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CHRONICLE

## A scientific life full of the scent of roses: to the anniversary of Olena Rubtsova

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### Abstract

The article highlights the life and scientific path of Olena Leonidivna Rubtsova, a well-known researcher who devoted her entire life to the study, selection, and preservation of roses. The anniversary essay presents the main stages of professional activity, scientific achievements, and contribution to the development of botanical science, particularly the study of the genus *Rosa* and the introduction of new varieties of roses into culture. The publication is a tribute to the person who combined scientific depth, creative thinking, and dedication to the work.

**Keywords:** Olena Rubtsova, anniversary, M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine

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The life of Olena Leonidivna Rubtsova is closely related to the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine. Here she spent the first ten years of her life, because her family and the families of many employees of the botanical garden of the first post-war generation lived on the territory of the botanical garden. She came to work here after graduating from the Ukrainian Agricultural Academy (now the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine) and continues to work today. Here she grew from an engineer to a leading researcher.

Olena Rubtsova was born on April 9, 1950. Her parents, the outstanding landscape architect Leonid Rubtsov and the artist and master of botanical illustration Valentina

Markova, worked in the botanical garden. Leonid Rubtsov, Doctor of Biological Sciences, professor, long-time head of the Dendrology Department, was the author of compositions for many sections of the garden, the most famous of which is the Lilac Garden.

After graduating from the Faculty of Forestry of the Ukrainian Agricultural Academy, Olena Rubtsova in 1973 started work at the Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Plants of the Central Republican Botanical Garden of the Academy of Sciences of the UkrSSR (currently the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine). From the first work days, Olena Rubtsova began scientific work with roses. In 1973–1977, she studied at the correspondence



**Figure 1.** Dr.Sci. Nataliia Zaimenko (on the left) and Dr.Sci. Olena Rubtsova (on the right) in the Rosarium of the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine.

postgraduate course at the Nikita Botanical Garden. Her scientific supervisor was Oleksandr Kormilitsyn, a scientist widely known for his outstanding work in the field of introduction. In the Nikita Botanical Garden, Olena Rubtsova, communicating with world-famous rose breeders Vira Klymenko and Zinaida Klymenko, gained invaluable experience in introducing and selecting roses. In 1980, Olena Rubtsova defended her PhD thesis on “Biological features of rugosa rose varieties and prospects for their selection”. In 1995, she was awarded the academic title of Senior Research Scientist in the specialty of Botany.

In 2011, Olena Rubtsova defended her doctoral dissertation “Genus *Rosa* L. in Ukraine: history, research directions, achievements and prospects”. The dissertation is devoted to the generalization and analysis of the results of theoretical and practical research of the genus *Rosa* in Ukraine, the reflection of the contribution of domestic scientists to world and Ukrainian science, the coverage of the achievements, and the coverage of the ways of further research. Subsequently, a monograph was published based on the dissertation studies (Rubtsova, 2009).

Since 1980, for 45 years, Olena Rubtsova has been the curator of the collection and exhibition area Rosarium. Since 2001, she has been working in the Department of Landscape Construction, and since 2003, she has held the position of Leading Research Scientist.

Under her leadership and with her direct participation, the rose collection of the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine is constantly being expanded, and varietal studies are being conducted. The rose collection assembled under her leadership is one of the largest in Ukraine and currently includes 30 species, 15 forms, and 650 varieties. This assortment indicates the collector’s ability to quickly respond to modern trends in requirements for varieties, fashion for the shape, size, and color of a flower or inflorescence.

Theoretical contributions and results of her developments became the basis for experimental work on preserving the gene pool and introducing new varieties of the genus *Rosa*. Thanks to Rubtsova’s theoretical and practical achievements, in 2006, the rose garden of the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine was granted the status of National Heritage.

Olena Rubtsova is a specialist in the history of the application of roses in garden landscapes and the history of their introduction and selection. Based on the study of archival, scientific, and literary sources, as well as her own theoretical and practical research, she carried out a comprehensive retrospective analysis of research on the genus *Rosa* in Ukraine (19–20 and early 21 centuries). She identified its main directions: introductory, geographical, floristic, bioecological, selectional, agrotechnical with biological principles of cultivation, and landscape decorative application of roses.

Olena Rubtsova pays special attention to breeding work with roses. Using the method of analytical and synthetic breeding and selecting somatic mutations, 11 cultivars of roses were bred under her leadership. Such cultivars include 'Khortytsia', 'Vintage', 'Carousel', 'Spohady', 'Pochayna', 'Halaktyka', 'Mushli', 'Solodkyi Son', 'Gracyinyi Tanok', 'Akvarel Rose Park', 'Vrazhennia', for which copyright certificates and patents were obtained.

She is the author of over 250 scientific papers, including nine monographs (i.e., Rubtsova et al., 2007; Rubtsova & Chyzhankova, 2019; Kolesnichenko et al., 2020; Rubtsova & Chuvikina, 2021). She is also a member of the Scientific and Specialized Councils of the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine and a member of the Methodological Commission of the Ukrainian Institute of Plant Varieties.

The fruitful scientific and organizational activities of Olena Rubtsova were pointed out by the Diploma of the Department of General Biology, the Levko Symyrenko Prize (2014), and the Badge of Honor lapel badge.

Colleagues appreciate Olena Rubtsova as an excellent specialist and an erudite person who is always ready to help and provide wise advice. The administration and staff of the M.M. Gryshko National Botanical Garden of the NAS of Ukraine sincerely congratulate Olena Rubtsova on her anniversary, and wish her good health, creative success, and the realization of her plans and ideas.

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## Наукове життя, сповнене аромату троянд: до ювілею Олени Рубцової

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У статті висвітлено життєвий і науковий шлях Олени Леонідівни Рубцової – знаної дослідниці, яка усе життя присвятила вивченню, селекції та збереженню троянд. У ювілейному нарисі представлено основні етапи професійної діяльності, наукові здобутки, внесок у розвиток ботанічної науки, зокрема вивчення роду *Rosa* та впровадження нових сортів троянд в культуру. Публікація є даниною поваги особистості, що поєднала наукову глибину, творче мислення та відданість справі.

**Ключові слова:** Олена Рубцова, ювілей, Національний ботанічний сад імені М.М. Гришка НАН України