

## SWAMP ROSE

*Rosa palustris* Marsh.  
Plant Symbol = ROPA

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Botany Department, Smithsonian Institution  
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### Uses

**Landscaping & Wildlife:** Swamp rose is used as hedges, walls, fences or trellises for climbing, edges for low selections, for massing and raised beds. This species is an attractive shrub throughout the entire year. The fruits are eaten by wildlife.

### Status

Please consult the Plants Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

### Description

**General:** Rose family (Roseaceae). Swamp rose is a native, perennial shrub that grows up to seven feet tall. The stems are tall, 0.3 to 2.5 meters high, with stout straight curved prickles (Strausbaugh & Core 1977). The leaves are alternate, pinnately divided into seven leaflets, the leaflets are pointed at the tip, toothed, hairy, up to 1½ inches long. The flowers are pink, solitary or few in a cluster, and 3 to 5.5 centimeters broad. This species flowers once a year, in midseason, and the bloom id for a protected period of six to eight weeks. The fruit is red, fleshy, and up to ¾ inch in diameter.

**Distribution:** *Swamp rose is found throughout Indiana, from Nova Scotia to Minnesota, south to*

*Florida, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi. For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.*

### Adaptation

Swamp rose is common in marshes and swamps. This species is abundant in swampy habitats and along ditches and streams (Bush-Braun 1961). It grows best in damp or wet rich loamy soil, in full sun or partial shade (Brown 1963).

### Establishment

**Propagation from Seed:** *Rosa palustris* seeds should be collected in the fall. Most rose seeds have a hard seed coat and require acid scarification, followed by a period of warm stratification and then cold stratification. After pre-sowing treatments, the seeds should be sown immediately in containers or seed trays containing a seed germination mixture to which a slow release fertilizer has been added. Place the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle. Out plant seedlings in the summer if they are more than twenty-five centimeters tall; otherwise grow in a cold frame for the winter and out plant in the late spring.

### Management

Pruning should be done to remove spent blooms, and diseased areas, after winter for winter injury, and to shape a plant.

Roses are one of the most susceptible ornamentals to most pests and diseases and require control from intensive IPM or control programs.

### Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Materials are somewhat available through native plant nurseries within its range. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government." The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture."

### References

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### **Prepared By**

*Jammie Favorite*

Formerly USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

### **Species Coordinator**

*Lincoln M. Moore*

USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center, Baton  
Rouge, Louisiana

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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