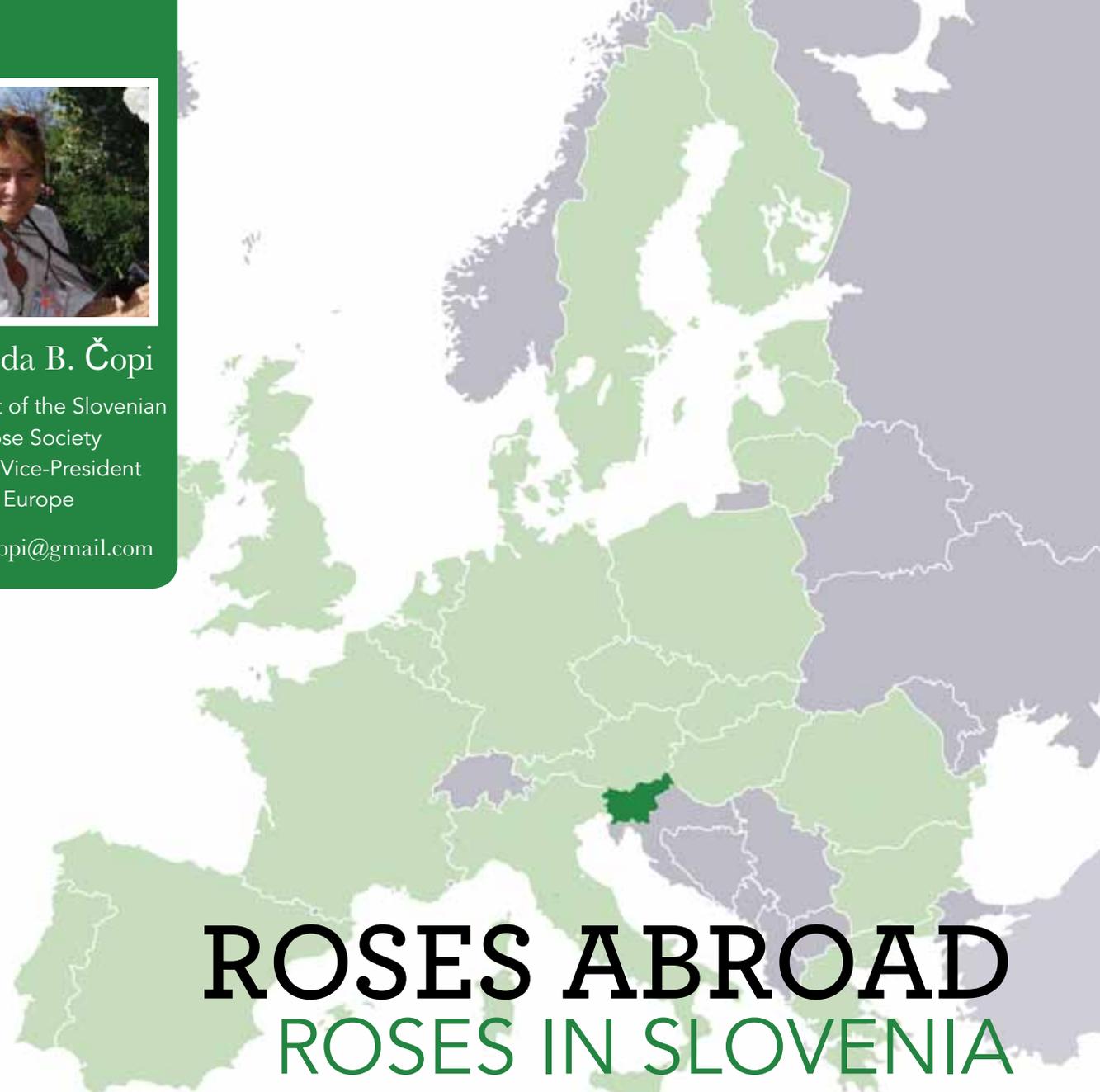




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ROSES ABROAD

ROSES IN SLOVENIA

Slovenia is a small Central European country, lying between Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. It extends on an area of only 13,000 mi² and some more than 2 million inhabitants. Slovenia lies in the top corner of the Adriatic Sea and has only 30 miles of sea coast but, on one hand, still could be considered a Mediterranean country. On the other hand Slovenia could also be classified as an Alpine country: according to its position under the Julian Alps with the high mountains (the highest is Triglav with 2864 m). Despite its compact size, Slovenia is an extremely diverse, colorful and heterogeneous country. This is also connected with the climate in this area: it goes from the mild sub-Mediterranean in the south-west towards more continental in the north-east.

The varied climate also affects the growth of roses – this allows us to admire their blossoms from the very first week of May until the end of June or even the first two weeks of July. The roses in Slovenia are a small part of the horticultural operation and in productions, but they are important plants in our gardening. They are growing in all parts of the country, and the rose is historically the most popular plant and part of every family garden. This means that the national enthusiasm for roses is visible through different parts of the country especially in the month of June. It is therefore interesting that even the old Slovenian name for the month of June – *rožnik* – in fact derives from the old Slovenian word for 'rose' – *roža* (a rose is nowadays more commonly called *vrtnica*) – reflecting the overall blooming



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Above: Roses in the Slovenian Sub-Mediterranean countryside

Right: Rosa 'Prešeren'

of the roses in gardens around the whole country.

In year 2008 Slovenian rose breeder Dr. Matjaž Kmecl created the first Slovenian rose variety, Rosa 'Prešeren'. It was named after one of the greatest Slovenian poets, France Prešeren. In collaboration with the Slovenian Rose Society the new variety was presented to the public on the Slovenian Day of Roses in 2008 at Arboretum Volčji Potok. Rose 'Prešeren' blossoms are of a gently pink color that becomes slightly apricot in tone towards the center. The flowers are quite large and have a diameter of 5-inches. The rose blossoms for a long time, maintaining its flowers fresh and compact. The specificity of



rose 'Prešeren' are the strong rosebuds that turn from the intense red color to pink when they open. The rose 'Prešeren' grows from 2½- to 3½-feet high and is quite resistant to diseases.

With the purpose of upgrading the knowledge about roses in Slovenia and promoting them to the wider



Above: Slovenian Rose Society members between the blossoms in Valdoltra

public, The Slovenian Rose Society (SRS) was founded in 2003. SRS was created with the aim of bringing together rose lovers and encouraging the development of rose gardens and the dissemination of knowledge on roses, helping the protection of natural and cultural heritage, providing training and offering professional assistance in the creation and reconstruction of rose gardens. SRS is a voluntary, independent and non-profit association of rose lovers, dedicated to the development of rose horticulture and other related activities locally and in wider environment. Among the main objectives of the society there are the protection of natural and cultural heritage, professional training and education, support for engineers with their horticultural activities, garden planning, promotion and technical assistance for setting up new rose gardens. The

SRS counts around 150 members, who come from very different backgrounds: from horticulture professionals to pure enthusiasts. The SRS is member of the World Federation of Rose Societies.

The logo of the Slovenian Rose Society is a story for itself. It represents *Rosa glauca*, Red-leaved Rose, which is a well-known and respected species, and which vari-



eties are used in parks all around the world. The SRS choose it for its visual representation because it is indigenous for this area.

Slovenian Rose Society organizes various expert lectures and trainings, and also field workshops regarding roses: pruning rose shrubs, pruning bourbon roses, summer care, preparing roses for winter, grafting school, etc. Under the domain of SRS there is also the Rose Festival and other rose related events. The Society organizes guided visits of rose gardens in Slovenia and trips abroad (Europe and wider).

As already said in the beginning of the article, the climatic diversity in Slovenia offers a variety of different micro locations. These have impact on rose gardens that can be roughly divided in two groups: sub-mediterranean rose gardens (those in Valdoltra and Portorož, accompanied with one in St. Ivan in the near Trieste, Italy) and continental rose gardens (those in Arboretum Volčji Potok, Tivoli and University Botanical in Maribor).

To be continued...



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Above: Guided visit of Arboretum Volčji Potok Below: Some of the Slovenian rose gardens

