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IN THE GARDEN

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It might seem a little early to be thinking of gardening, after all our Christmas tree and decorations are still up, and will be throughout February, but since Valentine's Day is typically associated with roses, and roses are shipped in March for our climate, this month is actually ideal for selecting more Old English roses for our landscape. Besides, names like Princess Anne, Duchess of Cambridge, Lady of Shalott, and Winchester Cathedral just warm my heart like a good cup of English tea.

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 Why English Roses? Well let me just share a few reasons from the catalog: “English Roses combine the delicate charm and fragrance of an Old Rose, with wide color range and repeat-flowering of a Modern Rose. English Roses have been bred...for the delicate charm and fragrance. The form of flowers of English Roses is very much that of an Old Rose: they may be cup-shaped or in the shape of a rosette, often with numerous small petals, the light between the petals giving them a warm and glowing effect, or the petals may turn downwards, to provide a more domed flower. English Roses have natural, shrubby growth or may be gracefully arching.

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 English Roses are notable for their rich and varying fragrances. In this way, they are undoubtedly second to none. Among them, in their different varieties, you will find not only the beautiful Old Rose fragrance, but tea, musk, myrrh, fruit and a whole variety of other fragrances; indeed, no group of flowers of any kind can rival them in this respect. Arranged, they make a beautiful picture and often remind us of the flower paintings of the old Dutch Masters.”

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 After highlighting charming characteristics like that, I find it hard to resist, besides the fact that the old Dutch Masters paintings are my favorites.

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 And so this year, I hope to have another grouping of roses planted, hopefully on a wrought iron or picket fence in my front yard with a new arbor over our walk, at least that is what I am hoping for. Nevertheless, the children are ordering several new varieties for me, which will grace our home throughout the growing season.

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 English Roses as Shrubs, Old Roses, Rambling Roses, and Tree Roses are just a few of the chapter headings in David Austin's marvelous catalog—the most beautiful rose catalog I have ever seen, thanks to Diane Drinkard. So do yourself a favor and order this magnificent catalog for yourself, but make your selections by the end of February so your Old English Roses have time to acclimate and become established before hot weather descends upon them. “Your Old English Roses” has a rather charming and pleasing ring to it, doesn't it? www.davidaustinroses.com or 800-328-8893.