

## Explorer™ Rose Breeding – Where Are You?

The well-known Explorer™ series of roses, developed by Agriculture Canada (AAFC), has come through the woods and back into the spotlight. All the breeding stock has been transferred from Québec and Manitoba to a new breeding program at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre in the Niagara region of Ontario. Kudos to CNLA

(Canadian Nursery & Landscape Association) for their foresight and determination in working out a mountain of logistical and legal details and saving the program! Peggy Walsh Craig, (COPF) said, “The time and effort put into establishing a new breeding program, moving the plants thousands of kilometres, and acquiring the rights to the breeding stock and existing varieties were enormous. Many people helped make this happen, in particular Michel Touchette, Rose Consortium Chairperson from Jeffries Nurseries, Rick Durand from Prairie Shade Consulting, Campbell Davidson from AAFC and CNLA’s Grower Manager, Rita Weerdenburg.”



Canadian Artists® rose Bill Reid will be introduced in 2012

With industry now taking the lead in rose breeding, Vineland Research was engaged to spearhead the program on behalf of CNLA. Dr. Rumen Conev, Vineland’s Research Scientist in Ornamental Plant Breeding is heading the effort which began with the transfer of plant collections and detailed information on pedigree and performance data from the Morden Research Station in Manitoba. Nearly 120 selections and genotypes along with 23 cultivars that showed promise as parental lines, have been transferred to Vineland and hybridization has begun!

Research will focus on resistance to black spot disease, cold tolerance and ways to ease the challenges of seed germination. Outcomes will include hardy cultivars that can withstand winters in the prairies, as well as those in Northern Europe and Russia. Other research targets involve producing new colours and re-introducing fragrance. Growers, retailers and consumers will benefit directly from this research, the only hardy rose breeding program in Canada. Royalty collection and monitoring will continue with COPF.

Look forward to four more introductions in the Canadian Artists® series, the next generation of Explorer™ roses!