

HRIA Sydney Group Newsletter

May 2026

From our Group Coordinator,
Glennis Clark

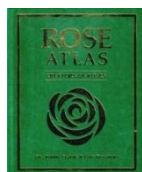
Wednesday 27th May, 2026

Dear Members,

Here we are nearly at the beginning of winter and it is time to put pen to paper or I should say fingers to the keyboard. I do hope you have been enjoying your autumn gardens and in Sydney we have had some cooler but sunny days with most of the rain being late afternoon or overnight so how perfect is that! There are still many roses flowering and in particular the teas are blooming in full force.

There are just a couple of things to discuss before I get on to the main event which believe it or not is Barbara's Garden at Rookwood.

I have made a special request over several newsletters now for someone to volunteer to prepare an action plan, should it become necessary, for our Sydney Group to become incorporated. It would mean having a look at the Department of Fair Trading website and considering their model constitution. You do not need to be a lawyer or an accountant to carry out this task. At this stage it is definitely not necessary for our Sydney Group to become incorporated but it is advisable to have a dot point list style plan ready to go and review, on say, an annual basis. We do wish to keep this simple. It would be **very helpful** if someone could volunteer for this role. Please give me a call if you would like to discuss.



As you are aware from over recent newsletters, we were donated a 422 page book *ROSE ATLAS: CREATORS OF ROSES*, by Dr Tommy Cairns & Luis Desamero. The purpose of this donation was to raise funds for our Sydney Group. We drew the raffle at our meeting held at Rookwood on Saturday 16th May and the winner was Sydney Group member and Rookwood worker John Maurer. We made \$110.00 from the raffle, so an excellent result.

A number of Sydney HRIA members have been working very hard in 'Barbara's Garden at Rookwood, to the extent that some of us have become quite obsessive. So, let me tell you a story.

A Gentle Obsession – Barbara's Garden, Rookwood

It all started with December and January being either too hot or too wet, or both, for us to work. With the heat and the wet the weeds took flight. We also feel that the Rookwood mulch we used in September 2023 and 2024 was not sufficiently cooked, so weeds that we had not seen before began to appear. Because of this we did not use the Rookwood mulch in September 2025. The photo gallery put together by our Editor Susan will show you what we were going to have to contend with and progress to date. We decided we needed help so set out to employ a gardener to help get it under control. We have been employing Tracey Fleischner's gardener, Lucas, who has been doing a fantastic job. Since the beginning of February we have had eight working bees and Lucas has worked with us over four of these. The plan has been that we weed, and in some cases double-weed, lay down cardboard and then mulch with sugar cane. As you are aware, this is a big garden. We have laid cardboard and mulched about two thirds of the garden. The weeding has now been completed in close to three quarters of the garden.



Marian's arrangements of roses from Barbara's Garden, Rookwood

In the large white vase: Teas – **Comtesse de Labarthe** (often sold as **Duchesse de Brabant**) **Hugo Roller**, **Isabella Sprunt**, **Lady Hillingdon** and **Safrano**, Chinas – **Comtesse du Cayla**, **Cramoisi Supérieur** and the Hybrid Perpetual **Frau Karl Druschki**

In the red vase (on L.) – **Lilli Marleen** (Floribunda)

A few of Marian's jonquils are in the jug and the very last of her dahlias are in the other white vase

As we are progressing, and seeing daylight, the obsession is developing. We have people obsessive about collecting cardboard (we could write a book on cardboard collection), we have obsessive weeders, obsessive pruners and all of us who are just driven and obsessive about seeing the garden develop to display its true beauty. We have a particular nasty weed called 'farmers friend' (*Bidens pilosa*) and the seeds from this weed have really created havoc not only in the garden but in the workers' clothes etc – Georgina's jumper was full of seeds to the extent that when she went home she Googled how to fix it and was advised to put the jumper in the freezer. I think it is still in the freezer and we are waiting in anticipation for the result. Now, that is obsessive!

As you can imagine this is costing money. We are very appreciative of having been given a grant by HRIA of \$2,500 and we are also using our existing funds. To date, we have spent \$2,742 on labour and the 114 bales of sugar cane (six donated) have cost us \$1,580. So in total, the cost to date is \$4,322. The wonderful news is that Rookwood are going to supply us with 50 bales of mulch for our next working bee and after this effort we will be able to assess what is needed to complete – we should be nearly there!

The roses are looking beautiful and Marcia Lusted has been propagating roses from this garden for us to sell as a fund raiser and also to use as replacements where some of the original plants are getting old. In some cases, these roses are no longer available in commerce. We have so far sold five roses to members, for a total of \$135. Marcia is trying out different methods of propagating and she has also become obsessive. I think this garden at Rookwood is getting into the psyche of all of us!

Saturday 16th May was our latest working bee. We had a beautiful sunny day and a great team of workers. As well as weeding, cardboard laying and mulching we planted seven new roses – two **Comtesse du Cayla** (propagated and donated by the Illawarra and Southern Highlands HRIA Group), two **Radiance** (these are replacing the two we lost in the big wet a couple of years ago), **Hugo Roller** and two seedlings of "Isabel Smith" (a rose found in Rookwood by the late Barbara May). At the end of the day Marian Crambrook walked through the garden collecting roses which she took home and made the arrangement at the head of this newsletter. What a lovely way to end the day; collecting blooms, and creating an arrangement is, after all, another obsession.

I will be away in Iceland and Greenland for the month of July and one of my challenges will be to photograph some heritage roses there. Someone told me it will be impossible but I don't believe them – perhaps this will be another obsession!

Very best wishes to all, *Glennis*.

Photo Gallery – 'Barbara's Garden', Rookwood Necropolis

Text and photos are by Susan Wade.

In total, Rookwood Necropolis covers 314 hectares (3.14 square kilometres). Barbara's Garden', was originally known as 'The Long Garden' which was initiated by the Sydney Group of Heritage Roses in the 1980s. The garden, named 'Barbara's Garden' after the late Barbara May who died in 2015, is located immediately opposite All Souls Chapel in Hawthorne Ave, off Necropolis Drive. Barbara, who was an expert propagator and identifier of old roses, worked for 30 years on saving the roses found on old graves at Rookwood, until her death in 2015. A couple of hundred metres long, this garden is a comparatively tiny but very special area within the vast Rookwood Necropolis. Containing approximately 200 bushes of (mainly) rescued and propagated heritage roses, this garden is indeed a heritage roses 'treasure'. China and Tea roses grow particularly well here.

A selection of roses in Barbara's Garden which were found and propagated by Barbara May



"George Watson", Tea,
found before 2000



"Agnes Smith", Tea,
found before 1988



"Isabel Smith", Tea,
found before 2002

All of the above roses were photographed on 16th May 2026.

Photos showing how the obsessions of some Sydney HRIA members are paying off

2nd March 2026



Before the weeds were removed, near **Comtesse de Labarthe**, on LHS of **Francis E. Lester**
*Due to pruning, FEL had few hips this autumn.**



After most of the weeds had been removed – near two **Comtesse de Labarthe** bushes, which are on either side of **Francis E. Lester**

The weeds included: couch, kikuyu, nut grass, a tall-growing grass, a type of nightshade (*Solanum* sp.), purple-flowered verbena, clover-type plants and the dreaded ‘farmers friend’.

6th April 2026

***In April, 2023**



Hips of **Francis E. Lester** (Hybrid Musk, 1946)
(FEL was not pruned early that year)



The area around **Bishop Darlington** was weeded and sugarcane-mulched by Tracey and Lucas



An area where Ken and Susan weeded today, tools and some of the removed weeds

A newly weeded and mulched section; sugarcane mulch was placed on flattened cardboard boxes by Tracey and Lucas



27th April 2026



A section of the garden which has been weeded and covered with cardboard and a pile of cardboard and bales of sugar cane mulch awaiting placement and spreading

A selection of commercially available heritage roses in ‘Barbara’s Garden’

Photographed on 2nd March 2026



Comtesse de Labarthe
(Tea, 1857)

Photographed on 6th April 2026



Frau Karl Druschki
(Hybrid Perpetual, 1885)



Bishop Darlington
(Hybrid Musk, 1926)

Photographed on 27th April 2026



Monsieur Tillier
(Tea, 1891)



Mrs Dudley Cross
(Tea, 1907)



‘Sanguinea – in commerce as’
(China, pre-1805)

Photographed on 16th May 2026



Lilli Marleen
(Floribunda, 1956)

From the Editor

Welcome to the May 2026 newsletter. Despite its annoyance for planned outdoor activities, I’m sure the rain has definitely been welcomed by our gardens in recent weeks!

Do you have a topic which you would like to be covered or any news to report for our HRIA Newsletter? Also, stories about members’ gardens (with photos) are very welcome. Closing date for the next newsletter is 4th August. Please contact the editor, preferably by email (*details on p. 8*) for more information. Future newsletters during 2026 will be sent out in mid-August and the last week of September and November.

Do try and bring a few named roses to our upcoming meetings for ‘show and tell’. Yes, even in mid-winter! Keep well over the winter months and safe travels to members venturing afield. Happy gardening, Susan.

FRAGRANCE from the GARDEN: A legacy of the old heritage roses

Susan’s brief account of Lillian Barry’s presentation at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Plant Fair Along with a few other Sydney HRIA Group members, I very much enjoyed the 2026 Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (SHBG) Plant Fair on Saturday 18th April. We could not have ordered a more glorious sunny autumn day! In addition to the many garden (and food)-related stalls at the fair – including the excellent and most successful Illawarra and Southern Highlands HRIA Group’s stall, there were several speaker sessions. Time constraints allowed me to attend only two of the six sessions, including the excellent presentation about fragrant heritage roses by Sydney HRIA member Dr Lillian Barry.

Lillian’s presentation included a summary, and examples of, the five distinct rose fragrance classifications: **Classic or ‘Old Rose’** – in the Damasks, Gallicas and Albas; **Fruity** – in some of the Bourbons, Teas and Chinas; **Myrrh** (as in *Myrrhis odorata*) – an anise scent often associated with ‘Old Rose’; **Musk** – in some of the Hybrid Musks and Ramblers; and **Tea** – as in the old Tea roses (hence the name) – a fragrance reminiscent of a packet of dried tea leaves being opened. We look forward to visiting Lillian’s Hunter Valley Garden on 7th November, when we’ll have the opportunity to see (and smell!) her collection of heritage roses and learn more about fragrant heritage roses for our own gardens.



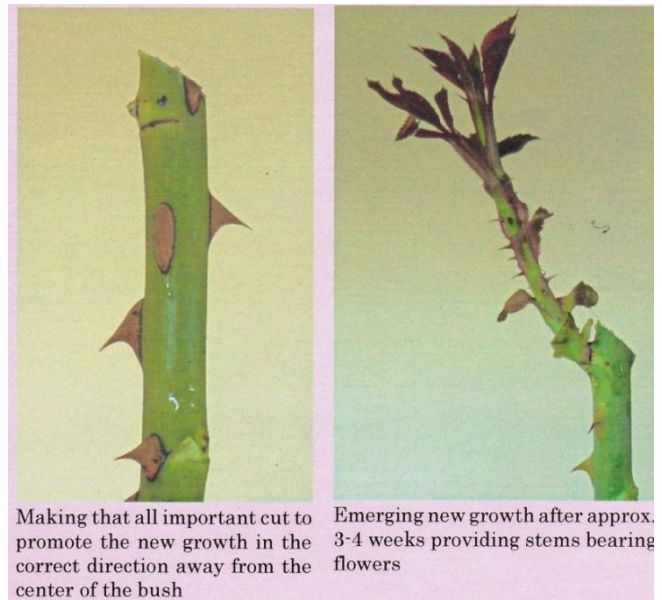
Credit: Dr Lillian Barry

Pruning Heritage Roses

This is an edited version of my longer pruning item in the May 2021 HRIA Sydney Newsletter – Susan Wade.

General comments, as below, may be made regarding the pruning of roses.

- **Pruning Objectives:** Improve Air Circulation, Deadhead for Re-bloom, Shape/Maintenance, Remove Old Canes, Crossing Stems, Weak Wood and Dead, Damaged or Diseased Root Stock.
- **Pruning for health:** Basic rose pruning involves the 3 Ds: removing dead, damaged, or diseased branches.
- **Pruning cuts should be made just above a bud eye.** ‘Bud eye’ refers to the area on the stem where branching occurs.
- **Once-blooming roses:** Old garden roses that bloom only once-a-year produce flowers on old wood. This is growth that appears the year previous to any blooms it produces. Once-bloomers should only be pruned immediately after they finish flowering (generally early summer – around mid-December). If you prune in winter, you will lose all of that year’s bloom. Old garden roses can be pruned to 15 inches every other year without damage. This keeps a large bush within bounds and provides shaping. If you don’t mind the size of the bush, then only prune for dead, damaged, and diseased canes or other growth consider undesirable.



Reference for the above information:
<https://www.heirloomroses.com/info/care/how-to/prune/>

Pictures: Courtesy of Dr Tommy Cairns, Editor of *Roses 90210* – Newsletter of the Beverley Hills Rose Society, USA

- **Repeat blooming or remontant roses:** Repeat blooming roses are pruned in mid-late winter (mid-July in Sydney/mid-August in colder areas which experience frost) and may be summer-pruned in late January/early February to encourage a good autumn flush.
- **More on positioning the pruning cut:** Some references emphasise the importance of positioning the cut (*as shown in pictures above*), whereas others don’t.
- **Protective clothing and gloves** are recommended as many heritage roses are very prickly.
- **Be very careful to clean pruning saws and secateurs between pruning each bush.** For weak growers it is particularly important not to transfer any diseases from bush to bush. Die-back can seriously affect some roses. Suggested sterilising methods include dipping pruning tools into one of the following: a solution of one part household bleach to nine parts water, one part tea tree oil to nine parts water, methylated spirits. Discard the sterilising solution safely after use (that same day).
- **To control over-wintering fungus spores** (such as black spot and powdery mildew), after pruning in July it may be advisable to spray with Lime-Sulphur on the bare stems and the soil around the bushes.

Specific guidelines for pruning various types of heritage roses are given by Trevor Nottle.¹

The information below has largely been extracted from Trevor’s most informative book **Growing Old-Fashioned Roses** (which, significantly, is Australian) and in emailed correspondence to Susan in April 2021.

Whereas modern roses need to be pruned in late winter to produce an abundance of spring blooms and to take on a good shape, Old-Fashioned Roses can, in most cases, be left alone for years with no harm done; it is almost impossible to kill a rose by not pruning at all for years.

Before pruning any rose, it is imperative that you know its named variety and then check on its class. Refer to the (publicly accessible) *HelpMeFind* website www.helpmefind.com/rose/plants.php and/or *Modern Roses* database [the American Rose Society (ARS)] <https://modernroses.org/>.² It is not sufficient to just describe a rose as a ‘shrub’ or ‘climber’.

The same rules cannot be applied to all heritage roses, as the various classes have different growth habits and flowering schedule. For example, few wild roses are remontant; notable exceptions are *Rosa chinensis*, *Rosa rugosa* and *Rosa fedtschenkoana*. Amongst other classes, some are remontant and others are non-remontant.

Wild Roses and their Near Hybrids

As a group, the wild (Species) roses and their hybrid offspring require very little pruning as they are by nature moderate to large shrubs and don't need pruning other than to rejuvenate them in their old age.

Before planting wild (or indeed any type of) roses, you should do research/consult catalogues to determine their growth habit and potential size. This may well avoid the following action suggested by Trevor:

If the wild roses you have don't fit the space allocated to them, then the roses should be shifted to where they can attain their natural forms, or be replaced by species which will fit into the spaces available.

Old European Roses – Gallicas, Albas, Centifolias, Mosses and Damasks

The old European roses flower only once per year on wood made the previous year. (Occasionally freakish weather conditions may result in the odd flower appearing out of season.) They are essentially flowering shrubs and form dense thickets of boughs supporting a canopy of twiggy top growth from which a heavy crop of flowers appears in late spring or early summer.

Once the flowers fade a mass of short new growths emerge from just below the dead flower heads and these are the parts which will flower the next year.

Any pruning should be done in summer, after flowering, and should be limited to the removal of one or two of the oldest branches and any dead wood.

Note that Trevor has given a caution about this group: Make sure suckering and running roses e.g. Gallicas and Albas are planted with the bud union above the ground. After 20 years of growing and suckering widely these groups of roses become a real problem to control or remove; best not to risk so much hard digging or poisoning.

Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals and Portland Roses

The Bourbons and their other 19th century companions are repeat flowering and they make growth which is similar in size, leafage and prickles to modern roses. The difference which is noticeable and significant is that the canes are much longer. The long canes of these roses allows for several different uses to which they may be put:

1. They may be used as flowering shrubs by allowing them to grow freely in the same manner as the old European roses.
2. They can be treated as moderate climbers to low climbers and trained against walls and trellises.
3. They can be treated as pillar roses whereby the canes are twined around a post or tripod set in the garden.
4. They may be "pegged down". The effect of pegging down is to promote flowering shoots from almost every dormant bud along each of the canes. *For pictures of pegging, this link may be helpful: www.finegardening.com/article/train-roses-to-produce-more-flowers*

Some roses may be self-pegged, by entwining two canes around each other: www.rosenotes.com/2009/02/pegging.html

Whichever method of training and pruning you decide to employ, the pruning points remain the same. Each of the canes will grow and produce good flowering wood for up to four years, after which they should be removed completely and their place taken by new growth.

China Roses and Tea Roses

Chinas and Teas usually take a few years to settle in and get established, so for the first few years it is almost unnecessary to do any formal pruning.

China roses will make low but very densely twiggy bushes and any pruning should be light. It is quite possible to simply clip them over into a roughly shaped dome and they will perform well. When water shoots have finished flowering they should be trimmed back to growing eyes below the flower head.

Refer to Glennis Clark's article, **Pruning our Old Teas Roses**, on the HRIA website – <https://www.heritageroses.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Pruning-our-Old-Tea-Roses-1.pdf> **As Glennis concluded:** Remember that Tea roses nearly always resent hard pruning! This is reinforced by Trevor on page 37 of his book: If you try to treat them (Teas) too harshly, the result will be a few-flowered bush that gets a reputation for 'sulking'.



Rosa gigantea – once flowering (non-remontant)



Crested Moss, (Centifolia, 1827)



Boule de Neige, (Bourbon, 1867)



Mutabilis (China, before 1894)

Hybrid Musk Roses

Left unpruned, Hybrid Musk roses will form masses of thick growth. Given their dense growth, Hybrid Musks are recommended as informal flowering hedges and pruned as such.

The stems of Hybrid Musks are branched all along their length. Avoid pruning from the base, just to tidy things up.

Penelope
(Hybrid Musk, 1924)



Rugosa Roses Their natural habit is to grow low, compact and tight-knit. **Rugosas are the 'no-prune' roses. Their growth is so dense and compact that they require no pruning for years. If used as a flowering bank or hedge (one of their best uses), Rugosas just need clipping into a uniform shape. To ensure hips, take care not to remove too much fruit**

Hips of Frau Dagmar Hastrup
(Hybrid Rugosa, 1914)



Climbing and Rambling Roses: Information about pruning this diverse 'group' of roses will be in the August 2026 Newsletter. If required before August, please contact Susan Wade (*email details are on p. 8*).

Pictured roses have been photographed by Susan at various public and private gardens in the ACT, NSW and Vic.

1. Trevor Nottle, *Growing Old-Fashioned Roses*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst NSW, 1983, pp. 34-38. (Also 2nd ed. 1995.) *Trevor has advised that this book is long out of print (only second hand copies may be purchased) and that he has been unable to trace the current copyright holder. Susan.*
2. The ARS serves as the International Cultivar Registration Authority - Roses (ICRA) by appointment of the International Society for Horticultural Sciences and *Modern Roses* lists all registered roses, not just 'Modern'.

Planned Activities

Working Bees in 'Barbara's Garden', Rookwood Cemetery

We usually work on the first Monday of each month between 10.00 am & 12.30 pm (followed by lunch), but in recent months we've had extra working bees to tackle the weeds and spread cardboard and mulch.

*We desperately need additional help as we continue to tackle the weeds and lay cardboard and spread sugarcane mulch. We also need large amounts of **flattened** cardboard (with sticky tape removed).*

Our next three 'regular' working bees during 2026 will be:

- **Saturday 6th June** **NOTE the change from Monday 8th June which was listed in the March Newsletter**
This change is allow spreading of 50 bales of mulch as soon as possible after delivery on Friday 5th June.
- **Monday 6th July** and • **Monday 3rd August**

Please bring your own pruning & weeding tools, chair & lunch. Park in the car park opposite All Souls Chapel – the rose garden is behind the car park. We do not work in rain, heatwaves or very cold weather. If you wish to come and are not sure of the weather, and for directions if a newcomer, please contact Sally (Tel. 9428 5501).

Up and Coming Events for 2026

Sydney HRIA meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of the month (but there are exceptions).

- **Saturday 20th June, 2.00pm – Frank Riethmuller, his life & roses** – PowerPoint presentation by Susan Wade **NOTE the date change for our June meeting.**

Venue: The home of Glennis Clark – in Turramurra

If you are planning to come, please phone or email Glennis by Thursday 18th June so she can organise seating and cups. Please bring a plate to share for afternoon tea. If practical, carpooling is suggested.

If you are, not a member of Heritage Roses Sydney Group, and would be interested in attending please contact the Sydney Group Coordinator for further information.

Saturday 4th July, 10.00am – 1.30pm – Annual pruning day at Rumsey Rose Garden, Parramatta Park

Please note that this is a week earlier than our usual meeting so as to fit in with Parramatta Park's celebrations for NADOC Week.

Tiffany Bignold will be leading our team and it is possible that the current contractors will arrange to have their apprentices on site so that they can learn how to prune heritage roses. You may be required to do some coaching / instructing.

Please come even if you are not in a position to do any pruning as it would be great if you could join us for lunch and a chat.

Directions: Enter the main gates at the Corner of Pitt and Macquarie Streets. Turn left and you will see a parking area. The rose garden is behind the parking area. Please bring your own morning tea and lunch and a chair. If you intend to prune on the day, you will need to bring your own tools and gloves.

- **Saturday 8th August, 2.00pm – Roses Growing Elsewhere** – PowerPoint presentation by Glennis Clark
Venue: The home of Glennis Clark *Refer to p. 7 for directions to Glennis' and other important information.*

If you are, not a member of Heritage Roses Sydney Group, and would be interested in attending please contact the Sydney Group Coordinator for further information.

Events planned for later in 2026 – more information in future newsletters

- **Saturday 12th September, 2.00pm** – Meeting at Angela Morgan's home and garden.
- **Saturday 10th October, from 10:00am** – We will be hosting an open day at 'Barbara's Garden', Rookwood. The Northern Sydney Regional Rose Society, and possibly others, will be attending.
- **Saturday 17th October, 2.00pm** – Visit to a garden in Pymble
- **Saturday 7th November, 11.00am** – Visit to a garden in the Hunter Valley – details will be in the August newsletter

• **Saturday 12th December 2026, 12.00pm** – End of year lunch at Beehive Café Restaurant, Beecroft
ADVANCE NOTICE: The 2027 Biennial HRIA Conference will be held in Armidale, NSW between Thursday 11th & Monday 15th November. More information will be provided in future HRIA Journals.

HRIA Sydney Group Committee for 2026			
Group Coordinator	Glennis Clark		
Treasurer	Pauline Dunne		
Newsletter Editor	Susan Wade		
Calendar Coordinator	Sue Ballinger		
Committee members	Ros Bignold Tiffany Bignold		

HRIA Website and Facebook

www.heritageroses.org.au www.facebook.com/www.heritageroses.org.au

Specialist Nurseries – Selling Heritage Roses

Green E Roses – 400 Galston Road, Galston NSW 2159 – Klaus, Brigitte, Stephen & Jacqui Eckardt

Potted roses only, year-round

Website: www.greeneroses.com.au **Tel.:** 02 9653 1745 **E.:** info@greeneroses.com.au

Green E Roses is our local Sydney nursery for heritage roses. They are true rosarians, have always been very helpful and have our full support. However, if you are unable to find the heritage rose you are looking for at this our local nursery, you may be able to purchase by mail order from one of the following

Wild Rose Nursery – in the Yarra Valley, Vic – Reuben Nieuwesteeg

Bare-root roses – delivered May to July, pre-order year-round Potted roses – year-round

Website: www.wildrosenursery.com.au

Ross Roses – in Willunga, SA

Bare-root roses – delivered June to August, order early (No potted roses sent interstate)

Website: www.rossroses.com.au **Tel.:** 08 8556 2555 **E.:** admin@rossroses.com.au

Wagner's Roses – in Kalangadoo, SA

Bare-root roses – delivered July to September, order early Potted roses – September to May

Website: www.wagnersrosenursery.com.au