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**2009 winning roses announced**

Each year, the All-American Rose Selections (AARS) organization picks new and exceptional roses for the landscape. The 2009 winning roses are Carefree Spirit™, Pink Promise, and Cinco de Mayo™.

AARS is a nonprofit association of rose growers and introducers dedicated to bringing exceptional, easy-to-grow roses to gardeners across the county. AARS operates a rigorous plant trial program via a network of more than 20 official test gardens throughout the country and representing all climate zones. AARS strives to identify roses that are easy to grow, and evaluates plants on more than 15 qualities, including disease resistance, vigor and fragrance.

For the first time, one of this year's winners is a shrub rose that was grown without any fungicide sprays. Carefree Spirit is the first and only landscape shrub to date to endure this real-world testing and prevail as a winner. It is a mounding rose that produces deep red blossoms with white twinkles in their eyes. The blooms finish pink as they bask in the sun.



Carefree Spirit amplifies the disease resistance associated with its Carefree lineage, with more than 10 years of hybridization improvement. Much like its parent rose, Carefree Delight, which was an All-America Rose Selections winner in 1996, the petals are beautifully set among abundant glossy, dark green foliage. Surpassing its parent, this rose has better disease resistance, blooming power and will perform well in any area of the country.

Pink Promise is a graceful bloomer with long stems for cutting. Most impressively, the National Breast Cancer Foundation selected this rose to officially represent a continual blooming promise of compassion and awareness. For every Pink Promise plant purchased, a percentage of the sales will be donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation to help extend women's lives through education and early detection. This hybrid tea's beauty is enhanced by the contrast of its large pink blossoms set against lush dark green foliage. Along with its stunning appearance, Pink Promise has good disease resistance, and flourishes even in cooler climates. A highly fragrant rose, Pink Promise fills any room with a deliciously fruity scent.



Cinco de Mayo brings a carnival of flowers to every garden. Mysteriously colored, it's an indescribable blending of smoked lavender and rusty red-orange. This festive rose may be impossible to describe but you'll love the endless bounty of multi-colored clusters sitting amongst clean, glossy green foliage and dark red new growth. The flowers, which hold well and are fast to repeat, radiate the smell of fresh-cut golden apples. As an AARS Winner, this floribunda has fantastic disease resistance and has performed exceptionally well across the country with little-to-no care. As the offspring of the 2006 AARS award-winning Julia Child rose, Cinco de Mayo enlivens any garden.



All of these roses were evaluated in 2008 for landscape performance and blackspot susceptibility at the ornamental and turfgrass research facility located at the LSU AgCenter's Burden Center in Baton Rouge.

According to LSU AgCenter horticulturist Dr. Allen Owings, "Cinco de Mayo and Carefree Spirit were very impressive, and Pink Promise shows good potential as a hybrid tea rose. Under a "no-fungicide" spray regimen, these roses more than held their own in the war on blackspot last year."

January through the spring is a great time for planting roses.

Theresa Friday is the Residential Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

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