

Top Exhibition Miniature and Miniflora Roses

*By Robert B. Martin Jr.**

The accompanying graphics sets forth a five-year analysis of the top exhibition miniature and miniflora roses, including the number of Queens of Show and royalty points awarded through the 2008 exhibition season.

In the miniatures, the perennial champion 'Fairhope' holds a healthy lead over 'Bee's Knees', however has shown signs of weakening in recent years. 'Fairhope' was out-pointed by 'Bee's Knees' in each of the last two years, and also by 'Sorooptimist International' in 2008. Still, the margins are close and 'Fairhope' continues to be among the leaders in Queens of Show. It is therefore unlikely to give up its position as the top miniature show rose anytime soon.

'Bee's Knees' has been very strong the last two years and has solidified its number two position. 'Sorooptimist International' has moved into third, ahead of 'Irresistible', which for years was the annual runner-up to 'Fairhope'. It holds a very large margin over No. 5, 'Miss Flippins', which had a relatively poor year in 2008. The latter is under pressure from 'Nancy Jean', which finished fourth in 2008, recording over 200 points. 'Arcanum' weakened in 2008 and is under pressure from 'Dancing Flame', which has been very consistent in recent years and is also among the leaders in Queens recorded. 'Glowing Amber' and 'Pierrine' round out the top ten, though both have recorded declining numbers of points in recent years.

Looking down the list, we see that the rising star is 'Ty', which has recorded over 100 points in the last two years, in addition to 15 Queens. 'Best of '04' has recorded 11 Queens in the same period and is just off the list at No. 30. Another newcomer making its way toward the list is 'Joy', which has recorded 94 points in two years with limited distribution.

Among the minifloras, 'Conundrum' holds a modest lead over 'Butter Cream' and 'Dr John Dickman', which two are separated by only five points. The latter has recorded the most Queens over each of the last four years and holds the overall lead in Queens of Show. Following these three, there is a large gap to the No. 4 position, held by the old warhorse, 'Tiffany Lynn'. It is followed by 'Louisville Lady', which is No. 4 in the list of Queens. Coming up fast are the thoroughbreds, 'Foolish Pleasure' and 'Whirlaway'. The latter's rise is extraordinary, having moved into the top ten in its fourth year since introduction.

Other rising miniflora stars are 'Leading Lady', now at No. 16, and 'Dr Troy Garrett', at No. 17. Looking off the list, 'Robin Alonso' has recorded over 40 points in each of the last two years and is now at No. 24. Also, 'Show Stopper' notched 73 points in its first year of introduction, while 'Abby's Angel' recorded 59 points in its second year. Others on the horizon include 'First Choice' and 'Power Point'. The large number of outstanding minifloras introduced in recent years has made the field very competitive.

Points are tabulated for all reported U.S. shows. Six points are awarded to a Queen, five for King and four for Princess. An additional three points are awarded to roses appearing in the Court of Honor or staged in the principal challenge classes of district and national shows.

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Bob is also a well-known rose exhibitor, having recorded 1,106 rose show trophies in the last 20 years, including seven national trophies and 44 miniature/miniflora Queens of Show. Bob was the recipient of the 2007 ARS Guy Blake Hedrick Jr. Award for lifetime achievement in rose exhibiting. Bob is also a hybridizer with eight registered varieties, including the top show minifloras ‘Butter Cream’ and ‘Peter Cottontail’.

Bob is a candidate for ARS Vice-President for which he maintains a website at www.bobmartinarsvp.com