

**Yard and Garden - 01-12-2013 - Ted Griess / Extension Horticulture Assistant**

*Every rose has its thorn.*

To most gardeners, that statement describes a prominent characteristic of a rose plant. Others may interpret it to have deeper meaning. For example, no matter what good we seek in life, it always seems also to have a negative side or the opposite effect; everything bad seems to have some good. Rather than getting all philosophical, I'd prefer just sticking to roses in general —no pun intended. Some gardeners avoid growing roses because they have annoying thorns, while others are more optimistic, praising these thorny plants for having roses. Which are you?

The rose is probably the most popular of all garden flowers. It grows in most every part of the United States. Many gardeners visualize growing roses in a special place. This past spring, Rita and I officially created a rose garden in our backyard. Only roses will be grown in this area. In previous years we've planted a number of roses among our other perennial flowers.

Well over six thousand varieties of roses exist, and plant breeders are introducing new varieties each year. I'm starting to think perhaps we should have made our rose garden larger.

I recently received an announcement from the All-America Rose Selections organization that



a grandiflora variety called *Sunshine Daydream* was selected as the AARS rose for 2012.

AARS is a nonprofit association comprised of rose growers dedicated to the introduction and promotion of exceptional roses. Established in 1938, this organization runs the world's

most challenging horticultural testing program and consistently recognizes roses that will be easy to grow and require minimal care by today's busy homeowner. AARS encourages the rose industry to improve disease resistance, ease of care and beauty in roses.



I first became aware of this organization in 1977 when I bought and planted *Double Delight*, the AARS rose choice for 1977. To this day, *Double Delight* remains one of my favorites.

Over the years, AARS has brought to the forefront some of the most popular roses in history. They include

*Peace* in 1946, *Forty-Niner* in 1949, *Chrysler Imperial* in 1953, *Tropicana* in 1963, *Perfume Delight* in 1974, *Showbiz* in 1985, *Brass Band* in 1995, *Knock Out* in 2000 and *Sunshine Daydream* for 2012. AARS winning roses are identified with the AARS red rose seal of approval to distinguish them from other roses at the nursery.



From its very beginning, AARS makes selections from six different classes of roses: *Hybrid Tea Rose*, *Floribunda Rose*, *Grandiflora Rose*, *Climbing Rose*, *Landscape/Shrub Rose* and *Miniature Rose*. In the early years, most winners were from the *Hybrid Tea Rose* or the *Floribunda Rose* class. The class *Landscape/Shrub Rose* became an instant hit with the announcement of *Knock Out* in 2000.



The *Knock Out* broke all records for sales of a new rose, and today it remains the most widely sold rose in North America. *Knock Out* was developed by William Radler, a Wisconsin botanist who was looking for a hardy, disease-resistant rose bush. Since 2000, newer varieties have been developed. All *Knock Out* varieties belong to the *Landscape/Shrub Rose* class and generally attain heights of three to four feet. Their strong popularity is based on two outstanding qualities: they are easy to grow and need little, if any, special care. This variety of

rose with stunning flower power is the most disease resistant rose on the market. It has a generous bloom cycle and provides a show of color from early spring well into late autumn. *Knock Out* varieties are hardy to USDA Zone 4 and heat tolerant throughout the entire U.S. They are self-cleaning, creating little need to deadhead. Periodic pruning in late winter/early spring keeps them maintained at a smaller size

Every rose has its thorn including *Knock Outs* — but who cares? With so many great beauties from which to choose, I encourage you to be an optimistic gardener, one who praises these thorny plants for having beautiful roses. That's how I view them.

For more information on AARS, visit their website at: [www.rose.org/](http://www.rose.org/)