

*Rosa x centifolia*

[Synonyms : *Rosa centifolia* var. *muscosa*, *Rosa gallica* var. *centifolia*, *Rosa provincialis*]

**CABBAGE ROSE** is a hybrid prickly deciduous shrub. It has large double, richly scented, bright pink (fading inwards from the outer petals) flowers.

It is also known as Burgundy rose, Centifolia, *Centifoliaros* (Swedish), *Centifoliarose* (German), *Centifolieros* (Swedish), *Devataruni* (Sanskrit), *Golap* (Bengali), *Gulab* (Hindi, Punjabi), *Gulabapushpam* (Malayalam), Great Holland rose, Holland rose, *Hundrabladros* (Swedish), Hundred-leaved rose, *Irosa* (Tamil), *Kartanoruusu* (Finnish), Pale rose, Provence rose, *Roja* (Telugu), *Rose des peintres* (French), *Rosier à cent feuilles* (French), *Rozo centfolia* (Esperanto), *Růže stolistá* (Czech), and *Zentifolie* (German); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of ambassador of love, dignity, dignity of mind, pride, simplicity, and unconscious beauty.

Essence is extracted commercially from the flower petals.

*Centifolia* is derived from Latin *centi-* (hundred) and *-folia* (leaved) components meaning ‘many leaved or with a hundred leaves or petals’.

There has been much debate among experts on the age of the cabbage rose and it seems that most have concluded that it is probably the youngest of the ‘old roses’. Although today some people refer to the cabbage rose as one of the ‘ancient roses’ it is now believed that it was unknown to the ancient Greeks and the Romans and that it was not the one referred to in the detailed description left by Theophrastus (c.372-c.287 BC), the noted Greek philosopher. Nor was it that referred to as the ‘Hundred-petalled’ rose by both the Greek historian, Herodotus (c. 485-425 BC) and the Roman natural historian, Pliny (23-79). Recent research can even demonstrate that cabbage rose is actually a hybrid of French rose (*Rosa gallica*), Musk rose (*Rosa moschata*), Dog-rose (*Rosa x canina*) and Phoenician rose (*Rosa phoenicia*) – and earliest references to it begin in about 1580.

It is said that a white variety of this species was adopted by the House of Stuart when the then Duke of York ascended the British throne in 1685 and became both James VII of Scotland and I of Britain (1566-1625). The cabbage rose was said to flower on 10<sup>th</sup> June which was a significant day for the Jacobites who supported him.

This double richly scented, pink rose ‘of a hundred petals’ has been familiar since the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and was painted by many of the famous Dutch and Flemish artists. The Dutch school of art appear to have painted it from the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century onwards. It does not feature in any of the earlier paintings of Jan (the Elder) Brueghel (1568-1625) and this has suggested to some authorities that the cabbage rose was still rare in the Netherlands at that time. On the other hand the *Flower Girl* painted by the celebrated Spaniard, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1618-1682) depicts cabbage roses in the peasant girl’s lap.

Authorities believe that Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1345-1400) knew this rose

The savour of the roses swote  
Me smote right to the herte rote,  
As I hadde alle embawmed be.

Of roses there were grete wone,  
So faire were never in Rone.

and that the famous English playwright and poet, William Shakespeare (1564-1616), was referring to the cabbage rose in *Hamlet* when he wrote

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers (if the rest of my fortunes  
turn Turk with me), with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get  
me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

The missionaries attached to the Spanish missions established on the western side of the North American Continent in the mid- to late 18<sup>th</sup> Century introduced various species of rose including the cabbage rose. It is also believed to have been introduced at the same time to the eastern side of the Continent (along with the dog-rose, *Rosa x canina*) and is another species that can be seen growing in the Governor's Palace Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia today.

Today the extract is used to make rose water, and oil of rose or rose essence, and it is also used as a fragrance by the perfumery and cosmetics industries.

Burgundy rose (cabbage rose) is the birthday flower for 1<sup>st</sup> August.