



Les Rosiers Anglais - Sue Cake

Jon Could I ask you first of all, why do you call yourself “Rosiers Anglais”?

Sue Um, because that translates as English roses in French and the French, well, they know English roses and that’s our main plant.

Jon So are we to infer from that, that most of your customers happen to be English?

Sue No, French.

Jon Really!

Sue Yes. I would say ninety percent.

Jon And they like the sound of English roses?

Sue They adore English roses.

Jon They prefer English roses to French ones?

Sue They do because they have a sli..... a different look. A lot of them are more perfumed and quite romantic-looking and they repeat flower, less disease and they do well in our sort of mild, humid climate of Brittany.

Jon Humid's a nice way of putting it. You specialise in David Austin roses.

Sue Yes, yes. We’ve got some other rose varieties, not grown back in, but we were very lucky that he was willing to let us become his producer here in Brittany.

Jon So who actually is David Austin?

Sue He is the, uh the original man who created the English roses which are famous throughout the world now. For over forty years he’s been breeding and creating new, new, new roses for the garden.

Jon How do you create a rose?

Sue It’s quite a long process.

Jon And I mean do you actually start with a seed, or...

Sue Yes, yes and cross pollinating. So you may already have a rose that you like very much but you’d like it to be a slightly different shade or, or more, more petals. So you would have another rose and you would cross the two. You have to be very patient, as I say, it takes a number of years and sometimes it can be a dud. It might not be, turn out how you want it to be.

Jon Do you actually advise people on planting?

Sue Yes, yes. Colours and heights of roses, and plants that accompany the roses as

well.

Jon If for example I want a rambling rose over my door what, which one would you recommend?

Sue Snow Goose is good or you've got Albrighton Rambler. Some principally do not repeat flower. Ramblers are, are grown for their prolific amount of growth and flowers but they only bloom once normally.

Jon When you say once you mean once per year?

Sue Yes. Usually June for about four to six weeks. And it's climbing roses that are slightly less prolific in their height but they repeat flower.

Jon You've stumped me actually, what's the difference between a climber and a Rambler?

Sue A climber is.... The size....usually the size of the flowers are larger, they can be, and they repeat flower. The growth is, is less; it might be three to four metres. And a Rambler can climb seven or eight metres eventually all over a house.

Jon Let's just take a step outside. Would you like to explain what we're gonna look at now?

Sue To the front of our house we have a courtyard, or a paved area and I have a passion of planting roses in pots which do really, really well.

Jon Don't they tend to dry out in pots?

Sue You have to water them like you would any, uh pots in the summer that are planted with plants. I tend to water mine usually once a day and feed them fairly regularly but they do so, so well and...

Jon So these plants that we're looking at, the ones that are potted up and ready to sell, how old are they on average?

Sue Probably a couple of years old at the most, yes.

Jon. And you've had them from babies?

Sue We've had them, no, only since last autumn. They've been with us not many months at all but they were already, they were already growing rapidly and they've already got foliage and they're really raring to be planted and have a new home.

Jon I presume that anywhere in Brittany would give ideal growing conditions for these plants?

Sue Yes. The main requirement is a minimum of four hours of sunshine. So if you have sun in the morning but not in the afternoon that's fine, or the reverse, or midday. If you have total sunshine that's, that's perfect as well. They are a few varieties that will survive in shade but they will create less blooms. They'll grow, they will create you know, branches and stems, but they will have less flowers.

Jon Now we're looking at probably I'd imagine fifty, sixty plants here. Which is the best seller?

Sue Munstead Wood which is a beautiful Burgundy/Bordeaux colour, heavily scented

and makes a beautiful shrub rose, repeat flowering and, and very little if any disease, it's really, really good.

Jon It's very resistant to disease as well.

Sue Yes, very resistant.

Jon Now you've just been telling me about the scale, a one to five scale, which rates how heavily perfumed it is, so how highly would that score?

Sue Munstead Wood is up the top at number five. So not only is he really good-looking he smells nice as well!

Jon Yeah, I'll go for him I think. Most of the time you actually visit markets and sell your roses there?

Sue Yes my husband is at market five days a week and he has a regular place and we do a lot of plant shows all throughout Brittany which start from mid-March and run through 'til July and there's a small break then and there's a lot of autumn shows as well.

Jon That's good to hear so you actually cover most of Brittany, do you?

Sue Yes as far down as Nantes and far across as Rennes, up to Dinard and up towards Brest and down towards Concarneau so, yeah, a big, big area.

Jon Yeah, and how do people actually find out where you are next?

Sue It's on our website but also there are a lot of plant shows and we hand out publicity at our markets about forthcoming shows plus our opening hours here at the nursery.

Jon Sue, lovely talking to you, good luck this year with your roses.

Sue Thank you very much.

