

Cold Hardy Roses

By

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Since we live in a cold region, some people may not have had luck-growing roses. Also, does growing roses with no fuss seem a fantasy? Well the problem is solved, try growing the Canadian bred roses: the Explorers and Parkland roses are among the hardiest hybrids on the market!

Today's modern hybrid roses stem from complex breeding utilizing primarily species native to the old world. Traditionally, rose growers in colder regions had to select from grafted roses, which include the floribundas, grandifloras and hybrid teas. These hybrid roses are among the most troublesome roses for northern rose growers due to their susceptibility to diseases and their general lack of hardiness. This is especially true for plants that are breed/grafted in warmer climates. To grow these roses you need to provide special care in winter to help them survive.

There are now a number of hardy shrub roses that are tough enough to survive the northern climates with very little extra work and as a bonus, many of them are resistant to diseases. Many of these robust roses were bred in Canada, so you know they have to be tough!

The Explorer roses were developed by the Agriculture Canada research stations in Ottawa, Ontario and L'Assomption, Quebec. The Explorer roses range in size from under 3 feet to large shrubs over 6 feet to climbers up to 9 feet. Most of these hybrids have semi-double blooms and are commonly in shades of pink or red. Some, especially those that utilize *Rosa rugosa* in their breeding, are highly fragrant. However, others have no fragrance. Most are repeat bloomers and exhibit good disease-resistance.

Among the lower-growing hybrids are 'Henry Hudson', 'Champlain', 'Frontenac', 'George Vancouver', 'John Franklin', 'Lambert Close', 'Nicolas', 'Royal Albert', 'Charles Albanel' and 'Simon Fraser'. For those with adequate space try the larger 'Alexander MacKenzie', 'David Thompson', 'De Montarville', 'Jens Munk', 'J.

P. Connell', 'Marie-Victorin' or 'Martin Frobisher'. Among the climbing Explorers are 'Captain Samuel Holland', 'Henry Kelsey', 'John Cabot', 'John Davis', 'Louise Jolliet', 'William Baffin' and 'William Booth'. If fragrance is your desire, then stick with 'David Thompson', 'Henry Kelsey', 'Jens Munk', 'John Cabot', 'John Davis', 'Louise Jolliet' and 'Martin Frobisher'.

The Parkland Roses were developed at the Morden Research Station in Manitoba. Their goal was to develop roses that could survive the deep cold of the prairie Provinces. The Parkland roses are generally of lower stature than the Explorers, available in a wider range of colors and are perhaps a little more refined in regards to flower shape. Many are resistant to black spot and powdery mildew. However, there are no climbers within this series and none is strongly fragrant.

Among those hybrids under 3 feet in height are 'Hope for Humanity', 'Morden Amorette', 'Morden Belle', 'Morden Blush', 'Morden Cardinette', 'Morden Fireglow' and 'Winnipeg Parks'. The taller growers (but still mostly under 4.5 feet) are 'Adelaide Hoodless', 'Cuthbert Grant', 'Morden Centennial', 'Morden Ruby', 'Morden Snowbeauty', 'Morden Sunrise', 'Prairie Dawn', 'Prairie Joy' and 'Rheinaupark'. Those that exhibit a light fragrance are 'Morden Cardinette', 'Morden Fireglow', 'Morden Centennial', 'Morden Snowbeauty', 'Winnipeg Parks' and the most fragrant of all these hybrids is 'Cuthbert Grant'.

The last group of Canadian-bred roses are the 'Canadian Artist' rose series. Now that the research stations in Ottawa and L'Assomption are closed and the Morden station has been seriously cut-back, it has been left to independent rose breeders in Canada. A group of breeders has started the Canadian Artist roses, named in honor of famous Canadian artists. Look for 'Emily Carr' and 'Felix Leclerc' in this series. So for the rose fancier why not try the Canadian-bred roses!

* Adapted from an article by Todd Boland a research horticulturist at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden.

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