

Australian Rose Award 2018 (ARA)

Johannes (John) Nieuwesteeg ARA - Victoria

After emigrating from the Netherlands in the 1950's, John wasted no time learning English and through his formative years worked on a dairy farm and a tree nursery, until 1974, when, with his father's help and guidance, he acquired land at Seville and the Nieuwesteeg Rose Nursery was born. However, growing roses in Australia wasn't as easy as it first looked, as they had to forget years of experience gained in Holland, and learn to grow roses the 'Australian' way,

This was accomplished in quick time, and gradually the nursery began gaining a solid customer base, a reputation for quality plants that continues today, and earned John the respect and admiration from his peers and fans that comes from years of experience and dedication.



The nursery moved to Tarrawarra Road at Coldstream about twenty five years ago, where John set about creating the wonderful rose garden which housed an extensive collection of all types of roses, from species (including the exciting new discovery *Rosa x nieuwesteegii*) to the very latest offerings from David Austin and other world renowned breeders. Sadly, the garden has been lost to us, as the property has been sold as John moves into virtual retirement, but it was constantly changing, thanks to John's hard work, keeping its many regular visitors on their toes! John propagated many of the old, rarer roses to take with him to his new home in Yellingbo.

A basically shy, modest man, devoted to his family, who continually shuns praise and any form of 'limelight', John dedicated most of his rose-growing career to the collection, preservation and promotion of old and rare roses. Nowhere was this more apparent than in his OPCA collection of Alister Clark's roses (now housed at the Alister Clark Memorial Rose Garden at Bulla), of which his garden displayed more than 50 known varieties and many more yet to be identified. He has written about and given lectures on Alister Clark and his roses, and has travelled extensively to collect them from old gardens all over the country.

For many years John has been a popular member of both the Rose Society of Victoria, where he served for a short time on the committee of management, and of Heritage Roses in Australia, for which he was the joint co-ordinator of the Greater Melbourne group for many years and for his efforts was awarded the Deane Ross Memorial Medal for his services to heritage roses. He gives generously, both of his time and his knowledge, displayed roses from his garden at RSV shows, where he often judged the old-fashioned rose sections and, because of that vast knowledge of all rose types, is called on to identify

roses brought to him by the public. For twelve years, he opened his private garden at Coldstream to the public on the weekend following the RSV Spring show in aid of the victims of road trauma, for whom thousands of dollars were raised.

He has also raised several new rose varieties including the Complicata seedling 'Helga Brichet', the Milkmaid seedling 'The Little Milkmaid', the rugosas 'Joanna' (named for his grand-daughter), 'Morning Star' and 'Evening Star', while introducing some worthwhile sports like 'Tilly Aston', 'Joyce Edmunds', 'Jean Galbraith' and 'The

Wedding Rose'. His most interesting release is the rose named in his honour, *rosa x nieuwwesteegii*, a repeat-flowering cross of *r. willmottiae* and *r. foliolosa*.

Now enjoying 'retirement' and down-sizing, after the sale of his Coldstream property, John has found it impossible to escape his rose-growing passion. He is still inundated by parcels of budwood and cuttings from avid collectors all over Australia, and now grows and sells roses at local markets and fairs, while still displaying a contagious passion and endless enthusiasm for the rose. He also travels annually to Renmark, collecting budwood from the HRiAl collection to propagate new plants for other public gardens, and now helps his youngest son Reuben with rose propagation for his Wild Rose Nursery.

In his retirement, recognition from his peers, in the form of the Australian Rose Award, for a man who has literally lived his life for roses, could not be more deserved.

The Rose Society of Victoria submits the above citation for consideration by the NRSA Awards Committee.



**silkies
rose farm**

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