

---

# *Hibiscus syriacus* 'Aphrodite', 'Helene', and 'Minerva'

---



The U.S. National Arboretum presents the refined, sophisticated Rose-of-Sharon cultivars, 'Aphrodite', 'Helene', and 'Minerva'. The elegant floral display of these bewitching flowering shrubs belies their rugged constitution. In the fiery forge of summer sun and heat, 'Aphrodite', 'Helene', and 'Minerva' prove their mettle with excellent dark green foliage and continuous flowering until felled by autumn's frost.



'Minerva'



'Helene'



'Aphrodite'

**U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction**  
**Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit**

U.S. National Arboretum, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, 3501 New York Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002





# 'Aphrodite', 'Helene', and 'Minerva' Rose-of-Sharon

**Botanical Name:**

*Hibiscus syriacus* L. 'Aphrodite' (NA 54983; PI 500001)  
*Hibiscus syriacus* L. 'Helene' (NA 41786; PI 445779)  
*Hibiscus syriacus* L. 'Minerva' (NA 54984; PI 499813)

**Family:**

Malvaceae

**Hardiness:**

U.S.D.A. Zone 5b

**Development:**

In 1971, a number of crosses were made between diploid *Hibiscus* seedling selections of (*H. syriacus* 'Suminokura-yae' x *H. syriacus* 'William R. Smith'), (*H. syriacus* 'Blue Bird' x *H. syriacus* 'Hanagasa'), or (*H. syriacus* 'Sokobeni-yae' x *H. syriacus* 'William R. Smith') and colchicine-induced tetraploid seedlings of *H. syriacus* 'William R. Smith'. The resulting triploids, 'Helene', 'Minerva', and 'Aphrodite' were released in 1980, 1986 and 1988, respectively.

**Significance:**

The landscape qualities of *H. syriacus* have been enhanced by the development of triploid cultivars with compact growth habit, leathery, dark green leaves, little or no seed production, and abundant continuous flowering. 'Aphrodite', 'Helene' and 'Minerva' extend the flower color range of the triploid *H. syriacus* cultivars developed by Donald R. Egolf with his first triploid introduction, 'Diana'. Plants flower from June to September. Highly tolerant to air pollution and drought.

**Description:**

**Habit:** Deciduous, multistemmed, erect-growing, densely branched shrubs.  
**Foliage:** Glabrous, firm-textured, dark green leaves; yellow fall color.  
**Flowers:** Heavy textured, waxy, campanulate.  
**Fruit:** When formed, a capsule, containing mostly abortive ovules and seldom more than 1–3 partially developed seeds.

Cultivar	Height and Width	Flowers
'Aphrodite'	9.4' tall; 7.8' wide (14 yrs)	Clear pink, heavily ruffled; prominent dark red eye spot radiating along veins to midpetal
'Helene'	8.1' tall; 6.5' wide (9 yrs)	White, heavily ruffled; red eye spot radiating along veins to midpetal; 3–20 twisted white petaloids
'Minerva'	8.5' tall; 6.8' wide (14 yrs)	Lavender with traces of pink overlay toward the center and reverse of petals; dark red eye spot

**Culture:**

Grow in a diversity of soil types but do best in a sandy loam with a pH of 5.5–7.0. Flowering is heavier and growth more compact when grown in full sun.

**Propagation:**

Root easily from softwood cuttings under mist, 3000 ppm IBA, in 4–6 weeks.

**Landscape Use:**

Specimen, clipped hedge, mass screen, trained as a single trunk standard for use as a container specimen or the focal point of a more formal landscape. Excellent to brighten summer landscapes of parks, industrial developments, roadsides, residential properties, and patio or shopping mall containers.

**Availability:**

Readily available from wholesale and retail nurseries and some mail-order firms.

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**

**U.S. National Arboretum Plant Introduction**  
 Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit

U.S. National Arboretum: [www.ars-grin.gov/na/](http://www.ars-grin.gov/na/)



August 1999