

Frau Karl Druschki

By Jolene Adams, Hayward CA

Breeder: Peter Lambert, Germany, 1901

The Great Druschki



My mother grew this rose. Her mother grew this rose. I no longer grow this rose (I ran out of room!). One of the best Hybrid Perpetuals, this rose was first classified as a Hybrid Tea. This has always been an indispensable white rose but its name has been against it and thus names more euphonious to other tongues have been coined. Had it always been known as 'Schneekoenigin' ('Snow Queen'), as was originally proposed, its popularity would have increased greatly. But instead it was named for the wife of the then-President of the German Rose Society.

A large grower to six feet, a well-sited plant will flower consistently all season with very large, exquisitely shaped, paper-white blooms, pinkish in the bud. It is a vigorous bush with good but coarse light-green leaves and erect growth. Every stout shoot bears one or more superb high centered blooms through the summer, with elegantly rolled petals of purest white with a lemon flush at the heart. The climbing form grows to about 12 feet and will cover the side of a garage (as it did for my mother) in about four years. The Frau was always studded with great white flowers, so regular and symmetrical that you would have to touch it to convince yourself that it was a living plant and not a plastic construction designed to decorate a bank lobby. Sadly, it had little or no scent. Indeed, 'Frau Karl Druschki' is as nearly scentless as a rose can be. Only in rare instances can a trace of fragrance be detected. A rose must indeed have other virtues to offset this lamentable lack. These she abundantly possesses.

'Frau Karl Druschki' became the parent of myriads of varieties, few of which approach, and none surpass her in any particular. One of the best, and an excellent rose, is 'Georg Arends', the issue of Druschki and 'La France'. Other offspring include Excellenz von Schubert, Sun Flare, Gruss an Aachen, Mme Grégoire Staechelin, Grey Pearl, Nevada, Carefree Delight and Carefree Wonder.

One of the Frau's parents, 'Merveille de Lyon' (1882), is a Hybrid Perpetual; the other, 'Caroline Testout' (1890) is an early Hybrid Tea. This mixed lineage seems to give it a foot in both camps. In any case, the Frau is far from typical of HPs in general. Most of these bloom only once and are strongly perfumed, whereas the Frau flowers freely all season and is almost scentless.

The flower is so full it sometimes balls in moist or rainy weather. However, if you want an iron-hardy, disease-free white rose, 'Frau Karl Druschki' has been filling the bill since its introduction in 1901.

(Top photo courtesy of Peninsular Rose Club
Bottom photo courtesy of Bob Bauer)