

# 'Frida Kahlo'

A UNIQUE SHOWY FLORIBUNDA HONORS A GREAT ARTIST

"I PAINT FLOWERS SO THEY WILL NOT DIE." – Frida Kahlo

This month we put a spotlight on a wonderful new floribunda introduction that was named in honor of Mexico's most famous and beloved artist, Frida Kahlo. A world-acclaimed painter, Frida once most famously said, "I paint flowers so they will not die." She was best known for her self-portraits and her use of bold, vibrant colors. She was a passionate gardener and rose lover, and she often picked roses and marigolds to entwine in her hair, as can be seen in her self-portrait included in this article. Like the flowers she immortalized in her art, the rose Frida Kahlo is a spirited and colorful reminder of her enduring life force.

The rose named in her honor was created by legendary hybridizers Christian Bedard and Tom Carruth from Weeks Roses in 2017 and was registered as WEKcifrabaun. Classified by the American Rose Society as a red blend (rb), it is a cross of City of San Francisco, Baby Love and an unknown seedling, and it was introduced to the buying public in 2018. The rose is a fitting tribute to the iconic painter, who is one of the most recog-

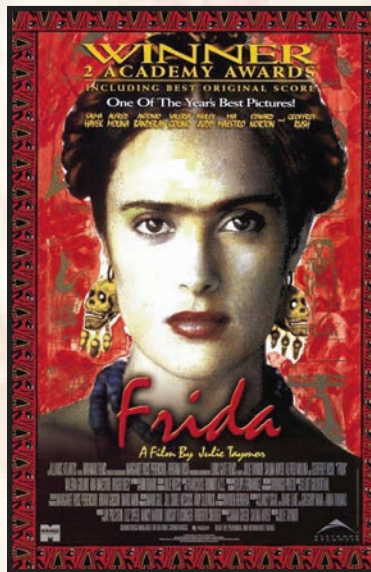
nizable artists in the world for her unique and flamboyant style. The 'Frida Kahlo' rose is also unique in the rose world, presenting scarlet red and gold striped blooms,

each of which is a one of a kind work of art, paying homage to its glorious namesake.

By way of background, Frida Kahlo, the artist led a wildly passionate life, which was highlighted by great professional success and plagued by injury and suffering. All of her wild and chaotic life experiences were reflected in her intense, dramatic work. As a teenager at the renowned National Preparatory School in Mexico City, she became famous for her outspokenness and bravery. At this school she first met the famous Mexican mural artist, Diego Rivera, who was to become the great love of her life. Through triumph and tragedy, great passion and romantic heartbreak,



By Suzanne Horn  
Master Rosarian



Frida lived through her art and her willingness to be outspoken about causes she believed in. After a divorce from Diego, the pair eventually remarried in a relationship fraught with numerous infidelities on both sides. They remained married until her eventual passing in 1954, shortly after her 47th birthday. She suffered greatly during her life and famously wrote in her diary, "I hope the passing is joyful – and I hope never to return."

Frida's fame has been growing since the time of her death. Her famous Blue House in Coyocoan, Mexico City was opened as a museum in 1958. Her fame in the United States skyrocketed in the 1970's feminist movement, holding her up as an icon of female creativity. In 1983, Hayden Herrera published "A Biography of Frida Kahlo", which drew more attention from the public to Frida and her work. Then in 2002, the Academy Award nominated movie "Frida" was released, starring Salma Hayek as Frida and Alfred Molina as the

tumultuous love of her life, Diego Rivera. The popularity of Frida Kahlo and her work soared to even newer heights.



As for the rose named in honor of this brilliant, eccentric artist, it is true to Frida's personal flair and fiery independent spirit. It has been garnering a lot of attention from home gardeners and exhibitors alike since its introduction, as its showy appearance matches its colorful namesake. This strikingly beautiful rose is a real attention-getter!

Its most notable feature is, of course, its eye-catching hue, as you can see from the attached photos. Those dramatic, striped blooms will stop you in your tracks in the garden with its stunning color blend, and it will be the one to draw your focus across a showroom filled with hundreds of other roses.



This floribunda has it all, including unique coloring, beautiful blooms and great disease resistance. The scarlet-orange rose has brushstrokes of gold and a soft red blush that is unlike any other cultivar. The color does not fade in the heat, but rather has an intensified red blush on the finish of

the bloom. 'Frida Kahlo' offers up medium sized semi double decorative bloom form with anywhere from 24 to 40 petals. The flowers are presented in small clusters of 5 to 6 striped blooms, which stand out against the rich, extremely glossy dark green foliage. They can also be disbudded to present one bloom per stem.

Those gorgeous multi-colored blossoms are each exceptional works of art with no two being exactly alike. Just as Frida is one of the most recognizable artists for her unique style, the scarlet red and gold striped flowers of 'Frida Kahlo' are also one of a kind in the rose world. Exquisitely



formed, ovoid buds open to reveal scalloped petals that are a novel mix of gold and red with a swirl of colors that continues to intensify as the flower ages, finishing with a deep red blush.



Its foliage is exceptionally disease resistant. This is a real bonus for those with "no spray" gardens. That rich, glossy foliage cloaks vigorous canes to make a lush backdrop to frame the budding flowers as they unfurl to expose the inner masterpiece. The flowers have an average diameter of 3.5" across. As with most roses, bloom size tends to increase with cooler weather. All of its pizzazz goes into the flamboyant color, as it presents only a



mild fruity fragrance.

By way of growth habit, 'Frida Kahlo' is a vigorous, upright, bushy and medium tall shrub, reaching about three feet in height and three feet in width. It blooms well in full sun but also thrives in partial shade. It also does very well in containers. It blooms abundantly throughout the growing season and repeats well with many bloom cycles throughout the year here in Southern California, providing beauty to the garden and lovely cut flowers for the home. It also presents a very desirable "finish". The flowers hold onto their bold, bright colors to the very end, dropping their vivid petals cleanly just in time for a new flush of blooms to appear.

For the exhibitors among us, 'Frida Kahlo' is already showing itself to be an excellent



exhibition rose, having already won numerous trophies for top exhibitor Linda Clark. It is certainly a contender for in multiple classes including Best Floribunda Bloom and Floribunda Spray/Queen.

I'm sure it would look lovely in a

picture frame, an English Box and in arrangements as well. One need only use a little imagination and creativity.

In conclusion, if you are one of Frida's countless followers or simply a lover of showy, dramatically hued roses, this is the choice for you. I encourage you to add

a piece of floral art to your garden with a rose that is as bright and vivid as the artist herself, the unique garden treasure that is 'Frida Kahlo'.