

A rose by any name could not be as sweet

Eric Leslie Trimper, OAM

Horticulturalist, floriculturalist, rosarian

Born: May 2, 1921; Renmark

Died: June 24, 2007; Adelaide

ERIC Trimper had a rare gift. He could grow and maintain exemplary gardens and communicate with anyone on how to prepare, grow and maintain plants. Whether it be a fruit, herb, vegetable or flower, native or exotic, he knew what it was, how to propagate it, grow it and judge it in a show.

He grew up in Renmark, the youngest of eight children. When he married Myrtle Schneider in 1947, he took over the running of the family property, a 9ha mixed fruit and vine block that included an expansive domestic garden.

The garden had a mixture of vegetables, fruits, grapes, annuals, bulbs, perennials, roses, exotic trees and shrubs and a huge collection of arid-zone native plants.

The regularly visited garden, like the fruit block, was always perfectly maintained. His Renmark Show exhibiting was legendary.

His battles with his great mate David Ruston for champion rose were highlights. David and Eric made numerous trips to Melbourne and Adelaide as exhibitors to take on and defeat the city experts in their State Rose Championships.

In 1972, Eric and Myrtle moved to Toorak Gardens and Eric began work as the gardener at Ashford Community Hospital, a position he held for 25 years.

In a matter of a few years, the Ashford garden became a renowned tourist attraction and brought joy to thousands of the hospital's patients and visitors.

Eric served as a horticultural consultant to the Golden Grove development and was



instrumental in the design and planting of the Adelaide International Rose Garden and the Chateau Barossa Garden.

He pioneered the use of landscape roses (especially groundcovers) in South Australia and, in particular, promoted the use of floribunda roses in gardens. His unique contributions to the Adelaide International Rose Garden, especially the huge collections of single roses, hand-painted roses and Australian bred roses, many of which were propagated by Eric, Dean Stringer and Eric's son Kelvin, will be a lasting legacy.

One of Eric's great gifts was his intuitive ability to guide and teach others - a mentor, before the term became a buzz word. Always

encouraging and teaching through practical guidance, he rejoiced in people's successes and he himself was a lifelong learner.

He was a conscientious conservationist and understood the need to maintain a healthy respect for the land.

Eric and Myrtle were members of more than 10 garden-related clubs and life members of at least five, including the Rose Society. They propagated thousands of plants (many of which were rare or hard to obtain) and donated them to various society trading tables, church fetes and community organisations for fundraising.

Eric served as a committee member, president, show judge and regular speaker for many of these groups.

His ability to teach and enthuse audiences on any aspect of gardening, propagation, pruning, exhibiting and judging was admired and sought after throughout the state and far afield.

In particular, he played the role of sidekick to David Ruston for many of David's flower-arranging demonstrations throughout Australia and overseas.

Their witty repartee had audiences enraptured and crying out for more.

Eric received several major lifetime awards for services to the rose and in the Australia Day Honours of 2001 was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to horticulture and floriculture, particularly as the head gardener of the Ashford Community Hospital, and through the National Rose Society of Australia.

Eric was a dedicated family man with a lifelong commitment to his church. For much of his life, he was also active in the brass band movement and a choir conductor. Eric is survived by Myrtle, his wife of almost 60 years, four children and seven grandchildren.