

# On the life's work of Gergely Márk

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I have been documenting the roses of Mr. Gergely Márk for five years. In addition to being motivated by my close friendship with him and the high esteem with which I regard him, my intent is to ensure **the survival of as many Márk roses** for future generations as possible.

**The roses of Mr. Gergely Márk are Hungarian roses in many respects: they are so-called "Hungaricums".**

On the one hand, although this 86 year old rose breeder has bred roses all his life as his profession, his activities **lacked market orientation**. This fact is reflected in the **names of Márk roses**, which could represent the figures of a Hungarian pantheon. On the other hand, another specificity of the breeding work of Mr. Gergely Márk is that over 80% of his new varieties were developed solely **under open ground conditions**. As it is not very lucrative, this type of breeding method has almost become extinct, however, rose varieties bred in this way show above average resistance to the adversities of the weather. Márk roses are a good example of this, as they have adapted very well to the extreme **climatic and weather conditions of Hungary**.

**Márk rose varieties are outstanding even by international standards.**

Last year I had the opportunity to praise the life's work of Mr. Gergely Márk at the **World Rose Convention** held in Vancouver. In my study I evaluated precisely 135 Márk varieties. The main criteria for entering new rose varieties in international competitions formed the basis of my discussion. **The results** praise the roses of Mr. Gergely Márk. The proportion of these roses showing above average frost resistance, their long blooming periods, intense colour play in their petals, roses frequently having simple flowers, and the stamen being frequently visible are all worthy of note. Often, these characteristics go hand in hand with a pleasant scent.

'**Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet emléke**' (synonyms: '**Heilige Elisabeth**' and '**Saint Elisabeth of Hungary**'), a gold medalist rose of Mr. Gergely Márk, satisfies fully the criteria cited above.

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This rose has deservedly earned **increasing popularity** during the past few years. In addition to being planted in many public places in **Hungary**, including every botanical garden and arboretum (such as the Arboretum of Gödöllő), this rose is to be found in the best known rosariums of **Germany**. Furthermore, it has been introduced in other European countries, such as **Austria, Belgium, France, Slovakia, and Italy** (where it has recently found a home in the rose garden of the Vatican). And 'Saint Elisabeth of Hungary' is spreading the good repute of Hungarian roses in **Japan, Canada, and the US** as well.

**All in all**, even if appreciation for new Márk rose varieties cannot be quantified through indicators of market success, the growing interest in these roses worldwide is a good demonstration of the recognition of their value. Hopefully the chances of survival of Márk roses will increase in proportion to their being planted.

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