

Funen is Denmark's third-largest island, known as the 'Garden of Denmark'. It truly lives up to its name as it is home to a sizeable number of heritage gardens and...plant nurseries. One of them is Buddes Planteskole ApS, a 50ha plant nursery in Bogense, owned and run by Henrik Budde.

Rose growing in the Garden of Denmark

At the core of Henrik's business are the field production of garden roses and hedging plants, sold either as bare rooted specimen or pot plants. His customer base includes predominantly garden retailers, exporters and some greenhouse rose growers.

Highly seasonal

Standing out proudly is his 14ha rose nursery with an annual output of around 56,000 garden roses/year. This is the easier said than done as it is a long haul, planting root stock, budding it in August and topping in early spring the following year in order to bring the top and roots in balance. "You need a minimum of eighteen months for growing a saleable product. Potted garden rose sales are highly seasonal and peak in summer when the shrubs bear flowers and are aesthetically pleasing."

With the predominant do-it-for-me trend Budde believes the outlook for container roses is rosy. "Bare root roses still account for half our sales volumes, but the market for container roses is growing."

Customer engagement

Budde attributes part of the container rose success to his fellow



citizen Rosa Eskelund who granted him the license to produce the full range of carefree Plant'n'Relax roses in 4 litre pots as well as the starting material for Sweet Home roses. "I guess you are aware of Rosa's communication skills? I think Rosa is an expert in media coverage. I can't put my finger on exactly what it is, but she manages to have her roses featured in all kind of magazines. So people start to recognize the company's different brands and ask for it. What's more she plays an important intermediary role in bringing us growers in contact with garden retailers. Last year, we produced 10,000 plants which were immediately sold. Other breeders can learn from her customer engagement. She is always thinking of ways to promote and sell our products. When she is in you'll be quickly selling out. But it also has something to do with novelty seeking – consumers who are constantly driven to possess the newest. And Rosa is relatively new to rose breeding and that definitely plays to her advantage."

Henrik emphasised that things will never be left to fate and destiny with Rosa's range of garden roses being extensively put to the test before taking them into commercial

production. "Moreover, Rosa's roses have been awarded multiple awards and gold medals in rose trials across Europe. She is truly coming up with some good stuff."

The future looks good

When asked about Scandinavian preferences in garden roses Henrik said, "Plants should be tough, frost-resistant. In terms of colours the taste is constantly changing. At the moment my customers in Norway, Sweden and Denmark have a soft spot for soft purple like the Plant'n'Relax 'Our Summer' rose. But it goes up and down with the fashion. Most important is that you have to deliver a complete range of colours." Overlooking future market potential Henrik expects 2016 to be a somewhat challenging year, however in 2017 the garden rose industry is sure to pick up brightly. The future looks good. It's all about adapting changing market circumstances. The amount of money they spend is still the same but they spend it differently. Until a few years ago consumers would easily buy 25 bare root roses for their garden in autumn, now they buy four big pots for quick impact and colour on their balcony and patio in Spring time." III

by Ron van der Ploeg

