



## The Australian Rose Award 1994

The National Rose Society of Australia has granted Mrs. Susan Irvine the Australian Rose Award in recognition of her work in promoting the rose and in particular preserving and perpetuating its Australian heritage.

In the early 1980s, Susan Irvine bought 'Bleak House', an old stone residence near Kyneton, in the central highlands of Victoria and set about establishing a spectacular rose garden around the house. Her initial interest was in the old roses which then extended to the roses of that doyen of Australian Rose Breeders, Alister Clark. She soon discovered that very few of Clark's roses were still available commercially and set out to re-discover and 'scrounge' as many of them as she could. At the same time she came across many other roses bred by early Australian breeders. Her enthusiasm for perpetuating the creations and achievements of Australian breeders has become a consuming passion.

At her present home in 'Erinvale', Gisborne, north-west of Melbourne, Susan has established a second extensive and celebrated rose garden, which is a testament to her quest. This garden contains the Ornamental Plant Collections Association holdings of Alister Clark's roses and those of other Australian rose breeders. This garden is one of the mainstays of the Australian Open Garden Scheme which she regularly opens for public inspection, as well as maintaining an interest in Bleak House which now runs as a retail nursery and display garden.

Susan is an accomplished author, with two very popular books to her credit. The first being 'Garden of a Thousand Roses' which chronicles her struggle and joy in establishing Bleak House. Her latest edition, 'A Hillside of Roses', describes the establishment of 'Erinvale'. Her books contain a very knowledgeable account of rose culture and companion planting.

In addition, Susan is in great demand as a journalist on roses and their culture, with particular emphasis on historic and Alister Clark roses. She writes for 'The Age', the 'Australian Garden Journal' and is a regular columnist for 'Your Garden' magazine. Susan also gives very freely of her time in giving lectures and demonstrations about roses.

As a member of The Rose Society of Victoria, The Heritage Rose Society, the Ornamental Plants Collection Association and the Australian Garden History Society, Susan has become one of Australia's best known rosarians.