, with blooms at the tips of a few long canes. Dead wood builds up in the center, probably due to lack of sun. To prevent this, periodically cut out some of the older canes and central clutter (old and new tangled laterals that grow inward and compete with new growth coming up from the center). No other pruning is required to induce blooming.

The musk rose will thrive without winter protection as far north as Richmond, Virginia, where its climbing habit is limited. In colder climates it will not be a successful climber; even in Virginia it is more of a tall shrub than a climber. At the Burwell School in North Carolina, it starts to bloom in July and continues right through the fall.

The dark green leaves are susceptible to blackspot, mildew, and a host of insects and other diseases. Nevertheless, *R. moschata* is a survivor, as we know from the durable old specimens of the true musk rose that have recently been found in England and the United States.

(Continued on page 27)

(Continued from page 26)

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Notes:

1. Although N[arcisse Henri François] Desportes, in *Rosetum Gallicum* (Paris, 1828), 111-12, claimed that John Gerard introduced the musk rose into England in 1596, it probably arrived there much earlier in the sixteenth century. See Roy E. Shepherd, *History of the Rose* (1954; facs. rept, New York; Coleman, 1978) 25; Graham Stuart Thomas, *Climbing Roses Old and New* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 36; and John Fisher, *The Companion to Roses* (Topsfield, Mass.: Salem House, 1987), 136.
2. John Gerarde, *The Herball or General Historie of Plantes* (London, 1597), 1084. (The spelling of Gerard's name on the title page of this edition is Gerarde.)
3. *Ibid.*, 1086
4. John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* (London, 1629), 418
5. *Ibid.*, 417.
6. Thomas, "The Mystery of the Musk Rose," in *Climbing Roses Old and New*, 48-57



*(Continued from page 3)*

scription of and argument for organic gardening I have ever heard. It gave me an enhanced understanding of the practice of gardening, and I am richer for it. Thanks, John!

Another standout was Jill Nokes's presentation of material from her book, *Yard Art & Handmade Places: Extraordinary Expressions of Home*. If you don't already have her book, I really suggest you buy it. The passionate gardeners and artists are an inspiration beyond description.

The programs of Bill Welch, Henry Flowers, and Margaret Cherry were quite worthwhile as well. The others I either missed or was not as impressed by, although Sandy Winokur's program on growing and producing olives in Texas was interesting. Unfortunately, I had to leave early and missed the second half of that one.

All in all, I would urge you to go to next year's festival, especially if you have not been to one.

Happy Gardening,

*Peter Schaar,  
President*

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