

**‘Monty Python’ – a new cultivar of rose
(*Rosa* L., Rosaceae)**

**‘Monty Python’ – nowy kultywar róży
(*Rosa* L., Rosaceae)**

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ABSTRACT: *Rosa* ‘Monty Python’ is a vigorous, suckering shrub with semi-double, pink flowers. It is similar to *R. virginiana*, but differs from that species and its double-flowered variants by green stems, stronger, unevenly spaced prickles and by pale green leaflets which turn yellow in autumn. It also resembles the old roses from the group of *R. ×damascena*, but none of them have such stems and leaves. It is a hardy and healthy plant.

Key words: Kórnik Arboretum, old roses, ornamental shrub, *Rosa virginiana*, *Rosa ×damascena*

The genus *Rosa* L. belongs to the taxa which have the record number of selected garden varieties. It is estimated that more than 4000 cultivars have been described so far and new ones are constantly published. Most professional growers focus their efforts on breeding large-flowered cultivars, while far less attention is devoted to flower mutations (sports) appearing from time to time also among wild roses and their hybrids. Their flowers are less spectacular but the plants are usually much more frost-resistant and drought-tolerant so they do not need much care and can be planted in less favourable habitats. One such rose is described below.

***Rosa* ‘Monty Python’ – a new cultivar
name (Figs 1–6).**

Shrub up to 2–2.5 m tall, with numerous suckering subterranean rhizomes. Sterile annual growth erect or arched above, yellowish green, unarmed in the upper 1/3–1/4, prickly below; larger prickles strong, broad-based, slightly curved, brown-red, unevenly spaced, up to 10 mm long, mixed with distinctly shorter needle-like gland-tipped prickles and bristles. Flowering stems 15–25 cm long, green, unarmed or

with single, strong, curved infrastipular prickles. Leaves 7–9(–11)-foliolate; leaflets light green, rather stiff, mostly elliptic, densely simply serrate, slightly glistening and glabrous above, dull and ± pubescent on the midrib beneath, becoming yellow in the autumn. Rachis ± pubescent, with scattered glands. Stipules ca. 5 mm broad, with straight auricles, glandular along the margin. Inflorescence 1–6-flowered. Bracts stipitate-glandular along the margin. Pedicels slender, 1.5–2.5 cm long, densely stipitate-glandular. Hypanthium cup-shaped, shallow, usually slightly narrowed above, densely stipitate-glandular. Sepals narrow, as long or longer than petals, with long, slightly broadened tips and filiform lateral appendages, stipitate-glandular on the back, patent after anthesis. Flowers ca 5 cm in diameter, semi-double to double, flat, rosette-shaped; petals ca 30–40, pink (The R.H.S. Colour Chart 1966: RED-PURPLE Group 73 b–c), yellowish at the base, those in the outer 2–3 rows patent, the inner ones smaller, irregularly curled or turned up, caducous after flowering. Stamens present. Styles numerous, densely hairy, distinctly protruding, forming large head (5–6 mm). Orifice very broad, 4–5 mm in diameter. Hypanthia fall off soon after anthesis.



Fig. 1. *Rosa* 'Monty Python' in flowers
(photo J. Zieliński).



Fig. 2. Close-up of flowers
(photo J. Zieliński).



Fig. 3. Flower buds
(photo J. Zieliński).



Fig. 4. Young root sucker (photo P. Kosiński).



Fig. 5. The middle part of an annual root sucker (photo P. Kosiński).

Rosa 'Monty Python' is easy to recognize by subsequent combinations of characteristics: adult strong stems (yellowish-)green, unarmed above, prickly and glandular-hispid at least in the lower half; leaflets stiff, pale green, (sub)glabrous, simply serrate, yellow in the autumn; flowers fresh pink, semi-double, rosette-shaped, with curled inner petals; pedicels, hypanthia and sepals densely stipitate-glandular, broad orifice, hips undeveloped. Comparative herbarium material (cultivar standard) is kept at the Herbarium of the Institute of Dendrology in Kórnik (Fig. 6).

Eponymy: named after the creators of Monty Python's Flying Circus.

Description of the new cultivar is based on plants growing for years in the rose collection of Kórnik Arboretum. It is the vegetative generation of the peculiar specimen found by the author in the 1970s on the roadside near Sandomierz in SE Poland. In general appearance this clone resembles *Rosa virginiana* Mill. but it differs from this species and its double-flowered variants (forma *plena* or var. *plena*) by more vigorous growth, green stems, light green leaflets becoming yellow in autumn and by stronger prickles on long shoots. It is possible that this plant is a hybrid of the Virginian rose, however it is difficult to appoint the second parent species.

In its flowers *Rosa* 'Monty Python' also resembles some of the old "historical" roses, especially cultivars from the group of *R. ×damascena* Mill., but none of them have such stems and leaves. It is a hardy, very vigorous plant. Its numerous suckers can be troublesome but this rose also thrives well when grafted on *R. canina* stock. When the plants grow on their own roots, the removal of the previous year's branches after flowering is recommended.

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References

The R.H.S. Colour Chart 1966. The Royal Horticultural Society, London.



Fig. 6. *Rosa* 'Monty Python'. Herbarium standard of the cultivar – KOR 52345 (photo P. Kosiński).