

Dr. E. M. Mills Rose – A One Time Bloomer (?)

By Jim Wagner

During the break time in early June at the E. M. Mills Memorial Rose Garden, two of our members asked whether the Dr. E.M. Mills Rose that was acquired and planted in this garden in 2015 and had its first bloom in late May 2016 was a “one time bloomer”. Generally, a rose is considered a “one time bloomer” if it has a mass of heavy blooms from late May through mid-to-late June and just has sparse blooms the rest of the season. As I have the full 100 years of the American Rose Society Annuals, I was able to find several references to the Dr. E. M. Mills Rose. Below is some of the history from the 1923 - 1930 ARS Annuals. *This rose was named Dr. E. M. Mills in 1926 in honor of his being President Emeritus of the American Rose Society.*

From the 1923 ARS Annual, facing page 169 Plate XVII, An unnamed Van Fleet hybrid between *Rosa Hugonis* and the Hybrid Tea, *Radiance*. On page 189 of this Annual it is indicated this bloomed in June 1922 in the garden of the late Dr. Van Fleet in Harrisburg, PA and was a hybrid made by Dr. Van fleet as a cross between Rosa Hugonis and the Hybrid Tea, Radiance.



From the 1926 ARS Annual, Plate XL, opposite page 49 and text on pages 46 and 47 of this Annual, **the new Dr. E. M. Mills, the new Van Fleet Hybrid Hugonis rose is named Dr. E. M. Mills, in honor of our ARS President Emeritus (Dr. E. M. Mills).** In 1926 there was an arrangement between the American Rose Society and the United States Department of Agriculture, that the stock of this and another Van Fleet rose named Sara Van Fleet was divided upon equitable terms between rose-growing members of the American Rose Society who agreed to sell it at uniform price and with uniform descriptions furnished by the Bureau of Plant Industry. Purchasers of the stock of these two Van Fleet roses had arranged for the sale of these roses in the autumn of 1926 and the spring of 1927.

From “Rugosa Roses and Their Hybrids, page 125 of the ARS 1929 “American Rose Annual”.

“Dr. E. M. Mills. A hybrid Hugonis that makes a very pretty, early-blooming shrub growing to a height of 4 feet, with small, deep green foliage. Though classed as a Rugosa hybrid it looks to me more like a Hugonis and Spinosissima cross. Its semi-double

flowers, about 2 inches or more across, of a primrose shade, suffused with pink, are very decorative. Very hardy.” (Note by Jim Wagner: This is an excerpt from a six page article by a Chester D. Wedrick, Nanticoke, Ontario. In the 1929 ARS Annual covering several of the above types of roses).

From “The Proof of The Pudding”, page 175 of the ARS 1930 “American Rose Annual”.

(Note from Jim Wagner. “The Proof of Pudding” is now called “Roses in Review”. Like the current RIR reporting, the above reflects the opinion of several people).

Dr. E. M. Mills. H.Rug. (Van Fleet, 1926). A. R. A., 1926; P.P., 1928. “Preston reports that it blooms two weeks in June and has a few scattering flowers in midsummer. The plant is vigorous and ornamental, even when not in bloom. Webster also had a few flowers in midsummer and healthy, vigorous growth. Cross considers it a valuable shrub whose early bloom, fragrance, good foliage, and tendency to improve each year are excellent points. He claims that it must be carefully pruned to produce a shapely bush. Yeager states that it winter-killed severely in South Dakota, and that it is not of much value for his region. Isham found it a rampant grower, a shy bloomer, and very disappointing, which is to be expected in the warm California climate. We think that its chief merit lies in its early bloom and its spreading, shrub-like habit. It blooms only once at Breeze Hill.”



Conclusion

Based upon the above and that this rose just bloomed in any amount from late May through mid-June in the Mills Garden, this rose should be considered a “one time bloomer” - yet to be determined if it has any or limited bloom the rest of the season. As I was away part of July, this conclusion is based upon the pretty much lack of bloom of this rose after mid-June through the July 4th holiday.

Photo credits: left above:1926 ARS Annual opposite p 49; above:D. Hoihan