

# Judging Miniature Roses

By: Richard J Anthony

An important element in the judging of miniature roses is size. It accounts for only ten points in the point scale but with miniatures horticultural excellence is not rewarded. The standards for judging miniature roses state **“In Judging miniatures, the element of size carries some special considerations. Although larger is better in the case of hybrid teas (and minifloras), this is not the case for miniatures. Conversely, neither is smaller always better in the case of miniatures. There is wide variation in bloom size in the class designated as miniatures. In judging the element of size, typical of variety is of prime importance. Any rose assigned to the miniature class must be neither penalized nor rewarded in the size element if the size is typical of the variety. If a miniature rose specimen is smaller or larger than typical, it should be penalized to the degree of distraction that this size deviation creates.”**

The standards for judging miniflora roses state **“Bloom size is judged in the same manner as the hybrid tea specimen. All other elements being equal the larger bloom of the same variety should be rewarded. Just as with hybrid teas there is great variation in bloom size between different varieties, an unusually large specimen of a typically smaller growing variety should take precedence over a smaller bloom of a larger growing variety.**

This difference in the standards between miniatures and minifloras for judging size has in the opinion of this writer caused more problems than many are aware. There is an axiom that you have to grow them to know them. Unfortunately, many rose judges do not grow the newest miniature roses. If a judge does not exhibit, subscribe to Horizon Roses or grow the newest roses, how is he or she going to form a mental picture of what is typical of the variety?

A few years back when clerking at a miniature national rose show I over- heard a judge state when judging the miniature **‘Wanderlust’** “just give it judged as I think it is a decorative variety”. Obviously, the rose **‘Wanderlust’** is not decorative but rather a rose with hybrid tea form as those who grow it can attest. This plays into what is typical of the variety as if you do not grow them then obviously you cannot know them.

With the change that has occurred over the past several years where miniatures have moved from being petite to smaller versions of hybrid teas, it might be time to consider a change in the judging standards for judging miniature roses. Roses such as **Arcanum, Bees Knees, Best of 04, Cream Sicle, Daddy Frank, Edisto, Emma Grace, Ginny, Hello Gorgeous!, Joy, King of the Road, Kiss an Angel Good Morning, Memphis King, Nancy Jean, Renegade, Robin’s Rose, Soroptimist International, Sweet Mallie and Wanderlust** are all on the larger side of being classified as a miniature rose.

This has resulted in a two part conundrum. If a judge does not grow the rose in question, then knowing what is typical of the variety can be difficult if not impossible. The second part of the conundrum is that “bigger is better” for all but miniature roses. I question why horticultural excellence is rewarded for minifloras but not for miniatures. It just may be time to consider a change of the Size Standards for Judging Miniature Roses in order that size could be rewarded. We are asked to be consistent in judging roses.....why not have the Standards for Judging Roses be consistent as well.