

# RHODODENDRONS

WITH

## CAMELLIAS and MAGNOLIAS

### 2002



THE ROYAL  
HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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2025



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# FOREWORD



## MAURICE FOSTER

You've never had it so good, to borrow a phrase. Not since the days of the great plant hunters over 100 years ago has there been such an inflow from across the world of plant information, plant specimens and seeds for botanical study and the embellishment of our gardens. There is now a greater choice of plants available for gardens than at any time in horticultural history. We live in a privileged time and each issue of this excellent Year Book reinforces the point with respect to our three genera.

In the wild in the last 20 years the photographic record and documentation of expeditions has enlarged our knowledge and inspired our interest in the extraordinary botanical riches of China, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Northern India, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan, Chile, Mexico and more. In some of these countries new areas have been visited, yielding new species, plants have been introduced into cultivation previously known only in herbaria, and plants previously lost to cultivation due to difficulty, neglect or underappreciation have been reintroduced. Laboratory analysis and fresh insights into species distribution have opened up new debates on classification for botanists and taxonomists internationally.

For the discerning rhododendron enthusiast this brings the fascination of discovery and a renewal of interest in species. But that is not the end of the story. There is

the added bonus of a vastly expanded choice of hybrids for every climate, every size and condition of the garden and every taste in colour, form and habit. The range of choice has never been higher. The articles by Peter Cox, Ted Millais and Gerald Dixon in this issue confirm these observations.

Many new camellia selections, as well as the best of the old, are included in the revised AGM list, described by Jennifer Trehane. Many more, which are not yet proven in conditions outdoors in the UK, have been bred for characters like fragrance, miniaturisation and cold hardiness from the introduction of new parent species and extend choice still further. Prospects for continuing to extend the range of camellias for our gardens have never been better.

Jim Gardiner's selection of magnolias for the smaller garden demonstrates the same point with respect to choice. It illustrates the versatility of a genus previously associated in the public mind with over-bulky shrubs and forest trees. Our recent survey of members' preferences yielded over 100 cultivar suggestions for the best 10 magnolias for general planting and there is now a quite unprecedented wealth of choice for every kind of garden. The proliferation of hybrids from the USA, the Greshams and the yellows for example, the vivid newcomers from New Zealand plus the big Asiatic forms and hybrids selected in the UK

provide us with an enormously enhanced range of planting opportunities.

Other woody genera show the same cause for celebration for all plant lovers. From *Cornus* to *Clematis*, *Hoheria* to *Hydrangea* or *Mahonia* to *Malus* there has never been such a wealth of choice. Added to this is easier access to plants – modern communication and rule changes across the EC means that it is generally neither difficult nor a major cost to find the plant you want. And whether or not you believe we are already being globally warmed, we have not had a real winter in the south of England for something like 12 years. We are privileged indeed.

And yet, there is a paradox. More brings less. The unpalatable irony is that this impressive *embarras de richesse* seems to go unrecognised. At this bountiful time of plenty, enthusiastic Group members may be aware of our good fortune, but the public at large seem generally ignorant of what they could be planting to improve and more greatly enjoy their gardens. Never, it seems, has demand for the best woody plants been so low. For many this is not at all puzzling. Fashion, the Laura Ashley style of gardening, short termism, diminishing garden size, the lack of plant programmes on television, garden centres' focus on quick-result bread and butter lines, the lack of publicity for awards, population mobility, lifestyle – there are many reasons for this paradox.

Some blame an apathetic and incurious public. People are simply not interested, they say. Others believe that there is an

acute lack of information at the root of it and that interest today in plants and gardens is generally high. I tend to share the view that if people were better informed then demand for plants would rise. Visitors to gardens frequently wax enthusiastic about new plants they have not seen before and ask where they can be obtained.

If the more optimistic assumption is correct, then perhaps as a specialist group we should look for ways of making a more proactive contribution to spreading knowledge of our three genera. We should work at generating interest among the wider public in enriching their gardens with the best rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias from the enormous choice available. We should do our best to educate what we must assume to be an interested but badly informed public. In this regard your executive committee is already making efforts to promote plants in the press at large and to make the Group better known as a clearing-house for first class information on the three genera. A start has been made and there are more opportunities for progress.

On top of this there are many ways each of us can contribute, especially at a local level, by supporting our local programme of activities – talks, lectures, leading groups, offering advice, stimulating interest in the press and generating momentum for increased membership. Indeed, stimulating public sales of this excellent Year Book would be a good start. In the attempt, there is always the agreeable bonus of meeting like minds and making new friends.

# PIERIS - A SURVEY



JOHN BOND

*John Bond had hoped to write a major article on Pieris for us, believing that the Year Book should deal with the natural companion plants of its specific genera. Illness prevented him from even starting the project, but instead, with the agreement of his family, we are able to reprint here an article he wrote in 1982 for The Plantsman, Vol 4, part 2. The description of *P. x formosa 'Firecrest'* has been incorporated from an earlier letter printed in The Plantsman, Vol 3, part 4 (p.256), and to which he refers in the original article. This piece is reintroduced to our membership as the Year Book's tribute to our former Chairman - Honorary Editor*

The genus *Pieris* provides the woodland gardener with many valuable additions to the wide range of rhododendrons and the many other suitable trees and shrubs which are available. This is not at all surprising in view of the close affinity to the genus *Rhododendron*, both being members of the family *Ericaceae*.

All of the species, at least all with which we are concerned in this article, are evergreen. Whilst not in the very front rank of evergreens (many *Rhododendron* species, for example, offer more exciting and variable foliage), they are without doubt of great value and provide a distinct variation for acid soils. It is, of course, the outstanding young growths which provide the highlights in the woodland. These vary from brilliant red in *Pieris formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Wakehurst' through red, pink and cream in 'Firecrest' and 'Forest Flame' to a most attractive bronze in *P. japonica* and its hybrids.

The flowers obviously provide a great feature and consist of white, sometimes pink in *P. japonica*, lily-of-the-valley shaped

bell-shaped flowers which are extremely freely borne on lax racemes or panicles. Various species produce flowers from February until the end of June. Flower buds are formed during the previous summer-autumn, and are also attractive, particularly those with brown-bronze colouring.

All members of the genus are totally hardy (in the Thames Valley) with the exception of *Pieris formosa* and *P. formosa* var. *forrestii*, both of which have been cut to ground level or severely damaged during the past winter [1982] to the extent that the only course possible was to cut to 30 to 45cm (12-18in) or so above ground level. Similar damage occurred in 1962/1963 and all specimens grew to heights of 4.5 to 5.4m (15-18ft) or more during the ensuing years. I would add that my policy is to cut as early as possible after the winter, providing damage can be properly assessed which will allow the severely cut-back shrub to produce its adventitious buds and the maximum amount of growth, well ripened, before the hard weather of winter arrives. For it is during the first winter after such

drastic treatment that the rejuvenated shrub is at its most vulnerable state. It is fortunate that *Pieris* will respond to such harsh treatment. At the time of writing (early June) all *Pieris* which have been treated as described above are responding and have several inches of young growth.

The genus thrives in light shade and demands a cool moist root run, in fact identical conditions to those required for the successful cultivation of choicer rhododendrons. These conditions are definitely the requirements of *Pieris formosa* and its varieties and forms and also for the hybrids between *P. formosa* and *P. japonica*. *Pieris japonica*, *P. taiwanensis* and similar species and forms will fail to flower in dense shade but will produce excellent foliage. They will, however, flower extremely freely in full exposure but frequently in such conditions produce very poor foliage. Clearly a happy medium is called for which, incidentally, applies to the closely allied *Kalmia latifolia* and many rhododendrons.

I am an advocate of dead heading, that is the complete removal of seed pods as soon as possible. Seed is set very freely and in my opinion the seed pods are decidedly unattractive, particularly when dried and splitting. The removal of seed also improves foliage and ensures finer flowers for the following season. Dead heading is a tedious task and *Pieris* are best tackled with secateurs rather than finger and thumb, which is the practice with rhododendrons.

Propagation is by fairly well-ripened cuttings which are normally taken from August until February and are comparatively easy to root with bottom heat with or without mist. Rooted cuttings and young stock are vulnerable to frost, particularly

late spring frosts and adequate protection should be provided. If new growths are frosted in spring, they should be promptly removed and the affected plants will shoot again within two or three weeks. Young plants will thrive in containers and a well-grown batch can look most attractive and make excellent subjects for the plant centre. Large plants in containers are a greater challenge but worthwhile, for there is a ready market for larger specimens.

For many years tree and shrub nurserymen have listed half a dozen or so *Pieris* and even the Hillier Manual only listed 17. It is, however, the recent great influx of new cultivars of *P. japonica* which have arrived from Japan, New Zealand and the United States which has prompted the writing of this article. The following are offered by at least a few nurserymen and plant centres unless stated.

#### *Pieris floribunda*

This species is a tough evergreen which eventually attains a height of 2m (6ft or so), and frequently a greater spread. It is, in my opinion, the least attractive of the *Pieris* which are commonly grown; it has dull lifeless foliage and is totally lacking in bright young growth. Flower buds are greenish and have a certain winter attraction, the ensuing flowers are white and are produced in great profusion on erect panicles, on young shrubs often 15cm long (6in). Specimens tire and deteriorate rapidly with age, and it is a common occurrence to see shrubs smothered with stubby 2.5cm spikes (1in). This species hails from the south-eastern United States and has been cultivated in Britain for many years. It is less often offered in the trade today, many of the

Asian species having proved to be more garden worthy. A selection, 'Elongata', received an Award of Merit in 1938; it has longer panicles than the type and is occasionally offered and clearly, if reliable, worth acquiring. I suspect, however, that my remarks above about age may apply to this cultivar.

#### *Pieris formosa*

A variable species which in its finer forms is superb for the woodland gardens of the warmer areas of Britain. I have dealt with the problem of hardiness of this species. Size and form of foliage varies from a large glossy green to the shorter, somewhat wrinkled appearance of *P. formosa* 'Henry Price'. A more recent introduction by Major Tom Spring-Smyth provides to my eye a close link with var. *forrestii*. The young growths are usually in the copper-bronze range and in *P. formosa* 'Henry Price' we have a not unattractive dull red. The flowers in some forms are individually very large and are borne on heavy clusters often as broad as long, and frequently lacking the graceful appearance of many *Pieris*.

The species in various forms, is occasionally offered by specialist nurserymen and plant centres. All but those in mild areas or the botanically minded will be best suited with the following. At least two Awards of Merit and one First Class Certificate have been awarded to various forms over the past 90 years.

#### *var. forrestii*

Undoubtedly this is the finest *Pieris* for our gardens, and in spite of my experience concerning winter damage (see p.7), I shall continue to plant large numbers in suitable sheltered woodland sites for the great display of young growth during May and June.

Clearly the cultivar 'Wakehurst', First Class Certificate 1930, is the finest form, and should be insisted upon when purchasing from the nursery or plant centre. Before leaving the subject of young growth, it is worth noting that 'Wakehurst' frequently presents the gardener with a bonus, that is a second flush of young growth during August; although a lesser show the overall effect is most pleasing when set amongst the new fresh green growth. The fine red foliage fades gradually through pink to yellow and eventually green which often has a slightly chlorotic appearance and ruins any chance of *P. formosa* var. *forrestii* being considered a first-class evergreen. With age 'Wakehurst' flowers freely during May and June and provides a great feature. If a specimen is covered with flowers, the production of young growth will be held up, only the non-flowering growth will produce red growth in association with the flowers, and here the practice of dead heading (see my remarks on p.8) is beneficial and will certainly assist the production of vigorous young growth. Flowering twigs frequently remain "blind" and fail to produce new growth for one season.

'Wakehurst' is comparatively easy to obtain in the trade, but the following two selections are less readily available. *Pieris formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Charles Michael' is an Award of Merit selection (the award was given for flower) from Caerhays Castle in Cornwall where, in my experience, it is best suited, for it has proved to be very prone to frost damage in the Savill and Valley Gardens at Windsor. 'Jermyns' (Award of Merit 1959 for flower), is also subject to frost damage from time to time, but is well worth persevering with in view of its distinct and

attractive characteristics. Lax, almost weeping in form, and with limited suckering habit (most var. *forrestii* forms that sucker are inferior), the flowering stems and sepals, in fact the whole inflorescence is vinous brown in colour. The colouring is a feature all winter long, and provides a distinct setting for the white flowers. This shrub was selected and named by Messrs Hillier and was the result of a second generation raising of a Forrest collection. Having shown interest in Graham Thomas's fine painting of *P. formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Rowallane' in his book the *Gardens of the National Trust* I now have, thanks to his generosity, rooted cuttings of this cultivar which has clear golden young growth in comparison to the bright red of 'Wakehurst'.

#### ***Pieris 'Firecrest' and 'Forest Flame'***

*Pieris 'Firecrest'* was named by Messrs John Waterer Sons and Crisp; it is extremely doubtful, however, if this name has been registered in the USA, and it is certainly the plant exhibited as *P. formosa* F8945 by this firm at the RHS show on April 10, 1964.

*Pieris 'Firecrest'* has also been grown on the Windsor Estate for a number of years. The late Sir Eric Savill purchased a plant from the Knaphill Nursery before the 1939-45 war as *Pieris formosa* F8945. A vase of this cultivar was shown from the Savill Garden on May 1 1973 with a good display of young foliage, and was given an Award of Merit. *Pieris 'Firecrest'* was again shown from the Windsor Estate on March 31, 1981, this time in flower, and again another Award of Merit was given.

I have no doubt at all that Desmond Clarke is correct in stating that *Pieris 'Firecrest'* is a hybrid between *P. formosa*

F8945 and *P. japonica*, the former being the seed parent. *Pieris 'Firecrest'* is an extremely hardy shrub showing no damage from the most severe weather. This was very obvious in the past winter (1982) when, as has already been noted, all forms of *Pieris formosa* were burnt or defoliated and *P. formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Wakehurst' F.C.C. very severely damaged.

'Firecrest' is a superb flowering shrub and in view of its flowering period, February-March, it can be described as a winter flowering shrub. Whilst it does not equal *P. formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Wakehurst' for its brilliant young growth, it is very pretty in growth with pale red, pink, peach and yellow shades according to development. It produces many more young growths with much smaller foliage. The habit of 'Firecrest' is upright, eventually producing a tall shrub of 4.5 to 5.4m (15-18ft) and with a spread of perhaps 1.8 to 2.4m (6-8ft). In spite of my remarks about *P. formosa* var. *forrestii* 'Wakehurst' if I were allowed only one *Pieris* I would choose 'Firecrest'.

*Pieris 'Forest Flame'* is reputed to be of the same parentage and is very similar to 'Firecrest'; from my observation 'Forest Flame' is more compact in habit and never flowers as freely. Both cultivars were awarded Awards of Merit at the same show for young foliage. I suspect that 'Tilford' a selection made by Mr John Slocock is of similar parentage.

#### ***Pieris 'Grayswood'***

This very free flowering compact (ultimate spread and height 1.2-1.5m [4-5ft]) but graceful shrub received an Award of Merit in 1981, when shown from the Savill and Valley Gardens, Windsor, for its superb

flowering capabilities. It came to Windsor some years ago as a gift from that most generous of gardeners, the late Mr Geoffrey Pilkington, and has proved to be a really fine addition to the range of *Pieris* available. *Pieris* 'Grayswood' can be grown in light shade or full exposure. In shade the drooping racemes of flowers are extremely long and graceful, and in a more open position it is freer flowering, and its winter flower buds have the previously described overall brown appearance which is again most attractive. This plant, or a very similar plant, is offered by some trade establishments as *P. taiwanensis*. I suspect that it is a hybrid between that species and *P. japonica*. Young growth is a worthwhile bronze-brown. As with the other reasonably compact and exposure tolerant *Pieris*, 'Grayswood' will make a very good informal internal garden hedge.

#### *Pieris japonica*

For many years very few forms and variations of this excellent species were available; suddenly we appear to be inundated with new arrivals and excellent some of them are, with the best of the new pink and red flowered forms providing us with some fine new shrubs. The species is white flowered, as we have grown it for years, and I find needs full sun, or nearly so, to obtain maximum flowering. The flowers are borne on pendulous racemes during February/March, according to weather conditions, and are only spoilt by very severe frost. The foliage is dark and glossy and the shrub will easily attain 2.4 to 3m (8–10ft), it is perfectly hardy as are all of its forms and variations.

#### 'Bert Chandler' (*P. j. 'Chandleri'*)

This selection is likely, I believe, to have blood of *P. formosa* var. *forrestii* in its make-

up. Quite out of character as a form of *P. japonica*, it has clear yellow young growth which is pretty, but very susceptible to spring frosts. I have grown this shrub for ten years or so, the largest is only 90cm (3ft) and I have yet to see flowers.

#### 'Blush'

This is the first of the new "pinks" and still remains a favourite of mine. Whilst not quite as strong in growth as the type it has a pretty open growth well furnished with small, dark green leaves and deep pink flowers, which are freely produced even in shade. 'Blush' received a Preliminary Commendation when shown by Messrs Hillier in 1977.

#### 'Daisen'

I am disappointed in this selection, at least by its behaviour to date. Its habit is compact and dumpy and lacks grace. The flowers are also very shyly produced and are borne on very short stumpy racemes. They are of a pretty pink, deeper in bud. I have much the same to say about 'Christmas Cheer'; it is a seedling of 'Daisen' and so far is behaving in much the same way and we are certainly not having flowers for Christmas! We are also growing a plant labelled *P. j. 'Rosea'* which is similar in general appearance, but has lovely peach-pink young growth.

#### 'Dorothy Wyckoff'

A tall slim cultivar with white flowers, another *Pieris* with the brown bud winter effect. I have seen several spellings of the surname, I believe the above to be correct.

#### 'Flamingo'

This has distinct deep vermillion flowers, by far the darkest available, I think rather foreign to the woodland, but most certainly distinct and a good grower. 'Flamingo'

received an RHS Award of Merit when shown by Messrs Trehane in 1981.

#### **'March Magic'**

When Kew took Wakehurst in hand, they inherited, amongst many other good things, a very pretty and fairly distinct *Pieris japonica* which has recently been named as above. The stems of the racemes and individual flowers have a very subtle dark colouring which, when the flowers are young, creates a most attractive picture, although it has to be said that a very good vase recently shown before Floral Committee B of the Royal Horticultural Society failed to gain an award.

#### **'Pink Delight'**

A very good pink-flowered cultivar producing pretty deep pink flowers in pendulous racemes. It is strong growing, producing a well-furnished shrub quickly, looks like a winner.

#### **'Pygmaea'**

This is a strange dwarf form of little garden merit and must be considered to be a curiosity. The foliage of this shrub is extremely narrow and slightly twisted, possibly a quarter of the size of the type plant. Short stubby inflorescences are occasionally produced. Plants of 60 to 90cm (2-3ft) are sometimes seen but normally much less. A synonym, "Congesta Linearifolia" is sometimes used, which appears to be a good descriptive name.

#### **'Scarlet O'Hara'**

A tall slim shrub which looks promising, good white flowers and better than normal, for this species, red young growth.

#### **'Variegata'**

Excluding hollies and hostas there are very few variegated shrubs suitable for woodland conditions. *Pieris japonica* 'Variegata' is

certainly good in shade, in fact I consider its performance more acceptable in such conditions for it tends to flower more freely in sun, and the combination of white flowers and white-cream variegations is to my mind unacceptable. Slow growing when young, this cultivar will eventually attain 2.4 to 3m (8-10ft). A recent arrival, *P. japonica* 'White Rim' is said to be of better constitution and to produce sharper variegations. Early observations support this.

#### **'White Cascade'**

This bears long racemes of white flowers on a well furnished strong growing shrub.

Most, if not all, of these forms and selections of *Pieris japonica* are available from specialist growers and plant centres. At this point, it may be appropriate to mention *Pieris yakusimensis*, seeds of which were collected by Monsieur Robert de Belder on Yakushima in 1970 from very dwarf specimens. The resultant seedlings are not dwarf, neither do they appear to have any real garden merit in comparison with many of those which have been described above. In all probability, this plant is nothing more than an outlier of *P. japonica*. In spite of my remarks about it, we shall watch its future development with the greatest interest.

#### ***Pieris taiwanensis***

A very hardy tough little species which flowers extremely freely in sun or shade, *P. taiwanensis* produces its white flowers on erect racemes or panicles some 7.5 to 10cm long (3-4in), the preceding winter flower buds are a pretty green in colour, the young growth has little colour. Once more, in view of the good *Pieris* that are available, it has to be said that this species is inferior and barely worthy of garden space. A form *P.*

*taiwanensis* 'Crispa' is grown; it produces foliage with distinct curled or wavy edges, and is known to revert to the normal all too frequently.

#### 'Purity'

I have placed this little plant here because I believe that it shows an affinity to *P. taiwanensis*. It is, however, a far finer and more useful shrub. Always free flowering with countless erect white racemes produced during March–April, 'Purity' came to us from Japan some 15 years ago as *Pieris*

*japonica* 'Grandiflora Purity' and was described as being extremely dwarf. It is very compact but will attain 1m (3–4ft) reasonably quickly, and far exceeds the height we were given to expect. The shrub received an Award of Merit when shown from the Savill and Valley Gardens in 1977.

There is no doubt that we shall have more forms and selections in our gardens before long for there are many more, particularly *Pieris japonica* forms, listed in catalogues from the United States, Europe, Japan and New Zealand.



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# CHANGES IN CLIMATE AND ITS AFFECT ON RHODODENDRONS



## TED MILLAIS

We have always lived in a frost pocket, here on the Surrey/Hampshire borders. The cold air from Hindhead, 90m (300ft) above us, descends and surrounds us regularly every winter. Just after the Second World War we frequently recorded temperatures of  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $0^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), identical to that of Midhurst which was often quoted by the BBC as the lowest in southern England.

Frensham Pond, near at hand, used to freeze over 25cm (10in) thick and support hundreds of skaters almost every year. We used a Fergy tractor with a snow plough to clear our local lanes and to gain access to the A287 Farnham to Hindhead main road.

I planted a number of rhododendrons in 1947, mostly Hardy Hybrids, but sadly many were killed by the climate at that time. *R. fastuosum*, *R. 'Purple Splendour'*, *R. 'Mrs J.G. Millais'* and *R. 'Mrs Charles Pearson'* still survive, but anything as exotic as *R. 'Betty Wormald'* had their stems split from top to bottom by the low temperatures.

To start with the change of climate was very gradual, but by the early 1960s we had dispensed with our snow plough. We were still experiencing damaging frosts on the 1 June from time to time, but by the late 1960s we were able to plant Fortunei hybrids such as *R. 'Naomi'* and also *R. 'Iceberg'* and *R. 'Avocet'*. *R. 'Loderi'* was still

giving us trouble with bark split, but hardy species such as *R. smirnowii*, *R. makinoi* and *R. oreotrophe*s were succeeding.

By 1970 the climate had improved sufficiently for us to start our rhododendron nursery and during the 1980s and 1990s we were able to increase the number of species and hybrids that we sell to 700 or 800.

I am sure that the rate of change in the climate has increased dramatically in the last few years. Our minimum temperature is now about  $-11^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $12^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and Frensham Pond has not been frozen sufficiently for skating for about 10 years. Snow, if we have any, only lasts two or three days.

Some years ago Robert Stevenson Clark gave me a layer of his Borde Hill prize-winning form of *R. montroseanum* which I kept for several years in a polyhouse for protection. *R. montroseanum* is not self-fertile and we used pollen, kindly sent from Blackhills and Anglesey, to set seed. This went on for several years, until the plant grew too large for the polyhouse and had to be planted outside where, much to my surprise, it continued to grow and flower profusely. This made me realise that it was time to try out several species which until then I had considered too tender for us. Since then we have outwintered *R. burmanicum*, *R. 'Fragrantissimum'* and *R. johnstoneanum*,

and several of the new species introduced from Vietnam and southern Yunnan.

In 1992 Keith Rushforth, David Chamberlain and Alan Clark visited Vietnam for the first time and collected rhododendron seed from between 1,500–1,800m (5,000–6,000ft). Until then it had been thought that rhododendrons from the main Himalayan ranges were hardy if collected from 3,000m (10,000ft) whereas plants from below this height would be on the tender side.

It now seems that away from the Himalayas this rule does not hold good and the critical height is much lower in Vietnam and SE China. The splendid *R. leptocladon* subsect. *Maddenii* – a new species from Vietnam – was seen at heights between 1,800–2,100m (6,000–7,000ft) in Hoang Lien Son Province (KR1877, 2189, 2932 and AC357). The 6cm (2½in) yellow flowers are very similar in all the collections and the plant succeeds in well-sheltered outside positions, barring an exceptionally hard winter. This is a really first-class plant.

We are finding the two forms of *R. sinofalconeri* hardy here. The south Yunnan form seen by Peter Cox and Steve Hootman (C&H 7183), with whitish indumentum, has not flowered so far, but the Vietnam forms, with beige indumentum, flowered here at six years old and look magnificent. Both forms are unusual in that the top flowers of each bright yellow truss open first, and the bottom flowers last. The seed from which our plants were raised (TV035) was collected at 2,100m (7,000ft) in the same area as *R. leptocladon* (see Fig. 3).

The 1992 Vietnam expedition also reported a rhododendron, at between 2,100–2,400m (7,000–8,000ft), which was

provisionally called *R. protistum* aff. under the following numbers, KR1986, AC431 and TH261 (see Fig.2). The large leaves 44 × 16cm (18 × 6in) looked very similar to the leaves of *R. protistum* but now it has flowered here and, owing to the shape of the flowers, Dr David Chamberlain considers it to be closer to *R. sinogrande*. It develops a very thin indumentum after about five years and the striking flower truss has up to 28 ventricose campanulate cream or white flowers with a large red blotch. I have not tried it outside, but some are growing well in southern Ireland, and there are five seedlings from Alan Clark's collection growing well in a garden near Farnham, Surrey.

The export of live plant material from China is now tightly controlled. I am therefore grateful for the facilities that have been provided by the Kunming Institute of Botany that have enabled me and others to study rhododendrons in the wild. In 1995 Peter Cox and I, with other members of our expeditions, met representatives of the Institute south of the bridge over the Yangtze near Leibo, which lies to the extreme south of Sichuan (see *Rhododendrons with Camellias and Magnolias* 1996-7, p.9). We had travelled south from Chengdu, past Mount Omei and Eiban, and into the area of Sichuan unexplored by the great plant collectors. Before dropping down into the Meigu valley we discovered a group of *R. augustinii* growing by the side of the road. These very bushy plants had fairly small leaves, and plants raised from this collection could almost be called high altitude forms – EGM 293 and C&H 7008. Ours are now flowering quite regularly every year, during the first and second week of June! The colours are mostly a nice shade of lavender-

pink (*RHS Colour Chart* Violet-Purple Group 81D) about 6cm (2<sup>1</sup>/in) across, but there are also some blues. Obviously there is enormous potential here for producing good late-flowering blue *R. augustini* and even late blue dwarf rhododendrons by hybridisation.

Plants from this expedition have with one exception all proved perfectly hardy here. *R. denudatum* (EGM 294, C&H 7012) makes its new growth very late, and is extra valuable on that account. The leaves are very superior to those of *R. floribundum*, a relative, and the rose- to wine-red flowers are likely to be better also. The deep red *R. ochraceum* subsect. *Maculifera* is quite hardy outside here even as a small plant, and is likely to be the best plant from this area. As it is normally found growing among rocks and cliffs, it is likely to require perfect drainage.

*R. glanduliferum* subsect. *Taliensis* was seen by us on a ridge of the Miaomiaoshan Range (EGM 347, C&H 7131) and has long *R. auriculatum* type leaves. It has brilliant red new growth, and white flowers in late June. Interestingly, this species was also reported by Peter Wharton of Vancouver Botanic Garden in Guizhou (PW 041 & 083). His plants look very similar to ours but perhaps not quite so long leaved. Peter also reported another very interesting rhododendron in Guizhou (PW 050). This appears to belong to either subsect. *Auriculata* or subsect. *Parishia* and may possibly be *R. chihsinianum*. We have just flowered this for the first time (see Fig.1), and its very attractive large flowers in many different shades of pink will normally be produced in

July. It is absolutely hardy here, and likely to be much more useful in producing the late pink Hardy Hybrids than *R. griersonianum* ever was. At this stage Dr David Chamberlain is uncertain if this is a hybrid swarm, or a new species. It may well turn out to be the best new species to have been collected for many years.

*Rhododendron irroratum* var. *ningyue-nense* was seen by us (EM 339 & 340, C&H 7100) near Yiliang. This very beautiful clear yellow rhododendron is the only one from this expedition about which I have any reservations. The plant itself seems quite hardy here, but it does have its new growth cut and it may be flower-bud tender. It is possibly best only for Devon and Cornwall.

*Rhododendron coeloneuron* subsect. *Taliensis* was also seen by us on this expedition, as was *R. denudatum* subsect. *Argyrophylla* (EGM 334). They are quite difficult to tell apart when not in flower, but *R. coeloneuron*<sup>1</sup> appears to lie half way between *R. denudatum* and *R. floribundum* subsect. *Argyrophylla*. Last year a plant produced quite pretty lilac flowers which were much more bell-shaped than *R. floribundum*. Other collections of *R. coeloneuron* are Edward Needham's 4029 and Peter Wharton's 009, both from Guizhou. All seem very hardy.

Our last call on our 1995 expedition was on Wumengshan, about 160km (100 miles) north of Kunming, where we saw *R. sphaeroblastum* var. *wumengense* and *R. sikangense* var. *exquisitum*. Both of these are illustrated in Prof. Feng's *Rhododendrons of China* and look excellent plants but neither

<sup>1</sup> Cox's *Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species* suggests *R. coeloneuron* may be better classified in subsect. *Argyrophylla* – Honorary Editor.



Fig. 1 (above): Rhododendron PW050,  
possibly *R. chihsinianum* Subsect.

*Auriculata* (see p. 16)

Fig. 2 (below): *R. sinogrande* aff.  
*KR1986* (see p. 15).

Fig. 3 (right): *R. sinofalconeri* *TV035*  
(see p. 15)





Fig. 4: Magnolia 'Pickard's Stardust' (see p.24)



Fig. 5 (above): Magnolia 'George Henry Kern' (see p.21).

Fig. 6 (below): Magnolia 'Randy' (see p.21)

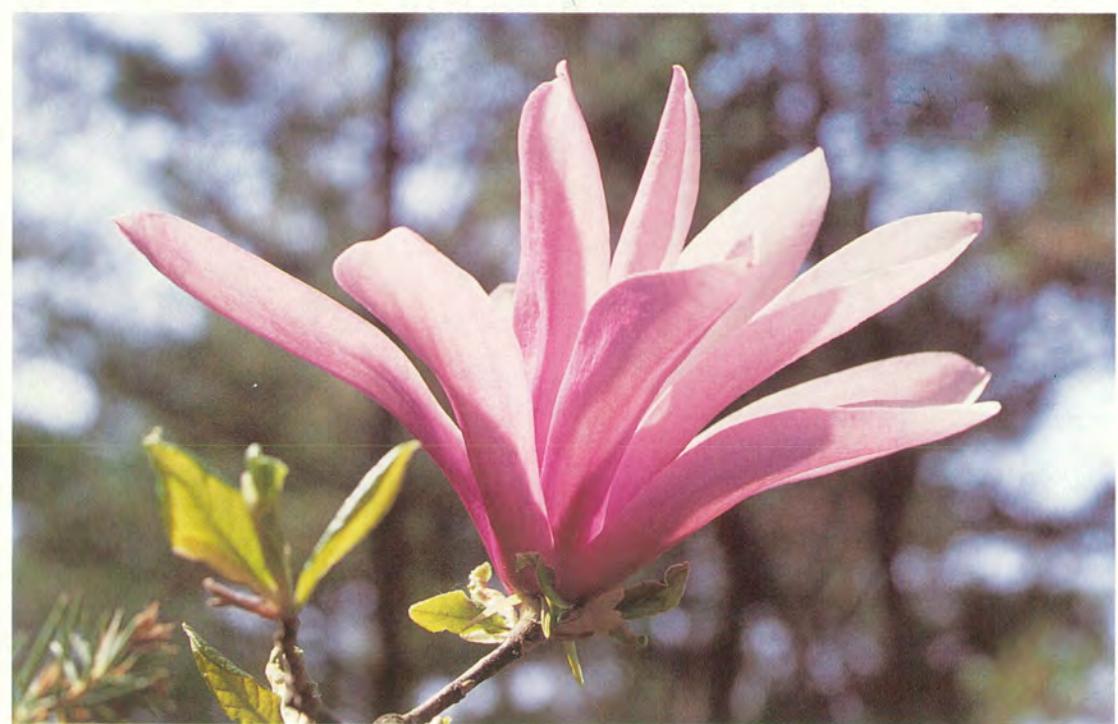




Fig. 7 (left): Magnolia 'Gold Star' (see p.23).

Fig. 8 (above): John Bond LVO, VMH 1932-2001 (see p.66).

Fig. 9 (below): Magnolia 'Jane Platt' (syn. *M. stellata* 'Rosea') (see p.23)



have flowered here as yet. As one would expect, *R. sikangense* var. *exquisitum* starts into growth very late. It is a much neater plant than *R. sikangense* var. *sikangense* (syn. *R. cookeanum*) which I remember seeing in flower in Mr Cook's garden near Corbridge in June/July.

The other main rhododendron on Wumengshan was *R. lacteum*, and it is very noticeable that it is much more vigorous than the original introduction from Cangshan, and seems to have larger leaves.

Alan Clark visited Wumengshan the year before us, in 1994, and again later. I think we saw his clump of *R. rex* aff. plants in the distance as we were coming away. These are very interesting, as the local inhabitants assured him that the flowers were cream or yellow. The leaves are larger, with a yellow midrib, up to 33 x 16cm (13 x 6½in) and the whole plant is much more vigorous.

While it is always a possibility that the yellow description may be a translation hiccup, I would certainly advise anyone to obtain this plant if they have room for it. I think that it is a very good bet that it will turn out to be yellow.

At the end of the 1995 expedition Peter Cox and Steve Hootman continued alone to the extreme south of Yunnan and besides finding *R. sinofalconeri* also came across the true *R. serotinum* subsect. *Fortunei* (C&H 7189). This plant has wavy edges to the leaves similar to some forms of *R. hemsleyanum* but much narrower. It is quite hardy and an extremely fast grower. So far we have not seen flowers, but I understand that it produces good white flowers in August. It should not be confused with a rhododendron that has up to

now been distributed as *R. serotinum* but is in fact a late flowering form of *R. decorum*. This also is a very desirable rhododendron and plants raised from American seed have produced very high quality and heavily textured flowers in mid July.

Our experience with the climate here must have been repeated to a greater or lesser extent all over the British Isles. The change in climate has been so gradual that many will not have noticed its full extent. The next 20 years will show an enormous change in the range of plants that we are able to grow. All rhododendron growers should experiment with new hybrids and species and I am quite certain they will be agreeably surprised at what can be grown. The golden age for rhododendron growers is surely just beginning.

At risk of stating the obvious, there is one precaution that is necessary when trying new hybrids. All young plants must be well protected for the first two or three years after planting, longer if possible. The thicker the stems of plants at ground level, the less likelihood there is of young plants suffering bark split. We surround all newly planted rhododendrons with plastic netting between 30–60cm (1–2ft) high depending on the type and shape of the plant. Each autumn the circle of netting is filled with leaves up to the height of the lowest branches and kept at that height until all danger of spring frosts are over. The leaves settle during the summer and act as a moisture retaining mulch, so that in some ways the wider the circle of plastic netting the better. Most people will be amazed at the difference in growth (which can be up to 200 percent) this treatment will make.

Plastic netting, available in green or

brown, is worth putting up with for the first few years until the young plants have established and have reasonably thick stems.

In the early days of the Rhododendron Society there used to be a lot of competition between gardens to be the first to flower the newest rhododendron species collected by the great plant hunters. Some of this competitiveness would not come amiss now, and one hopes that these new additions will find their way into all good rhododendron collections. It would be nice if all members of the Group who have not put in new plants recently would consider planting at least one or two new species every year.

The few new species that I have mentioned in this article are only a fraction

of what is likely to be available in the next few years. Volume III of the *Rhododendrons of China* edited by Professor G Feng of the Institute of Botany at Kunming has recently been published and covers 15 to 20 new species growing near Miaoershan north of Guilin and one hopes that the Chinese authorities will eventually allow rhododendrons in this area to be studied.

This is an exciting time for rhododendron growers. Let us make sure we make the best use of it.

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## THE MAGNOLIA SOCIETY

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# MAGNOLIAS FOR SMALLER GARDENS



JIM GARDINER

Magnolias have the reputation of being plants only suitable for the larger garden. It is true that when you see a majestic Asiatic tree magnolia in full flower, the heart starts pounding and you stand awestruck in its presence.

However, all gardens, irrespective of size, can accommodate a magnolia, and it is to this brief that I write. I want to highlight those that are either compact or sufficiently slow in growth, or that are upright in habit so they can be sited in a restricted space. You can, of course, prune larger growing deciduous magnolias to keep them within their allotted space. Pruning last season's growth directly after flowering to one, two or three buds, encourages a framework of spur growth on which flowering will take place the following season, but then you won't be motivated by a plant's 'presence' or 'elegance', more by how many can be fitted into the space.

When reviewing the genus to make recommendations, it is inevitable that you will be highlighting well-known species and hybrids as well as new ones. Many that I shall mention have been around for a long time but yet have considerable potential for wider use. Also 'where can I get these plants from?' is often the common cry and in many cases it is to the specialist nursery that

people have to turn. Being an international genus (the Magnolia Society has members in 45 countries around the world) there are specialist nurseries in the UK, as well as on the Continent, that supply and are willing to send plants. With the exception of protected plants, propagation material is also made available for nurseries to propagate from. See p.27 for a list of nurseries supplying the vast majority of those listed here.

## *Magnolia liliiflora* and its hybrids

Inevitably *Magnolia liliiflora*, either directly or indirectly through its hybrids, is probably the most influential species I shall be discussing here. This central Chinese species has been in cultivation in the UK for over 200 years. It's a slow growing multi-stemmed shrub that flowers over a very long period and, importantly, from an early age. The first and main flush is during mid/end of April, just as the first leaves are starting to unfurl, but it is also seen in flower periodically during May, June and July.

In China *M. liliiflora* had long attracted religious significance and grew in temple gardens. Plants were taken from China to Japan in the 8th century and probably to Korea at the same time. The process of selecting clones displaying different flower colours has obviously been going on for a

very long time, so it is not surprising that there are a number of colour variants available. *M. liliiflora* 'Nigra' is probably the most widely seen in the UK. On opening, the candles, very dark purple in bud, reveal six purplish white, lightly veined tepals on the inside with a rich purple-red exterior. 'Darkest Purple' and 'O'Neill' are two clones which are better known in the United States. The former, named by William Kosar, has the largest and darkest coloured flowers, while 'O'Neill' has up to nine tepals which are narrower than 'Nigra'.

When I visited Korea in 1997 with the Magnolia Society, Ferris Miller (founder of the internationally acclaimed Chollipo Arboretum) took us to a number of arboreta and temple gardens where *M. liliiflora* was in full flower. It was fascinating to see different clones wherever we went varying in scent and colour from pink to the darkest purple, also shape, size and number of tepals and whether they reflexed. It is hoped that a number of these 'improved' clones will find their way to the UK to enable us to determine their performance here.

*M. liliiflora* is the seed parent (with *M. stellata* as the pollen parent) of the de Vos and Kosar hybrids, better known in the UK as the Eight Little Girls. Developed at the US National Arboretum in the mid 1950s, and named in 1965 after wives, children and secretaries of Francis de Vos and William Kosar, they have become firm favourites. This has not always been the case. The late John Bond saw their value and planted them in prominent positions in the Savill Garden. However in the late 1980s he exhibited vases of all eight cultivars to a largely unappreciative RHS Floral Committee B. They were originally selected

for their profusion of flower, variation of colour and size of flowers and the rounded or conical habit. I was fortunate to see the original plants in the US National Arboretum during May 2000 when they were in full growth. All are growing in full sun in grassland, so presumably their growth will have been stunted.

Roberta Hagen, Secretary of the Magnolia Society has, over the past five years, made a special study of these original plants and an article will follow in the *Magnolia Society Journal*. However, a brief extract is included, as a number of them are thought to be mixed in cultivation. Colours recorded are as seen by Roberta in Washington, which when translated to the UK are several shades paler. Size of the plants also needs clarification. Those planted at Wisley as small container grown specimens eight years ago now vary between 2.5–4m (8–12ft) tall and wide. Being the original plants, all are 44 or 45 years old.

**'Ann'** is usually the first to flower with up to 10 red-purple erect tepals with a hint of fragrance. Original plant 4.25m high × 5m wide (14 × 15ft).

**'Judy'** is the smallest of the eight with up to 14 flared red-purple tepals with creamy white inside, with a hint of fragrance. Original plant 3 × 4m (10 × 13ft) wide.

**'Susan'** has the deepest flower colour with up to seven red-purple erect tepals with a light fragrance. 5m (15ft) high and wide.

**'Betty'** has the largest flowers of all, with up to 19 red-purple tepals, white inside, with a very light fragrance. 5m high by 5.5m wide (15 × 18ft).

**'Ricki'** always has twisted and contorted tepals, red-purple at the base continuing as a prominent stripe down the centre of the

outside of up to 14 tepals, which are white inside. The flowers are lightly fragrant. 4m high  $\times$  5m wide (13  $\times$  15ft).

**'Randy'** is very floriferous with up to 13 red-purple flared tepals, white inside. No fragrance. 4m high  $\times$  5.5m wide (13  $\times$  18ft) (see Fig. 6).

**'Jane'** is the most vigorous with up to 12 red-purple tepals, white on the inside, and is the most fragrant of all the Girls. 8m tall  $\times$  6m wide (25  $\times$  20ft).

**'Pinkie'** is the last of the Girls to bloom and the palest of all, red-purple at the base, fading to white at the apex and white on the inside of the 10–12 tepals, which are the widest of all. Moderate fragrance. 5.5m tall  $\times$  6m wide (18  $\times$  20ft).

I have always liked 'Pinkie' as it is distinctly later than the others with flowers that have a fragrance and are soft whitish pink in colour. 'Susan' too is distinctive with 'Randy' my third choice.

*M. liliiflora* and *M. stellata* have also been used to great effect by others, yet the following hybrids are rarely seen outside specialist collections.

'George Henry Kern' (see Fig. 5) was raised in 1935 by Carl Kern of Cincinnati, Ohio. It is less vigorous than any of the Girls, remaining a broad spreading compact plant with specimens seen rarely exceeding 2m (6ft) in height. The pale pink flowers, rose pink in bud, are seen over an exceptionally long period, from mid-April through to the summer months. It is never crowded in flower yet there are sufficient numbers for their presence to be noticed.

Amos Pickard of Canterbury, raised 'Lileny', a compact grower, but more upright and less 'twiggy' than 'George Henry Kern'. However, the flowers are consider-

ably larger and of a more vibrant pink. They are seen during late April and early May.

A firm favourite with the Americans is 'Marillyn', a *M. liliiflora* 'Nigra'  $\times$  *M. kobus* hybrid raised at Brooklyn Botanic Garden by Eva Maria Sperber in 1954. This was profiled in the *Magnolia Society Journal*, Vol. 35, issue 68, (2000). Larry Langford, who grows this plant in Tennessee, tells me that it is 'very upright with strong vertical branching. The small tree is 5m (15ft) tall and no wider than 2m (6ft) at its widest point'. The tulip-shaped flowers have six rich dark magenta-coloured tepals which are about 13cm (5in) tall. It is very floriferous, doesn't have the 'heavy foliage look' that is prevalent among the Girls, and extremely cold hardy.

Completing the *M. liliiflora* seed parent link are four small trees. 'Galaxy' and 'Spectrum' are both hybrids with *M. spengeri* 'Diva', raised at the US National Arboretum in 1963. 'Galaxy' is probably the more widely planted of the two, developing an upright, dense crown 4.25m high by 2m wide (14  $\times$  6ft) after eight years. 'Spectrum' is more widely spreading and has a more open crown. Both are floriferous from an early age with 'Spectrum' having a more intense but cleaner pink flower, while in Korea both were a deep magenta colour.

Oswald Blumhardt of North Island, New Zealand, bred what can be currently regarded as one of the best tree magnolias in cultivation. 'Star Wars' is a hybrid with *M. campbellii* as the pollen parent and flowers over a two-month period from mid March. On naming the plant Blumhardt described the flowers as 'fairly large, with the outer tepals rolled into tubes or spikes sticking out all around the buds and opening

blooms. As they are borne freely and point in all directions I call the plant "Star Wars". The most impressive plants I've seen were at Otto Eisenhut's and Piet van Veen's in Ticino, Switzerland, while those in the UK are more sedate in their growth rate. Here it grows about 36–45cm (15–18in) a year and is upright in habit. In Ticino it grows into a magnificent narrowly pyramidal, small to potentially medium-sized tree.

'Caerhays Surprise' was a deliberate cross with *M. campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata*, made by Philip Tregunna at Caerhays Castle in 1959. Like 'Star Wars' it flowers prolifically over a long period from late March. However, it is neither as large flowered (18cm [7in]) nor as heavily limbed, growing into a compact, upright growing, medium-to large-sized shrub (see back cover).

'Galaxy', 'Spectrum' and 'Star Wars' all benefit from being grown as single stemmed trees and can be limbed up gradually, exposing a clean stem. August is best for this as there is comparatively little sap running, and it is sufficiently early enough for wound occlusion to start. 'Caerhays Surprise' can be grown as a single-stemmed subject but I have grown it as a multistem from ground level to good effect.

#### ***Magnolia stellata* and its hybrids**

*Magnolia stellata*, the star magnolia from Japan, must be highly regarded as a subject for all magnolia collections, both small and large. It has its own association in Japan – The Japan Association for Shidekobushi Conservation – with 800 members and Dr Junji Itoigawa as President. There are a number of small populations throughout southern Honshu, primarily in Gifu, Aichi and Mei Prefectures where individual popu-

lations never exceed a few hundred plants. In September 2000 Mikinori Ogisu and Seiju Yamaguchi took me to see the small group of plants at Nakatsugawa in Gifu. According to Yamaguchi this group exhibit the greatest variation in number of tepals and flower colour, ranging from white to a rich pink. One selected from the group but not yet in cultivation is deep pink, 13cm (5in) across, paler on the top side, with up to 16 tepals, with each tepal up to 2.5cm (1in) wide. The plants were growing more or less in a bog, with *Berberis sieboldii*, *Quercus glauca*, *Ilex nipponica*, *Hydrangea paniculata* and *Acer crataegifolium* and were all about 3m (10ft) in height. In other moist, yet more freely drained localities plants to 10m (30ft) could be found.

Generally, *M. stellata* is not found growing with other species in the wild, however, in one location not far from Mizunami City, *M. salicifolia* is growing on higher ground. Here there is a small group of naturally occurring hybrids (*M. × proctoriana*) from which one plant has been selected by Yamaguchi. The parent plant has an upright habit, with soft pink, aging white, flowers. The leaves are intermediate between the two parents and are a pale green, not glaucous on the underside. This hybrid has been named 'Robert's Dream' after Robert de Belder. It is untried in the UK but propagation material should soon be available.

Before returning to *M. stellata* I should just mention *M. × proctoriana* 'Slavin's Snowy'. Named after Mr Bernard H Slavin, this was raised at Highland Park, Rochester, New York and develops initially as an extremely floriferous, slender, upright growing small tree. Its fragrant flowers are about

13–15cm (5–6in) across with white tepals, each of which has a pink blotch at its base. There are also three sepaloid tepals present. The flowers are frost hardy to  $-2^{\circ}$  to  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $28\text{--}27^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and are seen in succession over a three-week period from early April. A young plant at Wisley is  $3 \times 1.5\text{m}$  ( $10 \times 5\text{ft}$ ) after six years.

There are numerous flowering forms of *M. stellata* in cultivation, varying in flower colour and number of tepals in each flower. The flowers are quite frost hardy to  $-2^{\circ}$  to  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $28\text{--}27^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and flower in succession over a three to four week period from mid-March. They are slow-growing dense shrubs ultimately to around 5m (15ft), though plants at Vico Morcote in Switzerland are 6–8m (20–25ft) after only 20 years.

The most commonly seen clones in this country are 'Waterlily' and 'Centennial'; the latter is 'Persil' white, while the former is ivory white. There are many which exhibit a hint of pink in flower, predominantly along the underside of the tepals, inherited from either 'Rosea' or 'Rubra'. 'Chrysanthemumiflora' is a clone selected by Wada's Nursery of Japan, and is probably the best 'pink' currently in general cultivation. However, another Japanese clone grown by Sir Peter Smithers and considered to be synonymous with 'Jane Platt' (Fig. 9) is by far and away the best pink, though not widely distributed in the UK. Roger Gossler of Springfield, Oregon named this after Jane Platt who grew a fine specimen in her garden in Portland.

'Scented Silver', a vigorous American clone raised by Dr Frank Galyon is one to look for on account of its scented flowers, a trait not generally noticed in this species.

'Gold Star' is a *M. stellata* hybrid with *M.*

*acuminata* subsp. *subcordata* 'Miss Honeybee', raised by Phil Savage in Michigan (Fig. 7). Phil sent me scions in 1990 which despite being lost in the post for three weeks, were successfully grafted by Peter Catt of Liss Forest Nursery thus introducing this plant to the UK. In time it will make an upright growing small tree. The largest at Wisley is around 5m (15ft) after 10 years. Creamy yellow, star-shaped, 10cm (4in) flowers are seen on leafless stems in early April and, although not floriferous, it has an appeal and is worth including in collections.

'Pristine' is another *M. stellata* hybrid, this time with *M. denudata*. With a little help by judicious pruning of the laterals, it grows into a small tree. Dainty pure white flowers with up to 15 tepals are produced along the stem and held like candles before splaying open on the second day. These are generally seen during late March or early April. The frost tolerance of *M. stellata* is unfortunately not carried through into this generation, but nevertheless it is well worth trying. Raised by Professor Joe McDaniel, a founder member and former President of the Magnolia Society.

The other *M. denudata* hybrid of similar size worthy of wider attention is *M. 'Cecil Nice'*, a self sown seedling named after a former head gardener at Nymans in Sussex. It grows rather sedately into a small tree. The plant at Wisley is about 4.25m (14ft) after nine years. The flowers are a beautiful crisp pure white with a rich purple flush at the base, not too large, and when seen on the tree, well spaced and in proportion. Well worth consideration.

#### *Magnolia kobus* and its hybrids

*Magnolia kobus*, the closely related Japanese

species (Mikinori Ogiu suggests we should look at the cross section of the anthers to find differences between *M. kobus* and *M. stellata*) generally becomes too broad spreading for it to have a use in small gardens. However, because of its comparatively slow growth rate, consideration should be given to the following clones. When I visited the Holden Arboretum in Ohio, Charles Tubesing showed me a plant of *M. kobus* that only grew a few inches a year (and was now only about 2m [6ft]) yet was quite floriferous. A young plant has recently been established at Wisley, so we wait with interest. The late Dr August Kehr (who died in September 2001) introduced a tetraploid *M. kobus* which has been registered as 'Two Stones'. This has beautiful gardenia-like flowers, the outer 10–12 tepals reflexing to the horizontal, while the remaining 15 or so retain their central 'boss' shape arching over the stigmatic column. It is not particularly large, around 10cm (4in) across, but with such poise and charm it is well worth looking out for.

At Wisley in the early 1950s Dr E K Janaki Ammal, a geneticist, was investigating chromosome numbers in a variety of woody genera, including *Magnolia*. The results of her work can be seen primarily on Battleston Hill (Fig. 19), where colchicine induced polyploids can be found. After nearly 50 years all are large single or multi-stemmed shrubs or small trees 8 × 8m (25 × 25ft). 'Norman Gould' and 'Janaki Ammal' are named after the Society's botanist between 1931–60, and geneticist, respectively. Both plants were damaged in the storms of 1987 when limbs from other trees fell on them. 'Janaki Ammal' has star-like flowers with strap-shaped, slightly twisted

tepals while 'Norman Gould' has broader tepals with the flowers retaining an open cup shape. Both are extremely floriferous and, like the others, quite frost tolerant.

Amos Pickard of Canterbury introduced 'Pickard's Stardust' (see Fig. 4) a floriferous *M. kobus* hybrid which grows into a spreading medium-sized shrub. The six pointed tepals are held erect before opening out and are seen over several weeks from mid March.

'Esvelt Select' is a Dutch clone introduced by Dick van Gelderen of Boskoop. This is an upright growing small tree with flowers larger than the normal *M. kobus*. It is also distinguished by its mahogany red young leaves which are seen continuously throughout the season.

#### *Magnolia × loebneri*

*Magnolia × loebneri* is the resultant hybrid when *M. kobus* is crossed with *M. stellata*. This is an excellent group of hybrids, though not all are suited to the smaller garden. See Graham Rankin's profile of *M. × loebneri* in *Rhododendron with Camellias and Magnolias* 1999 for a detailed account.

So which of the *M. × loebneri* should be grown? 'Leonard Messel', raised by James Comber, head gardener to the Countess of Rosse at Nymans in the early 1950s, is still one of the best magnolias for general cultivation. It has an upright but compact habit and many beautiful, frost tolerant, soft pink flowers, which are seen over at least a four week period. Flowers vary in colour from season to season, between a rich pink and a very pale pink, which appears to reflect higher day and lower night temperatures.

Ferris Miller of Chollipo Arboretum introduced 'Raspberry Fun' in 1987. It was

raised from open pollinated 'Leonard Messel' and as a result is similar in habit with 16 rather than 12 tepals and larger flowers which are grouped in twos and threes as opposed to being held singly.

'Donna' was raised by Harry Heine-man of Massachusetts and named after his wife. The flowers are pure white and among the largest of this hybrid group, with up to 13 broad tepals which reflex backwards. In time it will make a large, broad spreading shrub.

I have seen 'Encore' flowering to perfection in Switzerland. It is a seedling of *M. × loebneri* 'Ballerina', selected by the late August Kehr, and has been well named. Flower buds appear in groups of up to four on the tips as well as along the stem, thus giving an 'encore' of flowering over a four-to six-week period. It slowly develops into a compact, upright growing, medium-sized shrub.

#### *Magnolia × kewensis* and *M. salicifolia*

The magnificent *M. × kewensis* 'Wada's Memory' is, without doubt, a star performer. If allowed to grow to old age in good growing conditions as is the case at the Henry Francis du Pont Museum in Delaware, then a plant of 12 × 5.5m (40 × 18ft) can be expected. But over a shorter time scale 'Wada's Memory' will give many years' enjoyment. Its beautiful compact conical shape, the magnificent flowering display (even on plants that are 10 years old) when hardly a twig can be seen makes it worthy of inclusion in the list.

The Japanese willow leaf or willow wand magnolia, *M. salicifolia*, is a fine tree if not a touch too broadspreading for inclusion here. It is one of the hardiest of all asi-

atic, its white flowers too are quite frost tolerant and its leaves have that arresting lemon verbena scent when crushed. More suitable for the small garden are 'Fastigiata' and 'van Veen', the latter with fine bamboo-like foliage selected by Piet van Veen, who has an outstanding collection, enjoying a spectacular setting overlooking Lake Maggiore. 'Jermyns' and 'Iufer' are two other compact forms, which probably should be found under *M. × kewensis* and which are also ideal for a place in the smaller garden.

#### **Other asiatic species**

Before moving on to highlight summer-flowering magnolias, and at the risk of making this too much like a list, I cannot avoid mentioning one or two more asiatic aristocrats. *Magnolia sprengeri* 'Diva' falls into this category and along with its many fine hybrids ('Eric Savill', 'Marwood Spring', 'Copeland Court', 'Claret Cup') is a touch too large to be included here. However, its sister *M. sprengeri* var. *elongata* can and should be included. In habit it is quite upright and densely branched and never gets terribly big. Its white flowers, which are seen more or less at the same time as its sister, open like miniature water lilies and in reasonable quantity.

In his excellent article in *Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias 2001* on *Magnolia cylindrica*, Philippe de Spoelberch reviews its current status and profiles its hybrids. 'Pegasus' (the Hillier *cylindrica*) ultimately gets too large for smaller gardens, but because of its slow growth and its floriferousness, it's an automatic choice. 'Bjuv', which came to Philippe's garden in Belgium via the Arnold Arboretum and Karl Flinck's

Arboretum in Sweden (after which it is named) and the pure white-flowered small tree 'Leda' are also worthy of trying.

### The Oyamas

The pendant early summer-flowering trio of *Magnolia wilsonii*, *M. sinensis* and *M. sieboldii* are all worth including for a number of reasons, their graceful habit (especially *M. wilsonii*), the poise of the flowers and of course their gorgeous scent. *M. wilsonii* is probably the most widely planted, with fully pendant flowers 10cm (4in) across, seen during May and early June. Recently I saw an excellent specimen of *M. wilsonii* 'Findlays Form' at Threave near Castle Douglas. A 25-year-old plant was 4m high by 5m across (12 x 15ft), with the flowers up to 15cm (6in) across, many of them double with 10 outer and six inner tepals. In a large garden, you can have the benefit of retaining the lower branches which more or less touch the ground, but with careful pruning, the lower limbs can be removed. This allows three or more stems to grow up, providing access underneath, and making a graceful statement.

*M. sinensis* flowers more or less at the same time, but those I have seen have flowers larger than normally seen in *M. wilsonii*, being 13cm (5in) across and fully pendant. Often a second flowering flush is seen in August. The leaves tend to be broader and are distinctly more glaucous on the underside. There has always been a flow of ideas of what exactly this species should be – does it belong to *M. globosa* as originally thought, or *M. sieboldii*? I admit I am in favour of *M. sieboldii*, but splendid specimens of *M. globosa* have rekindled my thoughts in this direction.

*M. sieboldii*, unless sited in ideal conditions, never really gets larger than a medium-sized shrub with the Korean form probably more vigorous than the Japanese. Both are worthy of inclusion, with their 10cm (4in) flowers 'looking you in the face' when seen at their peak in June.

### Evergreen species

Turning our attention to evergreen species, *M. grandiflora*, the southern magnolia has a wide distribution across the southeastern United States. This has resulted in a significant variation in leaf and flower as well as habit. Today there are over 150 named clones available to choose from, which inevitably provide a number for inclusion here. 'Little Gem', 'Harold Poole' and 'Hasse' are three slow-growing, compact clones and fairly columnar in habit. All have beautiful cinnamon-coloured indumentum on the underside of the small, slightly twisted/crinkled leaves. Blooms too are in proportion with the growth. 'Gallissonniere' is one of the most widely planted clones in Europe, attaining a very upright habit, though it gets quite tall. 'Bracken's Brown Beauty' selected by Ray Bracken of South Carolina, is one of the best selling clones in the United States, developing into a symmetrical pyramid form and is very hardy. The 15cm (6in) leaves too have this rich brown colour on the underside and flowers are seen in the States from May to October.

*Magnolia nitida* is worth trying if you live in a protected site in Cornwall, Ireland or southwest Scotland. Alternatively, if you are adopting the current research on the generic limits, then a number of the mitchelias would be included in this list of plants for the smaller garden.

### North American hybrids

However, to finish, little mention has been given to the yellow hybrids which have become so popular, especially in the United States. Generally the majority that use *M. acuminata* as a seed parent are too vigorous to try. At Wisley, for example, *M. 'Elizabeth'*, one of the most popular yellows, is close approaching 10 x 6m (30 x 20ft) across. However, if *M. acuminata* subsp. *subcordata* is used as a seed parent, or indeed in its own right, then there is a reasonable chance of including some here.

*Magnolia acuminata* subsp. *subcordata* 'Miss Honeybee' has small pale yellow flowers that appear at the same time as the foliage, so are rather inconspicuous. However, 'Yellow Lantern', a *subcordata* hybrid raised by Phil Savage in Michigan, is extremely fastigate and has truly precocious pale lemon yellow flowers. 'Goldfinch' is another Savage hybrid, this time using *M. denudata* as the pollen parent, which should be assessed. Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the late August Kehr have been at the forefront on magnolia breeding in the States. *M. x brooklynensis* are plants that have attracted more interest in the States than they have in the UK, however, 'Daybreak', 'Gold Crown' and 'Sun Spire', all Kehr hybrids, are worthy of our attention. 'Daybreak' was rated by Augie as his 'best hybrid to date'. It is columnar and very floriferous with large rose pink fragrant flowers seen in April. Both 'Gold Crown' and 'Sun Spire' are columnar, however, the latter is the most fastigate magnolia he had seen. Both have deeper yellow flowers than 'Elizabeth'.

So, here is a varied and exciting array of magnolias – some old, some new, and all worth trying. Through the Magnolia Society and the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group we can track down most, either as propagation material or as plants. Listed below are nurseries which collectively can supply most plants mentioned above. So why not give them a ring or email them. If you cannot get hold of your chosen plant, then I am sure we will make the necessary connection for you at least to try the magnolia of your choice.

### Nurseries specialising in magnolias

Mark Fillan, *Tuckerman Gardens*, Tamar Lane, Bere Alston, PL20 7HN

Tel: 01822 855050

Peter Chappell, *Spinners, Boldre*, Lymington, SO41 5QE

Tel: 01590 673347

Kevin Croucher, *Thornhayes Nursery*, St. Andrews Wood, Dulford, Cullompton, Devon EX15 2DF

Tel: 01884 266746 Fax: 01884 266739

Otto Eisenhut, CH 6575 San Nazzaro, Ticino, Switzerland.

Email: [infoeisenhut@bluewin.ch](mailto:infoeisenhut@bluewin.ch) /  
[www.eisenhut.ch](http://www.eisenhut.ch)

Wim Rutten, zevenhuizen#1 5595 XeLeende, Netherlands.

Email: [info@magnoliastore.com](mailto:info@magnoliastore.com)

*Jim Gardiner is Curator of the RHS Garden Wisley, President of the Magnolia Society and a member of the Group. He is the Author of Magnolias – a Gardener's Guide*

# THE FORGOTTEN RHODODENDRONS



CHRISTOPHER FAIRWEATHER

For any keen plantsman the 19th century was an exciting time, with so many new plants arriving from far distant lands. In 1845 the first Vireya rhododendrons arrived at the nursery of Robert Veitch & Sons of Exeter, and later of Kings Road, Chelsea. Thomas Lobb, an employee of Veitch's, travelled to Singapore in 1843. His main quest was to look for new orchids. Among these and other exotics, he found the first five species of Vireya rhododendrons growing in the humid jungle. Charles Curtis another collector, also working for Veitch's nursery, found two more Vireyas, making a total of seven. These first species were *R. jasminiflorum*, *R. javanicum*, *R. brokeanum*, *R. lobbii* (named after Thomas Lobb), *R. malayanum*, *R. multicolor* and *R. teysmanni*.

Despite having a limited selection of species to work on, Veitch proceeded to embark on an extensive breeding programme. Over a number of years they raised a staggering number of different hybrids, totalling around 500. Sadly, all but eight of these have now been lost to cultivation.

In the latter half of the 19th century interest in growing Vireyas was at its peak. Mr J H Mangles, a keen gardener and writer for the *Gardeners Chronicle*, visited the Veitch Nursery in 1879. On his first sight of these new plants he made the following

comments, 'The strain of Rhododendrons raised by Messrs Veitch has opened a new vista to enthusiasts, at least to such of them as have a warm greenhouse – what met my eyes as I entered the house was a neat compact batch of seedlings with good dark green and glossy foliage, and on one of them several trusses of expanding flowers such as I had never seen before. The colour was a particularly striking crimson.'

For many years the growing of exotic plants in heated glass was popular among the wealthier members of the gardening public. New and exciting plants were arriving from all corners of the British Empire, among them an increasing number of Vireya rhododendrons.

Around the turn of the century fashions started to change and interest in Vireyas declined. Two events appear to have been responsible. Firstly many hardy rhododendrons started to arrive from the Himalayas. These again created quite a sensation and were widely planted in many of the larger parks and gardens. Then sadly the First World War began. Costs rose and heated glass became an expensive luxury. Furthermore staff were away fighting the war. Consequently the enthusiasm for growing tender plants declined.

Apart from botanical gardens, namely

the Royal Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh and Kew, and in a few private collections, interest in Vireyas ceased until the 1950/60s. Around that time plant hunters began to explore the uncharted lands of New Guinea and discovered many more exciting Vireyas. Articles appeared in the gardening press and interest returned.

The series Vireya now includes around 300 different species, almost a third of the total rhododendron family. No doubt there are more to be discovered. They grow in the dense jungles of Malaysia, Borneo, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Isles and one important species in north Australia. They are extremely varied in growth and habit and are found at sea level or growing high on the mountaintops at 3,000m (9,800ft). Many are epiphytic, growing out of old tree stumps or way up in the fork of a tree, while others are terrestrial, favouring open jungle clearings or recently cleared roadsides.

One hundred years have passed since these plants enjoyed their peak of popularity. With many conservatories now being built, are we about to see Vireyas coming back as exciting flowering plants? This fascinating and very varied section of the rhododendron family certainly deserves wider recognition. Apart from being a colourful container plant for a cool conservatory, there are hybrids that could be grown as indoor pot plants and a number possibly useful for the cut flower market.

Around certain parts of the world there is much more interest. In Australia, New Zealand and on the west coast of the USA enthusiastic plant breeders have been hard at work raising many hundreds of new and exciting hybrids. These range in size from compact dwarfs to large shrubs 2-3m

(6-10ft) high. The colours are exotic and in some cases quite dazzling, from scarlet to orange, yellow, pink, white and many bicolours. A number are strongly scented with both unusual and unpredictable flowering habits. Vireyas for me are in flower every month of the year and many repeat flower at least twice in one season. The new hybrids are so startling that I am sure that if J H Mangles was to return now, 120 years on, he would be even more amazed.

Are they easy to grow? If you follow a few simple rules, my answer would be yes. Firstly it is important to consider where and how these plants grow. In the wild many plants are epiphytic, growing on mossy tree trunks or in the fork of a tree. Here they get plenty of moisture in the damp jungle, and at the same time excellent drainage.

### **Compost**

Really open compost with good drainage is essential. My current mix, for spring/early summer use is made up of potting grade bark, fine bark, coarse moss peat and Cornish grit, plus composted bracken when available. To every cubic metre of this mix I add 200 gms of magnesium limestone and 1.5kg of six-month slow release fertiliser, or liquid feed could be used if preferred.

### **Containers**

Black plastic pots are fine if they have plenty of drainage holes. Slatted wooden containers, wire hanging baskets, ceramic pots or even the open mesh pots designed for aquatics also make excellent containers.

### **Watering**

During the growing season Vireyas prefer to be moist but not too wet. I prefer to let the

plant almost dry out then give them a good soak, around every two to three days. In winter I keep the compost dry, watering as required every seven to ten days.

### **Feeding**

There has been some debate over the use of slow release fertiliser. Personally I find plants respond well to a six-month slow release feed applied in March. Alternatively liquid feed every 10 days during the growing season. They respond well to Tomorite.

### **Temperature**

All Vireyas are tender although ongoing breeding programmes may well, one day, produce hardy forms. I aim to overwinter my collection at around 8–10°C (46–50°F). Subject to the plants being a degree or two over zero, they appear to suffer no ill effect from cold. In fact I have had a selection of Vireyas in my unheated conservatory through the winter and they appear to be quite happy. Some hybrids develop red leaves when temperatures drop, but in spring they soon recover.

### **Pruning**

If left unpruned many Vireyas will make ungainly plants. From the moment when the cutting is taken, when I remove the central bud to encourage branching, pruning should continue. My preference is to prune in the spring just as growth begins. I combine this with an early feed. Even though more compact hybrids are available, pruning is essential.

### **Deadheading**

This is certainly a worthwhile practice and encourages new growth later.

### **Propagation**

There are two ways to raise Vireyas – from cuttings and from seed. Cuttings root quite easily. Take semi-ripe cuttings in late summer or early spring and use a rooting medium made up from 50/50 moss peat and perlite or sharp grit. Dip the cuttings in rooting hormone powder and then insert them in the rooting medium. A heated propagator with a bottom heat of 20°C (68°F) will certainly speed the result and roots should appear in around 10 to 12 weeks. Rooted cuttings are best potted on into a 9cm (3½in) pot in spring to early summer as losses can be high if you pot them in late autumn. Seed is an alternative way of raising more plants but it is slow. Vireyas have unique seeds with a tail at each end, enabling them to float on the wind. Seed must be fresh and requires a relatively high temperature (22–25°C/72–77°F) to ensure good germination. Fill a pot with moist, sifted peat, press the seed gently in to the surface, but do not cover. Keep moist and warm and seedlings should appear in about three weeks.

### **Pests and Diseases**

There are luckily very few pests and diseases that affect Vireyas. Peremethrin sprays offer good control of greenfly which can be a problem on new growth. Mealybug can be more troublesome and should be removed with cotton wool on a matchstick or, if they have really taken hold of the plant, spray with an insecticide. Powdery mildew, the scourge of so many rhododendrons, has not worried me at all. If it should appear spray immediately with a fungicide, such as Nimrod T. I have had trouble with rhododendron rust, probably my own fault due to

overcrowding in winter, and if the tell-tale brown spots appear spray with Systhane.

### **How to use Vireyas**

All my plants are in a variety of large and small containers. This allows me to move them around quite easily. In the cooler months from October to April they are very happy in a conservatory, with the minimum of heat necessary to exclude frost. When temperatures start to rise in late spring and summer, and the danger of frost is past, I find that Vireyas are much happier outside in the garden ideally with some sun and shade. Under these conditions they will flower happily for many weeks. Hanging baskets make ideal containers, planted with some of the more compact, spreading hybrids. Pots can be brought into the house where they will flower for many weeks. Vireyas also make excellent cut flowers.

I have tested about 100 different

hybrids, and the majority have grown successfully. Inevitably there have been failures that do not enjoy our climate. As mentioned earlier, flowering times are totally unpredictable. Even so I can guarantee to have one of my hybrids in flower every month of the year, even on Christmas Day. It is very exciting as they suddenly burst into flower when least expected and with some you have the added bonus of scent.

There are now many hundreds of new hybrids available, with more arriving every year. I have tried to be fairly selective, and below is a list of those that have grown happily for me.

*Christopher Fairweather is Chairman of the New Forest Branch of the Group and a member of the Executive Committee. He is a Director of Christopher Fairweather Ltd, The Garden Centre, Beaulieu, Hants*

### **Vireyas that grow well in Hampshire**

'Coral Flare'	Spreading, deep rose pink
'Flamenco Dancer'	Yellow, winter flowering
'Jasminiflorum'	White, pink flush, scented
'Java Light'	Bright orange, winter flowering
'Just Peachy'	Light orange
'Pink Delight'	Rich pink, old Veitch hybrid
'Popcorn'	White
'Rob's Favourite'	Red flowers July/August
'Thai Gold'	Rich yellow, repeat flowering

# REVISING THE AGM CAMELLIA LIST



JENNIFER TREHANE

The Award of Garden Merit is awarded 'to help gardeners choose plants which offer the best all-round garden value', to quote the *RHS Members Handbook 2001*. It is a practical award and every awarded plant should

- ◆ be of outstanding excellence for garden decoration or use;
- ◆ be available in the trade;
- ◆ be of good constitution;
- ◆ not require specialist care other than the provision of appropriate growing conditions.

Every few years a revision is carried out, to bring the list of cultivars up to date. Some, which are felt to be no longer worthy of the accolade, are removed, mainly because others have come along with even better qualifications. Some are no longer available due to lack of demand. Others which are felt to deserve a place on this important list are added. But who makes the decisions and what criteria are they looking for?

In our case it is the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Committee, one of the standing committees of the RHS. It has to be said that it is composed mostly of rhododendron experts, but the camellia numbers are rising. Each member of the main committee was given a copy of the existing lists of AGM camellias and rhododendrons in the summer

of 2000 and asked to go through them putting their knowledge and thinking caps to work. We were asked to select species and cultivars for both deletion and addition and to add comments to our choices, before submitting our lists to Mike Grant, the Wisley botanist who acts as secretary to our committee. These lists were then collated ready for the next stage; the formation of sub-committees with specialist knowledge.

The camellia sub-committee consisted of John Gallagher, a long standing member and Vice Chairman of the Committee, Malcolm Pharoah who has been tending Jimmy Smart's huge collection of camellias at Marwood Hill in north Devon for many years, and yours truly. Between us we see many gardens featuring camellias throughout the length and breadth of the land during each year, and two of us spend a great deal of time answering questions from the public about many aspects of camellia growing, including choice of cultivars for their various locations. They say that teaching is the best way to learn.

We set to work at a meeting in Dorset, in July 2000, to go through the existing list. With just three of us we thought it should not take long, but it's amazing how much thought and discussion goes into these things especially when three camellia enthusiasts

with very diverse interests and experience get together. There were disagreements, both with some of the suggestions made by other committee members and among ourselves, but democracy prevailed and the eventual list submitted to the main committee in October 2000 was one based on a mixture of unanimous and majority decisions.

Our list was further scrutinised by the main Rhododendron and Camellia Committee and by the Floral B Committee before arriving at a final conclusion for publication.

The first thing to note is that no species as such are now included. It was felt that, with increased knowledge and experience over the years, we could no longer recommend *C. tsaii*, the only species on the former list, for general garden cultivation. Its leaf tips scorch too easily and it does not flower freely in most gardens, so it now joins the other species as being best under glass.

The majority decision was also that many of the *C. reticulata* hybrids were not reliable bloomers outdoors, especially in cooler gardens, producing small flowers if any at all, but the most common reason for deletion was lack of availability. The nursery trade has found them to be difficult to propagate by cuttings and, because of lack of demand, not worth the effort of getting grafting knives out. This is sad because the sight of a large plant of, say, the deleted 'Lasca Beauty', or 'Arch of Triumph', or even the historically significant 'Captain Rawes', in full bloom is something to behold. My father proved that most reticulatas could be propagated successfully by cuttings and did not need grafting. He did much to popularise these magnificent camellias. Since leaving the family nursery I have also followed his technique successfully, currently with 25

plants growing away from about 30 cuttings taken in 1999. The secret is in choosing scions which are just at the right stage; semi-hardwood, not too hard and not too soft. There is only a two week period, usually in early July here in the south of England, when the wood is at the ideal stage, and cuttings of most cultivars root just as easily as any other camellia. Wounding the scion by scraping the outer layer of tissue vertically down for 1 to 2cm (0.5 to 1in), just above the lower cut surface helps, followed by dampening this area slightly, and finally dipping it in Seradix 3 rooting powder.

Many of the older cultivars, particularly those affected by virus, such as 'Captain Rawes' and 'Songzilin' ('Robert Fortune'), however, achieve low rooting percentages and have to be grafted.

Fortunately the magnificent red 'Dr Clifford Parkes' (*C. japonica* × *C. reticulata*) remains on the AGM list, with unanimous approval. Anyone who has seen its show of huge blooms against its bold dark green leaves, especially when flowering with bright yellow daffodils, cannot help but be impressed. 'Francie L.' also remains. Its parentage is registered as *C. saluenensis* 'Apple Blossom' form × *C. reticulata* 'Buddha', but as 'Apple Blossom' is arguably a hybrid between *C. saluenensis* and a *C. japonica* it might account for its unexpected hardiness. 'Francie L.'s ability to produce copious large light red blooms, and its suitability for training against walls makes it a garden plant of distinction, despite the strong tendency of its leaves to become leathery and strap-like, especially in winter. I have seen it thriving in the far north of England, in the Lake District, in a sheltered garden. 'Royalty', (*C. japonica* 'Clarice Carleton' × *C. reticulata*

'Chang's Temple'), another favourite of my father's, remains on the list. With its light red, large semi-double flowers it is popular both as a free standing camellia and for training against walls.

'Tom Knudsen' is another *C. reticulata* × *C. japonica* which gained unanimous approval. Seen in several gardens flowering its head off, the plant which we all particularly marvelled at was one at the top of an exposed hillside at Marwood Hill gardens in North Devon. Its formal-double, rose-form or peony-form red blooms withstanding sun, wind and frost to a remarkable degree. The upright, tidy bush added to its attraction for garden cultivation. 'Forty-niner', on the other hand, was instantly dismissed because the blooms are affected by poor weather and go brown very quickly, even under glass.

It is not generally appreciated that some of the most garden-worthy reticulata hybrids are not those with large leaves and large blooms. 'Inspiration' is a good example. Very similar to 'Donation', but deeper pink and with good dark green leaves and a tidy upright habit, this is a cross between a wild form of *C. reticulata* and *C. saluenensis*. The semi-double blooms, produced in great profusion over at least a three-month period, are only 8.5cm (3in) across.

A new introduction is another relatively small-flowered (11cm/4½in across) reticulata hybrid which is becoming more frequently available. It is the formal double, dark red 'Black Lace'. A cross between *C. × williamsii* 'Donation' and *C. reticulata* 'Crimson Robe' and introduced to cultivation in 1971, it rarely shows its narrow picotee edging of deepest red, almost black. The petals do have a lovely silvery sheen and it forms a compact plant with good leaves, more reminiscent of

a *C. japonica* cultivar than most retic hybrids.

Those *C. reticulata* hybrids that were deleted were removed mainly because of poor availability. They include the beautiful 'Arch of Triumph', the historic, but difficult to cultivate 'Captain Rawes', 'Lasca Beauty', and 'Mandalay Queen'.

When it came to assessing *C. japonica* cultivars we had little difficulty with deletions. We all agreed that 'C.M. Wilson' and 'Mrs D.W. Davis' produced magnificent blooms in the warm climate from which they came (Florida) and were excellent glasshouse plants here in the UK. However, experience has shown them to be unreliable in gardens here, often failing to burst out of their large buds and with flowers which damage too readily in our climate. 'Miss Charleston' was felt to have lost its place in the list due to its inferior petal quality and relatively poor resistance to rain and wind.

The only other deletion was 'Lady de Saumarez', which may well upset some of our friends in the Channel Islands, especially in Guernsey where it was bred. The majority decision was that it did not perform consistently well in the UK and, although the rosy red single blooms were very striking and produced in profusion in southern gardens, many plants became unsightly with a profusion of mottled yellow leaves as this cultivar carries leaf mottle virus.

We had a great time adding cultivars, with much discussion. Surprisingly perhaps we came up with some real 'oldies', such as 'Adelina Patti' (1889), which has undergone a revival. A well known Cornish nursery has been propagating from one of the plants in its woodland garden to exhibit them at RHS Shows in London. The subtle pink petals, veined darker pink and with a white margin,

surrounding a boss of golden stamens, combine to make this a very attractive single bloom, and this, combined with its deep green glossy leaves and pendulous habit make it a very useful garden plant. I'm not quite sure why we added 'Alba Plena'. This most historic of camellias, introduced from China to England way back in 1792, has certainly stood the test of time and the consensus was that it was a reliable and prolific formal double white. 'Mathotiana Rosea', was introduced by the famous, but now defunct Veitch nursery near Exeter in Devon, in 1874. It was felt to be a worthy inclusion because of its very high quality, large, fully imbricated, formal double, rose-coloured blooms which give interest in the garden late in the flowering season, with excellent foliage during the rest of the year.

'Sylva' (1903) with its brilliant scarlet red, campanulate/chalice-like single blooms and bright golden anthers is, thanks to renewed promotion in the nursery trade, enjoying a well deserved revival and is now included in the AGM list. Introduced in 1903 it has, in the past been mistakenly called 'Sylvia', which is actually a formal double red. It has also been confused with the single form 'Jupiter' ('Paul's Jupiter'), which has a much lighter, almost rose red colour.

'Fire Falls', a 1953 introduction, gains a place on the list because of its impact as a landscape plant. Its vivid red petals, are arranged loosely into a 'formal double' with a very casual appearance instead of the usual imbricated (overlapping) arrangement. The dark red peony-form 'Joseph Pfingstl' (1948) with its upright habit and good dark green leaves was also added.

'San Dimas' (1972) had unanimous and

enthusiastic approval. Good for a small garden because of its slow-growing habit and dense foliage, we agreed that the semi-double, rich red blooms were of outstanding quality and produced regularly over several weeks in mid-season.

Many of the varieties which are often seen on the show benches at Westminster are also good garden plants and already appear on the AGM list. We added a few more.

One of the most easily identifiable is 'Lily Pons'. Who can forget its characterful, long, scoop-shaped petals of glistening white with a slight green caste? Its dark green leaves and tidy upright habit make an attractive garden plant too. 'Commander Mulroy' has been around for many years and was included for its good foliage and soft pink, turning to white, formal double blooms. 'Desire' has similar, but larger blooms with a more accentuated and longer lasting blush pink tone to the edges of the petals. As a vigorous bush it needs plenty of space in the garden, but the high quality of its blooms make it one to cherish.

Those who see 'Lovelight' (Fig. 14) for the first time, especially in a sheltered situation under trees, are struck by its sheer beauty. Large, dark green leaves set the semi-double flowers with golden yellow anthers off to perfection. The pure white petals are much more robust than most whites. Three bushes planted on a sunny, south-facing hillside in Jersey are a beautiful sight year after year, despite their exposure to sun and salt laden wind.

'Margaret Davis Picotee' was introduced in California in 1982, nearly 20 years after its Australian-raised parent 'Margaret Davis'. Almost identical in its peony flower form and colouring, it is claimed to be superior in

colouring with a broader, stronger vermillion picotee edge to the creamy white petals.

Small blooms, especially of striking or different colouring, are more appreciated in gardens nowadays. 'Bokuhan' (originated in Japan in 1739), is a good example of miniature flowers which make a strong impact in any garden. Only 5–6cm (2–2½in) across, the red blooms with their striking white centre, are well displayed on an upright bush with slender stems and pointed, glossy, deep green leaves. We felt it had earned its place on the AGM list.

A little larger is 'Wilamina'. Freely available in many garden centres, this is appreciated where a tall narrow bush is required. Classified as having medium-sized blooms, (between 7.5–10cm [3–4in]), they are often smaller in the UK (6–7.5cm [2½–3in]). The blooms are a very formal-double soft pink with attractive incurving petals.

'Tom Thumb' was included for its two-toned flowers, pink with darker pink edges, set on an attractive bush. Perhaps a little sparse in its flowering habits for some, but unusual and attractive in its own way.

My own two favourite Japonica additions to the AGM list are 'Ave Maria' (Fig. 16) and 'Annie Wylam' (Fig. 17). The former is a great favourite in the gardens of those who like very pale blooms. Flowering early to mid-season, the pale creamy pink blooms are well set off by dark green foliage on a tidy, compact rounded bush.

'Annie Wylam', has possibly the most glossy dark green leaves of any camellia. Its flowers are peony- to rose-form, double with narrow petals or petaloid stamens in the centre and a bright pink colour shading to a contrasting white near the centre of the blooms.

There were a few deletions in the *C. ×*

*williamsii* category, mostly due to lack of availability, but some (notably 'Jenefer Carlyon' and 'Rose Parade') were considered to be less easy to cultivate than others and requiring 'specialist attention'. The quality of the flowers was not considered to be worth the extra effort of controlling the habits of the bushes

We added the freely available 'Jury's Yellow' even though it is almost identical to the *C. japonica* variety, 'Brushfield's Yellow'. The huge, bright, glowing claret coloured peony-form 'Wilber Foss' was included for its brilliant show as a landscape plant. Upright and bushy, its blooms are late, flowering almost into summer in some years (see back cover).

'Senorita' (Fig. 15) which, like 'Wilber Foss', is a late season bloomer was bred by Les Jury in New Zealand, and is only just beginning to make an impact, but it has very distinctive wavy bright pink petals edging its loose anemone-form flowers – very reminiscent of a flamenco dancer's skirt. A gorgeous thing if you like bright colours.

'Les Jury', gaining in popularity as it becomes more freely available, is also included because its red peony-form flowers, upright habit and attractive leaves make a good garden plant.

Two varieties are included, which are both exceptionally free flowering and are also excellent for training against walls and fences. 'Elegant Beauty', another Les Jury hybrid (1962), is a rich pink, and usually anemone form, but often a semi-double. It is very showy and prolific, especially if the fine young branches are allowed to cascade down the bush. The bronze young growth is an added bonus. 'Mary Phoebe Taylor' (1975) has larger blooms of a light rose tinged with pale pink, but is just as prolific.

Finally, just four autumn-flowering camellias were considered sufficiently reliable for AGM status. This was not because of their survival hardiness, but because it was agreed that most sasanquas, and the related *C. hiemalis* and *C. × vernalis* cultivars just do not flower reliably in a large number of UK gardens. Many growing outdoors do not start their vegetative growth until early summer and therefore do not have sufficiently mature wood for flower bud formation, which usually takes place in mid-summer.

'Sparkling Burgundy' (*C. hiemalis*) and the sasanquas 'Crimson King', 'Hugh Evans' and 'Jean May' were considered to be both reliable and reasonably easy to find in garden centres and nurseries. We reluctantly excluded *C. × vernalis* 'Yuletide' although we agreed that it was outstanding as a free flowering

mid winter cultivar, withstanding freezing conditions during its six week flowering period exceptionally well. The problem is availability. It is difficult to propagate; most of the young wood carries a profusion of flower buds, and the nursery trade cannot supply the existing demand.

Currently the book that lists Award of Garden Merit plants, is just that – a list – with cultivars carrying a RHS hardiness rating. Would it be more popular if it was a descriptive book with colour illustrations?

*Jennifer Trehane is a member of the Group, a member of the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Committee and a former Vice President of the International Camellia Society. She is the author of Camellias published by Batsford in 1998*

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# HPIMAW AT LAST



PETER COX

My father and Reginald Farrer spent much of 1919 searching for plants in Upper Burma (Myanmar) in the vicinity of the Hpimaw (now known by the Chinese name Pianma) and Chimili passes which lead over into Yunnan and the Salween River. In my article 'The Salween' (*Rhododendrons with Camellias and Magnolias* 1999, p.45) on our trip to China I explained how I had been heartbroken in not reaching the Pianma pass from the Chinese side, due to endless rain and rockfalls, and was determined to get there some day.

The idea of launching another trip up the Salween in the year 2000 seemed to be an excellent plan and this time there were 10 of us, including Steve Hootman, Garrett Richardson, Sir Peter Hutchison and Dr David Chamberlain, all of whom had been with me in 1997. The other members were Bob Zimmerman, a rhododendron enthusiast from the USA, Hugh Angus, curator of Westonbirt Arboretum, Maurice Foster, tree and shrub expert from Kent, Tom Hudson, anther tree and shrub wizard from Cornwall, and Peter Catt, a masterly nurseryman from Hampshire – altogether a very knowledgeable team. We were lucky to have Professor Cheng Xiao again as our Chinese leader and he did us proud. This time we chose the spring, partly to see more flowers, but also because we felt that the weather might be better than in autumn.

After we had spent some time exploring further north around Gongshan, we made for the Pianma pass on the 9 June 2000. We were informed that the road was now greatly improved and that we would have no trouble in crossing the pass and driving to the town of Pianma and on to the Burmese frontier. Various parties including one from New Zealand had crossed the pass recently, but as far as we could make out, none of these had ventured up the hillside above the top of the pass.

A truck unloading a crane in our hotel compound in Liuku caused one of those inevitable Chinese delays but my forboding of a repeat of 1997 was soon put out of my mind as we sailed to the top of the pass without anything getting in our way. Actually, the road was not metalled to the top as we had been informed and there were numerous small mud slides that could have easily grown into large ones if we had had the rain of autumn 1997. The Chinese soldiers manning the post on the top were very friendly and had no objections to us walking up above the pass.

We soon entered mist as we climbed above the Salween and this mist made good photography near impossible for the rest of our time around the pass. Bob, Garrett, Steve, David and I explored the north side of the pass while the others went to the south side and down the road to the west.

Almost at once we were thrilled to find a nice specimen of the rare *Rhododendron mallotum*, the first westerners to find this since 1924 we believe. This was into young growth with some old capsules, the early flowers being long since over. This fine species has excellent rugose foliage with a thick rufous indumentum on the leaf underside and good trusses of crimson flowers. We carried on up a zig-zag path through thick *Gaultheria semi-infera* which proved to be the dominant plant. While Steve carried on up the path, the rest of us cut across towards some rocks, using the gaultheria to hold onto on the very steep slopes. We found a group of typical *R. zaleucum* with very glaucous leaf undersides and rose-coloured flowers. I was delighted to find two plants named after my father, *Juniperus recuva* var. *coxii* and the very prickly evergreen *Berberis coxii*. The latter was not forming the impenetrable thickets that it does with us at Glendoick. Otherwise we found little of interest and hauled ourselves up on to the ridge some 200m (660ft) above the top of the road.

In the mean time, Steve had been exploring just over the back and had made two exciting finds. These were the rare big-leaved *R. basilicum*, with no other species it was likely to cross with, and *R. dichroanthum* subsp. *scyphocalyx* with good uniform orange-red flowers. Further searching among the gaultheria and the accompanying low bamboo revealed another 10 scattered plants of *R. mallotum*, just as Farrer and my father reported, but no small seedlings. A theory brought forward was that regeneration might only take place after

the bamboo flowers and dies – surely a risky way to reproduce a species that is already rare and with a very limited distribution. All we saw were healthy and undisturbed and roughly a uniform size.

My father's description of the pass in *Farrer's Last Journey*, surprisingly, fails to mention the gaultheria, and from the size of the *R. mallotum* they saw, our plants must have been at least one generation on. I quote,

'The weather continued to play with us, and we woke to a drizzle and a dense mist. We started to explore the frontier ridge [\*] to the north of the pass. This was our first, and worst, experience of dwarf Bamboo. The ridge for the first few miles is low, only a hundred or so feet higher than the pass. It is formed of gigantic boulders, and the Bamboo usually fills every cleft and cranny between them, in addition, of course, to all the lower slopes. I feel venomous against this useful but most annoying plant when I think of the discomfort it gave us. It plagued us in every way. It soaked us; it stabbed our legs whenever it was cut; it caught our clothing at every step. If we stood on a cut stem our feet would slide from under us, when we would clutch the stems by the pathside and get an involuntary shower-bath in a wild effort to keep ourselves from falling. Farrer began by ignoring the foot-wide path that was being cut in front of us. He searched for plants on either side, but the jagged stabs at his calves soon damped even his enthusiasm. It was amazing that there were plants to find in this maze of Bamboo; but plants there were, wherever they could get a foothold. The only solitary growing Rhododendron that could cope with the Bamboo was the marvellous *R. aemulorum* [now *R.*

\* It would seem that despite the defeat of the British in 1911 (see p.40), the frontier in 1919 was up at the pass and not as now, just west of the town of Pianma.

*mallotum*] (E.815). The entire Burmese side of the north of the pass was studded with it, rising squat and sturdy out of a sea of Bamboo. It was particularly uniform in size, always about 16 feet in height... .

This uniform plant size would indicate that the bamboo-flowering theory for regeneration might indeed be correct. It might be possible to find out from the locals when the bamboo last flowered, if it has occurred within living memory.

The others had gone ahead of us down the road and their footprints led us to where they had been. There were two rock pinnacles just below the road which were unusually easy to get at. Growing on these rocks were several low, compact specimens of *Rhododendron campylogynum* with palish young growth and very good flowers, red within. There were many signs of erosion and several plants had toppled over the edge on to the roadside. One of these was a huge *R. sidereum* which had not been cleared away and was still upright and coming into growth. This species was quite plentiful, but although normally one of the latest to bloom of the large-leaved species in cultivation, there was just one last cream-coloured flower to be seen. A great many seedlings were coming away on the banks which obviously enjoy the gritty subsoil as a seed bed. Alas, very few will stand a chance of being able to grow on and reach flowering size, but those that do, should help stabilize the loose soil.

The town of Pianma was approached through vast timber yards and masses of trucks partially blocking the road. Recent severe flooding of the lower reaches of Chinese rivers, notably the Yangtze, have alerted the Chinese to the disasters that can

occur from cutting down their forests. So all further cutting has been stopped in Sichuan and also large parts of Yunnan. Down the Yangtze from these two provinces, most forest has long since been destroyed, so the water run off is even more rapid and the Vietnamese have undoubtedly been suffering from trees being cleared on the Mekong watershed. This reduction of timber production has created a shortfall in China so poor Burma is being plundered instead.

Pianma has obviously grown rapidly as a result of this influx of imported timber and I am sure that Farrer and my father would not recognise the place today, nor the pass which of course in 1919 had no motor road. To quote my father again,

'At the bottom of Hpimaw hill we passed through Hpimaw village, a rambling shabby collection of bamboo shacks clustered on the side of the Hpimaw burn. This village was of some importance, however, and boasted a floating population, for it lay at the bottom of the last easy pass between Burma and China.'

We were taken to the frontier, which was not all that exciting with the same mixture of paddy fields and scrubby hillsides on both sides, and then to a museum and monument which commemorated the defeat of the British in 1911 by the combination of several local minorities armed with crossbows and pitchforks. Our Chinese hosts delighted in our discomfort in hearing that the British had been driven out by a motley gang with primitive arms. Hence the reason why this area to the west of the Irrawaddy-Salween divide is now included in China.

Garrett, Steve and I walked through the warm temperate forest looking for the tender red-flowered *Rhododendron kyawii* and *Maddenias*, failing to find the former.

There was quite plentiful *R. protistum* and *R. tanastylum* with *R. araiophyllum* which had all finished flowering. A little higher, much to our surprise, a few *R. edgeworthii* were still in good flower, perched up in the trees and only just visible through the mist. I enjoy my father's description of the first time they saw this species in flower,

'Something began to intrude itself on our sleepy vision, and we found ourselves gazing at a white Rhododendron flowering on the top of a cold, black rock under the shade of an Alder. This was the first time we had seen *R. bullatum* [now *R. edgeworthii*], which is so widely spread throughout Yunnan and its borders, and varies little in form but considerably in hardiness. Kingdon Ward has introduced the hardest form from the Yunnan-Tibet borderlands, and even that is none too happy in Northern gardens. I have a special affection for this plant; the leaves are so shapely and so pleasantly wrinkled above and felted below, and the big trumpets are so pure in their white and so prettily flushed with pink at the base, and, above all, it has such a hot, rich fragrance of cloves.'

I have inherited my father's love of this species and find it quite easy to grow if planted in an extremely free-draining medium. If I lose it in a hard winter I just start again. Some introductions are definitely harder than others.

Also in the forest the large-leaved *Magnolia rostrata* was just beginning to develop its seed cones. The recently described Maddeenia (1978) *Rhododendron pseudociliipes* grew nearby on the steep banks. This is easily recognised by its small pointed leaves and usually one-flowered inflorescence. There were a few plants of another Maddeenia, *R. maddenii* subsp. *crassum*.

There was always some rivalry between

the 'great' collectors, Forrest, Kingdon Ward and Farrer, who were all working the Burma-Yunnan frontier at the same time. Again to quote my father,

'That was a day made up of fusses and fidgets. Farrer's peace and repose was much disturbed by the arrival of five of Forrest's collectors from Tengyueh [now Tengchong] with orders to work the frontier range. Farrer considered this, quite unnecessarily, an infringement of his prior manorial rights, and spent the rest of the day in telegraphing and writing to Forrest. As a matter of fact, there was room for everybody, and neither Forrest nor his men had the slightest idea of encroaching upon our ground. Their orders were to work the Chinese side of the frontier, which was in too disturbed a state for it to be safe for Europeans. We found out later that they had only strolled down from the pass to see what Hpimaw looked like. At any rate, they caused a storm in a teacup, as their advent temporarily disturbed Farrer's poise to such an extent that he spent hours stamping up and down the verandah with his hands firmly clasped behind his back. Those who knew him when he was on the hunt will realize the passing significance of these little storms; for, so keen was he, that any suggestion of what the Americans call "claim jumping" was like a red rag to a bull.'

On their way back to Rangoon after the seed harvest, they met Kingdon Ward, 'At Myitkina we returned to civilization again. There we met Kingdon Ward, very weary after his season on Imaw Bum. We journeyed together to Bhamo and spent five halycon days sailing peacefully down the Irrawaddy to Mandalay, where we spent Christmas. Farrer came down with me to Rangoon, where we reluctantly parted, he for his bungalow at Maymo and I for India on my way home.'

My father never saw Farrer again.

Our little party was picked up and driven back over to the east side of the pass which we only glimpsed out of the vehicles on the way up. We soon found that owing to the steepness of the ground, the road had been blasted out of the hillside, leaving miniature cliffs both immediately above and below the road, which made access to almost any plants extremely difficult, and those that were get-at-able were mostly immature. Just within reach were a few plants of the lovely *Nomocharis farreri*, now considered by some as just a variation of *N. pardanthina*. The flowers had few or no spots on the lobes but were spotted in the centre and the leaves were in whorls. Steve managed to reach a fine *R. facetum* covered in its gorgeous scarlet trusses, a branch of which was later used to decorate our bedroom in Liuku. There were many *R. decorum* subsp. *diaprepes* with very large white fragrant flowers, few to the truss. These hung tantalizingly out of reach above our heads, scenting the air all round. Just before being picked up again, we found *R. araiophyllum* and *R. neriflorum*.

Did we find all the rhododendrons that Farrer and my father found between our 1997 and 2000 trips? Considering we

only had parts of three days and they had several months, I do not think we did too badly. We found five big-leaved species: *R. protistum*, *R. sinogrande*, *R. sidereum*, *R. arizelum*, *R. basilicum*; probably three Irrorata, *R. anthosphaerum*, *R. araiophyllum*, *R. tanastylum*; other elepidotes, *R. facetum*, *R. decorum* subsp. *diaprepes*, *R. fulvum* subsp. *fulvoides*, *R. arboreum* subsp. *delavayi*, *R. mallotum*, *R. neriflorum*, *R. dichroanthum* subsp. *scyphocalyx*; lepidotes, *R. zaleucum*, *R. genestierianum*, *R. triochladum*, *R. brachyanthum* subsp. *hypolepidotum*, *R. edgeworthii*, *R. maddenii* subsp. *crassum*, *R. pseudociliipes*, *R. monanthum*, *R. campylogynum* and *R. vaccinioides*. In all we found 23 species. Those recorded by Farrer and my father but which we did not find were *R. moulmainense*, *R. sulfureum*, *R. heliolepis*, *R. rubiginosum*, *R. habrotrichum*, *R. glischrum*(?) and *R. sperabile*. However, they apparently did not find *R. protistum*, *R. brachyanthum* subsp. *hypolepidotum* and *R. arboreum* subsp. *delavayi*.

Peter Cox, Director of Glendoick Gardens Ltd, Glencarse, Perth, is the author of several standard works on rhododendrons. He has made many plant expeditions to China and the Himalaya region

# MAGNOLIAS IN SURREY



ROD WILD

We envy our friends in Devon and Cornwall. With their sheltered valleys, mild climate, ample rain and acid soil, they can grow magnolias of which to dream. Magnolias are gaining in popularity, in large measure because of splendid new hybrids, bigger, better and flowering later so as to avoid the frosts. But what about the rest of us? What chance have we got of growing these exciting new varieties?

My wife and I garden in a low-lying frost pocket, near Guildford in Surrey. The soil is London clay, neutral rather than acid, and, as yet, my juvenile shelter belt provides little protection from the cutting north-easterly winds that seem to come in from Murmansk. All I can offer is to share my experience of growing magnolias here for the last dozen or so years. The results are immensely satisfying to me at least but there has been blood along the way.

Let's take the season in chronological order. First to be mentioned must be the astonishing, newly discovered species, *Magnolia zenii*. It is the nearest thing we have to a frost-proof magnolia. It is hardy down to zone 5 (−23 to −28°C/−10 to −20°F), which is 15 degrees colder than anything we get in this country. More to the point, the blooms are amazingly frost resistant (they come out so early they have to be). They must have their own antifreeze as they will take at least 5°C of frost (23°F), probably quite a lot

more. I look out of my bedroom window in February and apart from the snowdrops everything is lifeless, but there on a mound in the distance is the glistening white pyramid of *M. zenii*. I have never had a frosted bloom. Nothing in my small collection is as welcome, nor as easy to grow. The flowers are not spectacular, being white with a purple base about 10cm (4in) across, but they cover the tree so the effect is dramatic.

Unfortunately *M. zenii* is not yet freely available. Eisenhut of Switzerland and Ruttent of Holland both list it. A local specialist supplier may be able to find one for you, otherwise you can come to me for a cutting or get some seeds from the Magnolia Society seed counter (members only).

In March we have the *Magnolia × loebneri* hybrids – *M. kobus* × *M. stellata* – which for some reason have excellent frost-bloom resistance. These can tolerate quite stiff frosts, perhaps 5 or 6°C (23–21°F), certainly as much as March throws at them. The best known is the deservedly ubiquitous 'Leonard Messel'. This has the familiar *stellata* flower, but with a good pink shade and quite a strong growth habit. With good reason it came top in the Group's recent Top Ten Magnolias survey initiated by Maurice Foster and compiled by Mike Robinson.

There are plenty of other *Magnolia × loebneri* hybrids. 'Merrill' is a well-known white and 'Donna', a recent introduction, is

even better. All are tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions. They will even take some alkalinity as long as the moisture levels are good. They are perhaps the best magnolias in this regard.

Now we come to the *stellatas* themselves which again did well in the Top Ten survey. They seem to be able to take about 4°C (25°F) of frost. There are plenty of good whites (which I prefer) and a very good new pink, 'Jane Platt'. They are mostly quite small and for this reason if for no other should be the mainstay of any magnolia collection even in the coldest parts of Britain.

Late March and into April is the main magnolia season for most of us. It is bedevilled by those unexpected frosts which can turn a marvellous display into a mess of brown mush. Which are the toughest magnolias for this main period? Forget the beautiful *M. denudata*, it is much too fragile. Forget the *M. × soulangeana* hybrids too as they can give a good account of themselves in a sheltered suburb but the blooms are easily frosted in the country. In any case, there are better plants around. *M. × soulangeana* are all *M. denudata* × *M. liliiflora* and lack any real depth of colour (although the whites clearly do not suffer in this regard). What we need is a dash of that splendid *M. campbellii* pink, clear, strong and with hardly any blue. We must look at hybrids but first, what about those magnificent Asiatic tree magnolias, *M. campbellii*, *M. sprengeri*, *M. sargentiana* and *M. dawsoniana*?

All I can say is that I have found them hard to grow. I have one *M. campbellii* var. *mollicomata* not doing badly in a sheltered spot. I would probably not have tried it but it was sold to me as *M. cylindrica*. Thinking

it would be relatively small, I put it in rather too close to other trees and shrubs. These gave it shelter and, in spite of some bark split, it shot up through the lot and is now a source of great joy. Also in this category I have one *M. dawsoniana* 'Clarke' which appears to be untroubled. But I have lost plenty of the others. Of course, I will keep trying but for most people in the colder parts of Britain, I would stick to the hybrids. They will reward you well.

Todd Gresham was a gifted and highly productive American propagator. Working with existing first generation hybrids, he produced new hybrids that were, in essence, one quarter *M. campbellii*. The rest of the mix, if you analyse it, is basically a cocktail of *M. denudata* and *M. liliiflora*. The results include whites, such as the green-tinged 'Elisa Odenwald' and the sumptuous 'David Clulow' (another Top Ten entry). There are reliable pinks such as 'Heaven Scent' and 'Peppermint Stick', rich dark colours such as 'Joe McDaniel' and bicoloured forms such as 'Todd Gresham'. There is even a *M. campbellii* look-alike in 'Frank Gladney', perhaps having not quite the clarity of pink as *M. campbellii* itself but the same cup-and-saucer shape and a lovely hybrid. All these plants are a good bet for colder Britain and will have no trouble with our winters. Their flowers can't stand much frost, maybe a degree or so, but most flower quite late so they have a fair chance of escaping the worst. They are much more interesting and varied than *M. × soulangeana*.

If I increase the mix to half *M. campbellii* we may look for the most part to New Zealand. From there is the wonderful 'Star Wars' with that extra touch of fieriness in

the bloom making it deservedly in everyone's Top Ten. And then, of course, there are the splendid Jury hybrids. All I can say is that I have lost more than have survived. I am on my third 'Vulcan' which isn't doing too badly but the buds often damp off in winter. Only 'Star Wars' seems tough enough for me. I have hopes of 'Serene' and 'Apollo' which I have planted in a more favourable spot as I would love to succeed with these two beauties. Also I must try 'Caerhays Surprise' which shares the same general parentage but is not easy to find.

There are of course plenty of other hybrids. I would not bother with the Pickards although I do like 'Pickard's Schmetterling' with its strong wine-red stripe. They are quite easily frosted. The so-called "Eight Little Girls" from de Vos and Kosar are worth considering if you want something that stays fairly small. They are hybrids of *M. stellata* and *M. liliiflora*. 'Susan' and 'Pinkie' are my favourites which, although special, flower quite late and can take 2 or 3°C of frost (28–27°F) when in bloom.

Then there are the interesting hybrids which include *M. sprengeri*, *M. sargentiana* or *M. dawsoniana* in their blood. It is hard to generalise about these but I love 'Forest Pink' and 'Caerhays Belle'. Both are thriving for me. Indeed 'Caerhays Belle' is my most spectacular magnolia to date, with huge clear pink blooms at least 25cm (10in) across. But I don't think either has any special frost bloom resistance. Much more reliable, indeed indispensable for those of us in the colder parts of Britain, is the late-flowering *M. 'Spectrum'*. It is a hybrid of *M. liliiflora* 'Nigra' × *M. sprengeri* 'Diva' and well up in the Top Ten. It is striking in flower,

deep red-purple in bud, opening to pinker shades. Perhaps I have been lucky, but it has never suffered from frosting in my garden. *M. 'Galaxy'* is a sister seedling and said to be similar.

Now we must consider the yellows. These are all bred from *M. acuminata*, an American native. Arguments rage about which is the best but all are as tough as old boots, easy to grow and flower very late. *M. 'Elizabeth'* is everyone's favourite. Mine is determinedly going white on me, rather than the pale butter-cream that it should be but I still love it and it is well up in the Top Ten. I also like *M. 'Yellow Bird'* which is a good strong colour, but the flowers do get mixed up in the emerging foliage, while Maurice Foster recommends *M. 'Lois'*. With the same *M. acuminata* parentage come the peaches, such as *M. 'Woodsman'* and *M. 'Eva Maria'*. Not everybody likes these with their curious mixture of yellow and mauve but hardy they certainly are.

Splendid news for our purposes is the emergence of *M. acuminata* hybrids that are a much truer pink. There is still a touch of yellow but in 2001 the late August Kehr said that *M. 'Daybreak'* was his best magnolia yet – which is saying something. To the best of my knowledge it is not yet generally available in this country.

Finally there are the summer-flowering magnolias – no frost problems to worry about here. *Magnolia grandiflora* is indispensable if you have a wall. The others do not in general need the wall. Mine are not exactly romping away and I suspect they need a little more acid in the soil than I can provide. *M. wilsonii* (another Top Ten) is said to be less fussy and certainly mine does well. For me, *M. sieboldii* is the best of the

rest and a welcome show from late May. There are also some interesting hybrids, *M. 'Nimbus'* for example.

So my recipe for success in colder Britain is

- ◆ start with *M. zenii* (if you can get it)
- ◆ add the *M. × loebneri* hybrids and a few *stellatas*
- ◆ get at least a small trolley load of Greshams
- ◆ take your pick of the yellows and the summer flowerers
- ◆ on no account forget *M. 'Spectrum'*
- ◆ and if you have a sheltered spot by all means try one or two of the Jury hybrids.

Of course, local microclimates may mean that you can be a little less cautious, even in colder Britain. There is the marvellous collection on the RHS Garden Wisley's well-covered Battleston Hill and Maurice Foster doesn't do too badly on his Kentish ridge. As for me I have occasionally thought of taking up collecting car numbers when I

survey those 'brown' magnolias – a new shade, I tell my neighbours. But the year rolls round to *M. zenii* and I count my blessings. Mishaps there may be, but beautiful successes also and rich foliage throughout the rest of the year. Truly a genus at which to marvel!

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Competition was well supported again, although with less entries than in 2000. As usual the task of judging was not easy. The winner of the first prize was a regular entrant, Dr G B Hargreaves, with a fine picture of an unknown yellow magnolia cultivar (Fig. 24). Second was Mr C F Taylor (Fig. 25) with an excellent study of an old favourite *R. 'Vulcan'* ('Mars' × *R. griersonianum*). Third was Mr C R Waddington's portrait of an interesting Maddenia cross *R. dalhousiae* × *R. lindleyi* (Fig. 26). An extra class was introduced this year for the Best Entry by the partner of a Member, and this year's winner is Mrs J D Bottle (Fig. 27) with a print of *R. 'White Swan'* (*R. decorum* × 'Pink Pearl').

The Competition will be run again in 2002, so please remember to take photographs of any of the three genera next spring, in your own garden or elsewhere, and enter the best.

*Philip Evans*

# NEW HYBRIDS FROM HANS HACHMANN



GERALD DIXON

Most rhododendron enthusiasts will have at least a few of Hans Hachmann's hybrids in their collection, probably some of the many *Rhododendron yakushimanum* crosses that have been so popular over the last 15 years. Few of us realise that this represents only a fraction of the work of this prolific hybridiser. He has many other successful introductions to his name, including dwarf rhododendrons, evergreen and deciduous azaleas, *Cornus*, *Hamamelis*, *Kalmia* and a large selection of *Potentilla*.

Born in Barmstedt in 1930 in the heart of the north German nursery area of Holstein, his father a successful fruit grower, Hans Hachmann had the ideal background on which to build his extremely productive nursery business. While working as a young nurseryman for Johann Bruns, the largest of the north German nurseries, he also had the opportunity to spend many hours in the nearby rhododendron park of the great rhododendron breeder Dietrich Hobbie.

Since then, he has made around 5,000 crosses, on average 100 per year, resulting in more than 400 new varieties. Of these, the well-known *R. yakushimanum* hybrids are just a small part. One might be tempted by the sheer number of crosses made, to assume that some of them may have been

indiscriminate, but this is not the case. The contention of Hans Hachmann is that the hybridiser can never really be sure what to expect, especially with crosses involving hybrids, and that exceptional results are, by definition, only possible by raising adequate numbers of seedlings. However each of his crosses has been made with a particular goal in mind, often with astounding success. His systematic re-introduction of specific characteristics, sometimes over six or more generations, has proved to be a reliable method of attaining the required results.

My own experience of Hans Hachmann's hybrids began in the late 1970s with such plants as 'Bernstein', 'Creminrose', 'Ornament', 'Kokardia', 'Maharani', 'Nicoline', 'Sammetglut' and 'Simona'. Many of these are still commercially available but most have been superseded by the developments of the last two decades. It is this continual combination of his best crosses to produce even better hybrids, over a time-span of nearly 50 years, that makes Hans Hachmann's work so fascinating.

During a visit to his nursery in spring this year, together with my friend Hans Robenek, Hobbie's former head gardener, it was suggested that more should be done to popularise some of these wonderful new hybrids we saw in his display garden. After

much deliberation, he named a number of elepidote hybrids which he considered his best yet, according each hybrid three to five stars to indicate his personal preference.

The following descriptions are based mainly on information received from Hans Hachmann, supplemented by my own observations where considered appropriate. The flowering times given are for Barmstedt, Germany but for the last five years have also applied to southern England. The gold medals mentioned were awarded at the German national garden shows, which are held in a different venue every two years.

#### Red hybrids flowering between 12 April and 18 June

**'Fruehlingsgluehen'** ® \*\*\*\* 12–30 April ('Abendglut' × [*R. degronianum* var. *heptamerum* × *R. hirtipes*]). Loose trusses of up to 11 large funnel-shaped flowers in a clear glowing red with golden-yellow filaments. Very slow growing with a compact habit.

The earliest flowering red from Hachmann, it needs a little protection from frost during April. The female parent is one of the better clones from the 'Essex Scarlet' × *R. forrestii* var. *repens* cross that Dietrich Hobbie made about 60 years ago. By introducing two more species, Hachmann has managed to improve the foliage and bring forward the flowering time considerably.

**'Eruption'** ® \*\*\*\* 14–30 May ('Tarantella'® × 'Seestadt Bremerhaven'). Close, rounded trusses of 14–16 medium-sized flowers (5.5cm/12in) on an upright bush with good dark green foliage. The outside of the flowers is light red, as is the inner edging. Inside the flowers are pure white.

The light red fades during flowering to a delicate pink. One of Hachmann's best bicouleurs, The excellent foliage and the tendency to the lighter flower centre comes from the male parent.

**'Rabatz'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 16 May–4 June ('Double Date' × 'Erato'). Compact trusses of up to 11 large flowers (c. 8cm/3in) in the clearest fiery red. Fine black spots are distributed evenly over the whole flower which, together with the yellow filaments, seems to make the flowers glow even more. Good dark green foliage on an upright bush.

This is the newest addition to the Hachmann red hybrids, being much lighter and clearer in tone than most of the others. Although the female parent, 'Double Date', is registered as being of uncertain origin, Hans Hachmann is convinced that *R. griersonianum* was heavily involved. When queried about the seemingly unlikely result of this cross, he pointed out that all the other 300-odd seedlings grown (and subsequently discarded) displayed similar colouring, the main problem being the typical loose *R. griersonianum*-type truss.

**'Busuki'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 24 May–8 June ('Tarantella'® × 'Small Wonder'). Neat compact trusses of around 20 vibrant red flowers. The unusual white markings deep in the throat tends to accentuate the strong colour. A relatively slow-growing bush bearing attractive deep green narrow leaves.

This is arguably the best red Hachmann has yet produced. The female parent ('Tarantella'), a good red in its own right and a Gold Medal winner, has been improved by the addition of the clearer colour and compact habit of 'Small Wonder'.



Fig. 10: Rhododendron 'Ne Plus Ultra' (see p.75)



Fig. 11: Rhododendron 'Rosie Posie', an orange-flowered Vireya (see p.28)



Fig. 12 (above): Rhododendron zoelleri



Fig. 13 (left): Rhododendron 'Princess Di'  
Fig. 14 (above): Camellia 'Lovelight' (see p.35)



Fig. 15: Camellia 'Senorita' (see p.36)



Fig. 16: Camellia 'Ave Maria' (see p.36)



Fig. 17: Camellia 'Annie Wylam' (see p.36)



Fig. 18 (above): Battleston Hill at the RHS Garden Wisley (see p.55)

Fig. 19 (below): Magnolia kobus - an E K Janaki Ammal hybrid (see p.58)

Fig. 20 (right): Rhododendron 'Derwent'



**'Erato'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 25 May–11 June ('Oratorium' × 'Hachmann's Feuerschein'). Rounded trusses of up to 17 flowers in an intense deep red with very dark markings over three petals and with white filaments. Buds open blackish red and once open, keep their colour without any fading. Wavy foliage on a wide growing bush (Fig. 21).

Hachmann considers this to be the best deep red hybrid available, an improvement on (and replacement for) its female parent 'Oratorium'. The male parent ('Hachmann's Feuerschein') was also the female parent of 'Oratorium', its male parent being 'Thunderstorm'. This re-use of a parent in consecutive generations is a typical example of the method Hans Hachmann uses to further develop his hybrids. Introduced in 1998, it won a Gold Medal in Frankfurt the following year.

**'Trocadero'** ® \*\*\*\* 2–18 June ('Torero' × 'Erato'). Rounded trusses of 10–12 large dark red flowers with black spots on the upper petals. Beautiful shiny foliage in dark green on a very slow growing and compact bush. Awarded a Gold Medal in Magdeburg 1999.

This is a hybrid especially valuable for its late flowering, its slow growth making it particularly suitable for the smaller garden. This cross between two of Hachmann's best dark reds has resulted in even further extending the flowering period.

#### Pink hybrids flowering between 5 May and 18 June

**'Dolcemente'** ® \*\*\* 5–24 May ('August' × 'Fred Wynniatt'). A compact truss of 10–14 very large flowers (c. 8cm/3in) with

elegant wavy edgings. The colour is rose-red, overlaid with orange, contrasting beautifully with the strong yellow flare and dark red spotting. A compact bush with fresh green foliage.

Although only released in spring this year, this plant is already very popular. The unique colour combination imparts a warm glowing effect when in full flower.

**'Walkuere'** ® \*\*\*\* 20 May–6 June ('August' × 'Lem's Monarch'). The truss is similar in size (19cm/7½in) to 'Hachmann's Anastasia' but holds up to 15 even larger flowers, each 11cm (4½in) wide. It forms an upright-growing bush with large dark green foliage. The leaves are 21cm (8½in) long and 7.5cm (3in) wide, making this the largest-leaved of Hachmann's hybrids.

The ruby-red colouring lightens towards the flower centre, set off by darker spots. Awarded a Gold Medal in Magdeburg in 1999.

**'Hachmann's Anastasia'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 28 May–16 June ('August' × 'Lem's Monarch'). Gigantic 19cm (7½in) high trusses of up to 13 carmine-rose coloured flowers each of which is 10cm (4in) wide, flat with frilled edges. The rose colouring lightens towards the centre of the flower, the contrast accentuated by golden brown markings. The overall effect is similar to that of the male parent but with much better colouring and a perfectly filled truss.

This is one of the largest flowered of the Hachmann hybrids, building up into a wide but compact bush. It was awarded a Gold Medal when shown in Magdeburg in 1999 and, following its introduction in 1998, is already very popular.

**'Hachmann's Charmant'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 25 May–18 June ('Diadem' × 'Holger'). Very large dome-shaped trusses (16cm/6½in) containing up to 19 flowers, each measuring around 9cm (3½in). The flowers are basically white with light red edging on both sides of the petals, complemented by a large red flare. Large medium green foliage on a wide but upright bush (Fig. 22).

The fact that the two colours appear on both the inside and the reverse of the flowers and that the flare is separated from the red edging, gives this hybrid a wonderful picotee effect. It is extremely floriferous and the flowers are very long lasting. Hans Hachmann gives this hybrid his highest rating of six stars. It won Gold Medals in Dortmund 1991 and in Magdeburg 1999.

#### White hybrids flowering from 12 May to 10 June

**'Schneespiegel'** ® \*\*\* 12–31 May ('Babette' × 'Perlina'). Compact trusses of up to 13 large saucer-shaped flowers, each of which is 9.5cm (3½in) wide. Once fully open, the flowers are purest white with a prominent red basal fleck. Open growth on younger plants becomes compact after a few years. Shiny dark green foliage.

Reckoned by many to be the best white *R. yakushimanum* hybrid available, the heavy consistency of the flowers tends to deepen the pure white, heightening the contrast with the central fleck. Awarded a Gold Medal in Boskoop in 1987.

**'Bergensiana'** ® \*\*\*\* 24 May–10 June ('Madame Jules Porges' × 'Diadem')

Round trusses of up to 15 white flowers with a cherry-red flare which darkens

dramatically towards the flower centre. The perfectly shaped truss with its slightly protruding styles is like a white version of 'Mrs Davies Evans'. Forms a well-filled, compact bush. Awarded a Gold Medal in Magdeburg in 1999.

A good example of a purposeful cross to increase the effect of a contrasting flare. The female parent, 'Diadem', is a very popular Hachmann hybrid of 'Hachmann's Ornament' × 'Furnivall's Daughter'. 'Hachmann's Ornament' is 'Humboldt' × 'Direktor E. Hjelm'.

#### Purple and lilac hybrids flowering between 25 May and 18 June

**'Hachmann's Kabarett'** ® \*\*\*\* 26 May–16 June ('Hyperion' × 'Diadem'). Compact truss of 12 large flowers (c. 8cm/3in) on a rounded bush with narrow foliage. The flowers are a delicate light lilac with a very large and prominent Bordeaux-red flare. The wavy edging produces an effect reminiscent of *Cattleya*. It won a Silver Medal in Magdeburg 1999, following a 1997 release.

This is one of the most popular and exotic looking of the newer hybrids. The prominence of 'Hyperion's flare has been combined with the much better habit of 'Diadem', itself a cross between 'Furnivall's Daughter' and 'Ornament' (= 'Humboldt' × 'Direktor E. Hjelm'). It is another example of Hachmann's methodical way of increasing the effect of a prominent feature while improving the straggly habit of the female parent. All partners involved in this cross are heavily flared.

**'Pfauenauge'** ® \*\*\* 25 May–18 June ('Hyperion' × 'Diadem'). Closely packed

trusses of very large lilac-rose flowers, each 9.5cm (3½in) wide. The low-growing bush holds attractive dark green foliage.

This is a sibling of 'Hachmann's Kabarett', differing mainly in the heightened contrast between the deep burgundy-red flare and its lighter whitish background. The overall effect is very dramatic, reminiscent of the peacock feathers after which it is named. This hybrid often flowers again in autumn (10 September to 10 October) opening about 25 percent of the new buds.

#### Yellow and orange hybrids flowering between 28 April and 9 June

**'Gordian'** \*\*\*\* 28 April–16 May ('Belladonna' × 'Fred Wynnatt'). Large rounded trusses of 11 funnel-shaped flowers with 6–7 creamy yellow lobes. Good medium green foliage on a slow-growing compact bush.

This beautiful new hybrid was introduced in 2001 and shows great promise. The creamy butter-yellow colouring deepens gradually towards the centre culminating in a near ochre tone bearing two or three small wine-red flecks. The yellow filaments and style with the light green stigma add to the depth of colour making this, in my opinion, the most attractive yellow hybrid available. The female parent, 'Belladonna', is Hachmann's cross between 'Hotei' and 'Tamina'. 'Tamina' was produced by crossing 'Goldkrone' with an unnamed *R. wardii* hybrid and 'Goldkrone' came out of a further unnamed hybrid (*R. wardii* × 'Alice Street') crossed with 'Hachmann's Marina', which is 'Omega' × *R. wardii*. The male parent, 'Fred Wynnatt', gave the final elegant flower form to this mix of *R. wardii* and *R. campylocarpum*

with the addition of just a touch of *R. fortunei* and *R. dichroanthum*.

A further seedling recently selected from this cross has been named 'Mirabella' and shows similar promise. A mixture of peach and creamy yellow with orange overtones, this hybrid will be available in the next year or two.

**'Karibia'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 5–24 May ('Brinny' × ['Libelle' × 'Mariandel']). Loose elegant trusses of up to nine erect trumpet-shaped flowers in a warm yellow tone, increasing in depth towards the centre on both the inside and outside of the flower. The habit is very compact with attractive light green foliage.

Hans Hachmann considers this to be the best of his yellow hybrids. The male parent was an unnamed clone of his cross between 'Hachmann's Libelle' (= 'Golds-worth Orange' × 'Mrs J.G. Millais') and 'Mariandel', itself an unnamed clone of 'Hachmann's Marina' × 'Goldrausch'. The use of such unnamed clones, in an attempt to capture the best features of otherwise less-than-perfect seedlings, is something Hachmann often resorts to when aiming for a specific effect.

**'Goldprinz'** ® \*\*\*\*\* 6–30 May ('Festivo' × 'Alice Street'). Up to 17 flowers in a tight truss 13cm (5in) wide. The bright golden-yellow flowers have beautifully defined wine-red markings on the upper petal. The slow-growing compact bush holds its shiny dark green foliage longer than most hybrids (Fig. 23).

This is possibly the best yellow *R. yakushimanum* hybrid available. The clarity of 'Alice Street' has been combined with the dense habit and floriferousness of his yellow

hybrid 'Festivo'. By continuously using the compact partner as the female parent, Hachmann has avoided the loose habit often associated with *R. wardii* hybrids. It was introduced in 1995 and is extremely popular.

**'Belkanto'** ® \*\*\*\* 18 May–9 June ('Mrs J. G. Millais' × 'Golddekor'). Up to 17 lemon-yellow flowers in compact rounded trusses on a wide growing compact bush with excellent medium green foliage. Very free flowering. Awarded a Gold Medal in Dortmund 1991.

The flowers open a golden-yellow lightly tinted with orange and turn gradually to a clear lemon-yellow. The olive-green markings appear on the upper half of the flower and, together with the orange-red filaments and stamen and the light brown anthers, liven up the overall yellow effect without causing muddiness. This is probably the most popular of Hachmann's yellow hybrids and well worth planting.

**'Capriccio'** \*\*\* 24 May–8 June ('Brasilia' × 'Whitney's Orange'). Rounded trusses of up to 17 hose-in-hose flowers on a very compact bush. The spotted flowers open in light rose which gradually fades to creamy yellow.

The copious dark wine-red spots are evenly distributed over the inside of the flower and calyx and these produce a very unusual yellow-orange effect overall. The flowers are of a waxy consistency, similar to 'Peste's Firelight', and appear in great numbers on even the youngest of plants.

There are many other valuable Hachmann hybrids already available and many more are still to come. The best impression can be gained through his 280-page catalogue (more of a book) which holds 1,140 colour-illustrations depicting all of his current hybrids. Although the text is in German, with five to seven colour photos on most pages this should not deter the serious rhododendron fan. We have negotiated a special price for Group members of £8.50 plus postage. Please contact the author on 01404 831689 to order a copy.

It is becoming common practice nowadays for new hybrids to be subject to Plant Breeders Rights, as is the case with most of Hachmann's best hybrids. Each and every plant sold to the general public is provided with a special descriptive label, as proof of its legality. In my humble opinion the rhododendron community should support the few hybridists still active in this attempt to regain at least a fraction of their costs. The licence fee due from a nursery propagating these plants is very reasonable and should certainly not affect the already very high UK retail prices.

All the hybrids described in the above article are available at our nursery near Axminster, albeit in small numbers, and can be ordered in the usual ways.

*Gerald Dixon is a member of the SW Branch of the Group. He is the proprietor of Brooklands, a nursery at Shute, Axminster, specialising in rhododendrons and sorbus*

# CAMELLIAS IN ALKALINE SOIL



RICHARD KNIGHT

Growing camellias in alkaline soil may not seem a good idea, but have you ever considered ground containerisation? Using this basic principle for the last five years, I have succeeded in planting over 100 camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas on limestone with a pH of 7.5.

The following is a simple procedure that I have developed and which has allowed myself and my customers to enjoy these lovely shrubs.

## Tools and materials

- ◆ Ladies small spade
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Tape measure
- ◆ Garden fork
- ◆ One 80-litre bag of ericaceous compost (60 litres is too small)
- ◆ One empty 80-litre bag for use as a liner.

## Method

Select a suitable sheltered area, 1m (3ft) in diameter, in partial shade away from early morning winter sun as this will damage frost-covered flower buds. Dig a hole 35cm (14in) deep and 40cm (16in) in diameter (see Fig. 1 right). Stand the 80-litre bag of ericaceous compost

upright and push in the two bottom corners of the bag. This will make it easier to position the bag into the hole. Using a garden fork, punch drainage holes into the sides and bottom of the compost bag and shake and rock the bag. This will redistribute the compost inside the bag, making a rounder, better shape to fit into the hole.

Position the bag in the hole. At this stage the compacted compost level in the unopened bag will be about 12.5cm (5in) higher than the existing soil level. Do not cut open the bag at this stage. Chamfer the top of the hole by around 15cm (6in) all round and 15cm (6in) deep (see below). Fill in any gaps around the sides of the bag. This is important as it will prevent water collecting, especially on clay soils.

Using the empty 80-litre bag as a liner, cut off both ends and fold it, bringing the two cut ends together. Then cut out a quarter circle 16cm (6 $\frac{3}{8}$ in) on one of the folded corners. Open it out flat and cut down the opposite side. This will leave you a pattern as shown in Fig. 2 overleaf.

Position the liner with the black side up and stretch it over the

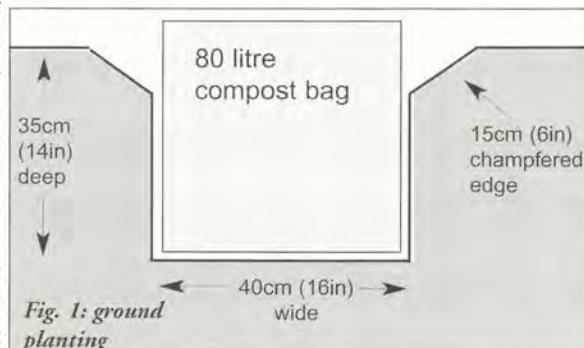
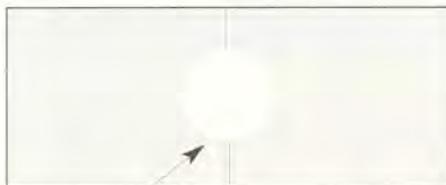


Fig. 1: ground planting

*Fig. 2: Empty 80-litre bag laid out flat*



It is important that the hole is a tight fit over the top of the bag

compost bag already in the hole. Push it down to lie flat on the chamfer and tuck under any surplus to form a 70cm (28in) circle. Cut along the top of the compost bag, then make four downward cuts along the exposed sides of the bag to the bottom of the chamfered edge. Lay the four flaps over the 70cm (28in) circle and tuck them under. Push the raised 13cm (5in) of compost onto the 70cm (28in) circle. This will finish level or slightly higher than the existing soil, completely covering the black polythene liner.

Now plant your camellia and mulch the surface with bark chippings to conserve

moisture and keep out weeds during summer. Ensure you water and liquid feed occasionally. Do not allow the compost to dry out in June and July when the next year's flower buds are forming. When the ground containerised camellia is more mature it does not need to be repotted. Simply pull out the tucked under surplus liner from under the chamfered edge. Lay it flat and then place more ericaceous compost over the top and remulch with bark chippings.

The main advantages of this method over pots are

- ◆ the root ball is frost protected due to the bark mulch and surrounding soil;
- ◆ there are less extremes in temperature on the root ball in summer;
- ◆ it needs less watering due to the sloping sides which divert extra rainwater towards the rootball;
- ◆ there is no expensive container to buy.

*Richard Knight is a garden consultant based in the Cotswolds and also grows a wide range of plants in his nursery garden*

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# RHS COLLECTION ON BATTLESTON HILL

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## COLIN CROSBIE

Battleston Hill is one of the jewels in the crown of the RHS Garden Wisley. From March to June the rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias give an outstanding display and a huge amount of pleasure to visitors at Wisley. It is difficult to imagine the destruction caused by the great storms of 1987 and 1990 when you see how well Battleston Hill looks at the present moment.

The original planting on Battleston was made in 1937. At that time the hill had a wonderful high tree canopy which was mainly oak, sweet chestnut and Scots pine. The Scots pine was a seed batch imported from the Harz mountains in Germany and widely planted over the entire Bagshot sand area. This canopy offered excellent conditions for the establishment of the many woodland plants. The northern slopes were cleared and planted up with the best cultivars and species of *Rhododendron* available at the time. After the war the development continued and a trial of rhododendron hybrids was planted on the path to the crest of the hill. At the same time a collection of evergreen Kurume azaleas and a trial of deciduous azaleas were planted. Rhododendron species were planted on the southern slopes of the hill in their botanical series, indicating the natural relationships and

giving a good idea of the diversity of this large genus. A bridge over the public footpath which led to the A3 ran from the species collection to the Dell, where the steep sided depression provided shelter for the larger leaved species. It is amazing to think that these same southern slopes and the Dell are now a Mediterranean Garden.

Much of this early work was carried out under the direction of Francis Hanger, who came to Wisley in 1946 as Keeper of the Garden. Hanger had previously been employed at Exbury, and was a well known expert and enthusiast for rhododendrons and other woodland plants. He is perhaps best remembered for the wonderful white *Camellia × williamsii* cultivar which is named after him.

The plantings on the hill matured over the next 40 years, with trials of hardy hybrids, *R. yakushimanum* hybrids, evergreen and deciduous azaleas and camellias taking place. The spring displays were legendary and in the summer the trees provided shelter from the sun for visitors.

All this changed overnight. On 16 October 1987 the Great Storm, with 145kph (90mph) winds, caused mass destruction over southern England and devastated Battleston Hill. The magnificent tree canopy was destroyed and areas which

had previously only seen dappled sunlight in the summer became completely open to the sun's rays. Over 80 percent of the trees on the hill were uprooted or snapped and as they came down they destroyed the plant collection underneath.

From this scene of devastation came a wonderful opportunity to redevelop a different style for Battleston Hill. Organic material was incorporated into the soil. A new irrigation system was installed, ensuring the recently planted trees and shrubs, as well as the older hybrids, could be watered effectively. New paths and a road network were made to allow visitors to circulate around the hill with greater ease and to see more than they could previously. Wind-breaks were planted to create shelter and large numbers of oaks and Scots pines to eventually replace the former canopy.

Then came the massive planting of the new found features on Battleston, with new collections of rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias as well as other ornamental woodland trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. There is now a far greater range of plants, with over 1,300 different rhododendrons, 280 camellias and 120 magnolias.

It becomes increasingly difficult to remember how things were as the new plantings mature and yet 80 percent are just under 10 years old. The tree windbreaks which were put in now have birch and alders, in some cases over 10m (30ft) high, while some of the oaks and pines which were planted to give the long term tree canopy are between 6–10m (20–30ft) high. There are still a few of the old trees left and they give wonderful structure when silhouetted against the skyline. However, it is the plantings of ericaceous and woodland plants

which create interest and beauty on the hill.

The Broadwalk, which has an avenue of *Prunus avium* 'Plena' interspersed with magnolias, should create a structural floriferous planting which will give interest for many years. The Broadwalk beds have a large number of Award of Garden Merit rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias, as well as many other gardenworthy plants. Some of the old trials' rhododendrons which survived the storm are especially outstanding including *R. 'Golden Torch'*, *R. 'Percy Wiseman'*, *R. 'Grumpy'*, *R. 'Hydon Dawn'* and *R. 'Hydon Hunter'*. These *R. yakushimanum* hybrids seem to be thriving in the more open conditions on the Broadwalk. Other special plants which remain from the trial are *R. 'Ilam Violet'*, whose intense blue/violet flowers interest everyone who sees them, and then a lovely plant of *R. 'Blewbury'*, 2.2m high × 2.5m wide (7 × 8ft) and covered in flowers each year.

There are a large number of evergreen azaleas but of particular interest is a collection bred by George Hyde. These hybrids are extremely floriferous. Included in the collection are *R. 'Evelyn Hyde'*, *R. 'Silver Fountain'*, *R. 'Rosemary Hyde'*, *R. 'Beattie'* and *R. 'Valentine's Surprise'*. Several of the Hachmann *R. yakushimanum* hybrids are planted there, including 'Hachmann's Charmant', 'Hachmann's Feuerschein', 'Hachmann's Polaris' and the superb 'Fantastica'.

On the northern side of Battleston East is the collection of Loderi rhododendrons. This group of outstanding rhododendron cultivars forms an avenue along part of this road. The large, cup-shaped flowers with their delightful sweet scent excite everyone, even the non-rhododendron enthusiasts.

Visitors can walk past *R. 'Loderi Fairy Queen'*, *R. 'Loderi Fairyland'*, *R. 'Loderi Game Chick'*, *R. 'Loderi King George'*, *R. 'Loderi Patience'*, *R. 'Loderi Pink Diamond'*, *R. 'Loderi Pink Topaz'*, *R. 'Loderi Princess Marina'*, *R. 'Loderi Sir Edmund'*, *R. 'Loderi Venus'* and *R. 'Loderi White Diamond'*, marvel at their magnificent flowers and try and spot the slight differences between the cultivars.

Further up the hill lies a trial of *Camellia × williamsii* cultivars and a wonderful collection of *Pieris*. The trial of camellias is used to assess plants for the RHS Award of Garden Merit. After trial *C. 'Tristram Carylon'* joined the ranks of *C. 'Donation'*, *C. 'Mary Christian'* and *C. 'St. Ewe'* as AGM plants. Other new cultivars are being added to this trial which will offer visitors the chance to see the best and most exciting plants, as well as many which are fairly new to gardens.

Throughout the hill there is a good collection of *Camellia japonica*, *C. × williamsii* and *C. sasanqua*. The latter are very interesting for their late autumn flowers, many of which are scented. At Wisley they are very reliable, especially when grown in an open and sunny situation. Particularly noteworthy are *C. 'Cleopatra'*, *C. 'Narumigata'* and *C. 'Mine-no-yuki'*.

The *Pieris* collection contains a large number of forms and cultivars of *Pieris japonica*, *P. formosana* and *P. taiwanensis*. They are lovely plants when covered with their racemes of white flowers in spring. Some of the *P. japonica* cultivars, such as 'Valley Valentine' and 'Flamingo' have a subtle pink colouring to their flowers. *Pieris* are wonderful plants for the woodland garden and they form good associations with

rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias.

Further along, the slope of the hill becomes a carpet of evergreen azaleas. Large drifts of 20 to 30 plants of each cultivar create a patchwork quilt effect with varying shades of red, purple, white and orange. These spectacular splashes of intense colour are a magnet for visitors.

Above the evergreen azaleas on the top of the hill is a large collection of *Rhododendron yakushimanum* hybrids. While at Wisley Francis Hanger raised many rhododendron hybrids using *R. yakushimanum* as a parent. One of the most outstanding plants in this group is a cultivar called 'Tequila Sunrise' which was raised by Hanger and named almost 15 years ago. It has wonderful strong pink flowers flushed pale pink at the base. Many of Hanger's other rhododendron hybrids can still be found on the hill, including *R. 'Coral Reef'*, the Moonshine Group, *R. 'Billy Budd'*, *R. 'Lascaux'*, *R. 'Shepherd's Morning'*, *R. 'Lady Bowes-Lyon'*, *R. 'Perfect Lady'*, *R. 'Beefeater'*, *R. 'Renoir'* and *R. 'Serena'*. Some of these hybrids are still wonderful plants. They do great justice to one of the first people to start the hybridising that is still carried out by rhododendron breeders all over the world today. Sadly, some of his cultivars were lost and destroyed during the storms and we would be very glad to hear from anyone who could supply plants or propagating material so that we could reintroduce them onto the hill.

The south side with its more open and sunny aspect has been planted to give autumn as well as spring interest. Large plantings of deciduous azaleas turn this area into a blaze of colour in May and early June. Bright oranges, reds and yellows combine

with pinks and whites to create spectacular and beautiful clashes. The lovely scent produced by some of these deciduous azaleas also adds to their beauty. Not only does this group of plants provide hot flower colours, but many have rich fiery autumn foliage, which can also match the *Acer palmatum*.

Also on Battleston South, beside the group of deciduous azaleas, is a collection of *Rhododendron yakushimanum* species, some of which were raised by Hanger from wild sourced seed. One particularly good clone has been given the name 'Wisley Blush' and it will be released by the RHS as one of its bicentenary plants in 2004. This selection has lovely blush-pink flowers which are smaller than the traditional *R. yakushimanum* and do not fade as they age.

This side has also been planted with many trees, such as *Acer*, *Sorbus*, *Prunus* and *Quercus*, which give good autumn colour and interest. Among the collection of deciduous azaleas is a series raised by Hanger at Wisley and named after British rivers. We have a large number of these at Wisley, but like the rhododendron hybrids, some were lost in the storms and we would be grateful for help in tracking down those missing from the collection (see Fig. 20).

The old camellia trial is located nearby. Most of the cultivars in the old trial are still widely grown and readily available.

Magnolias have been an important plant constituent of Battleston since the late 1940s. Francis Hanger brought a number of seedling *M. obovata* with him from Exbury and many of these are now 15m (50ft) or more in height. If you take a walk round Battleston Hill during mid summer there is hardly a place where their beautiful scent does not fill the atmosphere.

One of Hanger's contemporaries was Charles Raffill, an assistant curator at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. In 1946 he hybridised the eastern and western forms of *Magnolia campbellii*, the queen of magnolias, to produce the *M. campbellii* Raffillii Group. Sister seedlings of *M. campbellii* 'Charles Raffill' planted by Hanger now reach more than 18m (60ft) in the largest specimen. In Jim Gardiner's article on 'Magnolias for Smaller Gardens' (p.19) he refers to the Dr E K Janaki Ammal hybrids of *Magnolia kobus* (Fig. 19). During March these 50-year-old plants provide a significant flowering display which in certain instances mean that hardly a twig is seen.

Magnolia planting continued during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The 1970s included *M. 'Elizabeth'*, now thought to be one of the largest in the UK, while *M. sprengeri* 'Copeland Court' was planted in the 1980s. However, it wasn't until the 1990s that significant numbers of both species and hybrids were planted. The first plants of *M. 'Gold Star'* introduced to the UK were planted in 1992 from scions sent by Phil Savage. Many of the Jury Hybrids from New Zealand are included, with 'Atlas', 'Milky Way' and 'Apollo' in particular making beautiful flowering specimens even after about 10 years. Today there are about 120 species, hybrids and cultivars which will provide interest as the 21st century unfolds.

Part of the charm of Battleston Hill comes from the other woodland plants found here. *Pieris* and *Enkianthus* complement the rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias superbly well. The handkerchief tree, *Davida involucrata* and the Himalayan foxglove tree, *Paulownia tomentosa*, always create a stir while *Stewartia*,

*Styrax* and *Eucryphia* all add subtlety with their delightful white flowers.

In the summer months lace-cap and mop-head hydrangeas overflow with colour. *Hydrangea aspera*, with its large heads of pale porcelain blue flowers, surrounded with a ring of lilac-pink florets, brightens up areas of gentle shade followed later in summer by the aristocratic *Hydrangea paniculata* with their massive panicles which start white and fade to pink in some cases, particularly *H. paniculata* 'Pink Diamond'. With careful selection, clones can be seen in full flower over a 10-week period.

Battleston Hill has large plantings of traditional herbaceous and bulbous plants such as *Hosta*, *Meconopsis* and *Lilium*. It also has large collections not normally associated with rhododendrons, such as *Agapanthus*, *Hemerocallis*, *Dierama* and *Crocosmia*. Their strap-like foliage complements the woody content of the hill extremely well and they add colour and interest at a time of year which can sometimes be quite dull in a woodland garden.

Wisley has been very fortunate in receiving two plant collections from the RHS Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group. These collections were given to the Society by the group under the chairmanship of John Bond. The first is a representative collection of rhododendron species concentrating on those which have been introduced or reintroduced since the borders of China were opened to plant collectors again in the early 1980s. Most of the species have been collected by Ted Millais,

Peter and Kenneth Cox and Alan Clark, although there are others from several other plant hunters and expeditions. Plants from collectors such as Forrest have been included, so that we can compare original introductions with reintroductions.

This collection's aim was to increase public awareness of the beauty in flower and foliage of the species. Hopefully, this will encourage more people to grow them.

The second collection was presented in memory of Alan Hardy, another great enthusiast. Alan was particularly fond of the Ghent Rustica Azaleas and the collection of these wonderfully scented double azaleas was planted in spring 2000. After their first full season they gave a lovely display.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Group for these collections and to remember the late John Bond, who helped us to assemble these collections and who was a great friend to Wisley and especially Battleston Hill.

Battleston Hill is a wonderful showcase for rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias. Its recovery from the storms is truly amazing. There is now a far greater variety of plants on the hill, some 540 genera encompassing 4,251 cultivars and species. By showing the range, variety and beauty of these genera we shall encourage more people to grow these wonderful plants.

*Colin Crosbie is a member of the Wessex branch of the Group. He is Superintendant of Woody Plant Collections at the RHS Garden Wisley*

# GROUP TOUR TO DEVON AND DORSET



COMPILED BY VALERIE ARCHIBOLD

## **The Old Glebe (7 May 2001)**

Our first garden was Nigel and June Wright's lovely garden at The Old Glebe where immediately one turns into the driveway there are colourful shrubs on every side. Nigel explained to us that when he first arrived he had cleared away the brambles and weeds and found six rhododendrons – the only survivors of the gardens planted in the 1920s.

Soon after buying his first new plants to restock the garden he started propagating his own (he is a great advocate of the Nearing frame) with such success that he found himself selling the surplus. This led to the fine nursery he runs today.

Walking around we first looked at the double herbaceous border, the province of June, backed by yew and crab apple and already showing promise of the glories to come in high summer. We were then shown bed after bed of rhododendrons both species and hybrids, some very rare, noting some rather special conifers adding to the already great interest of this beautiful garden. A boggy stream had been transformed into an undulating water garden and the more energetic of us followed it to the bottom of the garden, while others were happy to take up the offer of wine and the most delicious selection of savoury nibbles served

on the terrace. It was warm and the birds were singing – altogether a wonderful start to our Spring Tour.

Eileen Wheeler

## **Burrow Farm Gardens (7 May 2001)**

We next visited Burrow Farm Gardens, owned by John and Mary Benger and situated in East Devon about 150m (500ft) above sea level. The 2.8ha (7 acres) of land has been developed over 30 years into the present beautiful landscaped gardens.

On arrival we were greeted by Mrs Mary Benger, the new Chairman of the Hardy Plant Society, who led us on a tour of the gardens. From the sundial at the end of this garden we walked down a long pergola noting a large plant of *Elaeagnus angustifolia*. The pergola was bedecked with roses, *Clematis*, *Wisteria* and *Vitis*, but there was not much yet in flower. We then crossed a stream over a cobbled stone bridge, noting a huge plant of *Gunnera manicata* on our right and passed on to the Apple Tree Lawn. Here were several beautiful acers including *Acer shirasawanum aureum*.

From there a winding path dropped towards a bog garden converted from an old clay pit. This area included large clumps of lysichiton, a variety of Asiatic primulas and an impressive cluster of hogweed.

Climbing back uphill we reached the Japanese garden and beds of deciduous azaleas and a lovely *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata', the whole nicely sheltered by well-established oaks. Among these beds we saw several loderis while a splendid *Pinus patula* marked the end of one crescent-shaped bed.

Nearing the hilltop we came across an ornamental pond connected to a fast running stream, with arum lilies and other water-loving plants still to bloom. We turned off at the hilltop and passed through woodland back towards the house. Here we saw the courtyard garden, with curved terraces climbing uphill and herbaceous plants and roses in the beds. At the very top was a handsome stone gazebo and below it an elegant urn in a circular enclosure.

From the excellent nursery a stone archway and wooden door formed the entrance to the new Millennium Garden and a delightful area designed after the style of Gertrude Jekyll. Several sets of paved steps led down to grassed areas, flanked on each side by cleverly designed colourful beds, the whole bisected by a narrow stone-walled rill cascading downwards from a water course through the mouth of a stone fish over several levels into a square pond.

To the side of the gazebo was an impressively designed and planted rock garden. A small, raised, stone pool and lawn all over-shadowed by a weeping birch, led the eye up to the courtyard we had seen earlier. This was a magical garden.

Valerie Archibald

### Minterne (8 May)

Our second day was a glorious day for one of the great rhododendron gardens at the home of Lord and Lady Digby. Situated

24km (15 miles) north of Weymouth, the 11.5-ha (29-acre) garden is a greensand oasis, blessed and dressed with 200 years of beech leaf-fall. *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Brilliantissimum' are a feature, one planted by the Queen in 1999, another planted in 1905 still only 4m (12ft) tall. The rhododendron garden is in the shape of a horseshoe, and we set off from the lawn down the west limb, noting *Rhododendron rubiginosum* and *R. decorum* Yu 13881, both from the expedition of 1937. The identity of the collector is confusing: in the 1967 and 1980 *Rhododendron Handbook* the numbers appear under 'Hu' but in the 1998 Handbook and in Volume 39 of the *RBG Edinburgh Notes* they are found under 'T T Yu'. In the 1967 Handbook, Mr Yu is termed 'Professor Hu's Collector'. However, Roy Lancaster in *Travels in China* reveals that T T Yu was himself Professor and led the 1937 expedition. A few queries lurk but first we must return to the garden.

We admired a number of *Rhododendron* 'Cinnkeys' (*R. 'Minterne Cinnkeys'* gained an AM in 1951 and an FCC in 1952) as well as a yellow version, *R. cinnabarinum* subsp. *xanthocodon* × *R. keysii*. For a stretch cherries flowered on both sides of the path and Lord Digby's inspiration to avoid the stiffness and formality of the standard form by having flowering cherries propagated as multistems is apparent in their happy accord with rhododendrons and other shrubs. Dr David Chamberlain was on hand to identify a pretty *R. selense* subsp. *dasycladum* and *R. praevernum* (4 × 6m/12 × 20ft), the large blue blotch on the latter distinguishing it from *R. sutchuenense*. We saw wonderful *R. augustinii* and *R. 'Blue Tit'* then rounding

the bottom of the horseshoe we came upon the big leaves, including magnificent specimens of *R. sinogrande* × *R. basilicum* with huge pristine white trusses, speckled with black anthers and with a dark purple blotch. Past *R. malloatum* F25067 (3.5m/11ft) and *R. beanianum* and we were in the lush Minterne Valley, the eastern limb of the horseshoe. The stream, its ponds and cascades, gave us a succession of exquisite views, culminating in the graceful lines of a low stone bridge. Noble trees overhead, with remarkable *Parrotia*, *Nothofagus*, *Pterocarya*, *Cercidiphyllum*, *Davida* and *Magnolia campbellii* sheltered plantings of *Rhododendron*, *Pieris* and *Enkianthus*, while at ground level there were large patches of the blue-flowered borage *Trachystemon orientalis*, *Primula* and *Rodgersia*. Abundant lysichitons at the streamside added their pungent azalea-like scent to the air and so we ascended to the lawn sated like narco-sized bees in a lime tree.

Pleasures of a different kind awaited us as Lady Digby welcomed us into her home. We were treated to many pictorial and other treasures: Van Dycks aplenty, many of the Digby forbears and a picture of the Prince of Wales later to be King William IV aboard Admiral Robert Digby's flagship. When the Admiral returned from the American War of Independence he laid up his ship and set his crew to work constructing the cascades in the Minterne Valley. Admirable!

*Dr Hugh Dingle*

#### **Abbotsbury (8 May 2001)**

Owned by the Ilchester Estate Trust, Abbotsbury is a garden created in the 19th century by Lady Ilchester, with the first rhododendrons planted about 1850 and

many camellias and palm trees in the 1890s. By the 1980s it had become heavily dominated by large trees permitting only limited light to reach the garden, and encouraging unwanted undergrowth such as brambles.

To the rescue came the 1987 and 1990 storms felling many trees, followed by Stephen Griffiths, the head gardener, who decided even more light was needed and felled and pruned more trees. This gave the all important basis to 'recreate' the virtually frost free garden with imaginative 10-year plans approved by the Estate Trustees. Old *R. arboreum* hybrids survived but camellias were heavily pruned and today the results of this rejuvenation and new planting are most evident and enjoyable. For our visit there was much colour from the old rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias and many of the new plantings were flowering such as *R. sinogrande*, *R. macabeanum*, *R. loderi*, *R. 'Dame Edith Sitwell'* and *R. 'Beauty of Littleworth'*.

The site is blessed with a wide rich band of acid soil within a range of chalk hills and, with wind shelter and a frost free climate, opportunities for imaginative planting are immense. The plantings are broadly zoned into woodland, sub-tropical, Mediterranean climate (but not limited to that area), Australia and New Zealand and a semi-formal millennium garden. Tree ferns have established successfully and the garden holds the National Collection of *Hoheria*.

*Richard Barber*

#### **RHS Garden Rosemoor (9 May 2001)**

The internationally renowned garden of Rosemoor, near Great Torrington, was donated by Lady Anne Berry to the Royal Horticultural Society in 1988. In addition

to her 3.2-ha (8-acre) garden a further 13ha (32 acres) of pastureland was given.

The garden is now divided into two large areas bisected by the A3220 and a cleverly engineered underpass allows visitors safe passage from one area to the other.

On the east side we passed through the entrance to see a colourful arrangement of gardens set in formal beds each with a different content of plants such as perennials, roses and so on.

We were escorted by our guide past this area towards the many raised beds further on, including the potager, herb and cottage gardens, and then on to the foliage garden. The paths were gravel with flowing lines reflecting the natural form of the plants that edge the borders. We were enchanted by the huge variety of plantings and in early May there was much colour.

Leaving the formal area we crossed over grassland to reach a large lake. A natural stream was diverted in 1990 to supply water to several boggy areas. Here were many water-loving plants – Asiatic primulas, hostas, trollius and zantedeschias. Although ornamental, the lake forms a large reservoir providing water for the garden.

We then walked through the underpass towards Lady Anne's Garden (the original garden planted by Lady Anne) and were impressed by the clever use of boulders and waterfalls edging the path and the use of ferns, woodland perennials and bamboos in the surrounding areas. In Lady Anne's Garden we reached a large lawn which runs the length of the vista to the house flanked by camellias, rhododendrons, magnolias and many other specimen trees. Here we noted *Magnolia 'Susan'*, *Betula 'Hergest'* with its lovely white bark, *Rhododendron*

'Maharani' and many other superb plants.

There is so much to see in this garden. Suffice it to say that the range of plants and the way that they are displayed gives great credit to all those RHS employees involved.

Valerie Archibald

#### **Knightshayes Court (9 May 2001)**

After a pleasant lunch at Rosemoor we travelled to Knightshayes Court. This is one of the many large country houses built by the Victorians in the boom years of the 1860s and early 1870s. Home of the Heathcote Amory family it was given on his death in 1972 by Sir John Heathcote Amory to the National Trust. The garden has been managed since 1963 by Michael Hickson who unfortunately was not free to be with us.

Walking from the entrance (converted in 1988 from the stable block) on a long gravel path leading towards the house, we had a panoramic view of rolling countryside on our right, and on our left a mixture of fairly recent plantings of *Pinus*, *Cornus*, beech and *Sorbus*. On the west side of the house a large conservatory held a collection of tender plants while plants against the house included *Chaenomeles 'Rowallane'*, which is a good red, a very old *Magnolia grandiflora 'Exmouth'* and a huge *Rosa banksiae 'Lutea'* reaching up to the eaves.

A flight of broad stone steps led us to an outstanding topiary effect where the yew hedge had been clipped at the top to display a fox being chased by hounds. On our left an extensive bank of mixed rock plants led up to a paved area with island beds containing mainly geraniums and backed by a fine lead tank dated 1727. This was flanked by a very fine pair of standard wisterias. Next to this garden was a lawn enclosed by a high

yew hedge, containing a large round lily pond, overlooked by a splendid *Pyrus salicifolia* and a Victorian statue of a bather.

Our tour led up another flight of steps to the woodland area where there was a fine planting of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, crossed by a network of grass paths giving easy access to a number of beds. We saw a beautiful example of *Prunus maackii* and a splendid *Acer griseum* both with a notable trunk and peeling bark. The whole woodland was interspersed with some very old trees and rhododendrons including *R. auriculatum* and some from subsect. *Fortunei*.

From the woodland area we came to a large lawn planted with numerous specimen trees including a splendid *Tsuga heterophylla* and a lovely *Cornus kousa* 'Norman Hadden' underplanted with unusual ferns. This led to an area of rhododendrons which included an old *R. sinogrande*, large *R. rex*, *R. falconeri* and *R. coriaceum*.

We walked on further to the hydrangea area then along a north-facing path furnished with a variety of ferns and many new plantings of oak (to be thinned later) and a collection of *Acer dissectum* alongside a *Cupressus cashmeriana* and *Picea smithiana*.

On the final walk back we diverted from the path and explored the huge area below the house which looks onto Tiverton. There we were rewarded with very large rhododendrons such as *R. auriculatum*, *R. falconeri*, *R. sinogrande*, *R. bureavii* and *R. fulvum*. There was also a very fine *Picea breweriana* and several huge *Tilia*.

Knightshayes has an individual atmosphere, at once interesting, but also peaceful and relaxing and we left with reluctance.

Valerie Archibald

### Lukesland, Ivybridge (10 May 2001)

After a welcome cup of coffee Brian and Rosemary Howell introduced us to their 6-ha (15-acre) garden. Brian led us through the Pinetum where there was a rare *Picea farreri* taken from the tree at Exbury, some of which Brian had sent to Cornish gardens 8–10 years ago. The cut-leaved beech, *Fagus sylvatica* var. *heterophylla*, was just opening its leaves. We climbed gently uphill on paths mown through wild flowers and grass past *Rhododendron loderi*, *R. 'Odee Wright'*, *R. 'Trewithen Orange'*, *R. 'Ightham Yellow'* and magnolias onto the pond at the top of this valley.

The bridge that crossed the stream, an engineering delight, is a reverse suspension design based on the Forth Railway Bridge. The valley deepened and the stream ran in a series of waterfalls, pools and ponds which the path crossed and recrossed by numerous bridges. Yellow rhododendrons are a favourite of Rosemary and we passed *R. 'Hotei'* and *R. 'Mariloo'*. Further down we came to a new *Magnolia campbellii* Alba Group from a Dutch nursery, a huge *M. campbellii* near the drive bridge and a large *Rhododendron smithii* in full red flower.

Rosemary then led us to a newly planted camellia garden, opposite the walled vegetable garden which had replaced big trees lost in the 1990 gale. We passed a 22m (72ft) *Ginkgo biloba* and a newish free-standing white wisteria on the west bank until suddenly there was a view of the 1862 Victorian-Gothic house across the densely planted rhododendron/camellia valley. This part of the garden was landscaped in the 1880s and here water divides to form an island. From the heather bank we wandered downhill through the Arboretum among

tall palm trees, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, European white elm, a Dawyck copper beech given by Colonel Balfour, a *Michelia* from Caerhayes Castle and a huge *Davidia involucrata* planted in the 1930s.

The path uphill on the east bank led through the newly-planted *R. Loderi* Group, *R. 'Katherine Fortescue'* and *R. 'William Fortescue'*, with some newer yellows including *R. 'Top Banana'* and *R. 'Yellow Pages'*, and among other camellias and a large horse chestnut tree. A dominant beech which blew over in the late 1980s had given new planting space for acers and rhododendrons. Nearer the house another area of old rhododendrons had been taken out and replanted with small new ones.

We thanked Brian and Rosemary very much for our greatly enjoyed visit to this excellent garden and presented them with *Cornus controversa 'Variegata'*.

Josephine Warren

### Lee Ford (10 May 2001)

This was our last garden (11 May), situated on the edge of Budleigh Salterton. The house was a rather grand mansion set in extensive grounds and entered by a long drive marked by several hundred-year-old plantings of sweet chestnut and a later planting of *Cedrus atlantica* Glauca Group.

We were met by the estate manager, Toby King, who gave us a short history of the garden over the last 20 years or so. Leaving the terrace we started a gentle walk uphill towards the woodland, and on the way we saw a fine example of the weeping birch, surely one of the most graceful of trees, also a large *Rhododendron 'Cornish Red'* as well as new plantings of camellias.

Reaching the woodland we found

several varieties of *R. Loderi* Group and a rather lovely long-leaved rhododendron of which the underside of the leaves were a warm brown velvet. The extensive pathway opened out into fresh glades, one of which held new plantings of rhododendrons and also laurels, the latter presumably grown for wind protection. All around were huge beeches as well as more unusual trees such as *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*.

We turned towards the house, seeing on the way new plantings of the unusual conifers such as *Sciadopitys verticillata*, *Pinus griffithii* and others. There were extensive plantings of camellias and also specimen rhododendrons such as *R. macabeanum*.

We then walked down towards the house, passing through the newly planted rose garden. From here we entered the walled kitchen garden which was beautifully laid out and maintained and a great credit to its keeper. We returned to the back of the house and the very extensive lawn, flanked by crescent-shaped beds filled with a variety of interesting herbaceous plants and shrubs, and some interesting trees such as *Luma apiculata* and a very ancient medlar tree which perhaps went back several centuries (part of the house is believed to be 16th century). We also saw a beautiful *Acer shirasawanum*. A stone gazebo stood against the kitchen garden wall, giving added character to the garden.

We finished at a handsome pavilion where the owner of the house, Mrs Lindsay-Finn, gave us a lovely tea and told us some of the history of the house and garden. We have to say that this was one of the most beautifully kept gardens in our experience.

Valerie Archibald

## OBITUARIES



### John Bond LVO, VMH

*The following is a shortened version of the address by Roy Lancaster at the Memorial Service to John Bond on Tuesday 10 April 2001.*

It is fitting that we should be remembering John Bond today. April, he once told me, was his favourite month. Like most gardeners he recognised spring and April in particular as a time of rebirth, a time of hope, a time of great excitement when the garden is at its most active with flowers and plants of all kinds seemingly falling over themselves to catch the gardeners eye.

In the vanguard of April flowers are rhododendrons, magnolias and ornamental cherries, plants that John had a special affection for and there can have been few gardeners who knew, grew or understood them better. His knowledge of, and affinity with rhododendrons, was recognised as early as 1972 by the Royal Horticultural Society when he receive the A J Waley medal awarded to a working gardener who has helped in the cultivation of rhododendrons. The stipulation 'working' meant a lot to John for despite his subsequent achievements he remained throughout his life very much a hands-on gardener.

His gardening skills and his encyclopedic knowledge of plants and plant people were recognised throughout the horticultural fraternity and brought him ever more prestigious honours, none more satisfying

to him that that of the Society's Victoria Medal of Honour which he regarded as the greatest award any gardener could receive.

Regarded in awe by many, approached with trepidation by some, John's often formal exterior concealed a great sincerity and compassion and if he found you a kindred spirit especially if you were genuinely interested in plants then his encouragement knew no bounds. He was acknowledged by his peers as the ultimate 'head gardener' who firmly believed that knowledge was for sharing. Essentially a private person, he never forgot his roots or those who helped or guided him along the way. Reticent to discuss his past, few beyond his family, his closest colleagues and friends knew much about his early career.

The son and grandson of head gardeners, John, as a boy, often helped his father working in his employers' garden at Braydon Hall near Cirencester, and on leaving school in 1946 aged 14, it must have come as no surprise when he joined a local nursery, John Jefferies and Sons, who specialised in trees and shrubs.

Two years later he successfully applied for the position of Improver in the garden of Lord Aberconway at Bodnant, North Wales under Head Gardener Charles Puddle. Charles had recently taken over from his father the legendary F C Puddle and John could not have had a better teacher.

Rich in the Chinese introductions of

the great plant hunters, Bodnant was a plantsman's paradise and John revelled in the opportunities it presented him. A fellow 'bothy' boy at Bodnant, Charles Funke, remembers John as a positive, single minded young man who knew where he was going and who paid great attention to detail.

Charles Puddle in a recent letter told me that and I quote,

'whilst at Bodnant it was obvious that John would go far. In his spare time he was constantly in the garden, taking names and studying plants. His interest in what went on in all parts of the garden was well above that of the normal improver and he was the best that came to Bodnant in my time.'

After National Service in the Military Police, he returned to Bodnant gaining experience in propagation and new plant introductions before, on Charles Puddle's recommendation, moving to the most famous woody plant nursery of the day, Hillier and Sons of Winchester.

The year was 1954 and Hilliers were growing easily the largest selection of hardy woody plants in Europe if not the temperate world – over 10,000 different kinds. Harold Hillier employed John in the propagation department at Chandlers Ford Nursery which specialised in magnolias, camellias, corylopsis, Japanese maples and ericaeuous plants. All the nice things as John would say.

In 1957 he was promoted to Nursery Manager at Jermyns eventually being responsible for 60ha (150 acres) of nursery stock and 40 staff. He spent summer evenings wandering through the nursery with colleagues discussing plants, especially rhododendrons and the local native flora

which he cared a deal about. On Saturday mornings he helped Harold Hillier with the initial plantings of what is now the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum, following Harold with a barrow-load of trees and shrubs with two men with spades.

Eight years with Hilliers helped shape John into the formidable all-rounder we all knew. In 1961 however, his desire for further experience saw him leave Hilliers and take on the Head Gardener's job at Leonardslee Gardens in Sussex, home of the famous Loderi rhododendrons, a post he held for little over a year when a greater challenge presented itself. A position was advertised in the gardens of Windsor Great Park. He applied and following what John called a gruelling interview with the gardens' creator Sir Eric Savill, he was appointed Assistant Keeper under Hope Findlay.

Eight years later he was made Joint Keeper with special responsibilities for the Valley Gardens, the propagation department and student training. In 1974 following Hope Findlay's retirement John achieved what he had long regarded as the ultimate job in gardening, when he was appointed Keeper of the Gardens. Much later he was given responsibility for the gardens at Frogmore and the Queen Mother's Garden at Royal Lodge. He held this position with distinction until retiring in 1997.

There is no question that all the skills, knowledge and experience gained by John in his early career came together in a glorious alchemy and flourished in his years at the Great Park. During this time Savill and Valley Gardens reached a new peak of excellence that was applauded internationally.

One of John's many achievements at the Great Park was to establish the Friends

of the Savill Garden in 1985 some of whom John trained to be garden guides. They were and still are a loyal, hard working and enthusiastic group whose friendship and support came to mean so much to him, especially in his last years.

John's cultivation techniques at the gardens were legendary though he described it merely as good garden husbandry. Mulching, he regarded as his second religion, and though regarded by some who worked for him as a hard taskmaster there is no doubting the results justified the means and there were few if any gardens in the country that exceeded the Savill and Valley Gardens in quality and variety of plants and planting.

Over the years John came to regard the Great Park and the Valley Gardens in particular as a refuge if not a haven for rare and unusual plants, especially those threatened in cultivation by changing fashions or economic reality. When, in 1982, the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, of which John was a founder, launched their National Plant Collection Scheme he took on no less than nine collections including rhododendron species, magnolias, hollies, pieris, dwarf and slow-growing conifers and hardy ferns.

To those of us who served with him on RHS committees John never ceased to amaze. I once remember him bringing cut pieces of a large selection of *Hydrangea paniculata* varieties to a London meeting giving chapter and verse on each and every one. On another occasion with his beloved Woody Plant Trials Committee at the Valley Gardens, he gave us what he called a brief introduction to the history of dwarf conifer collections in Britain. It was a master class

which left us speechless. His knowledge and his memories of the nurseries and private gardens of 20th century Britain were prodigious, and in my opinion unrivalled.

His occasional exhibits at the RHS Halls in London were red letter days and I shall never forget his exhibit of mahonias, generous quantities of freshly cut stems in flower or fruit, all from the Great Park. It was the largest collection of its kind ever shown and was staged to perfection, as were his woodland gardens at Chelsea. Who among us will ever forget John's judging skills, his eye for detail, his forthright comments and his admiration for quality, finish and what he called the natural touch.

Those who imagine John to have had a one track mind might be surprised to know that his spare time interests included bird watching, jazz, stamp collecting and steam engines, especially the old Great Western. He also enjoyed visits with his young son Christopher to support their local football team, Aldershot. His gardening interests too, were wide ranging and beside his home in the Great Park he maintained a large area of soft fruit and vegetables, while his huge compost heaps were said to be works of art! But what else would you expect from a third generation head gardener?

Throughout his busy life John enjoyed the love and support of his wife Edna who, even when ill health cruelly curtailed her activities, would still offer a warm welcome and hospitality to friends and visitors. Nor should we forget their children Susan and Christopher who must have found it just a little frustrating at times sharing their father with his plants. Although with John as your father, family garden visits had decided advantages and Susan long ago lost count of

the number ice creams and cakes she and Christopher enjoyed when garden visits ended in invitations to tea.

John travelled widely as a lecturer in Britain, Europe, North America, Japan and New Zealand making many new friends. In 1999, he joined some of his RHS colleagues on a tour with me to Chile, an experience he found enlightening if exhausting. One wet, misty day, we visited an area of old temperate rain forest in the mountains above Puerto Monte. There, in a veritable garden of Eden among the nothofagus, fitzroyas, crinodendrons, desfontaineas and ferns he knew so well from home he seemed content. Later that day he told me it had brought back happy memories of his time at Bodnant which is where he saw so many of these plants for the first time.

John never produced a book though he wrote many articles. Like George Forrest, the famous Scottish plant hunter, and others of boundless energy, he preferred to be doing rather than writing about it.

It would be easy to describe John Bond as the professionals' professional, but that would be too simple. He was a perfectionist but not a publicist; knowledgeable but not a know-all; a man who genuinely enjoyed and cared about plants and gardens and gained satisfaction from sharing them with others. Most of all he represented an age and a way of gardening that placed quality and patience before cosmetics and the quick fix. He was truly a gardener for all seasons.

*Roy Lancaster*

### **Logan Andrew Edgar OBE**

Logan's interest in trees, shrubs and plants dated back to his boyhood. He was 16 when his father, also a keen gardener, died leaving

Logan to care for a very large garden in which he worked assiduously until he left to serve in the Second World War.

After the war ended, and on marrying, he made his home on the edge of St Helens Wood, Hastings where he created a woodland garden with a unique collection of rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and camellias. It was not a formal garden, since Logan preferred the natural and unaffected, but it had a sense of peace and tranquillity and was a joy to visit, particularly in spring.

He spent his working life as a lawyer and on his retirement used his knowledge and expertise in the world of plants and shrubs in helping to found Coghurst Nursery. He enthusiastically propagated rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and what eventually became one of the largest collection of camellias in the UK.

In 1991 he wrote *Camellias – the Complete Guide* which many people considered a practical and captivating book. An updated paperback followed in 1996.

For many years he was secretary of the SE branch of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group.

Latterly, Logan became very interested in the autumn-flowering Sasanquas, particularly Bob Cherry's Australian Paradise Strain and the cold-hardy varieties of Dr Ackerman with whom he had recently been in correspondence. In 1997 the nursery staged what was thought to be the first ever exhibit comprised solely of *Camellia sasanqua* at a Westminster Show at the RHS Halls; an achievement towards which he and I had been working for many years. He was happily propagating camellias up to three weeks before he died.

*Jean Farnfield*

# COMPETITIONS



## Early Rhododendron Competition

13–14 March 2001

After one of the longest and wettest winters that many of us could remember, with below average temperatures and hours of sunshine it seemed doubtful that there would be any entries at all for this show, especially as the foot and mouth crisis only a fortnight earlier had prevented all movement of persons and vehicles from estates adjacent to farmsteads. Yet in the event the number of entries was only slightly down on the previous year due largely to the arrival on the show scene of a newcomer, the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum whose exhibits were staged by members of the Friends Society of the Arboretum and which provided the only competition for last year's newcomer, the Hon Evelyn Boscawen of Tregothnan. These two gardens provided almost all the entries and shared all the prizes except in just one class, where neither made any entry. The competition for the Alan Hardy Challenge Salver was thus very much closer than in 2000, the year of its inauguration, with the Hillier Arboretum just pipping Tregothnan for the trophy.

In the following report of the class competitions the prizewinners are abbreviated to 'Tregothnan' for the Hon Evelyn Boscawen and 'Hilliers' for the Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum.

Class 1, for three species, one truss of each, was won by Tregothnan with *R. arboreum*, *R. ciliatum* and *R. macabeanum*.

Hilliers made the only other entry for second prize with *R. cyanocarpum*, *R. purdomii* and *R. ririei*.

Class 2, for a spray of a species had six entries but only two prizes awarded, both to Tregothnan for *R. macabeanum* with seven trusses and *R. arboreum* (blood red).

Class 3, for one truss of a species had three entries, two from Tregothnan with first prize to *R. macabeanum* showing very large leaves, second for *R. arboreum* and the third prize to Hilliers for *R. meddianum* var. *atrokermesinum*.

Class 4 had but one entry, gaining second prize for Hilliers for *R. arboreum* subsp. *cinnamomeum*.

Class 5 had no entries, indicating the lateness of the season as this class usually has a number of entries of *R. barbatum*.

Class 6, for a truss of a species from subsects. Falconera and Grandia, had the only entry gaining first prize for Tregothnan showing *R. macabeanum* with much smaller leaves – in sharp contrast to their exhibit in Class 3.

Classes 7, 8 and 9, for a truss or spray from specific subsects, received entries only from Hilliers who gained first prize for *R. sutchuenense*, third for a poor *R. calophytum* in Class 7, second and third only for *R. piercei* and *R. malloatum* in Class 8 and again only a second prize for *R. eclectum*, the only entry in Class 9.

Classes 10, 11 and 12, for other specific species, had no entries.

Class 13, for one truss each of three

hybrids, gained first prize for the only entry – from Tregothnan – showing two different *R. arboreum* hybrids and 'Shilsonii'.

Class 14, for a spray of any hybrid, received three entries – all from Hilliers and these were first for 'Seta', second for 'Cilpinese' and third for 'Peter John Mezzit', a truly delightful and rarely seen hybrid with flower colour similar to that of 'Praecox' the very well known early flowerer.

Class 15, for a truss of any hybrid, attracted eight entries and four prizes were awarded. Hilliers gained first and second with 'Geraldii' and 'Titness Pink' while Tregothnan showed 'Shilsonii' for third prize and an un-named hybrid for fourth which looked not unlike 'Thunderstorm' with prominent white stamens.

Class 16, for a truss of a hybrid of which one parent must be from a list specified in the Show Schedule, was won by Tregothnan with the sole entry of an un-named good red having deep brown indumentum to the foliage – not unlike *R. fulvum*.

Class 21 was the only other class receiving any entries and in this were six from section Vireya with four prizes being awarded. First prize went to Dr Alun Edwards for 'Laetum', the exhibitor being commended for making the effort to bring his entry all the way from Devon. The three other award-winning entries were shown by Christopher Fairweather with 'First Light' given second prize, 'Just Peachy' third and 'Java Light' fourth prize.

David Farnes

#### Main Rhododendron Competition – Species, 28–29 April 2001

I am pleased to report an improvement in this, the best show for a number of years,

not only in numbers but also in quality. New exhibitor, the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum made a significant contribution which we hope will continue in years to come with their Curator Mr Buffin. Also a warm welcome to the new Head Gardener at Exbury, Miss R Martin, who kept up the high standard of staging we have come to expect from this notable garden.

Class 1, six species, one truss of each, The Lionel de Rothschild Challenge Cup. First prize to Exbury Garden with *R. arboreum* 'Rubaiyat', *R. arizelum*, *R. trallianum* var. *dictyotum* 'Kathmandu', *R. niveum* and *R. fictolacteum*. Second prize went to Hilliers with *R. pseudochrysanthum*, *R. niveum*, *R. adenogynum*, *R. arboreum* subsp. *zeylanicum*, *R. rex* and *R. roxieanum*.

Class 2, three species, one truss of each. Exbury gained first with *R. roxieanum*, *R. arizelum* var. *roxieanum* (a lovely vase), *R. coriaceum*. A close second was City of Swansea, Clyne Garden with *R. johnstoneanum*, *R. sperabile* var. *weihsienense*, *R. orbiculare*.

Class 3, any species one truss. A superb *R. roxieanum* gained first for Exbury, just pipping *R. niveum* from Brian Wright of Crowborough and third place went to Exbury with *R. trallianum* var. *dictyotum*. This was a very good class giving the judges quite a task. Exbury won the McLaren Challenge Cup.

Class 4, any species one spray not exceeding 75cm (30in) in height from the top of the vase. A very fine *R. davidsonianum* gained first for Exbury. Second and third places were awarded to Swansea with *R. rubiginosum* and *R. wadanum*. Exbury won the Rosa Stevenson Challenge Cup.

Class 5, any species of subsects.

Arborea or Argyrophylla, one truss, was won by Exbury with a slightly darker *R. niveum* than we usually see. Second was *R. arboreum* subsp. *roseum* from Swansea, which was only just in front of Hilliers' very good *R. argyrophyllum* var. *omeiense*.

Class 6, any species of subsects. Barbeta, Glischra or Maculifera, one truss. First in top form from Hilliers was *R. pseudochrysanthum*, second came Swansea with *R. spinulatum* and third Exbury's *R. glischrum*.

Class 7, any species of subsects. Campanulata, Fulgensia or Lanata, one truss. First was Hilliers with *R. campanulatum* 'Knaphill' and second Exbury with *R. campanulatum*. No third was awarded.

Class 8, any species of subsects. Grandia or Falconera, one truss. A worthy winner of this class was a superb *R. rex* from Hilliers. The same exhibitor showed a very clean *R. coriaceum* to gain second place. Brian Wright was third also with *R. coriaceum*.

Class 9, any species of subsect. Fortunea, one truss. *R. calophytum* from Exbury gained first with *R. orbiculare* from Swansea coming second before Brian Wright's *R. fargesii*.

Class 10, any species of subsects. Fulva, Irrorata or Parishia, one truss. The only entry, from Exbury, took first prize with *R. irroratum*.

Class 11, any species of subsect. Taliensia, one truss. Hilliers took first and third with *R. roxianum* and *R. prattii* respectively while *R. traillianum* from Exbury was awarded second.

Class 12, any species of subsect. Neriiflora, one spray not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. Again, Exbury was the only entry in the class and

took first place with *R. euchates*.

Class 13, any species of subsect. Pontica, one truss. There were no prizes awarded.

Class 15, one spray of *R. williamsianum* not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. After much discussion Brian Wright's *R. fargesii* was identified by Dr David Chamberlain and took first prize.

Class 16, any elepidote species not mentioned in classes above, one truss. Again only one entry, worthy of first prize, was *R. sperabile* var. *weihsienense* from Swansea.

Class 18, any species of subsects. Edgeworthia or Maddenia (Maddenia-Alliance and Ciliicalyx-Alliance only) grown in the open or otherwise, one spray not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. There were two vases of *R. johnstoneanum*, with that of Hilliers taking first from Exbury.

Class 19, any species of subsect. Maddenia (Dalhousiae-Alliance and Megacalyx-Alliance) one truss, grown in the open or otherwise. This time *R. johnstoneanum* was doubled up with the slightly larger truss from Swansea beating Exbury.

Class 20, any species of subsects. Triflora and Heliolepidia other than *R. augustinii*, one spray not exceeding 45cm (18in) in height from the top of the vase. Perhaps the best vase in the show, and so well-staged was *R. davidsonianum* from Exbury. Second came a very pretty *R. rigidum* from Swansea. Third place went to a rather small, but extremely healthy *R. heliolepis* from Hilliers.

Class 21, *R. augustinii*, one spray not exceeding 60cm (24in) in height from the top of the vase. A lovely spray from Exbury, the only entry, took first place.

Class 22, any species of subsects. Cinnabrina, Tephropepla or Virgata, one spray not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. Exbury, with the only entry, gained a third prize.

Class 23, any species of subsects. Campylogyna, Genestieriana or Glauca, one spray not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. As in the previous class the only entry received a third with *R. glaucophyllum* for Swansea.

Class 24, any species of subsect. Laponica, one spray not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. A very good *R. scintillans* from Exbury was first and Hilliers came second with *R. yunnanense*.

Class 26, species of subsect. Scabrifolia, one spray not exceeding 30cm (12in) in height from the top of the vase. First was Exbury with *R. spiciferum*, second Swansea with *R. hemitrichotum* and third Hilliers with *R. scabrifolium*.

Class 30, any species of deciduous azalea, one spray not exceeding 60cm (24in) in height from the top of the vase. Here the judges had a difficult task in separating three very fine exhibits. First and second went to Exbury with *R. quinquefolium* and *R. schlippenbachii* respectively. Swansea came third also with *R. schlippenbachii*.

I conclude by saying how pleasing it was to see the long established Millais Nursery of Farnham, Surrey staging a fine exhibit of species and hybrids. Notable in their exhibit were a new yellow-flowered *R. rex* collected in Vietnam, *R. hypenanthum* 'Annapurna', *R. 'Unique Marmalade'* (a most suitable name), *R. 'Prince Camille de Rohan'* and *R. balfourianum*.

Archie Skinner

### Main Rhododendron Competition – Hybrids

This year's contest, held over a weekend (28–29 April 2001) for the first time ever, attracted more entries than most other Main Competitions held in recent years.

So perhaps the critical publicity that pointed-up the lack of support for the London competitions had had a modicum of effect. Or perhaps it was the shift from weekdays to weekend that made the difference, although it must be said that it was the increase in the number of exhibits rather than an a significant increase in the number of exhibitors (only eight) that made the good impression. This said, it was nice to see The Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum back in contention. I can't recall when this well known garden last took part in a Vincent Square competition but Mr Buffin, who currently runs things there, must have been delighted with the 20 or so prizes he won in both the species and the hybrid classes; although he could have fared even better had the flowers, on some of his potentially very good exhibits, been fully opened. He must have also been pleased, and grateful, for the encouragement and support he received from Group members, Martin Gates and Tom Spring-Smyth.

As good as it was to see more entries than usual, the competition, as a show of rhododendrons, could have been better had more bench space been available. Vases were so tightly crammed together that judging and viewing were made more difficult than they should have been. Indeed, much credit must go to the stewards, George Horrocks and Archie Skinner, for deftly re-arranging the show-bench layouts in order to accommodate all competitors' vases.

As well as being bigger, the Competition also promised to be better but sadly this was not the case as many of the blooms which looked fine during staging and judging became decidedly hung-over by Saturday lunchtime. This must have disappointed the viewing public and even perplexed them when, for instance, they saw a limp entry succeed over what was to all intents and purposes a fresher and better looking bloom.

In the hybrid classes the better looking blooms were as follows.

Class 32, six trusses. These days it can be regarded as something of an achievement to produce six good and different trusses for this class. Exbury have done so to a commendably high standard for many years now although this year the strain seemed to be telling as their entry was somewhat below par. They were, however, the only garden to come up to scratch and as a result coaxed the judges into awarding a first prize. Their six were 'Dougie Betteridge', 'Lionel's Triumph', 'Ivory Scarlet', 'Colonel Rogers', 'Naomi' and 'Aurora'.

Class 33, three trusses. Although this class attracted three entrants, not one produced a really top trio of blooms. Nevertheless, all three were awarded prizes. Swansea Corporation's garden at Clyne took the opportunity to display three of their many *R. niveum* hybrids – 'Singleton Blue' supported by two unnamed crosses. This gained first prize. Second prize went to Exbury for 'Mrs G.W. Leak', 'Queen of Hearts' and 'Carita Golden Dream' while third prize was won by Hilliers for 'Gilian' (a large red-flowered *R. thomsonii* × *R. griffithianum*), 'Unique Cream' and 'White Campanula', a plant of obvious parentage.

Since these blooms are rarely seen on the show-bench, they serve to illustrate why it is important for new competitors – or, in this case, an old competitor making a comeback – to take part in competitive events.

Class 34, one truss, for the Loder Cup. This was won by Brian Wright. It represented his only first prize of the day so with a trophy at stake you could say there wasn't a better class in which to register one's sole victory. He showed the *R. lacteum* hybrid 'Robert Keir' suffering a mite from colour fade but unblemished and still displaying those good, yellow flushed pink hues. Second and third places went to Exbury with an impressive 'Colonel Rogers' and that lovely pink *R. griffithianum* × *R. fortunei* hybrid 'Aurora'. This class attracted 11 entries so it was appropriate that a fourth prize was awarded; it went to Clyne showing another of their unnamed niveum hybrids.

Class 35, one spray. For sheer flower power this was the competition's most outstanding class. It attracted 10 entries which provided an abundance of colour. First prize deservedly went to Exbury who presented 'Lionel's Triumph' as a big bouquet of a spray – a riot of peach, yellow, pink, cream and apricot corollas that totally overwhelmed the foliage (Fig. 28). As if one stunner was not enough, Exbury promptly produced a second. Another mammoth spray crammed with huge trusses of gorgeous pale yellow flowers. No name was given but it was out of 'Jalisco' × *R. fortunei*. Surely it merits a registered name although the 1969 RHS stud book gives Exbury's 'Fred Wynnatt' as a result of this match. It was awarded second prize but it could just as easily been first. Third prize appeared to

be awarded twice – once to Hilliers for 'Jenny' also known as 'Creeping Jenny' (*R. griersonianum* × *R. forrestii*) and again to Clyne for an unnamed 'Mrs G.W. Leak'-like hybrid.

Class 43, for subsects. Grandia or Falconera hybrids, was contested by three *R. niveum* crosses. First prize went to a noteworthy but unnamed truss from Clyne. Second went to Exbury's 'Colonel Rogers' and third to another unnamed entry from Clyne. Although I would not question the merits of these hybrids as good garden plants, I have yet to see one that actually improves upon *R. niveum* itself.

Class 45, for subsect. Taliensia hybrid trusses, was almost inevitably won by Exbury's fine 'Lionel's Triumph'. Hilliers entry of the same plant was second and Brian Wright's 'Robert Keir' and 'John Barr Stevenson' third and fourth respectively.

Class 49, for subsects. Maddenia and Edgeworthia hybrids, showed only one entry. It came from Chris Fairweather, alias Fairweather's Garden Centre, and was a most interesting and attractive truss of 'Eldorado' × *R. rhabdotum* which rightly was awarded a first prize. I am not sure whether or not this hybrid is currently being marketed by Fairweather's but it is certainly worth an enquiry by those interested in growing tender rhododendrons.

Class 50, for single sprays of subsect. Triflora hybrids was won by 'St Tudy' (a superb sparkling blue) from Exbury. Runner-up was a very good 'Phalarope' from Brian Wright followed by his somewhat outclassed 'Blue Diamond' in third place.

Class 53, for elepidote hybrid trusses not covered by preceding classes, was won by Exbury's 'Lady Digby', a strong AM

blood-red hybrid interestingly produced by pairing *R. facetum* with *R. strigillosum*. Second prize went to another, but not much seen, red – 'Popacatapetl' ('Elizabeth' × 'Compactum Multiflorum') entered by Brian Wright who also took third prize for an striking pink unknown hybrid.

Class 54, for elepidote hybrid sprays not covered by preceding classes, produced two intriguing and quite floriferous entries. The first, from Exbury, was 'Carex' – *R. irroratum* × *R. oreodoxa* but looking much more like the latter parent. The second, from Hilliers, was 'Gladys Rose' (*R. campylocarpum* × *R. fortunei*) creamy white with a crimson blotch, an attractive plant with which I am sadly unfamiliar.

Class 55, for trusses grown under glass. This class provided a marvellous opportunity for the public to see the wonderful orchid-like qualities and rainbow colours of the Vireyas. Of the eight entries, six were Vireyas and five of these were from Chris Fairweather. Indeed, had it not been for Exbury entering the very fetching virgin-white 'Lomariflora', and claiming second prize, he would have swept the board. As it was, Chris Fairweather won with the vivid red/orange 'Ne Plus Ultra' (Fig. 10), an old Veitch hybrid. In third place he had 'Java Light' another brilliant red/orange, or is it orange/red, and in fourth place 'Just Peachy', a satiny apricot-flowered number. For good measure, CF was also awarded a highly commended for the sulphur-yellow 'Toff'.

Class 56, for sprays grown under glass, was also won by a Vireya from Chris Fairweather. It was called 'Pink Delight' and was indeed a delight – in first class condition, bushy, compact and with about 20

vermilion flowers to each exotic truss. This was the only entry in the class.

Class 57, for evergreen azalea sprays, was another well-supported class with eight entries. Both first and second prizes went to Exbury who staged that excellent old favourite 'Hinodegiri' packed with crimson flowers and then a debatably named, but very attractive, pink runner-up. Third prize went to Clyne for their impressive red-flowered 'Ima-shojo'.

Outside of the competition, the RHS Garden Wisley put up for an award a fine red-flowered plant named 'Monica'. It was *R. forrestii* var. *repens* × 'Dr H.C. Dresselhuys'. For some reason it was denied an award but nevertheless looked full of promise and quite able to hold its own with the best of the medium-growing reds.

Brian Wright

### Early Camellia Competition –

13–14 March 2001

Although the excessive rainfall we had endured during the winter and spring of 2000/2001 had caused trouble for many trees and shrubs camellias did not seem to take it amiss and the blooms exhibited were of a very high quality. The number of exhibits, however, was seriously down.

#### Section A – cultivars of *Camellia japonica*

There were only two entries in Class 10 for single Japonica cultivars, three single blooms, one of each. This was won by Mr J Brixey with 'Evelyn', a lovely single deep red flower, 'Clarissa' and 'Apple Blossom'. Second came Chatsworth House Trust showing 'Adelina Patti', 'Alba Simplex' and 'Jupiter'.

Class 11 was for any single-flowered Japonica cultivar. There were five entries.

Chatsworth House Trust came first with 'Jupiter', second with 'Alba Simplex' and fourth with an unknown cultivar while Mr Brixley came third with 'Furo An'.

Class 12 for any three semi-double cultivars, one bloom of each, attracted four entries. First was Chatsworth House Trust which showed 'Magnoliaeflora' – a really superb bloom – 'Mrs D.W. Davis' and 'Tricolour'. Second was Mrs B Griffiths with 'Magnoliaeflora', 'Lady Vansittart Sport' (a good red) and 'Lady Vansittart', and third Chatsworth House Trust showing 'Dr Tinsley', 'Guilio Nuccio' and 'Drama Girl'.

Class 13. This class was for any semi-double cultivar and attracted 13 entries. It is worth noting that in 2000 this class attracted 23 entries. Whatever could have happened to the missing 10? First came Mrs B Griffiths with a most beautiful but unknown bloom – red with white markings, second Mr A W Simons with 'Flora', a very pretty bloom, white with pink splashes and third Mr J Brixey with 'Robert Strauss'.

Class 14 for any three anemone- or peony-formed cultivars attracted three entries compared with 12 in 2000 – why? Chatsworth House Trust won with 'Easter Morn', a very lovely soft shell pink cultivar that performs well, 'Dixie Knight' and 'Elegans'. Second was David Davis with 'Onitia Holland', 'Olwen Henry' and 'Mary Costa' and third, Mr J Brixey with 'Althaeflora', 'Gus Menard' and 'Faith'. This was a superb class with lovely exhibits from all.

Class 15 for any anemone- or peony-flowered cultivar had 15 entries against 23 the previous year. The winners appear in both years. First was David Davis with 'Onitia Holland', a most deserved award, second Mr Betheley with a lovely 'Margaret

Davis' and third David Davis with a rather large-flowered 'Owen Henry'.

Class 16, any three rose-formed or formal-double cultivars, one bloom of each. First was David Davis who showed 'Desire', 'Fimbricata' and 'Nuccio's Pearl'. Second was Chatsworth House Trust showing 'Madame lebois', 'Souvenir de Bahuaud-Litou' and 'Alba Plena'. Third was Mr J Brixey showing 'Prince Eugène Napoléon', 'Jean Clere' and an unknown bloom.

Class 17 for any rose-formed or formal-double cultivar had 12 entries. First was Mr Betteley with 'Augusto Leal de Gouveia Pinto', second Mr J Brixey with 'Julia Drayton' (a very lovely red 'Mathotiana' variety). There was no award for third but fourth was 'Nuccio's Pearl' from David Davis while Chatsworth House Trust was highly commended for its exhibit of 'Mathotiana Rubra'.

Class 18 was a demanding class for mixed types of *C. japonica* – any six cultivars one bloom of each. In 2000 there were 11 entries but this year only two. First came Chatsworth House Trust showing 'Magnoliaeflora', 'Mathotiana Rubra', 'Mark Alan', an exceptionally fine flower with spiky petals and a good red colour, with 'Elegans', 'Alba Plena' and 'R. L. Wheeler'. Second was Mr J Brixey showing 'Furo-an', 'Evelyn', 'Robert Strauss', 'Gloire de Nantes', 'Aaron's Ruby' and 'Althaeflora'.

Class 19, for any three cultivars of *C. japonica*, one bloom of each, had eight entries. First prize went to Chatsworth House Trust with 'Guilio Nuccio', 'Easter Morn' and 'Drama Girl'. Second was David Davis with 'Owen Henry', 'Margaret Davis' and 'Nuccio's Pearl' and third Mr Betteley with 'Margaret Davis' and 'Just Sue' which

is a sport of 'Margaret Davis'.

Class 20, for any three hybrids, one bloom of each, had five entries against 14 last year. First was Mr Betteley showing 'Buddha', 'Water Lily' and 'Otto Hoffer', second Chatsworth House Trust with 'Leonard Messel', 'Brigadoon' and 'Water Lily' and third Mr J Brixey showing an unknown pale pink flower, 'Mary Jobson' and 'Freedom Bell'.

Class 21, for any Reticulata Hybrid of which one parent is *C. × williamsii* or *C. saluenensis*, had seven entries. As in 2000 'Francie L.' took first, this time for Chatsworth House Trust. Second was Jonathan Jones with 'Salutation' and third Chatsworth again with 'Leonard Messel'.

Class 22, for any Reticulata camellia species or hybrid, attracted 11 entries. Again Chatsworth's 'Francie L.' took first. It is a most beautiful flower with strong growth and leaves a quite different shape and texture from those usually seen. Second was David Davis with 'Harold L. Paige' (see the front cover of *Rhododendrons with Camellias and Magnolias 2001* to see the exquisite beauty of this flower), third A W Simons showing 'Interval' and fourth Chatsworth with 'Captain Rawes'.

Class 23 for any three *C. × williamsii*, one bloom each, was won by Chatsworth with 'Charity', 'Brigadoon' and 'Daintiness'. Second, Mrs B Griffiths showing 'J.C. Williams', 'Debbie' and 'Anticipation', third Chatsworth with 'Dainty Dale', 'Donation' and 'Water Lily'.

Class 24, for any single *C. × williamsii*, had 10 entries. First prize went to A W Simons with a beautiful single white with good stamens, name unknown. Second was Mr J Brixey with 'Hiraethlyn' and third

Chatsworth with 'Mary Larcom'.

Class 25 for any semi-double *C. × williamsii* had seven entries. First was Chatsworth with 'Brigadoon', second Mr J Brixey with 'Muskoka' (a very different bloom from that shown by Mr K T Powell in Class 24) and third Mr Brixey with 'Daintiness'.

Class 26, for any peony- or anemone-flowered *C. × williamsii*, had 10 entries against last year's 17. First Chatsworth showing 'Jury's Yellow', second D & A J Edwards showing 'Anticipation' and third David Davis with 'Debbie'.

Class 27, for any hybrid other than of *C. reticulata* or *C. × williamsii*, saw A W Simons take first with 'Nicky Crisp'. Second was Mr Betteley with 'Cindy', a quite delightful small bloom with a white centre and pale pink outer petals. Third was Mr A W Simons with 'Golden Glow'.

Class 28 was for one bloom of yellow cultivars (including blooms with cream-yellow petaloids). Sadly it attracted only one entry, a lonely bloom of 'Jury's Yellow' from Mrs B Griffiths. Last year there were nine entries.

Class 29 was for any species – one bloom – and was won by Mr J Brixey with *C. saluenensis*. Second and third was Mr A W Simons with *C. chekiangoleosa* and *C. saluenensis* respectively.

Class 30, for any camellia, one bloom shown by an exhibitor who has not won a first prize at a previous camellia competition was won by the Hon E A W Boscawen's gardener, Jonathan Jones, with a truly lovely bloom of 'Donation'.

### Sprays

Class 1 for any *C. japonica* cultivar had four

entries. First was Mr Betteley with a very lovely 'Margaret Davis', second Marigold Assinder with 'Debutante' and third the Hon E A W Boscawen (Jonathan Jones) with 'Akashigata'.

Class 2 had five entires for any *C. × williamsii* cultivar. Mr Betteley took first with 'Water Lily', Marigold Assinder second with 'E.G. Waterhouse', Mr J Brixey third with 'Hiraethlyn' and the Hon E A W Boscawen (Jonathan Jones) fourth with 'Inspiration'.

Class 3 for any hybrid or species not eligible for the previous classes had two entries. First was Mr Betteley showing 'Miss Tulare'. The other entry, 'Crimson Robe', was a superb double red.

### Main Camellia Competition –

10–11 April 2001

#### Division 1 - Sprays

Class 1 for any three, one of each had six entries. The winning bloom was unfortunately missing but second was Ann Hooton with 'Twilight' and third Mrs B Griffiths with 'Blue Danube'.

Class 2 for any three *C. japonica* cultivars, one of each, was won by Ann Hooton with 'Matterhorn' with Mrs B Griffiths second with 'Thelma Dale'.

Class 3, for any *C. japonica* cultivar, was won by Mrs B Griffiths with 'Contessa Lavinia Maggi' while in second was Dr John Drayton and in third Mr K T Powell with 'Ruddigore'.

Class 4, for any *C. × williamsii* cultivar, was taken by Mr K T Powell with 'Francis Hanger', Ann Hooton took second with 'William Carlyon' and Diane Webb third with 'Jury's Yellow'.

Class 5, for any other species or

hybrid, was taken by Mrs B Griffiths with 'Dr Clifford Parkes' with D R Strauss in second with 'Black Lace'.

#### Division 11 - blooms

Class 10 was for any 12, one bloom of each. The winner of this class is presented with the Leonardslee Bowl. Each exhibit demands 12 blooms and there were nine entries, three more than last year. First place was awarded to David Davis (see Fig. 30) and it was a richly deserved prize for a superb entry comprising 'Commander Mulroy', 'Nicky Crisp', 'Berenice', 'Perfection', 'Anne Wylam', 'Margaret Davis', 'C.M. Hovey', 'Onitia Holland', 'Elegans', 'Nuccio's Pearl', 'Nuccio's Gem', 'Harold L. Paige' and 'Diana's Charm'. Second was last year's winner A W Simons, third Ann Hooton and fourth D R Strauss who also took a highly commended with his second entry. In the two entries he showed no duplicates.

Class 11, for any six cultivars, one bloom of each, had nine entries. First was David Davis (who also won this class last year) with 'Anne Wylam', 'Nuccio's Gem', 'Margaret Davis', 'Nuccio's Pearl', 'Onitia Holland' and 'C.M. Hovey'. Second was Brian Wright with 'Donation', 'Inspiration', 'J.J. Whitfield', 'Brigadoon', 'Anticipation' and 'Arbutus Gum'. Third was Ann Hooton with 'Rubescens Major', 'Twilight', 'Margaret Davis' 'Juno', 'Anticipation' and 'Haku-Rakuten'. Mr Betteley took fourth with his collection of 'Commander Mulroy', an unknown cultivar, 'Corvetti', 'Valterarada', 'Tom Thumb' and 'Francie L.' There was an exceptional 'Cinderella' shown in this class by D R Strauss which, although not placed, was a truly amazing

bloom with a pink and white fringe.

Class 12 for any three single-flowered cultivars of *C. japonica*, one bloom of each was taken by Ann Hooton with 'Spencer's Pink', 'Henry Turnbull' and 'Maggie Cole'. D R Strauss took both second and third with 'Apple Blossom', 'Furo-an' and 'Clarissa' and 'White Swan' 'Evelyn' and 'Rogetsu' respectively.

Class 13, for any single-flowered cultivar of *C. japonica*, had 14 entries against only six the previous year. Mr Betteley took first with 'Ohkan', Ann Hooton second with an unnamed entry and Mr and Mrs Short third with 'Adelina Patti'.

Class 14, for any three semi-double cultivars of *C. japonica*, one bloom of each, had seven entries. First was Ann Hooton with 'Adolphe Audusson', 'Haku-Rakuten' and 'Bob Hope', second A W Simons with 'Wildfire', 'Guilio Nuccio' and 'Mrs D.W. Davis' and third D R Strauss with 'Dr Burnside', 'Cinderella' and 'Mrs D.W. Davis'.

Class 15, for any semi-double cultivar of *C. japonica*, had seven entries against nine last year. A W Simons took first with 'Guilio Nuccio', Mrs J Handley (a welcome new exhibitor) second with 'Wildfire' and D R Strauss third and fourth with 'Gloire de Nantes' and 'White Nun'.

Class 16, for any three anemone- or peony-formed cultivars of *C. japonica*, one bloom of each, had five entries. First was A W Simons with 'Mark Alan', 'William Honey' and 'Brushfield's Yellow', second Ann Hooton with 'Miss Charleston', 'Tomorrow Park Hill' and 'R.L. Wheeler' and third David Davis with 'Shiro Chan', 'Elegans' and 'Onitia Holland'.

Class 17 for any anemone- or peony-

formed cultivar of *C. japonica*, had 21 entries compared with only eight the previous year. First was Ann Hooton with 'Tomorrow Park Hill', second Dr John Drayton with 'Kramer's Supreme' and third A W Simons with 'Takanini' which is a really tiny but dainty flower.

Class 18, for any three rose-formed or formal-double cultivars of *C. japonica*, one bloom of each, had eight entries. First and second was David Davis with 'Twilight', 'Nuccio's Gem' and 'Nuccio's Pearl' and 'Commander Mulroy', 'Nuccio's Pearl' and 'Diana's Charm' respectively. A W Simons took third with 'Wilamina', 'Desire' and 'Augusto Leal de Gouveia Pinto'.

Class 19, for any rose-formed or formal-double cultivar of *C. japonica*, had 18 entries against last year's 10. First was A W Simons with 'Augusto Leal de Gouveia Pinto', second Ann Hooton with 'Margaret Davis' and third David Davis showing 'Commander Mulroy'.

Class 20, for any three other cultivars of *C. japonica*, had seven entries. Ann Hooton took first with a beautiful group of reds, 'Dr Clifford Parkes', 'Miss Tulare' and 'Royalty', Mr Betteley second with 'Francie L.', 'Interval' and 'Royalty' and third David Davis with 'Nicky Crisp', 'Hope' and 'Harold L. Paige'.

Class 21 was for any reticulata, species or hybrid, one bloom, and had 11 entries. First and second went to D R Strauss for 'Lasca Beauty' and 'Black Lace' while Ann Hooton took third with 'Royalty'.

Class 22, for any three *C. × williamsii* cultivars, one bloom of each, had five entries. D R Strauss took first with 'E.G.

Waterhouse', 'Charleen' and 'Brigadoon', Mr Betteley second with 'E.G. Waterhouse', 'Debbie' and 'Water Lily' and third Ann Hooton showing 'Mary Larcom', 'Brigadoon' and Daintiness'.

Class 23, for any single-flowered *C. × williamsii* cultivar, had 12 entries. D R Strauss took first with 'Mary Jobson' and second with 'Francis Hanger' while in third was Ann Hooton with 'William Carlyon'.

Class 25 for any anemone- or peony-formed *C. × williamsii* cultivar, one bloom, had 17 entries. First was David Davis with 'Debbie', second Dr John Drayton with 'Debbie' and third A W Simons also with 'Debbie' – a popular girl.

Class 26, for any rose-formed or formal-double *C. × williamsii* cultivar, one bloom, had 17 entries. Mr Betteley took first with 'Water Lily', A W Simons second with 'Dreamboat' and Ann Hooton third with 'Julia Hamiter'.

Class 27, for any species or hybrid not specified above, had 11 entries. First was David Davis with 'Nicky Crisp' (a repeat of his 2000 entry), second A W Simons with 'Honey Glow' (is this a mistake for 'Honey Moon' which was placed second in this class in 2000?) and third A W Simons with 'Souza's Pavlova'.

Class 28, an arrangement of camellias shown for effect using no other plant material, was won by Ann Hooton with a lovely display of 'Jingle Bells'. Mrs B Griffiths came third with a beautiful display which used 'Thelma Dale', 'Chandlers Elegans' and an unknown cultivar.

Cicely Perring

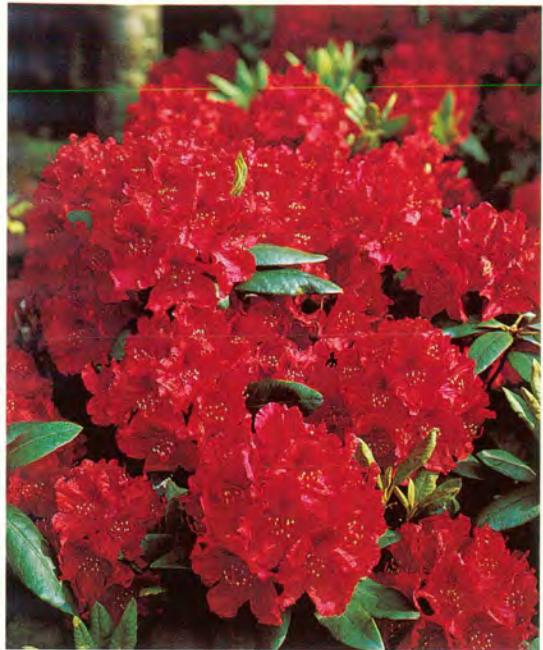


Fig. 21: Rhododendron 'Erato' (see p.49)



Fig. 22: Rhododendron 'Hachmann's Charmant'  
(see p.50)



Fig. 23: Rhododendron 'Goldprinz' (see p.51)

*Rhododendrons with Camellias and Magnolias 2002*





Fig. 24 (above left): An unknown yellow magnolia hybrid, winner of the Photographic Competition for Dr G B Hargreaves (see p.46)

Fig. 25 (above): Rhododendron 'Vulcan' which was second in the Photographic Competition, taken by Mr C F Taylor (see p.46)

Fig. 26 (left): Rhododendron dalhousiae x lindleyi which took third place in the Photographic Competition for Mr C R Waddington (see p.46)

Fig. 27 (right): Rhododendron 'White Swan', winner of the Spouse Section of the Photographic Competition from Mrs J D Bottle (see p.46)





Fig. 28 (above left):  
Rhododendron 'Lionel's Triumph'  
(E de Rothschild Exbury Gardens)  
winner of first prize in class 35 of  
the Main Rhododendron  
Competition at Westminster  
(see p. 74)

Fig. 29 (above right): An unusual  
Rhododendron ponticum with an  
almost nerine-like corolla,  
photographed by Irish Member  
Mr H V Gardiner

Fig. 30 (left): David Davis's superb  
12 camellia blooms that won the  
2001 Leonardslee Bowl (see p. 77)

# AWARDS



## ***Camellia japonica* 'Black Tie'**

Award of Merit 13 March 2001 as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition. Flower miniature formal double, 70mm diameter; petals c.50, red (45A), outer 35 x 25mm, inner 25 x 10mm. Leaves broadly elliptic, shiny, dark green. The opening flower passes through a distinctive 'rose-bud' stage when the outer petals are open and the inner ones form a neat cone. Raised by S C Walden Jr, USA. Exhibited by Dr J A Smart, Marwood Hill, Marwood, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 4EB. Specimen and transparency in Herb. Hort. Wisley (WSY).

## ***Rhododendron* 'Mrs Lionel de Rothschild'**

First Class Certificate 21 May 2001 as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition. Truss of c.18 flowers, 160mm in diameter. Corolla openly funnel-shaped, 40 x 70mm, 5-lobed, white, lobes edged with very thin purplish-pink line, prominent dorsal blotch of contiguous red-purple (59B) flecks on upper lobe extending slightly to lateral lobes. Stamens 10-11, 35mm, included; filaments white, slightly pubescent at base; anthers pale pinkish-beige. Style 30mm, white, faintly green and slightly pubescent at base; ovary dark green, glandular. Calyx very irregular with some lobes to 10mm, reddish-purple (59C). Pedicel 40-60mm, reddish-purple (59C). Leaves oblong, 170 x 50mm, scattered black hair-bases along midrib on underside. Probably raised by A Waterer. Exhibited by Edmund de Rothschild, Exbury Gardens, South-

ampton, Hampshire SO45 1AZ. Specimen and transparency in Herb. Hort. Wisley.

## ***Rhododendron* 'Ken Janeck'**

Seedling of *R. yakushimanum*. Award of Merit 21 May 2001 as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition. Rounded truss of c.12 flowers, 160mm in diameter. Corolla 50 x 70mm, funnel-campanulate, 5-lobed, white with faint pink flushing confined to exterior midrib of some lobes, dorsal blotch 20 x 20mm of diffuse, pale green (145A) spots. Stamens 10, 35mm, included; filaments white, pubescent at base; anthers pale brown. Style 40mm, greenish-white, flushed pink at apex; ovary dark green, pubescent. Calyx insignificant, to 3mm, pubescent. Pedicel 50-60mm, green with faint red flushing, pubescent. Leaves oblong-elliptic, 120 x 35mm, underside with dense, pale brown indumentum. Raised by K Janeck. Exhibited by Crown Estate Commissioners, The Great Park, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2HT. Specimen and transparency in Herb. Hort. Wisley.

## **Awards awaiting confirmation**

***Rhododendron* Augfast Group** from RHS Wisley (subject to registration of an acceptable cultivar name).

***Rhododendron* un-named no.2** from Exbury Gardens (subject to registration of an acceptable cultivar name).

***Rhododendron* un-named** from Millais Nurseries (subject to registration of an acceptable cultivar name)

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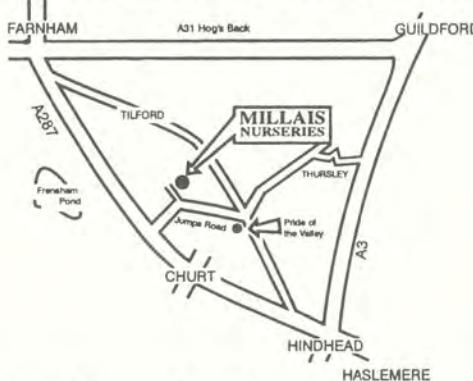
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This is a full-color treatment of all those temperate species currently in cultivation. 1st edition sold out soon after the initial publication. Due to popular demand, a **Second Edition** has been published featuring all of the original material as well as **three additional pages** featuring new species introduced since 1997. These include *R. monanthum*, *R. platypodium*, *R. miniatum*, *R. gongshanense* and several others.

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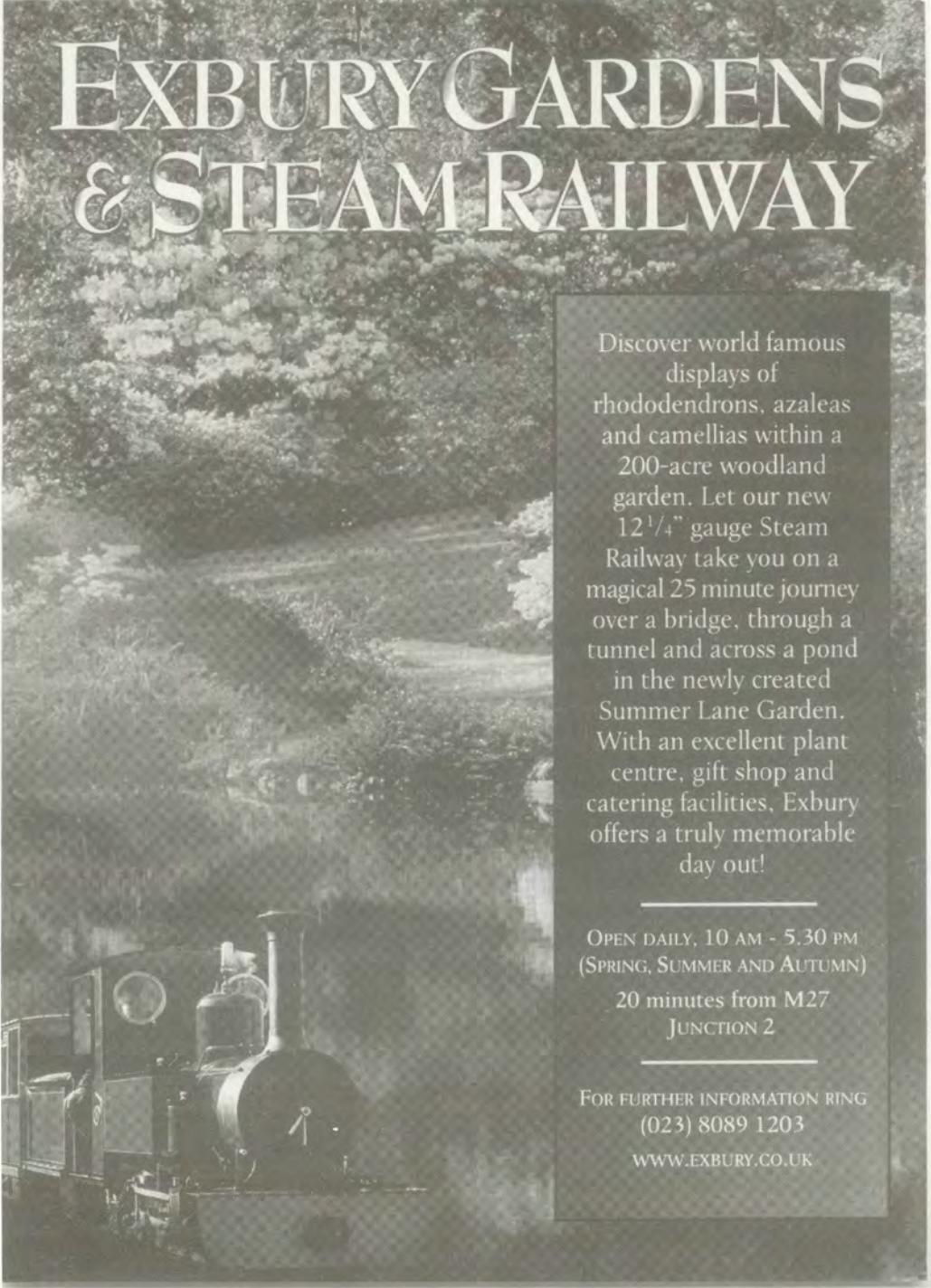
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