The Green Rose consists entirely of ragged sepals with no petals and the odor of black pepper.

Green roses important to legend of railroad

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On June 5, I gave a lecture on iconography of roses at Wyck in Philadelphia, looking at frescoes and paintings dating back to ca. 1450 B.C.

The house at Wyck dates from 1690, but the rose garden dates from 1820 and includes some roses unique to Wyck, such as "Lafayette," which commemorates the visit of Gen. Lafayette to Wyck.

The roster of speakers included Stephen Scanniello, former rosarian at the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens. Stephen delighted us with stories of roses and his attempt to establish a Heritage Rose District in New York City. With 17 sites, such as Trinity Church Cemetery & Mausoleum, Scanniello has supervised plantings of roses that have direct connections to neighborhoods.

Particularly intriguing is his planting of the Green Rose in African-American neighborhoods. In his book "A Rose by Any Name," co-authored with Douglas Brenner, Scanniello relates, "This bizarre flower plays a pivotal role in The Green Rose of Furley Hall, a historical novel about Quakers guiding slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad during the Civil War.

Author Helen Corse Barney drew upon stories of her Quaker ancestors, such as William Corse, a Baltimore nurseryman with abolitionist sympathies who planted "Vividiflora" at his estate, Furley Hall. Plants survived there until the property was bulldozed for row-house construction in 1953, the year Barney published her book.

Local legend — arising, perhaps, from the novel — says that Underground Rail-