



# Exceptional Roses of Gergely Márk

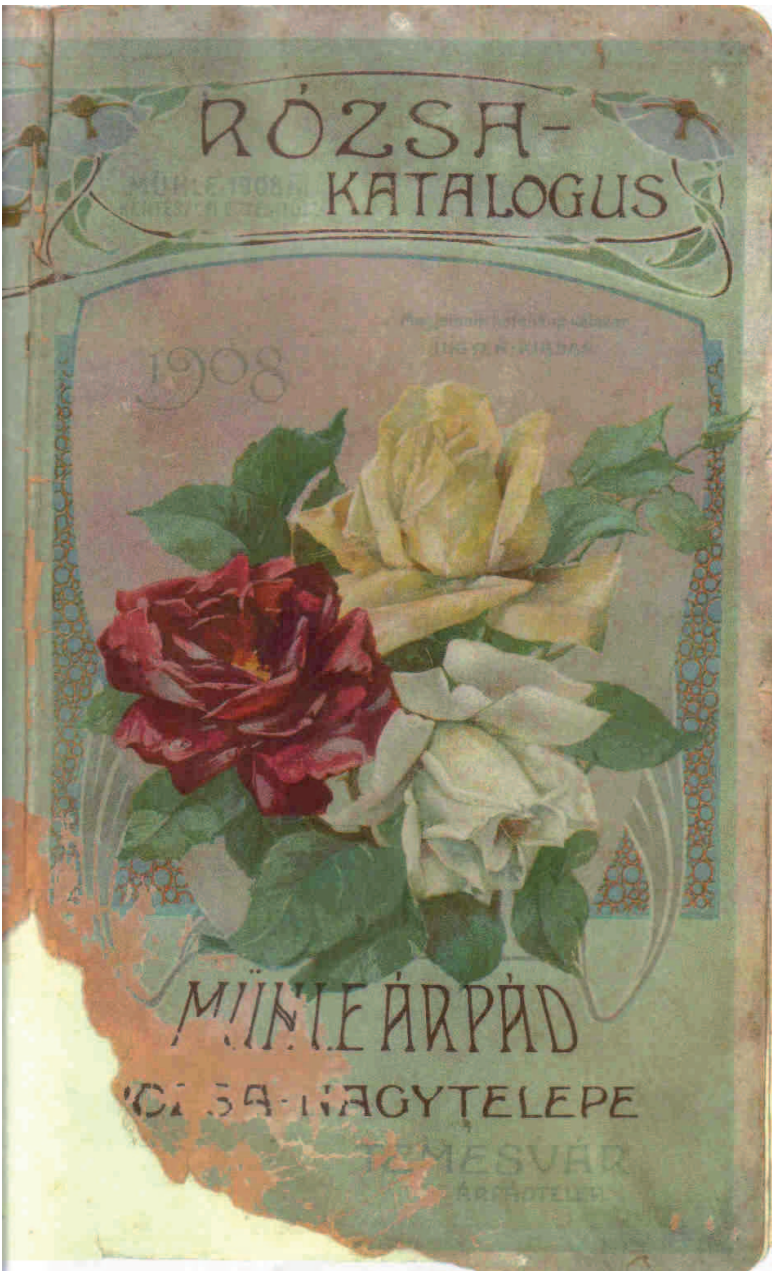
Presentation by Eva Kigyóssy-Schmidt  
The American Rose Society  
Fall National Conference  
Palm Springs, California USA  
**2009**





Fresco from a Roman villa,  
3rd century AD,  
Balácapusztza, Hungary  
Photo: Eva Kigyóssy-Schmidt

Rosa sancti-andreae  
Deg. et Trtm. ex Jav., Hungary  
Photo: Eva Kigyóssy-Schmidt



Rózsa Katalogus,  
Brüder Mühle , 1908  
Photo: Eva Kigyóssy-Schmidt



Décoration de Geschwind,  
Journal des Roses, 1896  
Photo: Erich Unmuth



**'Exceptional Roses of an Exceptional Breeder:  
The Story of the Hungarian Gergely Márk'**  
Outline

Presentation at the Fall National Conference of the American Rose Society, Palm Springs, California USA, November 13, 2009

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Mr Chairman! Ladies and Gentlemen!  
**Dear rose lovers!**

**Introduction**

I am deeply grateful for this exceptional opportunity to share with you some information on the life work of Mr. Gergely Márk. I made friends with him and his roses exactly five years ago. And surely, you will understand how, when one falls in love with roses, it is not possible to get over them...

Let me start with the **term, 'Hungarian Roses'**.

On the territory of Hungary, there are some relics of roses in the form of frescos dating from the third century AD. (The photos presented here were taken in a Roman villa in Baláca puszta not far away from the lake Balaton.)

Another unique phenomenon in Hungary is a **wild rose** that was discovered in 1920 and has been named as '**Rosa sancti-andreae** Deg. et Trtm. Ex Jav.' This wild rose is a rare find even in Hungary. I wish to spread it, by helping all those who would like to grow this variety to get in touch with its suppliers. Just contact me.

Let us continue with the '**Hungarian roses**' hybridized in Hungary.

This term was used for the first time at the World Fair in Paris in 1889. It referred to the roses of Rudolf Geschwind. In the autumn of 2006 my friend Erich Unmuth, from Vienna, Austria, published in the journal RosaMundi an article about Mr. Geschwind. Also, it is apparent that Mr. Geschwind succeeded in creating rose varieties that are frost resistant to such an extent that they do not need to be taken care of in hothouses. Based on his decades long experiments with Geschwind roses, Mr. Unmuth takes the view that presently, of the 150 hybrids known by the name Geschwind, only some 60 varieties are available, and of these 60 roses the identification of only approximately 25 is more or less certain.

Passing over the story of Hungarian rose breeder generations such as Mihály Horváth or the Brothers Mühle let us have a look at the Hungarian Roses of a more recent era. In 2004 Mr. Gergely Márk published a book in Hungary with the title: **The Book of the Hungarian Roses**. All of his more than 600 new varieties can be considered as so called 'Hungarian specialties'. From the fact that more than 80 per cent of all Márk roses have been bred and cared for under open ground conditions without winter coverage or irrigation and with minimum of labor input follows that these Márk varieties are fully adapted to the extreme conditions of the Hungarian climate. Consequently, most of them are particularly suited for landscaping and public parks. In this sense I uphold the argument that Mr. Márk has successfully continued the work of Rudolf Geschwind by further spreading roses **from private outdoor gardens into public spaces**.

Let me now come **back to the title** of my presentation.

First, having been hybridized on open ground makes **Márk roses exceptionally** disease resistant; these roses also tolerate droughts well and are highly frost resistant.

Their **breeder, Mr. Gergely Márk** can be considered **exceptional** for the following reason:

Even though Mr. Márk has over half a century of professional rose breeding activity behind him, **market demand has not**, or has only insignificantly **influenced his work**. All of his so called active working years he had spent as a research fellow at the State-owned Budapest Horticultural Research Institute. After his retirement in 1981 he continued his breeding activities by using his own resources. You will remember the **fall of the Berlin Wall** twenty years ago. I have been living in Berlin since 1968. Thus, let me underline here that for Mr. Márk the collapse of the Communist system **came to late**. At this time he had already been retired for nearly ten years and it was impossible for him to return to the market economy. Consequently, in spite of his highly limited resources, since his retirement in 1981 Mr. Márk had the freedom and the pleasure to breed **roses exclusively for his own passion**.

### **Structure of the slide presentation**

After this introduction let me give you an overview of the roses hybridized by Gergely Márk. My slide presentation will start with some rose portraits just to give you an idea of the shape of the Márk hybrids. Some pictures on the open ground working conditions will follow. This conference being in California, I have selected some Márk roses with above average drought resistance for you to become familiar with. To emphasize the robust character of Márk hybrids bred outdoors, I am also going to present to you a few roses that grow in soils with a pH value of 8.55 and which tolerate this circumstance very well. Further examples will follow showing the behavior of Márk varieties during an extremely long period of draught in May this year and during an unusually cold and rainy period in the second half of October 2009.

The presentation will end with a kind of fairy tale: With the story of Márk variety 'Saint Elisabeth of Hungary' and how it is being spread all around the world.

**Márk roses showing better than average drought resistance.**

Class and year of introduction. Photo: Eva Kigyóssy-Schmidt.



Indira, FI, 1971.



Tamási Áron emléke, HT, 1991.



Törökbálint, HT, 1992.



Skóciai Szent Margit emléke, Shrub, 1998.



Marcsika, HT, 1991.



Márton Áron emléke, HT, 1989.



**An outstanding Márk rose: 'Saint Elisabeth of Hungary'**, Shrub/Cl, introduced in 1988. (Synonyms: 'Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet emléke' and 'Heilige Elisabeth'.)

Photo: Eva Kigyóssy-Schmidt.



Törökbálint, Hungary, 2006.



Törökbálint, Hungary, 2009.



Törökbálint, Hungary, 2007.



Balaton lake, Hungary, 2008.



Törökbálint, Hungary, October 2008.



Ahrenshoop, Baltic See, Germany,  
December 2008