

The American Rose Center
America's Rose Garden
Volunteer Newsletter

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Editor: Claude Graves—

"News You Can Use"

The newsletter for volunteers to the American Rose Center to keep you apprised of service opportunities

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*Please contact Frank or Pam for work assignments or other information,
Contact Don (other than a Thursday) only if Frank or Pam are not available.*

**ARC regular Volunteer Day is Thursday of every week
Master Gardener scheduled service day is the third Thursday of each month.**

Master Gardener Volunteer Chair, Larry Williams—Larryw@broadmoor.tv 318-294-0642

Rambler Ramblings... Claude Graves

Many decades ago when I was in elementary school, every September I had to write an essay answering the question, "What did you do on your summer vacation?" Well, its September, so perhaps it is appropriate to answer that question for this months news letter. This summer I built a greenhouse, maybe more explicitly, a mist house. Please allow me to explain the relevance of my summer activity to the Rambler Project at the American Rose Center.

The Anne Belovich Rambler Collection—Rambler Conservancy Plan

The project to preserve Anne Beloviche's Collection of rare ramblers at the American Rose Center is a very long term commitment. To continuously grow all of the approximately 350 individual varieties for many years will require a much different approach than growing a few endangered shrub roses. There are three critical factors that preclude just planting the roses and letting them grow for a long period of time. Those factors are that ramblers 1) grow very large, 2) would occupy acres of garden space and 3) be very expensive to maintain.

In our relatively small space of the rambler nurseries the only solution is to only grow small plants. Growth of plants can certainly be controlled to some extent by growing them in containers, limiting root growth and thereby stunting the growth of the plant, but that can only be done for a limited amount of time until eventually the health of the plant diminishes to the point of death.

The only feasible way to grow small ramblers in a limited space environment like a nursery is to frequently remove the plants that have reached the maximum allowable size from a space and maintenance labor-cost perspective and replace it occasionally with a new baby plant of the same variety. From my experience growing the Anne Belovich collection I have learned that the average time a rambler can be grown from a 1 gallon, year old rooted cutting in a nursery before reaching a limiting size is about 3 years.



This time can vary significantly for some varieties that grow very large, very fast, and some that in 5 or 6 years have not outgrown their welcome. At Chambersville I would gather cutting and root approximately one third of the collection each summer to replace those varieties in the nursery the following spring.

For the first year at the Rose Center we populated the nursery with cutting I had rooted at Chambersville the year before. This last year we added to the varieties with roses I rooted at home in my small "hobby" greenhouse and some varieties that Steven Roussell kindly rooted for us in Lake Charles, Louisiana.



In December of 2022 I lost 15 varieties of my last cuttings taken from Chambersville just before they closed. They were frozen and lost in a freak storm that dropped the temperature overnight from 70 degrees to 12 degrees the next morning along with 50 mph winds. It became obvious that my "hobby" greenhouse would not be sufficient on which to entrust the future of the Anne Belovich Rambler Collection.

After much research and debate I settled on an 8' x 12' "home" greenhouse, the Mont Black from Enhanced Leisure which although not a true "commercial" greenhouse was an American made, 8 mm Poly Carbonate panel, insulated greenhouse made from significantly stronger frame components than the proliferation of Chinese products on the market. The

greenhouse also offered much needed options such as built in benches, automatic roof vents and shade cloth. It proved to be a great choice, it was a very high quality kit, but not an easy build, even with my engineering background. However it is everything I thought it would be. It should go thru an event like the December '22 freeze with 50 mph wind with no problem.

I mentioned earlier that this was built to be a "mist house", as the primary function is to root annually, or semi-annually, replications of the rambler collection. Two irrigation systems and related timers were installed to provide for mist operation for rooting and then, drip irrigation when the rooted ramblers are transplanted into 1 gallon pots.



The two 12' long benches are topped with 1" rigid form insulation with heat mats under the plants to speed up the rooting time. In addition to the roof vents, a thermostat controlled exhaust fan was installed to increase ventilation on those 100 degree days. Power was run into the greenhouse for the heat mats, lighting, electric heaters and fans. Back up heat is a kerosene shop heater in case of a power outage and/or extremely low temperatures.



Maximum capacity for rooting is 450 plants, in 18 trays of 25 plants each. On Sept 6th and 7th of this year I took 325 cuttings in Nursery 1 at the American Rose Center. All of these cuttings are now stuck and currently in the greenhouse. Teddie Mower, Anne Belovich's Daughter in Law is sending me additional cuttings of as many varieties as she can find of 48 varieties we have lost from the collection over the years at Chambersville (including the 15 I lost in the December '22 freeze. These roses will max out the Greenhouse at 450 plants.

In the past, and this time I have stuck 3 of each variety to increase the odds that I get at least one of each rooted. I am hopeful that with the improved rooting facility I will only need to root two of each variety in the future.

Next Master Gardener Rambler Service Day
Thursday September 21st @ 8:30 AM

Note, Start time will drop back to 8:30, temperatures should only be in the low 80's Thursday morning.

We should have a lot to do this month. The time I spent in the nurseries a few weeks ago showed that there will be more tying and pruning to do than in the past. And, the weeds seemed to thrive in the hot weather!

I will bring a new supply of the green tying tape so people will not have to share a roll.

I will also bring some extra nursery marking pens. Some of the plant labels and grid map numbers have faded over the hot sunny summer and need to be traced over to make them legible.

I hope to see many of you Thursday!