

COATESVILLE

# 'STEELING' THE GLORY

**Lukens roses:** Making historic appearance on ground of the National Iron museum



BILL RETTEW/MEDIANEWS GROUP

Arborist Jonathan Fairoaks poses at the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum. He is charged with growing historic roses.

**By Bill Rettew**

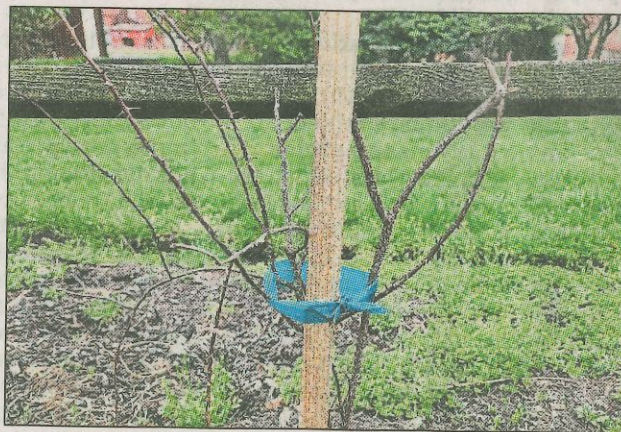
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**COATESVILLE** » With a nod to Coatesville's long tenure as a steel producer, The National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum is now growing historic roses.

New steel museum arborist and horticulturalist Jonathan Fairoaks is growing "Lukens Roses," which were named after early Lukens steel boss Rebecca Lukens. These types of roses might have once grown in Rebecca Lukens garden.

The correct name for the Lukens rose is the "Harrison rose," which is also known as the "yellow rose of Texas" and the "Oregon Trail rose."

Fairoaks said that the Lukens rose is a little wild and what is growing in iron and steel museum green houses



BILL RETTEW/  
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Fledgling rose bushes at the National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum in Coatesville.

will grow in four different places on the steel museum grounds. Flower beds and mulch piles will host fledgling rose plants.

"It's a pretty hardy plant," Fairoaks said. "I'm expecting great things from them."

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# Rose

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"I'm giving them every chance they deserve."

Fairoaks, who has designed custom treehouses for 41 years, and lives 45 feet off the ground in an oak in California and 90 feet high in a tulip poplar in Pennsylvania, was asked why he likes roses.

"They are one of the prettiest flowers I know," he said. "They smell great and they all tell a story."

Preston Thomas is the great, great, great, great, great grandson of Rebecca Lukens and J. Preston Thomas.

Generations of his family have handed down the lore of the roses, which were developed in New York. Thomas said he approached the iron and steel museum on a whim to propagate the roses. The iron and steel museum then discovered photographs of the roses in their heyday and em-

braced the idea.

Thomas said that a piece of history that might have been forgotten has been revived.

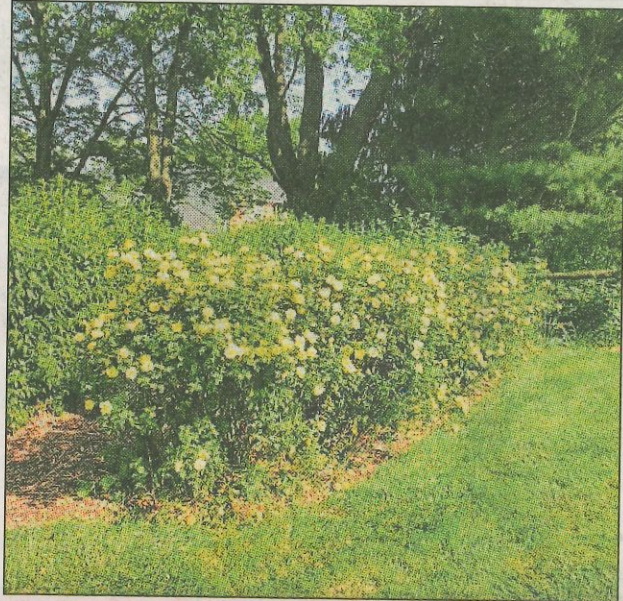
Jim Ziegler is executive director of the iron and steel heritage museum and said the roses will add color.

The roses will join numerous deciduous and evergreen specimen trees, including some ancient magnolias, American linden trees, American sycamores and ginkgos. A multi-trunked American sycamore and a century-old weeping beech also grace the property.

"We try to be as historically correct in all aspects, including the plantings and the grounds," Ziegler said. "The roses will bring color to each season."

Fairoaks is also working to add a Victorian badminton grounds at its original spot behind the c-1850 Terracina House on the property.

The museum will sup-



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New plantings of the "Lukens rose" might one day grow to look like these.

ply all the equipment needed, including shuttles, and one day might even host amateur tournaments.

Divided by First Avenue, the property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, in part be-

cause it retains much of the original landscaping. The museum is located at 50 S. First Ave. Tours are available. You might even hear the clanging of steel from the still operating, nearby steel plant. For more information, go to [www.steelmuseum.org](http://www.steelmuseum.org)