



# THE HERITAGE ROSE DISTRICT OF NEW YORK CITY

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Celebrating our heritage with  
historic roses in West Harlem  
and Washington Heights



Manhattan Borough President  
**Scott M. Stringer**

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October 2009



## **About Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer**

Scott M. Stringer, a native New Yorker, was sworn in as Manhattan's 26<sup>th</sup> Borough President in January 2006. During his tenure, Borough President Stringer has led the way in addressing many of Manhattan's most pressing issues, including: increasing community input and response to development and planning projects across the borough; introducing comprehensive reform and empowerment measures to Manhattan's Community Boards; leading the fight to maintain and create new affordable housing units across the borough; empowering parents to better participate in the public school system; investigating and recommending policy action on the city's many transportation issues; and helping working families and small businesses access resources to become and remain self-sufficient. As Borough President, he has also released the following reports:

- FoodStat: Measuring the Retail Food Environment in NYC Neighborhoods (May 2009)
- A New Day For Parental Engagement: Reforming & Empowering Community Education Councils (March 2009)
- Uncalculated Risk: How Plans to Drill for Gas in Upstate New York Could Threaten New York City's Water System (February 2009);
- Food in the Public Interest: How New York City's Food Policy Holds the Key to Hunger, Health, Jobs and the Environment (February 2009);
- Saving the Moms & Pops: Ten Ways to Support Small Independent Retail Stores and Keep Manhattan Vibrant (January 2009);
- Illegal Street Vending: The Unique Case of Ground Zero (October 2008);
- Dangerous Neglect: Elevator Safety in New York City Housing Authority Buildings (September 2008);
- Still Crowded Out: School Construction Fails to Keep Up with Manhattan Building Boom, Updated Analysis (September 2008);
- Land Rich, Pocket Poor: Making the Most of New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) Unused Development Rights (August 2008);
- Senseless Subsidies: A Report on Tax Benefits Under the Industrial and Commercial Incentive Program (May 2008);
- Crowded Out: School Construction Fails to Keep Up with Manhattan Building Boom (April 2008);
- A Working Balance: Supporting New York City's Families through Paid Family Leave (January 2008);
- We Want You(th)! - Confronting Unregulated Military Recruitment in New York City Public Schools (September 2007);
- Hidden in Plain Sight: Sexual Harassment and Assault in the New York City Subway System (July 2007);
- No Vacancy: The Role of Underutilized Properties in Meeting Manhattan's Affordable Housing Needs (April 2007);
- No Way Out: An Analysis of The New York State Department of Health's Role in Preparing Nursing Homes for Emergencies (December 2006);
- Breaking Parole: An Analysis of The New York State Division of Parole's Caseload Management Guidelines (December 2006);
- The State of Repairs: An Examination of Elevator and Escalator Maintenance and Repairs in New York City's Subway System (August 2006);
- Thinking Outside the Box: An Analysis of Manhattan Gridlock and Spillback Enforcement (July 2006); and
- Parents Dismissed: An Analysis of Manhattan's Community Education Councils and the New York City Department of Education's Role in Engaging Parent Leaders (June 2006).

## About the Heritage Rose Foundation



The Heritage Rose Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1986, devoted to the preservation of old roses. Its mission is to preserve heritage roses and promote their culture; to establish gardens where these roses may be grown and displayed; to foster public knowledge and appreciation of heritage roses and their preservation.

Goals of the Heritage Rose Foundation:

- The collection of roses originating in the nineteenth century or earlier and roses with particular historic, educational, or genetic value (heritage roses).
- The establishment of one or more gardens wherein heritage roses may be grown and displayed.
- The advancement of research and investigations into heritage roses, including history, identification, genetics and breeding, propagation, diseases and pests, and suitability for landscape use.
- The publishing and dissemination of information about heritage roses, including any and all research that emanates from the foundation.
- The establishment and maintenance of a library of books, periodicals, research papers, manuscripts, catalogues, and other items to facilitate further research and investigation into heritage roses.
- The establishment of public knowledge of heritage roses through seminars, meetings, forums, panels, lectures, tours and exhibits designed to encourage and increase the public's perception of heritage roses.

For additional information about the Heritage Rose Foundation, please contact Stephen Scanniello (President) at P. O. Box 831414, Richardson, TX 75083 or [steprose@mac.com](mailto:steprose@mac.com).

## **Acknowledgements**

The Borough President thanks all the staff of his office who helped develop and create the Heritage Rose District of New York City. In particular, the Borough President thanks staff members Paimaan Lodhi, Urban Planner, for leading his office's efforts in creating the Heritage Rose District, and Anthony Borelli, Director of Land Use and Planning, for his guidance in developing the project. The Borough President also thanks the following staff members who worked on this report and helped launch the project: Alaina Gilligo, Chief of Staff; Cuong Nguyen, Deputy Chief of Staff; Sascha Puritz, Director of External Affairs; Carmen Boon, Press Secretary; Joan Vollero, Deputy Press Secretary; Sari Bernstein, Deputy Director of External Affairs; and Anthonine Pierre, Community Liaison.

This project would not be possible without the dedication and partnership of the Heritage Rose Foundation, in particular, Stephen Scanniello, President, and Betty Ellen Vickers, Secretary. Their vision, guidance, knowledge and resourcefulness have been immensely important to the creation of the first heritage rose district in the country.

The Borough President and the Heritage Rose Foundation are especially grateful to the nurseries from around the country that generously donated the rose bushes to begin this very special project: Antique Rose Emporium of Brenham, TX; Ashdown Roses of Redlands, CA; Brookville Nursery of Glenhead, NY; Der Rosenmeiseter of Ithaca, NY; Florida Southern College of Lakeland, FL; Presby Iris Garden of Montclair, NJ; Roses Unlimited of Laurens, SC; and Vintage Gardens of Sebastopol, CA.

The Borough President also thanks the following community members, volunteers and City employees who have been early supporters and contributors to this project in a variety of ways:

- Jane Bolster, American Academy of Arts and Letters
- Douglass Brenner, Heritage Rose Foundation
- Cathaline Cantalupo, NYC Dept of Parks and Recreation
- Francia Castro, Boricua College
- Mencia Figueroa, Hispanic Society
- Amy Gavaris, New York Restoration Project
- Yekaterina Gluzberg, Partnerships for Parks
- Grinnell Tenants Association
- Robert Herrmann, Broadway Malls Association
- Camilla Huey, Roger Morris Park Conservancy
- Reverend Jerry Keucher, Church of the Intercession
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- Margaret McQuade, Hispanic Society
- Ken Moss, Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum
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- Riverside Oval Association
- Robert Santos, City College of New York
- Steve Simon, NYC Dept of Parks and Recreation
- Mark Vaccaro, NYC Dept of Parks and Recreation
- Matthew White, Recycling the Past
- Michael Mowatt Wynn, Harlem Heights Historical Society
- Rick Zeidler, NYC Dept of Parks and Recreation



## **THE HERITAGE ROSE DISTRICT OF NEW YORK CITY**

**A project of  
Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer  
and the Heritage Rose Foundation**

### **Overview**

Roses have been appreciated throughout the centuries and are considered one of the most popular and widely cultivated flowers in the world today, with over 150 species and more than 20,000 hybrids available. Roses are a well know symbol of love. In varying colors and arrangements, roses also represent unity, friendship, happiness and courage, among other meanings.

The rose, in all its variety and color, was made the New York State flower in 1955. In 1986, the rose was proclaimed the national floral emblem of the United States of America.

“Heritage” roses are a collection of roses originating in the nineteenth century or earlier, with particular historic, educational, or genetic value. Heritage roses are also known as *old* roses, *wild* roses, *heirloom* roses, *historic* roses, and *antique* roses.

The neighborhoods of West Harlem and Washington Heights – both with ample open spaces and a rich history – provide a perfect setting for growing and displaying roses, especially when the plantings are inspired by local heritage and convey a special meaning to a place or time.

### **What is the Heritage Rose District of New York City?**

The vast majority of distinguished rose collections are maintained in private estates, formal gardens, and dedicated public gardens. Similar to these gardens, the Heritage Rose District of New York City (“Heritage Rose District”) contains a variety of noteworthy old roses. However, its collection is displayed in everyday public spaces throughout West Harlem and southern Washington Heights – in neighborhood parks, publicly accessible open spaces, roadway medians, sidewalk planters and residential front yards for everyone to enjoy freely at most anytime.

More than a beautification project, the Heritage Rose District is intended not only to increase the public's perception of heritage roses, but also to create attractive markers celebrating the horticultural history of New York City, honor local historical figures, and celebrate local culture and heritage. The Heritage Rose District is the first of its kind in the country.

### **Origins of the district**

Since taking office in 2006, the Borough President has been working on several community-based planning initiatives focused on the neighborhoods of West Harlem and southern Washington Heights. The promotion of local cultural resources toward supporting economic development has been a significant goal of the Borough President’s planning efforts.

Inspired by recent plantings of heritage rose bushes at the graves of notable New Yorkers interred in Trinity Church Cemetery, community leaders conceived of the Heritage Rose District as a means to strengthen the public’s ties to the area’s rich heritage and to raise the visibility of their neighborhoods.

The planting of the commemorative roses was spearheaded by the Heritage Rose Foundation (HRF), a nonprofit organization established in 1986, devoted to the preservation of old roses. In Spring 2009, the Heritage Rose Foundation planted the Harison’s Yellow, thought to be the original “Yellow Rose of

Texas,” near the grave of George Folliott Harison, who in the 1830s created this rose in his Manhattan garden. On the grounds of the Church of the Intercession, Heritage Rose Foundation marked the grave of John James Audubon by planting the ‘Audubon,’ a red rose created to celebrate the famed naturalist whose estate became Trinity Church Cemetery.

### **District boundaries and planting sites**

The Heritage Rose District encompasses the western portion of Northern Manhattan generally between West 135<sup>th</sup> and West 163<sup>rd</sup> streets, with Broadway and Trinity Cemetery at its nexus. With additional plantings on the historic grounds of Trinity Cemetery and at several other nearby locations, the Heritage Rose District, with an initial collection of over a hundred roses bushes, was established by the Manhattan Borough President’s Office and the Heritage Rose Foundation in Fall 2009 (*see map*).

Planting sites have historic or cultural importance, past or present. The variety of rose chosen for each site honors or celebrates a historic or cultural quality specific to the neighborhood and location. For example, the flowerbeds in the West Harlem triangle parks dedicated to distinguished singer Johnny Hartman and World War I soldier Dorrance Brooks, will be planted with species that were bred by New Yorkers or once grew on the estates of notable local residents such as John J. Audubon, Alexander Hamilton and Madame Eliza Jumel. The Heritage Rose District collection also includes the Puerto Rico rose, found on the island and symbolic of the area’s cultural ties to the Caribbean.

Rose bushes require regular care and maintenance to thrive. Accordingly, inaugural planting sites are sponsored by public and institutional stakeholders in the creation of the Heritage Rose District, namely the Department of Parks and Recreation, Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum, the Broadway Malls Association, Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum, City College of New York, the Hispanic Society of America, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Boricua College.

### **Expanding and sustaining the Heritage Rose District**

The Heritage Rose District is a volunteer effort coordinated by the Manhattan Borough President’s Office. The project depends on a network of volunteers and philanthropic supporters. All rose bushes in the district’s inaugural collection were donated by nurseries from around the country. Horticultural expertise and guidance is provided by professional horticulturalists or trained volunteers and is coordinated by the Heritage Rose Foundation and its partners.

Day-to-day maintenance of the roses, including pruning, watering and pest control, is site-specific and the responsibility of dedicated individuals or organizations. The initial planting sites reflect commitments by the City and local institutions. Future planting sites will require similar sponsorships, and hopefully will include other public sites, such as New York City Housing Authority developments and community gardens as well as broader streetscape efforts that may include the front yard space of private residences.

Proposals for additional planting sites are welcome. Because roses thrive only under specific conditions, it is important that future planting sites meet the following criteria: ample sunlight, protection from the elements, separation from walking paths, protection from road salt and other de-icing agents, and dedicated maintenance by an individual or organization. Sites that are also surrounded by fencing and/or on raised beds are particularly well suited.



# HERITAGE ROSE DISTRICT OF NEW YORK CITY

## Planting Sites

Fall 2009

- 1 Morris-Jumel Mansion
- 2 Audubon Terrace
- 3 Plaza at 155th and Riverside Dr
- 4 Church of the Intercession
- 5 Trinity Cemetery
- 6 Broadway Malls
- 7 Jackie Robinson Park
- 8 Montefiore Park
- 9 City College Campus




Spring 2010

- 10 Convent Garden
- 11 Donnellan Square
- 12 Maggie's Garden
- 13 Johnny Hartman Plaza
- 14 Hamilton Grange
- 15 Dorrance Brooks Square
- 16 St. Nicholas Park
- 17 St. Nicholas Place Playground

Future Plantings

- ▲ Additional Sites

## Local Features

-  Parks and Open Spaces
-  Historic Districts
-  Subway Station

A Project of:



Office of Manhattan Borough President  
Scott M. Stringer



The Heritage Rose  
Foundation



## More about the roses

The majority of roses selected for the Heritage Rose District are known to have grown in New York City prior to the twentieth century. Some were created in the city; other were imported from sources around the world. All celebrate the neighborhoods of West Harlem and Washington Heights and the history of New York City.

### Photograph



*Vintage Gardens*



*Stephen Scanniello*



*Vintage Gardens*



*Vintage Gardens*



*Vintage Gardens*

### Rose name<sup>i</sup> and description<sup>ii</sup>

#### **‘Apothecary’s Rose’ and ‘Rosa Mundi’**

Both of these ancient varieties are gallica roses dating back to medieval times. ‘Rosa Mundi’ is a striped sport, or mutation, of the red ‘Apothecary’s Rose’. These spring-blooming shrubs were included the 1811 inventory of the Elgin Botanic Garden. Dr. David Hosack, the curator of this long-gone garden, is buried in Trinity Church Cemetery.

#### **‘Audubon’**

Christened in 2004, this red rose celebrates the famed naturalist whose estate became Trinity Church Cemetery. Five-petaled fragrant roses cover this four-foot shrub all summer long. This rose is planted on the property of the Church of the Intercession at Broadway and W. 155th Street, near Mr. Audubon’s grave.

#### **‘Baltimore Belle’**

Named for the daughter of a reformed drunkard, this climbing rose created by Samuel Feast was introduced to NYC from Baltimore in 1843. After his death, Feast’s nursery became part of the Baltimore estate known as “Harlem.” The light pink roses bloom in June.

#### **‘Celsiana’**

Of Dutch origin pre-18th century, this popular rose was undoubtedly in early Dutch gardens in New Amsterdam. A tall-growing shrub, ‘Celsiana’ produces pink flowers in June.

#### **‘Centifolia’**

Also known as cabbage roses, centifolias were grown in Manhattan’s Dutch gardens as early as 1650. One interesting citing of this rose was by Fredika Bremer, author of *The Homes of the New World* (1853). Ms. Bremer observed female inmates in the Tombs tending a bed of these shrubby pink roses.



*Vintage Gardens*

### **‘Cramoisi Supérieur’**

The cherry-red roses of this small plant were sold at the Harlem-based nursery of Floy and Sons in 1835, two years after it was first produced in Paris. One of the many popular continuous-blooming French roses found in gardens of New Yorkers, it was also noted in the 1842 garden of D. Monck. Monck grew roses for the cut flower/florist trade. Monck had one entire greenhouse devoted to ‘Cramoisi Supérieur,’ where he grew them in pots.



*Kent Krugh*

### **‘Duchess of Portland’**

A red rose with strong fragrance, ‘Duchess of Portland’ was grown in 18th century Manhattan in kitchen gardens. During the 19th century, ‘Duchess of Portland’ was used to create a new class of roses know as Portland roses. Swiss-born horticulturist Daniel Boll sold many Portland roses at his nursery located at 52nd street and Bloomingdale Road.



*Stephen Scanniello*

### **‘Felleberg’**

The nursery of Noe & Boll (located near present day Times Square) listed this rose in their 1837 inventory. It’s appropriate that Daniel Boll, a Swiss born gardener, would sell this rose. It’s suspected that this rose is of Swiss origin, as well. A short growing climbing rose. ‘Felleberg’ (also spelled ‘Fellenberg’) produces cherry-red roses throughout the summer and autumn.



*Stephen Scanniello*

### **‘Graham Thomas’s Single Musk’**

This tall growing, extremely fragrant white rose was discovered in 20th century England by Graham Stuart Thomas. It’s thought to be *Rosa moschata* (the Musk Rose), an ancient species rose that was considered by many to be extinct. Native to northern Africa, the musk rose was brought to New Amsterdam by Dutch settlers in 1672.



*Stephen Scanniello*

### **“Green Mount Red”**

Only two plants of this small-flowered red rose are known to exist today. The oldest grows in Baltimore’s Green Mount Cemetery, the other is newly planted on the grave of Mr. George F. Harison in Trinity Church Cemetery. Harison’s plant was grown from cuttings taken from the Baltimore cemetery. It’s possible that this rose may be the long lost 1854 variety ‘Beauty of Greenmount’[sic], a red shrub rose created by James Pentland while he was the head gardener of Green Mount cemetery. Pentland’s rose was included in the inventory of 19th century New York nurseries.



*Stephen Scanniello*

### **‘Green Rose’**

Green color, no fragrance, and small blooms - this rose was a popular conversation piece among the elite gardeners of NYC when it was first sold during the 1830’s. Of unknown origins, this three-foot shrub was rumored to be a sub-rosa symbol for the Underground Railroad. Peter Henderson, nurseryman from Jersey City, described in best in 1894: “...of no beauty whatsoever, only sought for as a curiosity.”



*Vintage Gardens*

**‘Harison’s Yellow’**

Deep yellow, fragrant blossoms adorn this tall growing shrub rose. Thought by some to be the “Yellow Rose of Texas,” this beauty created a sensation when first introduced in NYC around 1830 by George Folliott Harison, who created this rose in his Manhattan garden. ‘Harison’s Yellow’ is planted near Mr. Harison’s grave in Trinity Church Cemetery.



*Vintage Gardens*

**‘Hermosa’**

A pale pink rose popular among gardeners and florists of 19th century New York. In 1842 ‘Hermosa’ rose was grown in the greenhouses of D. Monck, a florist on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue near 28<sup>th</sup> Street. ‘Hermosa’ means “lovely” in Spanish, and is a fitting name for this beauty. In 1879, Jersey City florist Peter Henderson discovered a climbing form of this small shrub and named it ‘Setina’.



*Malcolm Manners*

**‘Louis Philippe’**

Sr. Lorenzo de Zavala, a distinguished Mexican statesman, brought this crimson rose, named in honor of Louis XVIII of France, to NYC circa 1835. Eventually moving to Texas, Zavala had a strong disagreement with Santa Ana and fought with the Texians [sic] in the Battle of San Jacinto. It was said that his wife watched the battle from her garden, where this rose was planted. The Zavalas always maintained a home in New York City, where he may have also planted this rose. There are those who call this the “Red Rose of Texas”-- perhaps it also is the “Red Rose of New York?”



*Stephen Scanniello*

**‘Madame Boll’**

The deep pink, intensely fragrant rose was introduced from France in 1853 to honor the wife of Daniel Boll of Noe & Boll Florists, New York City. The nursery was located in what is now Times Square. Daniel Boll is buried in Trinity Church Cemetery in a grave that had been forgotten for many years until recently located by members of the Heritage Rose Foundation.



*Vintage Gardens*

**‘Madame Hardy’**

Pure white with a green button eye, this fragrant damask rose can grow to five feet tall and wide. On June 22, 1837, this green-eyed beauty was offered for sale at Noe & Boll, Florists of Manhattan.



*Vintage Gardens*

**“Maggie”**

This fragrant red Bourbon rose of unknown origin has been found in gardens throughout the world. One such discovery was in the garden of Mattie Breedlove, whose garden was in an earthen, swept yard - characteristic of her African culture. Ms. Breedlove allowed cuttings to be taken, thereby returning this beautiful rose to commerce. The Harlem garden of John M. Bradhurst, a Manhattan apothecary, was famous for its collection of Bourbon roses.



*Malcolm Manners*

**“Maitland White”**

A fragrant white rose of unknown origin discovered on the island of Bermuda during the 20th century. It's a variety of a tea rose, a class of 19th century roses thought to be too delicate for northern climates. However, R. F. Carman (buried in Trinity Church Cemetery) was praised for his superb collection of tea roses. The Carman garden was north of the cemetery.



*Antique Rose Emporium*

**‘Marchioness of Londonderry’**

Pale pink with exquisite blooms, this fragrant 19th century Irish beauty was introduced to New York gardens during the influx of Irish immigrants. The large roses are produced all summer on a 5-8' upright shrub.



*Kent Krugh*

**‘Mary Washington’**

Small flowers of white and pink with a delightful fragrance are produced in clusters throughout the summer. According to tradition, this moderate growing shrub was created by George Washington circa 1790 and named by him for his mother, Mary Ball Washington.



*Vintage Gardens*

**‘Princess de Nassau’**

Princess de Nassau' covered arbors and fences in 19th century New York gardens with fragrant creamy-white roses all summer long. Of French origin, this was one of the many “Musk Cluster Roses” sold in Manhattan during the 1840s.



*Malcolm Manners*

**“Puerto Rico”**

Sr. José Marrero-Torrada, a horticulturalist who wrote *Las Rosas del Ayer* - a fine monograph on the heritage roses of Puerto Rico, recently discovered this rose on the islands. “Puerto Rico” is upright shrub that produces medium-sized, fragrant creamy-white roses all summer long. Some rose experts suspect that this found rose may be the same as the Bermuda Mystery Rose “Maitland White”.



*Vintage Gardens*

**‘Rose du Roi’**

This fragrant reddish-purple rose, named for King Louis XVIII of France, was the most popular florist rose in Manhattan during the 1840's. A good garden plant as well, this medium-sized shrub was especially beautiful in the garden of R. F. Carman in 1841.



*Malcolm Manners*

**‘Russeliana’**

Sold in New York City as long ago as 1844, this climbing rose was planted near graves and used in mass plantings in the garden style cemeteries of the Victorian era. A rose of uncertain heritage, this purple red June blooming hybrid has many aliases. One, ‘Old Spanish Rose’, leads some rose experts to believe that this beauty sold in New York City during the 1830’s may have been brought to America by explorers from Spain.



*Leon Ginethal*

**Scotch Roses**

Scotch roses, native to Great Britain, came to Manhattan with the earliest English settlers. The plants in our collection, unknown pink and white varieties, were recently collected from cellar holes in upstate NY where they’ve existed for centuries without any care. In 1811 these spring-blooming roses were included in the Elgin Botanic Garden (present-day site of Rockefeller Center).



*Stephen Scaniello*

**“The Shipwreck Rose”**

This pink June-blooming rose is suspected by some to be ‘Celsiana’, but not everyone agrees. Those who live in Sag Harbor know it as “The Shipwreck Rose.” On its way to Manhattan nurseries, the clipper Louis Philippe went aground, causing the crew to throw the cargo (champagne, potted trees, precious French roses) onto the sand. This rose was rescued and today thrives in gardens of Sag Harbor.



*Stephen Scaniello*

**‘Souvenir de la Malmaison’**

One of the most popular French roses ever introduced, this light pink very fragrant Bourbon dates to 1844. Introduced thirty years after the death of Empress Josephine, this ever-blooming shrub rose was a nostalgic nod to her famous chateau and gardens. This fashionable rose was prominently displayed in gardens of 19th century New York City Francophiles.

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<sup>i</sup> Single quotes with a name denote a known name. Double quotes denote a “study” name, meaning the rose is in commerce but its origins have been lost.

<sup>ii</sup> Descriptions provided by the Heritage Rose Foundation.

**Contact**

The Manhattan Borough President’s office will continue to assist in coordinating efforts to promote and expand the Heritage Rose District. For additional information, please contact Paimaan Lodhi at 212-669-2016 or [plodhi@manhattanbp.org](mailto:plodhi@manhattanbp.org).





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