

This rose is a polyantha bred by Ronald M. Finch in 1923 and named after his wife Mrs R.M. Finch. Ronald M. Finch was the manager at the Concord Nurseries of Arthur Yates and Co. Ltd in Sydney and he said (Sunday Times Sydney) that his best rose was **Mrs R.M. Finch** which won four 1st class certificates. We are not aware what other roses he bred or if any are still commercially available. Ronald Finch was trained in England and his father was a gardener before him.

Mrs R.M. Finch is still available through most rose nurseries today. However, it is often sold incorrectly labelled as the Alister Clark rose **Australia Felix – 1919**. Australia Felix was a hybrid tea and therefore quite a different rose and possibly the true Australia Felix is now extinct, however, it could turn up in a garden or a churchyard somewhere, someday. In my garden in Eastwood I had one rose labelled **Mrs R.M. Finch** and across the other side of the lawn was a second rose labelled **Australia Felix**. I often used to look at them and think what is the difference? It was not until some years ago when I had one of our Heritage Roses Sydney Group founding members visiting and she told me the story about the incorrect labelling and so I had two of **Mrs R.M. Finch**. This is a hardy rose, very easy to grow and it continually repeat flowers in clusters like a true polyantha. I now have it growing in a pot in my courtyard and it is just as happy as it was in the ground. As you will see in the photo the cluster shows the blooms in a variety of stages from the tight bud which is a dark pink through to the various stages of the bloom as it fades to a very pale pink. It does have an unusual trait in that after the first full flush it often sheds its leaves but very quickly they grow again and it continues to bloom in flushes for about nine months.

I highly recommend this rose for either a garden or a pot. However, if you are asking for it at a nursery and they say they do not stock it ask if they have **Australia Felix** and if what you are shown is a pink polyantha there is every chance you have **Mrs R.M. Finch**.

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