

## There are ways to take care of the Valentine roses

By John Arnott

Did you buy or receive roses for Valentine's Day?

Well if you did, you interacted with one of the oldest cultivated flowers in the world. This perennial, that dates to prehistoric times and beyond, has at least 100 different species and thousands of cultivars. And can range in size from a miniature about six inches tall to a climber more than 23 feet. Most species are native to Asia, but we have a species native to North America that grows wild in King Township.

Most original and today's wild roses have a single flower made up of a circle of five deep pink (rose) petals, each one being double lobed.

The plant's name comes from an ancient Indo European word to Persian word (wurdi) through Greek rhodon to Latin rosa. Roses, believe it or not, are related to strawberries and apples. Look at their flowers and you'll realize the connection. Most rose varieties are pollinated by bees.

Now to keep those valentine roses happy, the folks in the Nobleton-King City Horticultural Society say put them where they'll get lots of light, but not direct sunlight. Change their water every two days and use warm water. None of the flowers' leaves should be underwater as they will quickly start to decay and produce bacteria that will very much shorten the life of the bouquet, as well as cause an unpleasant smell. Always remove damaged leaves and petals. When you change the water cut about a quarter of an inch off the end of each stem while you hold it underwater in another container ? a wide one is best. This procedure re-opens the cut end of the stem which may have started to scab over ? a natural reaction by the plant to heal its injury ? preventing the stem from absorbing a necessary amount of water. The warm water widens the stem end cells again allowing more water to be absorbed up into the flower heads, And-often this will revive drooping flowerheads. Lifting the freshly clipped flower stems out of the container where they were cut to put them back into the vase of fresh warm water shouldn't cause a problem. Sometimes just submerging the whole plant, stem, flower head and leaves in a container of warm water for two or three hours, even overnight will revive it.

If you want to try your hand at drying a rose from your valentine bouquet, choose one that isn't fully open, then strip off all the leaves and hang it upside down in a warm but dry dark place for about two weeks.