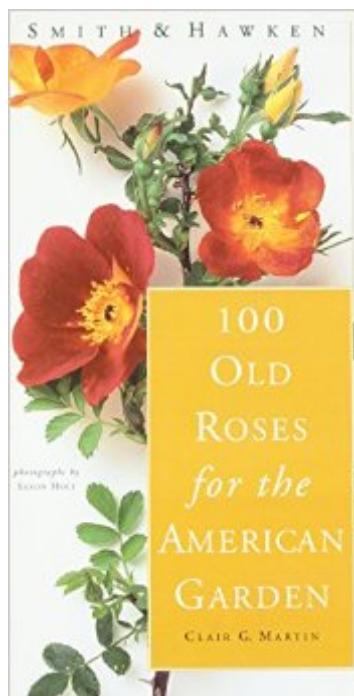


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Smith & Hawken: 100 Old Roses For The American Garden



Synopsis

Grow a rose once praised by Virgil, known today as 'Autumn Damask.' Or the ancient 'Apothecary's Rose,' which Count Thibaut brought back from the Crusades. Or 'Empress Josephine,' enjoyed by the lady herself. Treasured for their mixture of toughness and charm, versatility in the garden, and glorious scent, Old Roses are a revelation to gardeners accustomed to fussy modern hybrids. Suddenly roses don't come in one shape but in a dozen, and don't require a scientific approach but thrive with the basics of sun, water, and soil. Clair Martin, who has over 2,000 different roses under his care, offers enthusiasts a perfect introduction to growing Old Roses, followed by a focused list of 100 cultivars ideal for gardens across America. From 'Alba Semi-plena' an excellent cold-climate survivor and one of the oldest forms of the white rose, to the popular 'Zephirine Drouhin,' with her deep, rich cerise tones--each rose is photographed in sumptuous color and accompanied by history, parentage, culture, and at-a-glance information on availability, stature and habit, hardiness, and time of bloom.

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Customer Reviews

Clair G. Martin has produced a successful survey of old roses for most gardeners. His prior work, 100 English Roses for the American Garden is the preferred reference work for American Gardeners of the ever popular Austin Roses. This book gives a terrific survey of old roses for those unfamiliar with the subject. The book follows the same easy to use format as its predecessor. The opening section provides a useful review of the old roses and their history. Interesting side bars,

such as the biography of Pernet-Ducher, give a lively and informative view of the area. The most popular part of the book will be the field guide. Saxon Holt's lush photographs illustrate each of the roses. The text is clear concise and informative. Again the information below the text provides essential guides to size, as well as hardiness, based on region. All in all, a most useful book for the casual gardener who seeks to begin to grow old roses or even the more dedicated rosarian seeking a concise overview of the subject. For the more serious OGR aficionado, this book will be the source of many arguments based on the field guide choices. For readers of Brent Dickerson's tomes on the subject, or Graham Thomas's seminal works this book will lack the exhaustive information of those works, but should be pleasing because of its convenient size and breezy prose.

As others have previously mentioned, this is by no means the "authority" on the old roses, but what a wonderful little book it is! You don't have to work out twice a week in order to lift it and thumb through it, and it will fit in the back pocket of your overalls. The field guide is the area of the book I use most- the pictures are of a rose branch, often including buds, partly opened flowers and plenty of leaves, so you get a good idea of what the flowers, leaves and cane colors look like together, and that is not something many books offer. The pictures are taken on a clean white background and show the true form of the rose bloom. I like the author's style of writing and the fact that he often gives his opinion of the rose and the nature of it's scent, as well as the facts of it's growth habit. He also lists the roses by color in the back of the book, and that is a nice reference touch. This is a great reference book to take to the nurseries or on garden expeditions because it is so portable and offers so much information on each rose. We all know how vague some of those nursery tags can be, and if you don't have a photographic memory the easily found details quickly let you know if the rose you are considering will grow 4X4 or 10X10 in your area and whether or not it *really is* the rose that you want to plant beside the steps going to the back door! (I know- it would be just lovely there, wouldn't it....) I have this book as well as the "100 English Roses" by the same author. They are not the books I reach for on a rainy day when I am looking for design inspiration, but they *are* the ones that I constantly reach for when I am doing the actual planning and planting and need the facts, and also the ones that my friends love to borrow. These are not expensive books, and it will be money well spent.

Saxon Holt's color photos embellish nearly every page of this gardener's guide to old rose varieties. Unlike many rose books which assume prior knowledge, this advises a range of gardeners with details on the rose's growing needs and methods accompanying the full-page color photo of its

flower. Highly recommended: 'the' pick if only one or two rose books were to be included in a home gardening collection.

If you are interested in growing roses and want to try some that are not just your basic Hybrid Teas, this is a wonderful book to get. You will drool over the pictures and the text is excellent. The pictures take one page and are a gorgeous shots of the bloom with a long stem and leaves. On the opposite page is text which goes into great detail about the rose characteristics, growth patterns, habits, vigor, etc. It is an invaluable book when trying to decide what old garden roses to introduce to your garden. This format is so beautiful and so useful, that I have purchased all of the gardening books in this "series" by this publisher. It is rare to get such excellent photos in combination with such useful text. I started growing roses about five years ago and became frustrated with Hybrid Teas because of blackspot and their generally fussy behavior and stiff, formal flowers. This book and Liz Druitt's book were instrumental in getting me to try old garden roses, and am I glad I did! I would highly recommend this to both beginning gardeners and experienced, alike.

Although this book isn't all-inclusive (after all, the title is 100 old roses), this is the book I reach for first. It's great when I'm trying to find out more information on a rose in a catalog, or looking for an old rose for a specific spot. First of all, I can't resist the pictures (but they may be slightly misleading as in the case of Blanc Double de Coubert which I've never seen growing with the great cutting stem as shown). Second, the text makes for amusing reading. It's opinionated, and I like that. Third, there's the handy Index of Old Garden Roses by Color in the back. It's actually a little summary: flower style, plant type, and class e.g. Madame Isaac Pereire: cupped, tall, Bourbon. Very handy. The only thing that would make this better is if it had scratch and sniff (unfortunately not realistic)...since scent is such a subjective thing (I was so hot for Louise Odier until I smelled her and was surprised to find that I didn't like the fragrance).

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