

Roses to inspire our sense of place

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By Heather White



Chinook Sunrise: Bloom colour is a kaleidoscope of shades, from deep coral to pale pink.

What colours come to mind when you hear the phrase Chinook Sunrise? That's the name of the newest hardy rose for northern gardens. Chinook Sunrise blooms are described as a delicious kaleidoscope of shades, from deep coral to pale pink, by Amy Bowen, research director at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre in Vineland Station, Ontario.

Chinook Sunrise, a shrub-type rose, is the second release in a series of roses called Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection, developed at Vineland in Canada's current national rose program established in 2010 in partnership with the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association. Vineland is an independent, not-for-profit organization funded in part by the federal and Ontario governments to support innovation in the horticultural industry.

"Roses are not as fussy as some people think," says grower John Bakker of J. C. Bakker & Sons Ltd. Wholesale Nurseries, in St. Catharines, Ontario. "Initially, the focus of the Canadian rose growing program was extreme hardiness and it's still that, but roses are now also bred for disease resistance and low maintenance."

In 2017, in time for Canada's 150th birthday, a mildly fragrant floribunda with large double flowers named Canadian Shield (*Rosa* 'AAC576') made its debut. Canadian Shield is a repeat bloomer with vivid red blooms and glossy green foliage that Bowen says "blooms from late June until heavy frost — which is early November in my garden."

The rose is bred to be winter hardy to Zone 3a (-40 C°). "I live in the Niagara region, but we have partners across the country who test our roses for hardiness," Bowen says "They tell us how the plants perform in challenging, cold winters."

This March, Chinook Sunrise (*Rosa* 'VLR001') was unveiled at Canada Blooms in Toronto.

"It's a little smaller than Canadian Shield and more compact," Bowen says. "It has a semi-upright habit; height is four feet (120 cm); spread is about the same. It's also bred to be winter hardy to Zone 3a, plus tolerant to black spot and resistant to powdery mildew." As with Canadian Shield, Chinook Sunrise doesn't need deadheading.

"As a bud breaks and bursts, it's a deep coral colour; as the flower opens up it's more of a pink colour that fades over time to apricot, and then turns very pale shades of pink before the petals drop off," says Bowen.

"Because it's a repeat bloomer, you see all bloom stages at one time. Some flowers will be at the end of their lifespan and some will be just opening. There are lots of buds, too, so you know more flowers are coming."

It's these so-called waves of colour that make this rose so beautiful, she says. "Through extensive consumer research we know the softness of the waves of colour made consumers think of the warm winds of a Prairie chinook.

"Pictures don't do it justice. You have to see it up close and personal."

Case in point: Pots of blooming roses happily held court at Canada Blooms, drawing in passersby. "Lots of people stopped," Bowen says. "Some talked about their experiences growing Canadian Shield, and there was lots of excitement for Chinook Sunrise."

Scent was one of the things people picked up on. "What's the first thing people do when they see a rose? They cup the flower and go in for a smell," she says. "It has a light, classic fragrance, strongest when the bud first opens."

"Plus, we gave people a sneak peek of the next rose, which will come out in another two years, in 2021: A bright pink rose called Aurora Borealis," Bowen says.

Bakker's wholesale nursery has grown many of the Chinook Sunrise plants to be sold this spring for the first time at retail nurseries and garden centres across the country, including stores with seasonal set-ups such as Canadian Tire and Loblaws.

"It performs well. Lives up to its reputation in terms of being disease resistant and hardy. You don't need to spray it. And it's a decent size," Bakker says. Other countries are using these types of hardy, low-maintenance roses in commercial landscapes and public spaces, he says, jazzing up the neighbourhood and showing them off to good effect, garnering excitement and interest.

"We have work to do in marketing our roses," says the grower.

For more information

For more on Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection, including where to buy, visit 49throses.com.



Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection first rose, released in 2017: Canadian Shield.



Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection second rose, released in 2019: Chinook Sunrise



Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection third rose, coming in 2021: Aurora Borealis.

Only in Canada, eh

If you're new to Canada, or need a refresher in geology, geography and history, here's what's behind the rose names:

- **Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection:** The rose collection is named after the 49th parallel – a circle of latitude that is 49 degrees north of Earth's equator – that marks the border between Canada and the U.S. from Manitoba to British Columbia, but is used figuratively in song and lore to describe all of the border.
- **Canadian Shield:** The first rose in the series, red in colour, was released in 2017 in time for Canada's 150th birthday. It's named for the Canadian Shield, an ice-scoured area of Precambrian rocks surrounding Hudson Bay that covers half of Canada, including cities such as Montreal, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Winnipeg (but not Toronto), and is celebrated for its forests, waterpower and mineral resources. "If you let Canadian Shield go, it creates a shield. It's a big plant! That's why we like the name Canadian Shield for that rose," Bowen says.
- **Chinook Sunrise:** The second rose in the series, a medley of coral colours, introduced in 2019 is named after the phrase for a warm dry wind that blows down the east side of the Rocky Mountains at the end of winter. The name derives from the First Nations people known as the Chinook in the Pacific Northwest.
- **Aurora Borealis:** The third rose in the series, pink in colour, coming in 2021, is named for the natural light display in the Earth's sky, predominantly seen in the high-latitude regions such as the Arctic, also called the Northern Lights. Vineland describes No.3 in the trifecta: "The bright dancing lights of the aurora are captured in the blooming clusters of this dramatic sunset pink rose

set against dark green and glossy foliage.” Who says we can’t romance the rose here in Canada?

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