

# GIANT MINIATURES

By Marty Hammond

Giant in height and width, but miniature in bloom, I'm talking about mini climbers. We have eighteen different mini climbers in our landscape, which includes nine in 14 inch patio containers. I am so pleased with them, I feel they deserve special credit and attention. The mini climbers in patio containers are located at 8', 4x4 patio posts with a 12" wide trellis attached 12" out from the post, for the rose to be trained on. Each rose is wound around the post and tied to the trellis.

This year we have two new mini climbers, which are both becoming two of my favorites. **Rainbow's End**, a yellow blend with peach, orange, and a hint of red, it taking its time climbing the trellis, but the foliage is dense and this beauty has been in constant bloom for 6 months. **Stolen Moment**, a light mauve semi-double, is our other new acquisition. It was sold as a climber, however, it's not listed as such by ARS, and it is very slow getting started. We'll just be patient and give it time to develop and prove itself.

We have a couple of mini climbers which are not continual bloomers as most are, probably because of their location. One of these lighter bloomers is **Earthquake**, a yellow with red streaks. Each bloom is different and very interesting, so it's well worth keeping. **Candy Cane**, another light bloomer, is a lovely blend of pink and white single blooms in loose clusters. This very lacy and delicate looking rose is located at one end of the patio that gets only morning sun. Two other climbers that get only morning sun, but are more prolific bloomers are **Jean Lajoie**, a gorgeous medium pink (everyone's favorite), with hybrid tea-like blooms which are superb, and **Hurdy Gurdy**, a really wonderful white and red-streaked variegated climber. Everyone who visits our garden, goes away saying "I've got to get one of those". All four of these seem to be disease resistant. They all have gone beyond the 8' patio posts and are now beautifully draping themselves over the top of the patio. They are wonderful companions to the hanging basket fuchsias.

On the mid patio area, there are four mini climbers that are in full sun. I've already mentioned *Rainbow's End*, and with it in this area is **Ruby Pendant**, a wonderful dark mauve, which looks more magenta than mauve. It's not listed as a climber by ARS, but in my garden it's over 8' tall and would be at least 6' wide if I didn't wrap the canes around the trellis and post. It's always in bloom and holds its color very well. The canes are stiff, which makes training a little more difficult, but they are manageable. It's located next to the rock waterfalls, and its intense color is very striking, with the lovely creamy white *Starla* set in front. The other two climbers in this mid patio area are **Orchid Jubilee**, which has especially nice very full clusters of light mauve blooms, and **Golden Century**, an orange-yellow blend. These four climbers are perfect compliments for the variety of colorful minis in hanging containers and the containers sitting on the patio. *Golden Century* is very unique. When the buds first open, they are a definite light orange, but the orange soon fades to a lovely golden yellow, then with age, the blooms become lemon yellow, almost cream. The blooms are for the most part "self cleaning", so there's very little dead-heading needed. The foliage is small and dense and because it's so prolific, it has completely filled in around the post and trellis and has gone some 4' or more across the top of the patio. A truly wonderful mini climbing giant with lots of canes which are easily trained.

The area which features our shade garden is separated by four complimentary mini giants. In just five years **Work of Art**, an orange pink blend, (predominately orange) has gone beyond the 8' trellis, continuing on across the patio. This rose is located at the entryway into the shade garden. We're constantly brushing against it in passing, but it's almost thorn-less so it's okay. Remember when choosing the location for a rose close to an entryway or walkway, you must be able to pass by it without being attacked.

**Little Girl**, an orange pink blend (predominately pink), has also climbed the 8' trellis and gone on to cover another 6' of patio cover to join with Work of Art. These two roses are a great duo – similar in color, but just enough different to be noticeable and blend well. Both are always in bloom, with lots of clusters of gorgeous 1 ½" hybrid tea-like blooms. The canes are flexible, so they are easily tied and trained. I have had a little trouble with rust on these two, but then I only spray when it's absolutely necessary, and all the mini climbing giants are hard to spray successfully because of their height and accessibility. Needless to say, I don't do any deadheading on the tops of these either. I get up on top of the patio cover only once a year – to lightly prune and tie them down because of the wind. **Hi Ho**, a wonderful blend of strong medium pink, with just a hint of orange is also in this area. These blooms are really special! A mass of clustered blooms that holds color well. It seems to be disease resistant, even though located so close to those that get rust occasionally. The fourth in this area is a truly delightful yellow blend called **Touch of Midas**. This is a lovely, delicate rose and looks just great between *H-Ho* and *Work of Art*.

The area at the rear of the shade garden is the home of Magic Dragon, A dark red that gives us more foliage than blooms. Because of its location, it doesn't get a lot of sun, which is probably the reason for the excess foliage. This rose was our first mini climber and was a gift from a friend. It too has produced multiple canes, and is way over 8' tall and 8' wide.

On the side wall, we have mini climbers as background for small shrub roses, minis and floribunda roses. These are in a real hot spot, as they get the noon day heat reflected off the wall and house. We have a really special climber in this area called **Dreamcoat**. This mini has *Joseph's Coat* in its parentage, and though similar, it's lighter than *Joseph's Coat*. This gorgeous giant is a very vigorous rose. The other very prolific mini climbers in this side area are **Jazz Time**, a lovely deep pink which just insists on giving lots of canes and is always in blooms, and **Red Delight**, a nice medium red. **Twister**, a very full dark pink with white streaks, is spaced between Jazz Time and Red Delight and really stands out between the pink and the red. Each of these four are to the top of the 6' wall (and over) and have each grown sideways with several laterals, which totally cover the wall.

I tried a few climbers in hanging containers, but they soon got too long to train or control, so after one season they were moved into the ground where they could climb and be allowed to become giants.

When purchasing mini climbers, don't rely on the description of expected height. Our South-western climate gives us a much longer growing season than many other regions, so if you want a mini climber to stay 6 feet, then you will need to heavily prune.