

MSU Rose Garden Fills Many Roles

By Bob Ratliff

Roses are among the most popular additions to home landscapes, and the Veterans Memorial Rose Garden at Mississippi State University provides a panorama of traditional and new rose varieties.

The garden is located at the Highway 182 entrance to the R. Rodney Foil Plant Science Research Facility.

“Rose planting at the site began during spring 2006. By fall 2007, construction was complete, and more than 30 rose cultivars were established at the garden,” said Pam Collins, assistant professor and director of gardens in the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. “The garden is designed to be an important part of the horticulture program at MSU and to be a resource for members of the general public who are rose enthusiasts or who just enjoy the beauty of a facility of this type.”

The garden offers several features:

- A central gazebo
- Raised-brick planting beds encircling the gazebo
- Paved walkways through the beds
- An arched bridge connecting the site to a visitor parking lot
- Three arbors
- Ornate brick and steel fence
- Americans with Disabilities Act compliant

The garden was designed by MSU landscape architect Darryl Ray. Volunteers from the Oktibbeha County Rose Society and the Oktibbeha County Master Gardener Program planted the first roses at the site.

The garden includes several classes of roses:

- Hybrid Tea
- Shrub
- Floribunda
- Ground Cover
- Grandiflora



Photos by Kat Lawrence

“Most of the rose cultivars at the garden are on Jackson and Perkins understock or are hybrids developed by Louisiana hybridizer Eddie Edwards and grown on fortuniana rootstock,” Collins said. “These plants have good resistance to heat stress and plant diseases common in Mississippi.”

Most of the rose cultivars in the garden were donated by two major supporters of MSU’s horticulture programs.



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“Well-known Mississippi rosarian James Mills, owner of K and M Nursery in Buckatunna, donated plants, as well as time and talent to the establishment of the garden,” Collins said. “Jackson and Perkins, a national full-service nursery, has provided plants and other support for garden. The company’s efforts have been coordinated by its north Mississippi sales representative, Dave Shanklin, a graduate of the MSU horticulture program.”

The rose garden is used for a variety of activities, including:

- A teaching resource for the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
- A research site for MSU students and Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station scientists
- Self-guided tours by the public
- Programs for garden clubs and other organizations by MSU personnel
- Weddings and other private events by appointment

Virtual tours of the rose gardens are available on the Web at rosegarden.msstate.edu.



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