

ROSES ON FORTUNIANA ROOTSTOCK

By Martin Skinner, ARS Master Rosarian

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Fortuniana rootstock was discovered in China about 1848 by a Scottish plant explorer named Robert Fortune (one reference lists him as Forber Fortune.) In 1903 an Australian rose grower near Perth was short of rootstock and decided to bud some plants onto Fortuniana stock. The vigorous and healthy plants resulting from this graft made apparent the advantages of rosa Fortuniana.

In recent years more and more rosarians are growing roses that have been grafted on Fortuniana rootstock. Originally, this was true for only southern states, particularly Florida. The several advantages of this rootstock are that it is resistant to many varieties of nematodes, as well as gall, stem die-back and root diseases. Its very fine and abundant roots are ideal for sandy soil so as to absorb the nutrients and water that the plant requires. In addition, tests by Dr. Samuel McFadden at the University of Florida have demonstrated that plants grafted on Fortuniana rootstock produce more blooms and are taller than those grafted on other rootstock. Plants so grafted are known to live longer than those on other rootstocks.

It was originally thought that roses grafted on Fortuniana rootstock would not be practical in more northern states. Probably this is because the graft must be positioned well above the ground. Rosarians throughout Tennessee have discovered that this is not true; these roses survive the temperatures that we experience, particularly after the first year. When in doubt, the rosarians have placed mulch so that the graft is covered.

What is necessary in the growing of these roses is that they must be supported. This is because of the shallow growing roots and the tall bush. Otherwise, the main cane may break at the graft. In general, these roses should not be pruned as severely as plants on Dr. Huey rootstock, for example. Also, due to the maze of roots, these plants are heavy feeders. They should be fed and watered more often which results in more and stronger canes, and more and larger blooms. Many of the commercial growers are now offering roses grafted on Fortuniana rootstock. Many articles dealing with the use of Fortuniana rootstock can be found via Google. The above was extracted from several of these articles.