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Blue Roses Only In Legends

There are no blue roses. Like the fabled "Seven Cities of Cibola," they seem destined forever to remain the province of legend. Take, for instance, the "Blue Rose of Persia," a Gallica rose which legend says the Crusaders brought back to France. A plant named Cardinal de Richelieu whose open blooms are purplish and fade to "blue," is thought to be the rose.

The Arabs accentuated the bluish coloring, so the story goes, by the application of an unknown mineral, perhaps cobalt, to the cambium layer of the stems. According to the book, "The Magic World of Roses," an Englishman once discovered a blue rose growing in his garden. Somehow it offended his aesthetic sensibilities and he pulled the plant and destroyed it.

Even radiation, he says, is not likely to alter chromosomes in such a way as to produce a true blue rose.

But lavender colors are something else. Initially, lavender colors were difficult to work with, notes Warriner, for a couple of reasons.

One is that some of the early lavender plants were very weak in nature and therefore, a lot of hybridizing was necessary to develop strong strains.

The other reason is that many of the lavender, or mauve roses have been "hard" colors, generally not eyepleasing.

There are a number of lavender roses, but none of the pigments in the genus *rosa* is blue and it seems unlikely that any combination of the pigments that do exist, even if treated with sugar or metal ions, will produce a blue rose.

Warriner predicts that the entire class can quickly gain a greater prominence than it has had; but he reiterates that, "A blue rose, I'm afraid, is beyond reach, at gold."

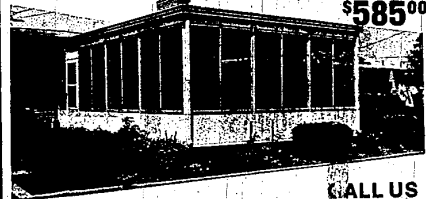
Even so, many rose fanciers will continue to dream of true blue, and if such a rose should ever be developed, it will eagerly color it solid end, beyond reach, at gold.



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The blue fact is, hybridizers have only been able to develop roses such as Sterling Silver and Heirloom, mauve or lavender colors that approach the blue end of the color spectrum but don't reach it.

And that, in the opinion of William Warriner, plant research director for the rose firm of Jackson & Perkins, is as close to blue as anyone is likely to get.

Outlining the reasons for

State Prize To Local Firm

A Farmington manufacturer won the top award of non-consumer product of the year for Michigan Week in judging last week in Grand Rapids.

Electro-Ion, Inc. won the award for its line of materials coating products which virtually eliminate pollution by replacing liquid spray methods with an electrostatically-charged powder. The powder clings to a grounded surface and is

fused during baking to form a more even and durable coating than that produced by spraying.

Greater Michigan Foundation judges said the environmental and economical aspects of the product were most significant in attracting the award.

The award for consumer product of the year went to the Hazel Park manufacturer of a one-wheeled motorcycle trailer.

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