

Why are there Two Different Color Blooms on my Rose?

By Bill Kozemchak

When getting the garden ready for our garden tour last week, I noticed some long light green canes coming out of *Brite Eyes*, a Will Radler climber which has darker foliage and doesn't throw off long canes. Upon further inspection, dark red *Dr. Huey* blooms were mixed in with the light pink blooms of *Brite Eyes*. Following the lighter canes down to the base of the plant, I found a couple canes coming out of the ground away from the rose base. These are suckers, canes coming off the rootstock, not the grafted variety you have purchased. I dug down next to suckers so I could remove them as low as possible. Looking at the photos, you can see how far down they started to sprout off the roots. I have had suckers on quite a few roses over the years and the more you see them, the easier they are to spot. Remove them as soon as possible, so the energy goes to the grafted rose, not the rootstock sucker. If left to grow, the rootstock can take over and the grafted variety can eventually die off. Some people find it interesting to have two different colors roses on one plant and will let them go. This may work for a while, but eventually the rootstock will take over. Also the rootstock only blooms once in the spring. I have had some roses throw suckers almost every year, despite trying to remove it as low as possible. Others did not reappear after removing them low. I have also never had a *multiflora* grafted rose throw a sucker in my garden, all the ones that did were *Dr. Huey*. Should you see small white flowers on a sucker, that would be *multiflora*.



Top row: Pink *Brite Eyes* blooms along with the dark red *Dr. Huey* blooms on the sucker.

Middle and bottom rows: Suckers coming out of the ground and the dirt dug away to remove the sucker as low as possible.

Photos by Bill Kozemchak