

# AMERICAN ROSE

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# At the Table

Tips on exhibiting roses  
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## EXHIBITORS FORUM

### Exhibiting Roses Texas Style

This edition of Exhibitors Forum illustrates different facets of showing roses through the story of Tommy Hebert.

## Finding a Rose Show Mentor and Becoming a Rose Show Mentor

AT 84, **TOMMY HEBERT** has grown roses much of his life and it only took a surprise visit to Tommy's garden by the late Slats Wathen to entice Tommy into exhibiting his favorite hybrid tea roses. Tommy recalls that after having briefly met Slats at his office, he arrived home to find Slats in his garden. Slats

pointed out a particular rose on the 'Garden Party' bush and suggested that Tommy should take the bloom to the 1982 Golden Triangle Rose Society Rose Show the very next Saturday. While in the garden Slats explained how and when the rose should be cut and promised to help get the rose entered on show day. As all good rose stories go, Tommy's 'Garden Party' won Duke of Show and though he's won several Queens since, none of the awards have given him greater pleasure

than that first Duke. The famous slogan for the Golden Triangle Rose Society, "We grow 'em, show 'em and share 'em", underscores Tommy's belief that roses are made for sharing and for showing. The late "Pop" Warner and Slats were key in Tommy's recruitment to the society and his rose education. Tommy learned from expert rose growers and exhibitors; he makes a tremendous effort to pass the information forward. Over the years, as members are encouraged to exhibit their

Tommy's floribunda 'Madison Grace' has HT form and covers itself in soft pink and white blooms.

roses for fun and for sharing with the community, Golden Triangle places emphasis on varieties that exhibit well. Tommy enjoys rose shows and thinks they're a great place to discover new varieties and are the most valuable tool for advancing the future of roses. Shows present a great opportunity to respond to questions from observers. And dispelling the myth that roses cannot be grown well in your area is best done at rose shows where the evidence of success is on display.

"Young" rose lovers are often numerous at rose shows, and Tommy has learned to spot those that have a desire to exhibit by the questions they ask. A gentle suggestion that they would enjoy exhibiting often helps them decide to give it a try. He likes to walk them through the judged show to highlight what makes each of the winning entries winners. Asking a few questions about what varieties they are growing gives opportunities to show a novice some good choices to add to their gardens that grow well locally.

## Executing Challenge Class Entries

TOMMY'S FAVORITE ENTRIES AT SHOWS are those that display open blooms in challenge class collections. These include Three Stages of Bloom or Triangle of Blooms. Entries in these classes are especially good when using a naturally-opened bloom. He advises that open blooms are not easy to grow unless they are covered during the period in which they slowly open naturally and oh-so-gracefully. He finds that the good open bloom "sells the collection" and wins the trophy. Favorite open blooms are 'Perfectly Red' and 'Pop Warner'. They open on the bush very readily to form a much more natural bloom than those that are "manufactured" at the show by plucking a few petals off a rose that has failed to hold its center well enough to be exhibited at exhibition form. The naturally-open bloom has a more graceful appearance with fresh stamens capturing the judges' attention. And, as every exhibitor learns,

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Dr T. Allen Kirk Trophy for Stage of Bloom

a couple of blue ribbons won in the open bloom class can be helpful when competing for sweepstakes. Tommy says, "I can think of no greater rose pleasure than helping the frustrated beginner understand that the simple solution to most of their rose problems is starting with a good rosebed. To see the light come on in their eyes, and to hear from them a few months later thanking you for your suggestions is generous payment." Tommy agrees that we can't deny that the camaraderie with other exhibitors is a benefit but he finds other reasons to exhibit. He argues that in our efforts to produce the best roses we not only benefit rose culture but we generously share care practices and culture with others. And it certainly encourages membership and participation in local, district and the American Rose Society shows and activities. Tommy wholeheartedly endorses exhibiting for fun; for the sake of the rose and for ARS!

## My Rose Show Mentor: Tommy Hebert

VISITING WITH THE JUDGES after an American Rose Society sanctioned rose show is always interesting and in 2014 at the Tyler National ARS Convention I hit the jackpot. Tommy Hebert from Beaumont, TX, shared with me the finer points of executing a great challenge class entry. I generally limit my entries to the horticulture classes but this gentleman rose pro encouraged me to step up and try something different. We also talked about his fairly recent infatuation with hybridizing. I'm not saying that I'll "step up" and venture into hybridizing but I will say you meet the nicest people at rose shows who are generous with their time and their expertise. It is this generous spirit that has mentored me and helped me grow my rose exhibiting efforts.



Tommy with 'Resa G'

## Hybridizing Roses: It's All About Creating Rose

EXHIBITORS TURNED HYBRIDIZERS have given their fellow exhibitors some fabulous roses. Of late, Fred Wright, John Smith and David Clemons have registered roses that are seen often on the trophy table and in exhibitors' gardens. Tommy Hebert joined the ranks of exhibitors cum hybridizers when he introduced the hybrid teas 'Resa G' and 'Shug' in 2013. Hybridizing roses appealed to Tommy not only because of his love of exhibiting roses but in large part due to his professional life as a chemist. Chemists work in an environment that involves tedious activities and hybridizing certainly has its share of tedious tasks. From his first efforts into hybridizing, Tommy enjoyed creating new roses and especially varieties that exhibit well.

Tommy's venture into hybridizing began with rose hips that were naturally available or open pollinated hips that were the product of largely self-pollinated sources of rose seeds. He explains that he harvested the hips, shucked them, refrigerated the seeds, planted them and succeeded in scoring a few successes (seeds that germinated), but their resulting seedlings most frequently were not strong and the blooms disappointing. He then started to read and ask questions of other hybridizers; "Lo and behold, reading and questioning proved itself again. I was reminded of the phrase 'hybrid vigor', which I had heard in a couple of college botany and genealogy courses in those ancient years of my education." The seedlings that result from crossing different varieties are normally more vigorous and productive than those resulting from self-pollination. When asked about the process of selecting parents for his seedlings, in true form for a Texan he replied, "As regards the selection of parents for my seedlings, I simply 'danced with who brung me'. I had about 250 rosebushes in my garden back when this all started — so I had a pretty good crop of 'breeders'. But I had no knowledge of which were best suited to be a 'Mom' or a

"Dad", and I couldn't care less. I simply introduced randomly selected pairs, performed the marriage, participated in the consummation, delivered the children and provided them with food and lodging. Unlike in today's society, where Junior's departure is often urged, if my seedlings work hard and produce satisfactory results, they are free to remain. Therefore, the population of my garden now exceeds 400. My ever-present motive that I have for hybridizing is to produce new varieties that will hopefully be good roses — with exhibition form!"

Of the thousands of seedlings hybridized, Tommy has registered only eight but he explains, "I have a couple of dozen 'in the oven' that haven't yet proven their worth. But I don't want to introduce a poorly performing variety, so they are still on trial." He has two particular hybrid tea seedlings, 'Cullen' and 'Rachie Pie', that make him think they will be of exhibition quality and be commercially appealing, but he isn't 'counting his chicks' yet. While *Horizon Roses*, edited by Robert B. Martin Jr., is a gift of commentary regarding new exhibition roses, Tommy also likes to personally hear what people think about his roses.

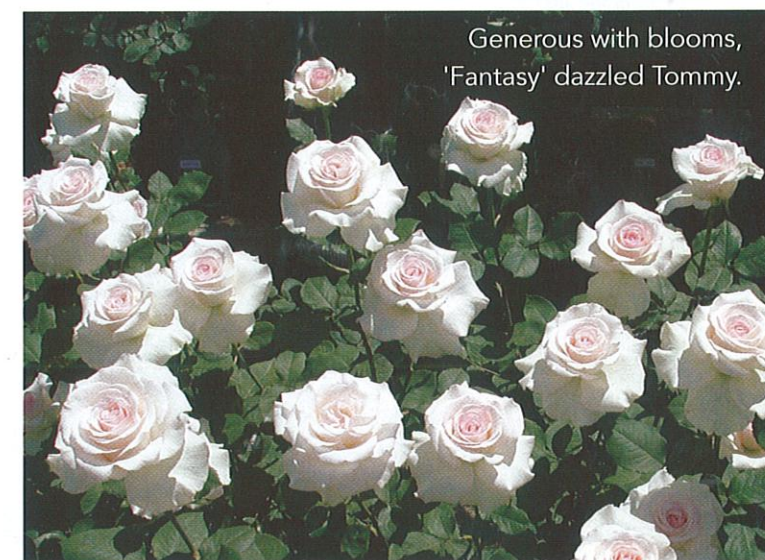
Tommy's favorite rose was formerly the last one that scored big for him at a show and while such roses still thrill him they are now sharing "pet" status with his own registered roses. He puts 'Shug', a medium-pink hybrid tea, at the top of his favorites since it grows well in south Texas, throws big stems almost free of prickles, has very good foliage and good sized blooms with good substance. Tommy admits that the all-important centers, especially in spring, are sometimes undependable, but he is pleased with comments from growers of 'Shug' in other parts of the country. 'Resa G', a red blend hybrid tea, has stirred the most interest of all his roses, with several big winners included. He says that 'Miz Tiz', a white hybrid tea, and 'Madison Grace', a pink blend floribunda, appear to be "comers." And, of course, Tommy has great hopes for his two seedlings, 'Cullen' and 'Rachie Pie'. Vendors selling Tommy's rose varieties are K and M Roses, Wisconsin Roses and Cool Roses.

While exhibiting is fun, hybridizing seems to give a unique and personal pleasure like no other. Tommy says, "What a great feeling to know that God and I were the sole creators of such roses. My roses have strong qualities and, although I'm still trying for a large

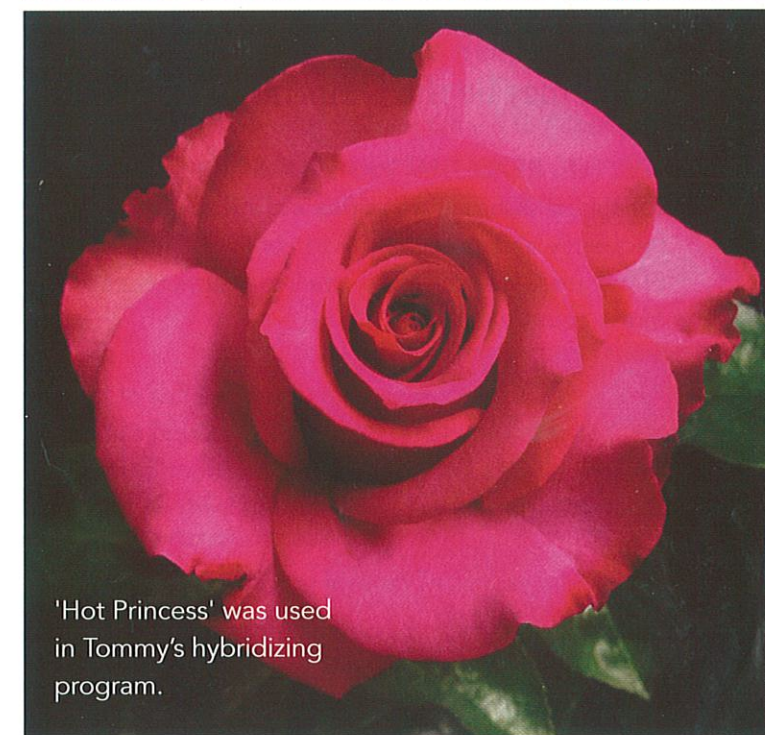
er percentage of fragrant, disease-resistant specimens, I am very pleased with the few that I have been partly responsible for placing on this earth." For all of you with even the slightest desire to hybridize roses "someday", Tommy suggests that you start now because his only regret is that he didn't start 25 years ago!

## Tommy's Favorite Exhibition Roses

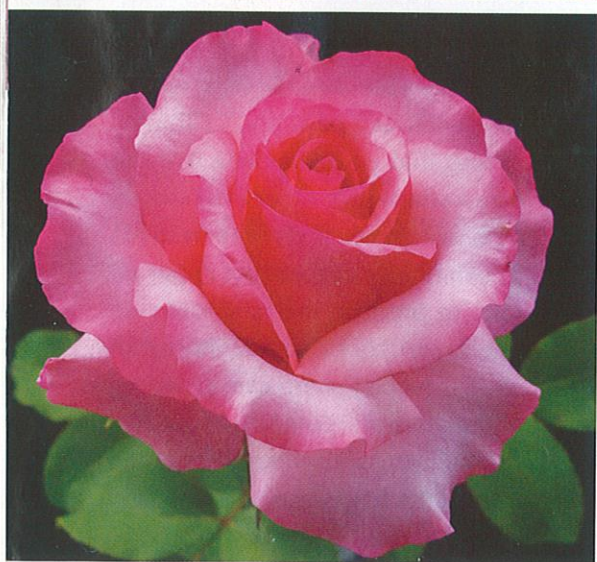
'Hot Princess', 'Fantasy', 'Resa G', 'Perfectly Red', 'Cajun Moon' and a "few others have borne that title at various times".



Generous with blooms, 'Fantasy' dazzled Tommy.



'Hot Princess' was used in Tommy's hybridizing program.



TOP: 'Resa G' already has a Queen to its name. BOTTOM: 'Shug' is the best exhibition rose Tommy has hybridized.