

Enfant de France

Hybrid Perpetual
(Lartay, 1860)

In 1996, I added approximately 120 Old Garden Roses to my one-year-old Arizona garden. In the selection, I included several hybrid perpetuals: Baronne Prevost, La Reine, Reine des Violettes, Paul Neyron and Enfant de France. The first four are fairly commonly grown and easily obtained. Enfant de France, however, is listed in very few of the most widely read rose compendiums. Of all these varieties, Enfant de France is my favorite and deserves to be more widely grown!

Hybrid Perpetuals resulted from crossing highly fragrant, large flowered Gallicas with repeat flowering Chinas. Hybrid Chinas were crossed by Laffay in France with Portlands and Bourbons. His first Hybrid Perpetual appeared in 1837, Princesse Helene.

Hybridized in 1860 by Lartay of France, Enfant de France has blooms of the most exquisite silvery pink. A moderately upright shrub, the prickly canes grow to about four feet high and wide in our climate. The center of the bloom generally remains a button-eye and the form stays well through its life. Petals are velvety, have moderate substance, and hold well as cut flowers. The bloom season lasts from as early as late March through perhaps June. Foliage is a matte dark green and very disease resistant.

This Hybrid Perpetual responded well to heavier pruning in its third and fourth years by flowering profusely on firm canes. It is among the easier OGRs to exhibit, but still makes a lovely addition to the landscape. The bush also lasted well through the abnormally hot summer, with little if any leaf burn. While it has the effect of a once-bloomer more than that of a perpetual, Enfant de France definitely adds a fragrant, unique presence to any collection of roses.



Photo courtesy of Yesterday's Rose