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Gray et al.

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(54) **FLORIBUNDA ROSE PLANT NAMED 'GRAALPHA'**

(50) Latin Name: ***Rosa* hybrid**
Varietal Denomination: **GRAalpha**

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USPC **Plt./143**
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
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See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

PUBLICATIONS

http://www.rose.org.au/assets/oznames-11-11-2018.pdf; Nov. 11, 2018; 2 pages.*

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

'GRAalpha' is a new and distinct floribunda type *Rosa* hybrid plant which is characterized by the combination of an semi-weeping to spreading growth habit, very high resistance to *Diplocarpon rosae* and *Podosphaera pannosa*, nearly continuous flowering, distinct flower color dominated by yellow with irregular orange variegated areas that are splashed and flecked with yellow, and the stability of these characteristics from generation to generation. The new cultivar is generally suited to landscape applications.

2 Drawing Sheets

Latin name of genus and species: The Latin name of the genus and species of the novel variety disclosed herein is *Rosa* hybrid.

Variety denomination: The inventive variety of *Rosa* hybrid disclosed herein has been given the variety denomination 'GRAalpha'.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Parentage: 'GRAaplha' is a seedling selection which resulted from the controlled cross-pollination of an unnamed *Rosa* hybrid female breeding line (not patented) and an unnamed *Rosa* hybrid male breeding line (not patented). Both parents, developed by the same inventor and never commercially released, exhibited traits deemed commercially significant and desirable.

After many years of trialing, the female parent was confirmed to possess a combination of desirable traits such as compact growth habit well suited to the landscape, very high resistance to powdery mildew and blackspot and having flower color dominated by yellow with irregular orange variegated areas that are splashed and flecked with yellow and borne on a bushy plant growing to 1 meter tall and 1 meter wide. The male parent was selected for use in breeding after trialing confirmed the presence of a modern flower color. During the spring of 2015, the female parent was emasculated and was manually pollinated with pollen from

the male parent. In autumn of 2016, seed was collected from hips produced by the female parent and a number of seedlings were grown to a mature size, including the claimed plant. These progeny were further evaluated for desirable traits such as fragrance, mildew disease resistance and novel flower color, and in January of 2016 the claimed plant was first observed. In January of 2017, after further evaluation for desirable traits, the claimed plant was deemed to be garden-worthy and suited to widespread cultivation. It was given the denomination, 'GRAalpha'.

Asexual Reproduction: Asexual propagation of 'GRAalpha', by way of softwood stem cuttings, was first performed in May of 2016 at the inventor's nursery in Highfields, Australia. Through more than twelve subsequent generations, the unique features of this cultivar have proven to be stable and true to type.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The following characteristics have been repeatedly observed and represent the distinguishing characteristics of the new *Rosa* cultivar 'GRAalpha'. These traits, in combination, distinguish 'GRAalpha' as a new and distinct cultivar.

1. *Rosa* hybrid 'GRAalpha' exhibits a semi weeping to spreading growth habit; and

2. *Rosa* hybrid 'GRAalpha' exhibits mid green, glossy foliage; and
3. *Rosa* hybrid 'GRAalpha' exhibits repeat flowering; and
4. *Rosa* hybrid 'GRAalpha' exhibits a double flower type; and
5. *Rosa* hybrid 'GRAalpha' exhibits flower color dominated by yellow with irregular orange variegated areas that are splashed and flecked with yellow.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. **1** illustrates, as nearly true as it is reasonably possible to make the same in color photographs of this type, an exemplary 12 month old 'GRAalpha' plant, exhibiting several faded flowers, grown outdoors at the inventor's commercial nursery in Highfields, Australia.

FIG. **2** illustrates, as nearly true as it is reasonably possible to make the same in color photographs of this type, the typical flower of 'GRAalpha'.

DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The following observations and measurements, made in February of 2019, describe averages of two own-root specimens of one year old 'GRAalpha' plants. The plants were grown outdoors in a garden bed of a red krasnozem soil in full sunlight, at the inventor's nursery in Highfields, Australia. No shade or supplemental light was provided. Temperatures ranged from approximately 17 to 35 degrees Celsius during the day and 7 to 18 degrees Celsius at night. Standard practices for irrigation, fertilizer and pest control were applied at appropriate times during the growing season. The plants were pruned.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that certain characteristics will vary with older or, conversely, with younger plants. 'GRAalpha' has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. Where dimensions, sizes, colors and other characteristics are given, it is to be understood that such characteristics are approximations or averages set forth as accurately as practicable. The phenotype of the variety may differ from the descriptions set forth herein with variations in environmental, climatic and cultural conditions. Color notations are based on *The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart*, The Royal Horticultural Society, London, 2007 Fifth Edition except where common terms of color are used.

A botanical description of 'GRAalpha' and comparisons with the parents and the most similar commercial cultivar of *Rosa* hybrid are provided below.

General plant description:

Growth habit.—Semi weeping to spreading.

Growth rate.—Approximately 10 months to reach 60 cm.

Dimensions.—80 cm tall and 80 cm wide.

Environmental tolerance.—Very good heat tolerance; cold hardiness is unknown.

Disease resistance.—Very high resistance to powdery mildew (*Sphaerotheca pannosa*) and very high resistance to blackspot (*Diplocarpon rosae*).

Pest resistance.—Neither resistance nor susceptibility to typical *Rosa* sp. pests has been observed.

Propagation.—Technique — Softwood stem cuttings. Time to initiate roots — About 13 days at approximately 21 degrees Celsius at root zone and 18 degrees Celsius ambient temperature. Time to produce a rooted cutting — About 25 days at approximately 21 degrees Celsius at root zone and 18 degrees Celsius ambient temperature.

Root system: White fibrous roots with many root hairs extending from lesser roots in a featherlike arrangement.

Branches:

Branching habit.—Irregular branching from mature branches, breaking first from the uppermost buds near the apex of each shoot.

Quantity.—Numerous.

General dimensions.—Approximately 60 cm long; 1.5 cm in diameter near the base and tapering to 0.5 cm.

Immature branches.—Length — 27 cm. Diameter — Approximately 0.4 cm. Texture and pubescence — Glabrous, with prickles. Color — Nearest to RHS 144C. Prickles — Density — Moderate; 4 prickles per 2.5 cm of branch. Color — Nearest to RHS 152D. Shape — Convex. Texture — Smooth. Length — 0.7 cm.

Mature branches.—Length — 60 cm. Diameter — Approximately 0.5 cm, after one year. Texture and pubescence — Glabrous, with prickles. Color — Nearest to RHS 144C. Prickles — Density — Moderate. Color — Nearest to RHS N167C. Shape — Convex. Texture — Smooth. Length — 0.7 cm.

Leaves:

Arrangement.—Alternate imparipinnate compound leaves.

Quantity.—Approximately 7 per mature branch.

Attachment.—Petiolate.

Leaf internode length.—2.5 cm.

Dimensions.—Approximately 10 cm long and 70 cm wide.

Petiole.—Dimensions — 2.0 cm long and 0.1 to 0.2 cm wide. Color — Nearest to RHS 150B and margined RHS 143C. Texture and pubescence — Smooth and glabrous. Prickles — Not present. Stipitate glands — Not present.

Stipule.—Shape — Linear to lanceolate. Dimensions — 1.0 cm long and 0.5 cm wide. Color — Nearest to RHS 150B. Texture and pubescence — Smooth and glabrous. Margins — Ciliate. Apex — Apiculate. Base — Winged. Prickles — Not present. Stipitate glands — Not present.

Rachis.—Dimensions — 1.0 cm long and 0.1 cm wide. Color — Nearest to RHS 145A. Prickles — Present. Stipitate glands — Not present.

Leaflets.—Quantity — Seven leaflets on axillary leaves. Dimensions — Average size of the terminal leaflet is 4.5 cm long and 3.0 cm wide. Shape — Ovate. Apex — Acuminate. Base — Acute. Margins — Serrated. Texture, pubescence and luster, adaxial surface — Smooth, glabrous and glossy. Texture, pubescence and luster, abaxial surface — Smooth, glabrous and matte. Juvenile foliage color, adaxial surface — Near RHS N144C, with no anthocyanin intonations. Juvenile foliage color, abaxial surface — Near RHS 145B, with no anthocyanin intonations. Mature foliage color, adaxial surface — Nearest to RHS 143A. Mature foliage color, abaxial surface — Nearest to RHS 145C. Venation — Pinnate. Venation color, adaxial surface — Nearest to RHS 143A, with midrib RHS 145C. Venation color, abaxial surface — Nearest to RHS 145C, with midrib RHS 145C. Petiolule — Dimensions — 0.2 cm long and 0.1 cm wide. Color — Nearest to RHS

144C with no anthocyanin intonations present. Prickles — Not present. Texture — Smooth.

Inflorescence:

Inflorescence type.—Flowers are single or clustered.

Blooming habit.—Almost continuous from October through June in the southern hemisphere.

Time to flower.—6 to 8 weeks for a new stem to mature and flowering begins to occur once a stem matures.

Peduncle.—Dimensions — 80 cm long and 0.3 cm in diameter. Color — Nearest to RHS 145A. Strength — Strong. Texture and pubescence — Smooth and glabrous. Prickles — None present.

Bud:

Shape.—Ovate.

Size.—2.0 cm long and 1.5 cm in diameter.

Color.—Nearest to RHS 142B.

Flower:

Pedicels.—Dimensions — 3.0 cm long and 0.2 cm in diameter. Color — Nearest to RHS 46B. Strength — Moderately strong. Texture and pubescence — Smooth and glabrous. Prickles — None present.

Calyx.—General — Comprised of five polysepalous sepals. Diameter of calyx — 0.8 cm

Sepals.—Shape — Lanceoalate; occasionally with leafy appendages. Color, interior surface — RHS 152A. Color, exterior surface — RHS 144C. Dimensions — 2.5 cm long and 1.0 cm wide. Apex — Apiculate. Base — Flat at union with receptacle. Quantity — Five. Pubescence — Densely puberulent. Margins — Entire. Stipitate glands — None present.

Corolla.—General shape of corolla — High centered and irregularly-rounded with a tight outer whorl; opening to nearly flat. Rate of opening — 6 days from bud to anthesis. Dimensions — Approximately 7 cm in diameter and 3 cm deep. Fragrance — Light rose scent. Lastingness — On the plant for 5 days after anthesis. Persistence — Self-cleaning.

Petals.—Petal count — Exhibits double flowers with approximately 35 petals under normal conditions. Petal arrangement — Irregularly rounded whorl at anthesis and aging to a loose whorl. Dimensions — 3.5 cm long and 4.0 cm wide. Petal shape — Rounded. Apex — Rounded. Base — Flattened, then obtuse. Petal reflex — Not reflexed at apex. Petal margin — Entire; slightly undulating. Texture — Hard. Aspect — Formal. Petal color, upon opening — Upper surface — Nearest to RHS 6A, and striped and flecked with RHS N30D. Lower surface — RHS 6B, and striped and flecked with RHS N30A. Petal color, at anthesis — Upper surface — Nearest to RHS 6A, and striped and flecked with RHS N30D. Lower surface — RHS 6B, and striped and flecked with RHS N30A. Fading — Nearest to RHS 45B.

Reproductive organs:

Stamens.—Quantity — Approximately 50. Anthers — Shape — Narrow ovate. Length — 1.0 cm. Color — Nearest to RHS 12A. Pollen — Many. Pollen Color — Nearest to RHS 3A. Filaments — Color — Nearest to RHS 17C. Length — Approximately 0.8 cm. Pistils — Quantity — Approximately 50. Length — Approximately 1.0 cm.

Stigma.—Position — Held level at one-quarter the length of the filament and anther. Shape — Ovate. Color — Nearest to RHS 11B.

Style.—Length — Approximately 0.8 cm long. Color — Nearest to RHS 18C.

Ovary.—Dimensions — 0.5 cm long and 0.3 cm wide. Color — Nearest to RHS 3D.

Receptacle.—Shape — Pitcher-shaped. Dimensions — 0.5 cm high and 0.5 cm wide. Color — Nearest to RHS 141D.

Hip and seed: Not observed.

COMPARISONS WITH THE PARENTS

The new rose plant 'GRAalpha' may be distinguished from its seed parent, an unnamed breeding line, by the following combination of characteristics:

1. The flowers of 'GRAalpha' exhibit a distinct flower color dominated by yellow with irregular orange variegated areas that are splashed and flecked with yellow, whereas the flowers of the seed parent exhibit a yellow general tonality.
2. 'GRAalpha' exhibits a semi weeping to spreading growth habit, whereas the seed parent exhibits an upright growth habit.

The new rose plant 'GRAalpha' may be distinguished from its pollen parent, an unnamed breeding line, by the following combination of characteristics:

1. The flowers of 'GRAalpha' exhibit a distinct flower color dominated by yellow with irregular orange variegated areas that are splashed and flecked with yellow, whereas the flowers of the pollen parent exhibit a yellow color with pink stripes and flecks.
2. 'GRAalpha' exhibits a very high resistance to powdery mildew and blackspot, whereas the pollen parent is susceptible.

COMPARISONS WITH THE MOST SIMILAR VARIETY OF COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Plants of the new cultivar 'GRAalpha' may be distinguished from the commercial variety *Rosa* hybrid 'MACoranlem' (not patented) by the following combination of characteristics:

1. 'MACoranlem' is tall and arching, whereas 'GRAalpha' is semi weeping to spreading in growth habit.
2. Immature branches of 'MACoranlem' have anthocyanin present, whereas it is absent in 'GRAalpha'.
3. 'GRAalpha' has flowers with little fragrance, whereas 'MACoranlem' flowers have mild fragrance.

That which is claimed:

1. A new and distinct variety of *Rosa* hybrid plant named 'GRAalpha', as described and illustrated herein.

* * * * *

FIG. 1

FIG. 2