

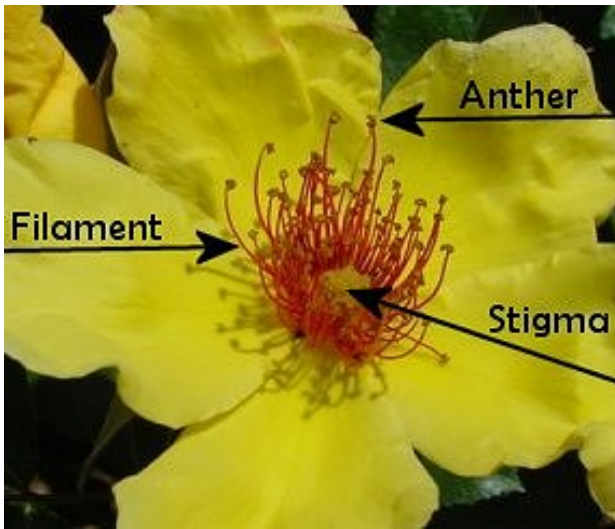
Hybridizing for Fun

By Gail Trimble

Introduction

Hybridizing, or cross-pollinating, is the practice of crossing one rose with another in order to produce a different, or “hybrid” rose. The rose is bisexual; having both male and female parts, and can therefore pollinate itself. When one takes the pollen of one rose and applies it to the stigma of another, one is hybridizing.

Knowing the sexual parts of the rose bloom is necessary. Stamens, the male part, are comprised of a filament with an anther on top. Inside the anther is pollen, which consists of grains that look like a yellowish powder. The female part, called the pistil, starts with the visible stigma on top. Underneath the stigma is the style, which has thin columns that pass the pollen down to the ovary.



Your goal might be to produce an exhibition red hybrid tea. Or, you might have a passion for purple, and hope to create a beautiful shrub. If you love single flowered roses (4-8 petals) then you are in luck, as you will see more singles than anything else. Soon, however, you will discover that only one thing matters initially – disease resistance. Baby seedlings are very susceptible to disease – if you are fortunate enough to have a disease resistant one, it matters not what color or shape it is, it is a keeper - if not to introduce commercially, then to use as a future parent. When you consider the hundreds of thousands of seedlings that nurseries

such as Weeks Roses has to select from in order to introduce perhaps 25 roses, it is easy to feel discouraged. While they have the advantage of ample space and proven parents, there is still a great



deal of **luck** involved. With careful selection of good parents, you are just as likely to produce a rose that is better than either of its parents.



Personally, I feel that there is nothing in the rose world that gives as much joy as hybridizing. Of course, seeing a newly purchased rose open for the first time, or winning a class at an annual or district rose show is thrilling. But it is a fleeting and temporary elation. Hybridizing, from the moment a baby seedling pokes its head out of the soil, develops true leaves, forms a bud, and opens the bloom, is one exciting moment after another. Since there are multiple seedlings, it is a sustained joy, or as one online hybridizer put it, “Every day is Christmas”.