

DAMASKS

Perhaps the most mysterious of the old rose groups; attempts have been made to track down the probable parentage of the Damasks, but the suggestions seem implausible. The name refers to Damascus in the Middle East, whence it was once believed these roses came. We do know that they have been used for centuries in the production of attar or oil of roses; their fragrance is strong, and today is the scent most often associated with roses. For potpourri, few roses are more valued than the Damasks. Recent genetic studies have revealed three wild rose parents that led to the Damasks: *Rosa gallica*, *Rosa moschata*, and *Rosa fedtschenkoana*.

Habit

Damasks are moderate to large growers reaching 5' to 7' in height, arching with tapering branches that bow down with the weight of their blooms. We group them into three styles.

1. (E.g., YORK & LANCASTER) The tall broad-spreading canopies, heavy caned below and twiggy at their extremities.
2. (E.g., LEDA) A shorter type with stouter canes and a more spreading, stiff habit, often with larger flowers of more petals.
3. (E.g., GLOIRE DE GUILAN) Even lower, more spreading plants rarely topping 4'.



AUTUMN DAMASK

[ROSE OF CASTILE, QUATRE SAISONS]

D rr/fff/1 unknown, ancient [Robinson]
One has only to read Dr. Hurst's treatise on the AUTUMN DAMASK in *The Old Shrub Roses* by Graham Thomas, to become thoroughly confused about this rose, which he believed to be a seedling of *Rosa moschata*. We can only affirm that versions of the Damask rose have been grown for hundreds of years, having formed the basis for the rose oil industry. The AUTUMN DAMASK to our minds is identical with the SUMMER DAMASK, except that the former blooms sporadically through summer and fall, as well as abundantly in the spring. All are exceedingly fragrant.

BELLA DONNA

D o/fff/2 unknown, pre-1844 [Pickering]
Very double medium pink flowers of many petals blush with age and remind one of the AUTUMN DAMASK in a more sumptuous form. Larger, coarser foliage and a stouter constitution make a plant less inclined to grow tall than broad.

BOTZARIS

D o/fff/2 Robert, 1856 [Hortico]
Smallish white flowers crammed with petals and a button eye. BOTZARIS seems less pure a Damask than many in this list and, like MME. HARDY, it may have other parentage, perhaps among the Gallicas.

CELSIANA

[BELLE COURONNÉE]

D o/fff/1 Cels, pre-1817 [Pickering]
The great broad petals of CELSIANA create a wide plate of pale pink that glows with the soft yellow stamens. The grayish foliage of this plant gives it the appearance of an Alba.

GLOIRE DE GUILAN

D o/fff/3 Lindsay/Hilling, found [Pickering]
Light pink flowers, paler at the petal bases, showing lovely stamens. A compact grower that makes an arching mound very luxurious of foliage.

HEBE'S LIP

D o/fff/2 Lee, Paul, c. 1846 [unknown]
An odd cross but a lovely variety. Wavy, semi-double flowers are blush-white tinged pink at the edges. Moderate growth and handsomely thorned. Our bush of HEBE'S LIP recently produced a sporting branch that was identical to ST. NICHOLAS.

ISPAHAN

D o/ff/2 unknown, 1832 [Temple]
Not a pure Damask but perhaps a descendant; nonetheless exceptional. High-centered buds of bright pink open slightly cupped in loose clusters. The bouquet effect of ISPAHAN makes it one of the most desirable in this group.

KAZANLIK

D o/ffff/1 Keller?, 1689? [Huntington i.d.]
Pure pink flowers of typical Damask form, opening blowzy and fragrant from dark pink buds. Graham Thomas believes the true KAZANLIK, from the attar fields of Bulgaria, is the rose called PROFESSEUR ÉMILE PERROT.

LA VILLE DE BRUXELLES

D o/fff/2 Vibert, 1836 [Pickering]
We are tempted to place LA VILLE DE BRUXELLES with the Hybrid Chinas because of its rather smooth stems and foliage. Certainly this has the most formally perfect flowers of all the Damasks. Deep pink flowers shot with blush and rose glisten like satin.

LEDA

[THE PAINTED DAMASK]

D o/fff/2 unknown, pre-1831 [Huntington]
White flowers edged richly with pink, marbling pale upon opening. LEDA is so striking in appearance that she endears herself into the gardens of many who prefer modern roses.

LÉON LECOMTE—*Missing from our collection.*

“MME. A. LABBEY”

D o/fff/2 unknown, unknown [Heirloom]
This is in fact a Damask hybrid, not the Hybrid Perpetual, MME. A. LABBLEY, as it is currently sold. Flowers are small, very double, deep rose pink with a lovely fragrance. Grows like LEDA. It is conceivable that this is the MME. L'ABBEY listed in Dickerson's *The Old Rose Adventurer*, which he indicates was a Centifolia-Gallica hybrid, a cross that would have similar characteristics to a hybrid from a Damask rose.

MME. HARDY

[FÉLICITÉ HARDY]

D o/fff/2 Hardy, 1832 [Pickering]
MME. HARDY is far from pure Damask, but appears to have no China influence. Perhaps a Gallica strayed into her ancestry. The very double soft white flowers with green centers are the subject of many beautiful portraits. Widely grown and loved. Fragrant.

OEILLET PARFAIT

D o/fff/2 Foulard, 1841 [Pickering]
Small, warm pink flowers of ordered perfection, disheveled. We mistakenly placed this with the Gallicas in our last catalogue, and referred in our description to the striped Gallica which shares this name.

OMAR KHAYYAM

D o/fff/3 Fitzgerald, 1893? [Pickering]
A very odd rose, supposedly raised from seed collected from a rose growing on Omar Khayyam's grave. It has no guard petals so that the semi-formal array of petals stands starkly in contrast to its green foliage. A strange and gawky grower, very weak and difficult, that tends to stay low and sprawl.

“PETITE LISETTE”

D (A) o/fff/1 unknown, unknown [Huntington]
Rose pink flowers, 2" to 3" across, flat with tight button eyes in long-blooming clusters. A dense shrub showing Damask influence. This is clearly not the Alba originally of this name, hence our quotation marks. Thomas and Beales discuss this, and it grows in the gardens of Mottisfont Abbey.

PETITE ORLÉANNAISE—*Missing from our collection.*

PINK LEDA

D o/fff/2 unknown, prior to 1844 [Pickering]
A sport of the favorite, LEDA, or vice versa. Light to medium pink flowers edged crimson, full of petals with large button eyes and a strong Damask scent. Moderate size.

PROFESSEUR ÉMILE PERROT

D o/fff/1 Perrot, found 1931 [Lowe; Perrot]
Large, very shapely flowers set this fragrant rose apart from the blowsier KAZANLIK, which is more fragrant still. Brought from the rose fields of Bulgaria by the French professor; this rose rightly attracts much attention in our garden.

QUATRE SAISONS BLANC MOUSSEUX

D rr/ffff/1 Laffay, c. 1837 [Oliva, found]
This mossy white sport of the AUTUMN DAMASK is very charming; dark dense moss covers the crowded buds, making a contrast in color and texture to the silky blooms. An upright grower, with flowers throughout the season.

ROSE DE PUTEAU

D rr/fff/2 unknown, pre-1826 [SJHRG]
This is so similar to the AUTUMN DAMASK that we are inclined not to include it, yet something seems different; flowers are a richer rose pink to rose red and the plant inclined to be more compact. Judge for yourself.

ST. NICHOLAS

D o/fff/2 James, Hilling, 1950 [Luhn]
While ST. NICHOLAS has Damask affinities, its flowers are like pale pink versions of the Gallica OFFICINALIS, the inner petaloids turning on a mass of yellow stamens, the petals lightly spotted. Sets magnificent, large hips. A sport of HEBE'S LIP.