

Synopsis

A delightful, fascinating chronicle of Christopher's search for "old roses"--the original breed which all but vanished after 1867, when roses were hybridized. "What sticks in the mind is the stories he tells and the people he's met, researched or gone to look for--the mad, passionate, wildly uncompromising people, fixed on a flower."--New York Times Book Review. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

There are few books in my gardening library so excellent I buy extra copies; miserly dealt out only to The Worthy. One of them is In Search Of Lost Roses. In Search Of Lost Roses is a romp. A detective story. We are outlaws. We skulk through forgotten cemeteries. We drive old dirt roads. We meet eccentric old folks over garden gates, guardian angels of roses whose scent we will remember all our lives; things foreign to hybridizers in white lab coats. I defy you to read this book and ~not~ acquire at least one of the old roses lauded within. My first choice was 'Aimee Vibert', a climbing noisette from 1828. England and France have an ancient horticultural feud. French nurseryman J.P. Vibert named his fragrant white masterpiece after his daughter. (As an aside: hunt plants with a woman's name. Only the best plants were named after wives, daughters, and mistresses.) Vibert said of his delicate climber "The English when they see her will go down on their knees." As I did and still do. For the three weeks she blooms on the arbor she is the goddess of the garden. She has a magnetizing effect on garden visitors and I tell them the story and say the punchline in my Inspector Clouseau accent. It is a testament to Mlle. Vibert that 200 years later she is still enchanting, passed down gardener to gardener. I never would have known her without In Search Of

Lost Roses. You will never forget this book. But buy it for the rose rustler's cutting recipe alone, if you will. With it I rooted cuttings from a fragrant and summer-long unknown in an ancient cemetery (I gave her the name of the lady she was planted over) after two years of trying other methods. And buy two. Perhaps someone you know is worthy. 5 Stars for Mr. Christopher.

For me, Gardening is about feeding my soul with beauty. If you are weary from reading the countless "how-to" gardening books that fill the shelves of the bookstore, then I would highly recommend this book. Did you know that public parks evolved historically from cemeteries? Read this book to find out more. And, no doubt, as other reviewers have noted, you will go out and find yourself one of these roses after reading their story. Great book! :-)

My family has a long-standing love affair with roses: a "Belle of Portugal" that my grandmother planted in the 1920's has been passed down through several generations. So I found this book utterly delightful, full of fascinating anecdotes about old varieties of roses, the characters who developed and distributed them, and the even wilder characters who "rustle" and propagate old roses with passion and gusto today. The chapters are thematic and geographical, rather than historical, but they're immensely fun to read. I learned all sorts of amazing historical trivia -- e.g., why the Grass Valley, CA public library owns a Cornish/English dictionary, and the political aspects of rose nomenclature. And, as someone interested in "heirloom" plants in general (I'm a card-carrying member of Slow Food), I found his discussion of rose genetics and propagation fascinating. Some of his stories are poignant, too -- e.g., the elderly black women in rural Texas who propagated roses over the centuries from sheer love, but were dying out even as he wrote. I enjoyed the book thoroughly, and recommend it even if you're not an old rose buff.

This book was an interesting compendium of the experiences of the author in looking for and finding old roses. He gives insight into the background of roses, where to find them and practical knowledge of the collecting. I do think it is a scientific work or an index, rather an interesting read about how he approached collecting old roses and what made them interesting to him. I enjoyed it!

The first book I remember from my childhood is The Tasha Tudor Book of Fairy Tales. Tasha Tudor's illustrations always include garlands of roses, and I always knew I was going to have a garden absolutely full of roses. As a young adult, I was disillusioned with the modern hybrids that were available at that time. They looked stiff and unlovely in the garden, they had little fragrance,

and they fell prey to black spot and the cold northern climate. After spending huge amounts of time, effort, and money, I had given up on roses. Then, in the odd way things happen, I came upon this book in the return shelf at the library. I started reading it, and finally realized what was wrong in my experience with roses. The ideal rose in my imagination was a historic rose, not a modern hybrid tea! Thomas Christopher, even though he was a horticulturist, made the same discovery through serendipity. It is really fun to read how he discovered the world of heirloom roses and the people who grow them. You will find yourself enjoying this book while reading it, and then realizing later how much you learned from it. The book led to my gardening with old roses, and later, David Austin Roses, which are everything I ever hoped for in roses. If you want to read more about the history of the rose, another very interesting book on the subject is *The Quest for the Rose* by Phillips and Rix.

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