

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY ROSE SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Roses Have Always Been in My Life!

Hi! My name is Jennifer Culp. I was born in Tarzana and lived in a house my Father built. The rear yard was very large and I remember wandering through all the plantings with my Mother. I also recall being ordered to stay out of my older brother's way as he drove the tractor, so I headed indoors to ride my tricycle. Out in the front yard, my Mother had lots of roses along the fence by a circular driveway. I loved how the roses smelled and felt, except for the thorns!

Growing up, I spent endless hours exploring my Grandmother's back yard. It was large, full of fruit trees, flowers, cactus, you name it, and she probably grew it. It was a wonderful "jungle" in the backyard. Together, my Grandmother and I would prepare persimmons, figs, guavas, peaches, plums, and all sorts of wonderful jams. Her front yard had a giant flowering magnolia tree and cocoa trees with bean pods, which I fed to her two dogs. They loved it! Out along the driveway she had assorted roses and other flowers. Her neighbors were friendly people, always stopping by to enjoy all her flowers. She would send them along with a few of her lovely roses.

My Mother loved roses. She would shop for different varieties with both my Grandmothers and I. Even my Great Aunt would contribute the name of a particular new rose variety, and we'd start the search for it. I remember my Dad planting them all around the yard for her. She would loving tend to them, while I followed along smelling each one. I learned to be careful of bees after I was stung! We always had fresh beautiful roses on our dining table, breakfast table, and coffee table in the living room. The vision and fragrance is a wonderful childhood memory.

Fast forward many years, I celebrated matrimony on the Queen Mary with all red and white roses. Settling into my new home, I planted rows of rose bushes along the driveway, so I would have plenty to choose from to cut and bring into the house. This brought me many years of joy and much fun while educating myself at botanical gardens and commercial nurseries, and the welcome opportunity to meet many of my neighbors.

My daughter grew up carrying sow bugs around in her pocket, which she would happily share with you. She grew up with the same love of gardens, and began taking me along with her to wonderful botanical gardens in other states, and there was always a rose garden! We always let the neighborhood children cut 2-3 roses to take home, with the understanding that they could return another day for more roses, and we would not cut them all but leave some to enjoy. Everyone was happy!

While I understand there is no true “blue” rose, I had strangers knocking on my front door, or stopping their auto while driving down the street, to ask me the name of my “blue” rose. It was “Blue Girl,” which has shades of purple, but over the years it took on a more blue hue. There is always so much to learn! New introductions, old heirlooms, great and exciting color combinations! And it is such fun to share roses with others who enjoy them, as well!

After an injury, I was worried I would no longer be able to tend my rose bushes with the same loving care, as I had in the past. This was a huge concern for me. I researched the various types and discovered rose trees. I purchased several rose trees and had them planted. However, I just couldn’t remove the rose bushes. So, I pruned them all away leaving only one sturdy stem, staked upright with a metal pole, and turned them into rose trees. They all survived and thrived, and I was thrilled!

Armed with heavy duty welding gloves, which came up to my elbows, I tackled my roses for pruning. What a difference these gloves made for me! No more stabbing from thorns. Nowadays, so many modern advantages to help us deal with these challenges, and many different gloves are available for sale to help us. I won’t even mention all the wonderful cutting tools available now.

It is generally understood, spending time in your garden with your roses and other lovely specimens you enjoy, whether it’s native plants, succulents, orchids, lilies, azaleas,--you name it, they all go with roses, is as therapeutic to your body, mind, and soul, as is listening to good music! Prayer and meditation are often found within a garden, and frequently accompanied by music! Energy, spirit, compassion, loving kindness, and peace can all be found in your garden!

Now, living for over 30 years in Huntington Beach, I unknowingly became somewhat spoiled. I could place just about any plant anywhere and it would grow. Ordered lots of seeds, they sprouted. Grow vegetables, no problem. You name it, just like my Grandmother, I may have grown it at some point. I was distressed to leave my avocado tree and my Datura trees, but I came to the SFV to take care of my Mother. Over a number of years, my daughter had planted native plants and succulents, and my Mother still had some fruit trees and rose bushes and climbers. After a number of plants died, and I was quickly humbled, I went looking for knowledge and help!

One of the very best ways to enjoy your roses is to join your local rose society. You will learn from day one everything you may need to know for the proper care and maintenance of your roses, and the SFV offers some unique challenges to growing

roses successfully. You will meet some of the friendliest and welcoming people you could ever hope to meet!

Most rose societies offer monthly speakers, refreshments, fundraising with roses of some type to fund speakers and programs, and camaraderie with fun people. There are always a few “walking encyclopedias” in the room, people with vast knowledge who are more than willing to share with you, should you have any questions or concerns about your own roses. At SFV Rose Society, we have several Rosarians, who are often in attendance and happy to help you with any questions you may have.

I invite and welcome you to stop by the SFV Rose Society meetings held at the Wilkinson Senior Center in Northridge, on the second Saturday at 10:00 a.m., to hear our informative and educational speakers, relax with some delicious refreshments and a cup of coffee, and meet some of our friendly Members. You will not be disappointed. See you there!

Jennifer Culp ☺
President
SFV Rose Society