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Rosa x odorata

[Synonyms : *Rosa chinensis*, *Rosa indica*, *Rosa nankinensis*, *Rosa sinica*]

CHINA ROSE is a prickly deciduous shrub. Native to China it has small slightly fragrant, crimson or pink (occasionally white) flowers.

It is also known as Bengal rose, *Cheenia gulab* (Hindi), Chinese rose, Fairy rose, *Kat gulab* (Bengali), Monthly rose, *Rosier* (French), *Sada gulab* (Punjabi), Tea rose, and *Yueh chi* (Chinese); and in flower language is said to be a symbol of beauty, beauty ever new, grace, and something that is always new.

Odorata is derived from Latin *odor* (scent, smell, odour) meaning ‘scented or fragrant’.

The China rose has been cultivated in China for many centuries.

Although most experts seem to believe that it was introduced to Europe around the turn of the 18th Century others have noted a painting now in the National Gallery in London, *Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time* by the Italian artist, Il Bronzino (1502-1572) in which it has been alleged Cupid is holding a pink China rose in both hands. This would suggest that this species could have been growing in Italy by at least the early 1540s when it was being painted.

Some authorities consider that China rose beyond any other is the ancestor of the largest number of garden hybrids.

Medicinally, the fruit are used in China to treat ulcers, sprains and wounds.

It is the birthday flower for 14th October.