

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF ROSE PRODUCTION IN LIFE OF SETTLEMENT SZÖREG

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ABSTRACT

The rose is a magnificent, mysterious plant. It had been grown before Christ. Today it is sold mainly as a cut flower. A great amount comes from Szőreg to the internal market, but gardeners of Szőreg export it to wholesalers or directly to costumers, as well. This is a particular field to grow and sell rose-trees. Nowadays traders make roses available to costumers in this form, too. It is worth mentioning their industrial use since roses are used in food and pharmaceutical industries and in cosmetics, as well.

Rose-trees need special soil, light, water and nutrient. Their complex existence is presented as a comparative advantage around Szőreg where there are excellent conditions for cultivation of roses. No wonder that more than 90% of rose production in Hungary comes from Szőreg and its surroundings.

This study intends to examine what economic and cultural role rose tree growing has in the life of a small town in the south-east of Hungary – taking a rose-growing family farm as an example.

Keywords: rose-growing, rose tree growing, rural development, rose festival, family farm

INTRODUCTION

The rose had a very important role in certain cultures even before Christ. In the course of time it had evolved as a domesticated plant, its role had increased in different religions-mainly in the pagan body of beliefs, before Christianity took the rose as a religious symbol. It had already been grown in 1500 BC, that time it was utilized in cosmetics and therapy. It has been cultivated as an ornamental plant since 18-19th centuries. Roses can be found all over the world: in the moderate and subtropical parts of the Old and New Worlds. It grows almost everywhere in Europe, except for the Arctic Circle. (MÁRK 1976; MATTOCK J. – NEWDICK, J. – SUTHERLAND, N., 1994)

In our country rose-growing is typical around Szeged. The former co-operative farm in Szőreg took the important role in promotion of rose tree growing. Gardeners of Szőreg made this region well-known with their hard work.

We are presenting specialties in growing and selling formed by today through the example of a family farm.

ROSE TREE GROWING IN SZŐREG

The rose culture in the area between the rivers Tisza and Maros goes back in the past of more than a hundred years. This geographical area has excellent climatic and geological conditions. Rose trees are connected to Szőreg by both the appropriate natural conditions and tradition of their cultivation. The soil of good quality which is rich in nutrient, the suitable amount of water and sunshine are all available here. (HÖHNE, J. – WILHELM, P. G.,

1999) These lands can be found between Szőreg and Deszk in the area bordered by Tisza and Maros.

The family farm examined in our survey was founded in 1989. Today they have 50 thousand stems of young and selected roses. Until 2007 they were contracted clients of foreign breeders, so they grew the rose trees to order. Almost every rose tree was exported during the time of contracts. Cultivation and export were regularly checked by the administrative departments, which were in function that time. Today they produce for home producers, mostly commercial kinds because it is easier and it does not involve registration and controlling.

The examined family farm can be regarded as a typical one, this model characterizes rose gardeners. Each working process from planting to picking is done by the female members of the family. There are three of them- the mother and the two daughters- who carry out the precise, less physical duties. The male members of the family, the father and the son, do the work which needs more physical strength. Most of the processes are motorized in order to save time and money. Each family member has its own duty but they need other human resources for the seasonal work.

Cultivation, irrigation, nutrient supply and plant protection are accomplished with machines driven by a tractor: before planting they loosen the soil with a plough in middle-depth (around 18-24 cm). (JAKOBI, K.,1993; RICHTER, G. – PROLL, T., 2005) They are very careful so that the surface of the soil cannot turn downwards. After the soil has settled (the end of March, the beginning of April), they can start planting which they use a planting machine of two lines for. They can plant the 50 thousand stems of young rose trees within two days. After this step they water the stocks with a windable irrigation system which can be repeated several times depending on the weather conditions.

In the suitable weather conditions the wild subjects become fully ripe by the middle of July. They become ready for budding which is started around 10 July. Three members do this work in the family. They have used a special machine for it for two years so they can save a lot of time and energy. They can finish budding in two weeks with 5 persons for 50 thousand stems of wild subjects.

After budding they do not remove the ribbon, they wait until the next spring. They remove it only after slotting so there is a smaller chance that either the frost or the pest damages them. Slotting is started in late winter. The slot is exactly between the leaves and the new shoot. Before picking they cut back the rose trees in the height of 1 cm, and then they remove the leaves from them. This process is started in the middle of October. It is the most complex step. One person – always the father – controls the machine which picks up the young tree. He has to take a very big responsibility since he should drive the tractor very slowly and evenly so that the picking machine cannot cut the stump to pieces. The employees pick up the rose trees from the ground and then classify them. Two female members of the family check classification and then attach the class labels. They put a white label on the 1st class stems, orange on the 2nd class and red on the 3rd class. 10 classified stems are put in a pile which is bundled by the brother. He bundles the stems first in a bundle of 10 and then of 50. Then, they put them on the trailer connected to the tractor, and finally, they are carried to the storage. They store them in a separate building until the customer transport them. In the meantime they water them so that the stems cannot get dry.

ROSE GROWING TODAY IN HUNGARY

4-5 million stems of roses are grown in Hungary every year. 98% of them is produced in the region of Szőreg: in Tiszasziget, Újszentiván, Kübekháza, Szőreg and Deszk. Some home data are shown in *Table 1*.

The open-field acreage rose	
2009	46,8 hectare
2010	44,2 hectare

Eye Mode planting	
2009	4 680 000 pieces
2010	4 420 000 pieces

Field produced noble rose tree (I and II Class)	
2009	3 600 000 pieces
2010	3 400 000 pieces

Table 1. The Rose-growing number of data

Source: http://www.mgszh.gov.hu/szakteruletek/szakteruletek/novterm_ig (25th 02. 2012)

The planted subject is generally 20% more than the amount of the ready stems but the farmers take this number into consideration when planting so they can fulfill the orders without problems. Around 76% of the open-field acreage roses are exported packed with free roots, only 24% of the full amount of rose trees is sold in the home market.

There are 31 bigger producers in the Szőreg region who earn their living only from rose growing. Around 31 families are occupied directly or indirectly with rose growing in open fields. One producer deals with around 30-40 thousand stems here. The planting proportion was 10 thousand stems five years ago which has grown to 40 thousand by today. The number of farmers is small regarding the Hungarian conditions which results that the offer of the relatively small number of producers can hardly fulfill the demand for the product.

The number of the species grown here changes every year because of the wide variety of the customers' demand. As an average, farmers grow 200 types of rose trees in Hungary. The different departments can only estimate the data of rose growing, for some reasons, so it is not easy to find exact data.

Today it is Hungary which exports the most rose trees, some millions a year, in Europe. Orders from breeders make the biggest export, among them the most important ones: Meilland (France), De Ruyter (the Netherlands), Kordes (Germany). (JESZENSZKY Á., 1978)

The examined family farm has exported to 19 countries so far. Constant destinations are: Germany, France, Croatia, and Italy. They export the most to France, the Netherlands and Germany.

The specialized knowledge, experience which is handed down from fathers to sons,

customs, good examples, joy felt in work, pride, sure income, success in the precise work—all these make the rose culture which has conquered Europe. The local people believe that those who were born in Szőreg have rose growing in their blood which is not only work but passion, as well.

ROSE FESTIVAL IN SZŐREG

It has been a tradition since 1990 that the Rose Festival is organized at the end of June. The event itself is an opportunity for farmers and people interested to meet each other which has a significant marketing value, too. Also, this event makes the rose even more popular.

At that time of the year Szőreg is dressed in rose petals. In 2004 the rose of Szőreg became a 'hungaricum' which is not only an honor but a special trade mark, too, from marketing point of view. The last decade enchanted thousands of people with the beautiful flower compositions. <http://www.programturizmus.hu/tdestination-szoregi-rozsaunnep.html> (2012.02.28.)

These farmers try to utilize their existing conditions, results. They are planning the future locally which they have the necessary natural and environmental circumstances for. These settlements have made allowance for their conditions, their professional knowledge, tradition, the employment rate and income and protection of village values.

They know the market demand and they intend to realize an exemplary rural development by integrating the local traditions. They deeply believe that both good reputation and its producers have to be respected. It is an example for that people working in agriculture can easily learn what they think sensible. Development of a community depends on where their members settled down and what culture of production they formed there.

CONCLUSIONS

In the modern farm the rose trees are grown to sell them for home or foreign customers, breeders. Besides, they are utilized for industrial purposes; it is worth mentioning the food and pharmaceutical industries and the cosmetics, too.

Hungary's soil, the surroundings of Szőreg, the areas of the South Great Plain Region are excellent for growing roses.

The people of Szőreg are highly appreciated in Szeged region. They form a community where different ethnic groups have been living together in tolerance for centuries, where the people are connected by the exemplary love for work, beautiful gardens, flowers and roses. For roses which give not only safe job but joy, as well. And not only for the farmers but for the German, Italian or Danish housewives who plant and take care of the famous rose trees of Szőreg.

A real community needs a common holiday. It was found by the people of Szőreg in the Rose Festival which has been an attractive, splendid event in the Szeged Festival Programs for years, it is a must to take part in it.

The rose has become the emblematic element of Szőreg. Life and work of lots of families are arranged around it. Nevertheless, the rose means even more here: the central element of the social contact and socialization which symbolizes the common aims and inherence. It is part of the culture and the passing down of knowledge over generations. Also, the rose and the rose tree are our national treasure too, that is why it is a protected trade mark. The vicinity of Szeged (Szőreg is its administrative part) offers the advantages of a big city so the opportunity to protect traditions (ZSÓTER B., 2006) and to utilize the life in a modern city, the unity of country and town and of the living and working place are all realized at the same time here.

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