

A Child's Love of Miniatures

By Eula Richards

One day my phone rang and it was a dear friend and schoolteacher at one of our nearby elementary schools. She told me that she and another teacher had arranged to take about thirty-five to forty, fifth graders on a field trip. She asked if I would consider having the children stop and visit our rose garden as one phase of their trip.

I told her how delighted we would be to have them and we arranged for their day and time.

I thought about what I could do to make it interesting for them. As you know eating is always interesting to children. Carroll immediately went shopping for snacks, cookies, popcorn and apples.

While he was gone I found a piece of *Styrofoam* and filled forty orchid picks with *Floralife* preservative.

I cut miniatures and greenery and made miniature bouquets the small arrangements on a small table on the lanai ready for each child. Then the big moment arrived. When the school bus door opened out popped thirty-five fun filled lively children.

They were well trained by their teachers and listened while I welcomed them and told them a brief history and some fun things about growing roses. We smelled all the varieties until there wasn't any fragrance left in a single rose.

One thing caught my eye, and that was how they seemed to be drawn to the miniatures. Where we live we have quite a bit of wildlife. They had heard that we had three baby alligators in the canal in the back, and of course, they had to check this out. All wild animals are very smart, and they well knew when safety was best for them out in the center of the canal where they too, could observe what was happening.

There were two redheaded woodpeckers that were making the rounds on the palm trees. The children were fascinated about how they went round and round on the trees and not up and down, and they were talking with each other all the time.

Carroll had made squirrel feeders and each squirrel had its own table and chair with a cob of corn fastened on a nail in the center of the table. They could each sit on their own little chair and eat the corn from the cob. Every child wanted Carroll to make one for them.

Many of the children were fascinated with the cute name of the plants, like 'Minnie Pearl', 'Jilly Jewel', 'Black Jade' and 'Fancy Pants'. The most popular seemed to be 'Busy Bee'. At that time the plant was filled with blooms and they counted 38 little 'Busy Bees' blooming on this plant. We took several pictures of this scene.

Time was now growing short so we all retreated to the lanai for snacks and much too soon it was time to leave.

I then showed them the little mini bouquets that I had made for each of them to take home to their mommas, as well as one for each teacher. Since 'Busy Bee' was so popular, everyone wanted 'Busy Bee'.

We invited them all to come back and bring their parents, and if they would like to learn to grow roses, that was a job that we as Consulting Rosarians would certainly enjoy teaching them.

What a beautiful experience, both for them and us. Children's smiles, like miniatures, never stop growing more beautiful with each passing day.