

RHODODENDRON AND CAMELLIA GROUP.

BULLETIN NO. 10. OCTOBER 1979.

CALENDAR FOR NEXT FEW MONTHS.
1980.

FEB 9 Restaurant at Wisley re-opens at 10.30 a.m. for season.
19-20 RHS Show - first of the new year.
19 RHS Annual General Meeting at 2.30 p.m. N.B. TUESDAY.
MAR 1 Savill Garden and Restaurant re-open for season (below).
11 RHS Early Spring Show.

FOR MORE 1980 CALENDAR DATES, SEE NEXT BULLETIN, NO.11.

MATTERS OF IMMEDIATE OR CURRENT INTEREST.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. Please read the important notice below and over, from the Group's Honorary Treasurer, immediately, and if need be complete and return the cut-off slip at the foot of this page.

GARDEN OPEN. The Savill Garden, Windsor, which is usually closed from late autumn until early spring, is this year still opening daily and will continue to do so until Christmas Eve 24th December. This new arrangement will be repeated in future years. The Plant, Gift and Book Centre will also be open until 24th December, but the Restaurant is closed. The Garden and the Restaurant will both re-open on 1st March. Visitors are thus enabled to see many winter-flowering and berrying plants, as well as bark, foliage, pattern and design effects, which they have not previously been able to enjoy. An advertisement giving particulars of the Savill Garden's former opening arrangements appeared in the September issue of "The Garden" but the information given here replaces some of them.

JOB OPPORTUNITY - THE SPECIES COLLECTION. I have just heard from Mr John Bond, Keeper of the Gardens, that there is a vacancy for a charge-hand for the Species Collection in the Valley Garden at Windsor. The appointment will preferably be made for January 1980. The vacancy is caused by the unexpectedly early retirement of the holder of the post, and a house can be made available to the successful applicant. Anyone interested should get in touch with Mr Bond immediately. His address is:-

J.D.Bond, Esq.,
Crown Estate Office,
Great Park, WINDSOR, Berks.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE GROUP are now due (1st NOV) for year 1979-80.

1. Members already paying by Bankers Order need read no further, but accept our thanks for their help and co-operation.
2. Other members of the Group are requested to complete the tear-off slip below and return it to the Treasurer, as soon as possible please. Wherever possible, please complete the request for a Bankers Order form, as this saves the Treasurer much work and saves the member the worry and uncertainty of paying the subscription on time each year.
3. Those members who are in arrears with their 1978/79 subscription will receive a personal notice of reminder with this Bulletin, and are being invited to pay the two years together, whereupon the new Year Book will be despatched to them when it is published.
4. Overseas members are asked, wherever possible, to send their cheques or International money orders drawn on Banks with a U.K. (London, usually) branch office. In this way, their cheques can be

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CUT OFF OR TEAR OFF. To be sent to the HON. TREASURER of the Rhododendron and Camellia Group.

FROM. Name _____
Address _____

D.N.Farnes,
"Corton Lodge",
7, Burntwood Avenue,
Emerson Park,
HORNCHURCH,
Essex RM11 3JD.

TELEPHONE: HORNCHURCH 40536.

- * a) I enclose cheque for £_____ for my subscription for 1979-80.
- * b) Please send me a Bankers Order form for subscription to the Group.

* PLEASE DELETE AS APPROPRIATE.

THANK YOU.

(TREASURER'S NOTICE about subscriptions, continued from Page 1).

made out in Sterling, thus saving firstly any conversion charges when the cheques are paid, and secondly problems of equivalent currency in the ever-fluctuating rates of exchange.

It is possible for overseas members to combine their subscription with their R.H.S. membership (due 1st January each year) but it is essential to inform the R.H.S. office how the monies are to be apportioned. In the past, several subscriptions intended for the Group have been long delayed or even never reached us at all.

5. The rates of subscription remain unchanged at £3.00 per annum (or £1.50 for those not requiring the Year Book).

6. Those members who have queries about their subscriptions, before completing the slip below or sending their cheques, should not hesitate to telephone the Treasurer (available most evenings after 6.30 p.m.). With the new index of members now complete, an answer should be possible, in most cases, within ten seconds.

DAVID FARNES.

EDITORIAL.

Regular readers of the Bulletin may feel that the "Calendar for next few months" section is very slight this time. This is not so much fortuitous as deliberate. Bulletin No. 11 is "due", in my way of timing issues, in January 1980; it will probably arrive in most members' letter-boxes in February. In the interval I expect the seasonal holidays and festivities to have more importance in real life than a few bulletin dates in an envelope which has been put aside "for the moment".

I have in fact a few more dates in mind than are shown on Page 1, for these merely presage the new season. By the time the new Bulletin, No. 11, arrives in the New Year, there will be a more extended Calendar and it should by then seem to have a new relevance, for the new season will be in sight. As I have mentioned before, the new sap will be rising. For instance I know that a date is being arranged by the South of England Branch, which may well be clear by the time No. 11 is being prepared; furthermore, the Wessex Branch have two dates arranged already (see further on), and there could well be a third before the dark nights are over; for these, the next paragraph sheds a little November light.

WESSEX BRANCH. This branch covers Surrey, Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and Berkshire. The South of England Branch ("Sussex Branch") covers the slice to the east of this area. Quite a lot of Group members live in the middle of the double area, and Mr. Dudley-Cooke has asked me to make it clear that Members outside the Wessex area would be more than welcome to attend any of their meetings; further information, if needed, may be obtained from:-

Mrs N. Sanders,
Badger Cottage, Guildford Road,
BAGSHOT, Surrey. Telephone - BAGSHOT 73439.

I recently took advantage of this welcome facility, and had a very enjoyable evening at the home of Mr and Mrs Ted Millais, at their nursery (rhododendron nursery, of course) at Churt, Farnham, Surrey. The atmosphere was informal and personal - my own preferred atmosphere - and the arrangement was in my view an ideal one. First, a quiz panel, consisting of Lady Adam Gordon, Mr John Bond and Mr Millais himself, answered a lot of good questions, and their

PLEASE ATTEND TO THE SUBSCRIPTIONS SLIP ON PAGE 1

OVERLEAF, IF THERE IS NEED.

On 9th February 1980, at a venue to be announced, Mr Bond will give a lecture on the Valley and Savill Gardens at Windsor. Another date, 10th May, has been fixed for a visit to Wakehurst Place, Sussex.

SOUTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH. At a recent meeting about 120 transparencies were shown of Rhododendrons in Scottish gardens. Apart from the Botanic Garden at Edinburgh, these were Argyll gardens, and all of them had been visited by members of the Group on the Scottish tour earlier this year. The photographer/projectionist thoroughly enjoyed himself, and hopes the others did. On this occasion we enjoyed the hospitality of Mrs Benn and Miss Preston at Slaugham Park, Handcross, Sussex.

Another meeting is being planned for early in 1980; details may well be clinched in time for Bulletin No. 11.

GROUP ACTIVITIES IN SPRING 1980 - advance notes. Arrangements for the 1980 Tour of gardens in Cornwall are well under way - see the Chairman's summary further on. Bulletin No. 11 will give last-minute clearing-up information if there is any, as well as more information about the projected one-day visit to gardens in Kent. One of them is Major Hardy's garden, Sandling Park, and another owner is being approached; the Group's Vice-Chairman, Mr Alan Hardy, is kindly handling these arrangements, which are for the Wednesday of Chelsea week. Members on the Cornish Tour will also be able to visit Rosemoor (The Lady Anne Palmer) and Marwood Hill (Dr J.A.Smart), should they have time; these are two post-war gardens in Devon. Lastly, for the moment at any rate, there is a possibility of a visit to another garden during Chelsea week. I hope to be able to amplify and where necessary confirm this promising programme in the next bulletin. Please do not overlook the overlap of the end of the Cornish Tour with the Rhododendron Show at Vincent Square (April 29th and 30th).

THE SPECIES HANDBOOK. Although I have no definite dates to cite, I understand from informed hearsay that the new edition of the Species Handbook is now on true course. I think that this means that whereas we used to say "a few years" we can now reasonably say "a few months"; but with an undertaking of this magnitude I also think that it does NOT mean "a few weeks".

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES.

THE CORNISH TOUR, APRIL 1980.

So far forty people have registered for this tour, of whom only twelve have asked for accommodation to be arranged, and only four have asked for transport. The following arrangements have been made, on the advice of the Organisers of the South-West and Wessex Regional Branches:

FRI 25 APR Truro Show 12 noon

Lunch with the Judges and Committee

Lecture in Truro

8 p.m.

(continued overleaf, Page 4. The reply slip below refers.)

CUT OFF OR TEAR OFF.

THE CORNISH TOUR, APRIL 1980.

To: Major E.W.M. Magor, CMG, OBE,
Lamellen, St Tudy, Bodmin, PL30 3NR.

IN BLOCKS PLEASE.

From: Name

Address.....

I / WE would like to participate in this Tour. Please advise on procedure in due course.

Date.....Signature.....

SAT 26 APR	Trelissick (R.Spencer Copeland Esq and the National Trust) Caerhays Castle (F.Julian Williams Esq)	10 a.m. 2.30 p.m.
SUN 27 APR	Penwarne (J.M.Williams Esq) Penjerrick (Mrs J.H.K.Fox) (Guide, Dr V.Challinor Davies) Glendurgan (P.H.Fox Esq and the National Trust)	10 a.m. 11.30 a.m. 2.30 p.m.
MON 28 APR	Chyverton (N.T.Holman Esq, President, Cornwall Garden Society) Trewithen (A.M.J.Galsworthy Esq)	10 a.m. 2 p.m.
TUE 29 APR	Trewidden (A.R.Bolitho Esq) Trenwainton (Major S.E.Bolitho and the National Trust)	10 a.m. 2.30 p.m.

There are a number of other rhododendron gardens in Cornwall worth seeing, and it would be possible to visit one after the Show on the afternoon of the 25th, and a programme could also be arranged for Wednesday 30th if members wish, though it is regretted that the St Tudy gardens cannot be included, owing to the Rhododendron Show being a week earlier than usual. Other members wishing to take part in this tour are asked to inform the chairman as soon as possible. It is for this purpose that the slip is provided at the foot of Page 3.

COULD YOU HAVE GUESSED ? The extracts which follow refer to five (different) rhododendrons. The sources are given on a later page, along with, of course, the identifications.

(a) ".....one which, in my opinion, will hold its own with any other rhododendron. Seen at its best, it is laden with trusses of delicate rose-pink, crimson-spotted blooms, a shrub of pleasing proportions, pyramidal in shape, with the long lower branches spreading so that they conceal the stem and completely cover the surrounding ground".

(b) "The Rhododendron referred to is one of the most beautiful, with compact trusses of white, or more commonly, rosy-red (occasionally deep red) flowers; the leaves are small, displaying the trusses of flowers to great advantage. This species is usually a bush five to eight feet tall, and of about the same dimensions through the head; more rarely it is fifteen to twenty feet tall".

(c) ".....is unlike any other known rhododendron....."

(d) "Blooms in June in central Manchuria".

(e) ".....it competes with R.ponticum".

Obviously these are not adequate descriptions for identification purposes; but when you get to the answers you may find you share the surprise I felt on encountering each one in context. EDITOR.

DO YOU NEED TO COMPLETE AND SEND OFF THE

SLIP OVERLEAF ?

.....

.....

EFFECTS OF THE 1978-9 WINTER.

There has been an interesting response to the Chairman's notes in Bulletin No. 9 and Sir Giles Loder's note on Camellia 'Elsie Jury'. In reply to the latter Mr David Trehane sent the very interesting letter which I reproduce here.

CAMELLIA ELSIE JURY WINTER 1978-9. There is no doubt that this camellia suffered in many places in this drastic winter. In our nursery we lost many young plants which had been fed too late and the older ones lost their flower buds. This happened in garden centres up north.

Against this I had reports sent to me praising its success in Kent and my own plants in Cornwall did not suffer. These are in a cold garden. Lomatia ferruginea a few feet away was killed and a Myrtus luma damaged and all the other myrtles were cut to ground level. The Hebes and Senecio greyi were killed in the same garden but Rhododendron nuttallii in a corner of the ruins is shooting from low down. The perverseness of all this is made clear when I mention that the Hebes and Senecio seen on a road roundabout at Horsham were flourishing - just down the road from Sir Giles' 'Elsie Jury'.

The japonica parent of 'Elsie Jury' is 'Pukekura White'. I know nothing of it but I doubt if its parentage contributes to the failure of the flower buds of 'Elsie Jury' to withstand the winter.

I believe that the cause of much of the damage done by the winter, particularly in Cornwall, was that the cold summer was followed by a warm growthy autumn which prevented ripening of sap and wood. Instead of the normal protective composition of the cell water, or sap, which a normal summer and autumn promote, there were chemicals running up the vascular system instead of down, thus creating the conditions for bark split and bud drop.

The best description of the processes involved in winter injury is probably on pages 273-4 of David Leach's 'Rhododendrons of the World'. I think that Peter Chappell will find the cause of his bark split there and go out and look critically at his water-loving pine trees sucking away at his sandy New Forest mixture which is called soil for lack of something better - marvellous stuff for blueberries at pH 4.5 !

Looking around again at a lot of secondary growth on camellias and feeling that northerly chill which the Old Men never knew in Cornwall I wonder if we are in for a second dose ! God forbid !

DAVID TREHANE.

Next, a detailed and most informative summary from Mr Nigel Holman of Chyverton, which the Cornish Tour party will have the good fortune to visit next April. Mr Holman presents an overall picture dealing with camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons in the garden at Zelah, Truro, Cornwall, and the effect of the winter of 1978/79.

Camellia x Cornish Snow; UD (= undamaged); North Wall; 1955.
C. reticulata, forma simplex; UD; many, all open ground; 1935-68.
C. reticulata Capt Rawes; some die-back; 50% bud drop; West wall; 1935.
C.r. Crimson Robe; 100% bud drop; open ground; very sheltered; 1966.
C.r. Lionhead; 100% bud drop; open ground; very sheltered; 1964.
C.r. Noble Pearl; 80% bud drop; open ground; very sheltered; 1966.
C.r. Purple Gown; 100% bud drop; open ground; very sheltered; 1964.
C.r. Robert Fortune; 80% bud drop; West wall; 1958.

C.r. Arch of Triumph; UD; West wall; 1976.
C.r. Royalty; UD; West wall; 1973.
C.r. William Hertrich; UD; West wall; 1971.

C. saluenensis; leaf scorch; three; all open ground; '30's.
C. sasangua Nurumi-gata; 100% flower loss; East wall; 1958.
C. sinensis; 100% bud drop; open ground; 1968.
C. taliensis; some die-back; open ground; very sheltered; 1961.
C. x williamsii Elsie Jury; UD; open ground; 1968.

(report continues on next page.)

- Magnolia delavayi; some die-back, 80% leaf loss, but flowered normally; open ground; 1953; (Caerhays, i.e. Wilson)
- M. grandiflora; UD; South wall; c.1850.
- M. grandiflora Goliath; SW wall; UD; 1938.
- M. nitida; severe die-back; 100% bud loss; complete defoliation (first break on 5th July; Lanarth 1957 (probably F.26509; East wall.
- ditto UD; very sheltered SW wall (corner); 1978 (Treseder from Caerhays, could be F.26381).
- Michelia doltsopa; severe die-back; complete leaf and flower-bud loss; open ground; 1951 Hillier; near-glabrous form close to M. floribunda; 45 ft tree.
- Rhododendrons. S. Maddenii.
ss. Ciliicalyx.
R. burmanicum v. 'Lanarth'. Defoliated, some die-back; 100% bud loss; now looking well; sheltered; Fortescue, Buckland Monachorum ex Lanarth; 1963.
R. ciliatum; UD; several, open ground, but sheltered from East; Gill; 1930.
R. fletcherianum; UD; sheltered; Cox 1968.
R. formosum; 25% die-back, 80% defoliation, 50% flower bud loss; 1960.
R. iteophyllum; plant reduced by 50%; sheltered 1960.
R. scopulorum; plant reduced by 80%; very sheltered North wall; Magor c.1970.
ss. Maddenii.
R. crassum; two planted 1935 (Tremough) as R. maddenii; very sheltered; severely damaged (80% plant loss). These have never before been injured by frost. One planted 1972; more exposed than above, but UD; Magor, 1972.
R. maddenii; UD; sheltered; 1970 as v. jenkinsii.
R. manipurense; 50% growth loss; sheltered; 1965.
ss. Megacalyx.
R. lindleyi; two, severe damage; open ground; seed ex Hardy (Brodick); 1965.
S. Cinnabarinum.
R. cinnabarinum v. Nepal; LSH 21283; UD; 1960.
v. roylei; Hooker (layer from Carclew, one-time home of Sir Charles Lemon, a friend of Hooker; original no longer in that garden); UD; 1925.
v. purpurellum; LST 6349; Ingram 1965; UD.
R. concatenans; UD; 1960.
R. xanthocodon; KW 6026; UD; Harry White 1935.
S. Grande.
R. coryphaeum; UD; 1960.
R. grande; defoliated; seed ex Hardy (Brodick) 1965.
R. macabeaenum; KW 7724; UD; 1930.
two ex Reuthe 1960; some die-back; lost flower buds.
three ex Hardy (Brodick) (seed) 1965; severely damaged.
R. mollyanum; ex Windsor 1960; defoliated.
R. sinogrande; ex Caerhays 1953; K; This species has never survived for long in the garden (first planted 1930).
S. Fortunei ss Griffithianum.
R. griffithianum; ex Fortescue 1964; defoliated, some die-back. Cox and Hutchison 389; open ground; severe damage; 1968.
S. Neriiflorum ss Haematodes.
R. mallosum; two ex Reuthe 1964; slight damage.

NIGEL HOLMAN.

We now have a report from Sir Peter Smithers, and as this refers to the winter in Switzerland, yet includes several of the plants mentioned by Mr Holman, it is of particular interest because of the comparisons that can be made. Sir Peter has thoughtfully explained the climatic conditions which normally obtain. In view of the offer contained in the last sentence of his report I quote his postal address here:

Sir Peter Smithers,
CH-6911 Vico Morcote,
SWITZERLAND.

Winter of 1979. Lowest temperature minus twelve degrees Centigrade in January accompanied by high north winds. Exposure of the garden, a SE slope. Altitude 384 meters. Soil, slightly acid rapidly draining on micaceous schist. Rainfall 75" distributed throughout the year but heaviest in spring-summer and lightest in late autumn and winter. Snow cover in winter of 1979 was of short duration. Day-night temperature differential is high and very hard frost is only of some hours duration. Sunshine 2001 hours.

Plants listed in the Rhododendron Group letter:-

<u>Camellia</u> x Cornish Snow	untouched
<u>C.granthamiana</u>	foliage untouched, buds (flower) killed
<u>C.granthamiana</u> hybrid	
China Lady	foliage untouched, bloomed normally
<u>C.reticulata</u> , cultivars	
and hybrids	foliage untouched, lost some bloom buds
<u>C.saluenensis</u>	untouched but no bloom
<u>C.sasanqua</u> , many cvs.	continued to bloom through the winter:
	unaffected
<u>C.sasanqua</u> x <u>reticulata</u>	(The Girls) same as above
<u>Magnolia delavayi</u>	defoliated but now back to normal
<u>M.grandiflora</u> 14 cvs.	unaffected
<u>Michelia doltsopa</u>	in open (as all of the above) defoliated and
	bloom buds lost. Now back to normal
<u>M.figo</u>	against a S.wall and sheltered from north:
	not affected. Bloomed freely
<u>Rhododendron burmanicum</u>	in open, bloomed normally, unaffected
<u>R.other maddenii</u> sp.	no damage to those out of doors. Only five of
	the most tender are under glass here.
<u>R.x Tyermannii</u>	in sheltered place, unaffected
<u>R.polyandrum</u> , 3 cvs	in sheltered place, unaffected
<u>R.crassum</u>	in open, unaffected
<u>R.brachysiphon</u>	in sheltered place, unaffected
<u>R.macabeaeanum</u>	unaffected
<u>R.cinnabarinum</u> (hybrids)	unaffected

In general the Maddenii group, of which we have very many spp. and hybrids, are very cold-resistant here provided that they get plenty of sun.

We grow a great many plants which are considered tender in the UK, but our conditions are so different that it seems hardly worth giving a detailed report. However, if there is any particular plant of interest I shall be glad to report on it if asked.

PETER SMITHERS.

As no report has yet come to hand from the South East corner of England, or for that matter from various other rhododendron areas, I append a brief note on the few tender plants in my own garden in Mid-Sussex. R.ciliatum; of about fifteen three-year seedlings, one had been planted out a foot from a south-facing house-wall, fully sheltered from the very strong south-west winds which often kill; it was unmarked, and has now set a flower-bud on every shoot. The remainder were close-planted in two 9" polythene pots, not sunk but under tree-cover, and were unaffected; a few have now set flower-bud. A twenty-inch x sesterianum, planted out near the ciliatum in 1978, bore flower-buds, but these were burned and never opened; there was slight damage to leaf and shoot. A bushy two-foot lindleyi in a sixteen-inch pot was left out all winter on a south and east wall; there was no apparent damage to leaf or flower-bud, but the buds never opened although they stayed green and healthy-looking until July, when they disintegrated. It has now set thirty very substantial-looking flower-buds and has been taken into the shelter of a (very) cold greenhouse; furthermore, my fingers are crossed whenever I think about it. Saffron Queen (burmanicum x xanthostephanum) lost its flower-buds as it does any hard winter; it was planted under heavy oak cover four years ago. A new replacement plant of R.johnstoneanum, whose predecessor took four years dying, was unaffected; no flower-buds yet. A five-year-old calpinense, two feet across, flowered normally in full exposure.

About a dozen young macabeanums and sinograndes, from six leaves to six years old and all in places under a high oak canopy, proceeded as normal, but of course there^{are} no flower buds to consider. In camellias on the Chairman's list I only have Cornish Cross and Francie L., in reasonably sheltered sites. Both flowered normally and well, which comprises a little usual flower damage to Cornish Cross and none at all to Francie L. I have a good many saluenensis hybrids, nearly all from Caerhays, but not the species; as usual I had some, but not very much, open blossom damage.

Finally, a full report on a major tragedy in East Anglia, when the bulk of Mr Colin Grainger's Camellia collection of over a hundred varieties was wiped out, with Rhododendrons much more tolerant of the conditions.

The winter of 1978-0. "The Cherries", Stowmarket, Suffolk.

I was only a schoolboy during the last hard winter, that of 1962-3. I can clearly remember digging cars out of the snow and wandering across the frozen lake near my parents' home. My horticultural interests only commenced in recent years, and though there is no shortage of gardeners to tell me how savage 1962-3 was, there are few factual records readily available to support their contentions. For the record book, therefore, I present some details of the experience of winter 1978-9, not a pleasant one.

Weather statistics. The driest autumn since 1752 preceded the most severe winter for sixteen years. October was mild with several day maximums exceeding 15°C (59°F), and the first half of November continued the trend. Secondary growth on Rhododendrons was a significant feature of the weather, as was the number of second-rate flower trusses. The first ground frost was suffered on November 24th, (-½), followed by a series of frosts until December 1st, the worst being -10½°C on November 29th. During this period, day-time maximums were generally below 5C (½C on November 1st). Northerly winds brought snow on November 27th and 28th. Early December was milder (up to and a little over 10C on four days) and frost free. A further cold spell followed with snow and day-time maximums below 5C, while night-minimums fell to -9C. Late December was mild and frost-free, but the 31st tumbled down to a severe -10½C. Day-time temperatures from December 29th to January 2nd failed to rise above freezing-point, with the 1st recording a maximum of -3C and a minimum of -10½C. Moscow recorded -35 degrees Centigrade on January 1st, the coldest since 1905.

The severe weather continued until the latter part of February. Maximums were sometimes below freezing and occasionally above 5C, finally climbing above 10C on March 2nd. Minimums fell to -14½C on January 27th; the lowest of the winter. Snow was a recurring feature, persisting through the second half of January, and as blizzards from February 11th to 15th.

March was milder, with temperatures up to 14½C, and only one frost below -5C (-7C, March 23rd). Spring commenced in the second week of April, but the following four weeks were cold. Mid-May saw milder weather. Precipitation had been high in December, following the abnormally dry autumn, and continued high through till April.

1946-7 was severe, so were 1961-2 and 1962-3. 1978-9 was also severe. There has been a spell of approximately sixteen years between them, but even that is too frequent for me.

The Plants. Magnolias suffered very little damage. The top bud on M. rustica rubra was killed, but M. liliflora nigra flowered magnificently. M. grandiflora 'Goliath' and 'Exmouth' were not harmed. Rhododendrons fared well. There were some casualties including a hardy hybrid. The following were killed outright: (1) Dr. A. Endtz (HH) (3' high). This plant had grossly over-flowered for several years, and growth had been disappointingly short and stubby. (2) Dragonfly (3' high). Half killed in 1976, but was recovering well. Flowering in late July, growth had been late. This plant had been well fed to help it to grow away in recovery, but this probably killed it. I shall miss this plant very much. (3) R. eximium. (4' high). In poor condition. Originally a gift given up for dead by the donor. (4) Fabia Tangerine. (2'6"). In very lush growth late November. (5) Fortune. (18") In growth during November. (6) Fusilier. (3'6") In lush growth, as usual,

late November. (7) R. macabeanum. Three plants up to 3' tall. Two were still suffering from 1976, another from moles. (8) May Day. (2'). Still half dead from 1976. (9) R. mollyanum. (4' tall). Another 1976 victim, in poor health. (10) R. sinogrande. (18" high). Two plants in active growth in November.

The following suffered dead wood:

(1) R. arizelum. (2' tall). Two plants, late growth, cut back to 1'. (2) Barclayi Robert Fox. (2'6" tall). Purchased May 1978 in dust-dry condition. Growth commenced in late July. Totally defoliated and some die-back, but now recovered. (3) Budock (thomsonii x Shilsonii). (2'6" tall). Another 1976 victim. Partially defoliated, much die-back, some recovery. (4) Caerhays John. (2'6" tall). In growth late. Top half killed. Excellent recovery. (5) R. eximium. (5' tall). A transplant sufferer (from another garden), killed to near ground but recovering. (6) R. falconeri. (2' tall). Growing in October. Late growth killed, but recovering well. (7) R. grande x macabeanum. Two plants: (a) (4' high) - after grande; killed to ground but recovering. (b) (5' high) - leaves 20" x 9". Easily mistaken for sinogrande. Lost its best leaves and some wood. (8) Lady Chamberlain (ex Lanhydrock). (2' tall). Late growth. Killed to 1'. Excellent recovery. (9) Lady Chamberlain Chelsea. (2' tall). In lush growth in November. Killed to ground but recovering well. (10) Lady Rosebery. (4' tall). In late growth. Killed to near ground. Incredibly vigorous recovery. (11) Pink Glory. (5' tall). A 1976 sufferer that had over-flowered for years. Killed to 1'. Limited recovery from main trunk. (12) R. smithii. (8' tall). Over-flowered and late growth. Some die-back. (13) Starcross (discolor x Lodaureic Iceberg). (3' tall). Very late secondary growth. All wood killed except one lateral off main trunk. Lateral still growing. (14) Tally Ho. (4' tall). Season's growth killed. Recovering.

Surprisingly, the griffithianum hybrids fared well; notably five plants of the 'Yvonne' grex (3' tall); seventeen different clones of 'Loderi' (up to 4' tall), even small plants of 'Titan' and 'Superlative'; 'Isabella' (4'), three different clones of 'Angelo', (up to 4'), 'Cornish Cross' (Exbury, 18", and Penjerrick, 2'6") and Penjerrick (cream, 2' and pink, 3'6"). The pink form of 'Penjerrick' did lose a few leaves and 'Yvonne Opaline' a few buds, but this was the extent of the damage. 'Loderi King George' gave its best show ever in May. Although 'Fabia Tangerine' (2') was killed, 'Fabia' (3') itself suffered hardly at all. 'Exbury Lady Chamberlain' (2') only lost a few leaves, while the Lanhydrock form (2') and 'Chelsea' (2') were cut back savagely. A parent, cinnabarinum, was unharmed (as were concatenans and xanthocodon). While the elliottii hybrid 'Fusilier' (3'6") was killed, probably owing to its customary late secondary growth, 'Kilimanjaro' (4') was unscathed and flowered superbly with enormous trusses. Many Rhododendrons which normally grow late suffered no damage, including: Aladdin (4'), Antonio (3'), Argosy (3'), R. auriculatum (4'), Azor (4'), Blanc-Mange (3'), Europa (4'), Firedrake (3'), Isabella (4'), James Burchett (3'), July Fragrance (15"), Kilimanjaro (4'), Lodaureic Iceberg (4'), Midsummer Snow (3'6"), Northern Star (2'), Polar Bear (3'), Sea Foam (18"), Southern Cross (2'6"), Torch (2'), Veldstar (2'6"), and Wonderland (2').

It would seem, therefore, that the casualties were not the varieties popularly thought to be tender, but varieties in growth unusually late for the variety, or suffering in one way or other. 'Starcross' (discolor x Lodaureic Iceberg) was nearly killed. It had made unseasonably late secondary growth, whereas its sister seedlings 'Northern Star', 'Sea Foam', 'Southern Cross' and 'Veldstar' were not damaged. 'Lodaureic Iceberg', one of the parents, fared equally well. The two Kyawi hybrids 'Europa' and 'Firedrake' were unharmed. Far too much has been written about the alleged tenderness of griffithianum hybrids. Not one of them with as much as 50% or more of its 'blood' suffered to any significant extent, while the hardy hybrid Dr. A. Endtz was killed.

Bark split was not experienced except for my best plant of grande x macabeanum. I was fortunate to notice this at a sufficiently early stage, and bound it up with raffia. This was successful and probably saved a unique plant. No other plant was split, not even those that were killed. A young R. nallotum (12") came through unmarked.

I believe that the freezing northerly winds of late December to early January did most of the damage, desiccating plants with their roots frozen, even more than the -14½C on January 27th, 1979.

However, it should be noted that plants of H.3 ratings were equally as tough as H.4 varieties. Hardy hybrids are not the only Rhododendrons to plant if you live north of London.

Camellias suffered terribly. All except one small japonica were growing in pots varying from 6" to 14". The largest plant, saluenensis 'Trewithen Red', was not damaged (5'6" in 14" tub), but even 'Donation' (three plants at 2' in 6" or 8" pots) was killed. The casualties were mainly in 6" or 8" pots and ranged from 1' to 4' tall. Of 128 different varieties only 22 survived without protection:

Adolphe Audusson (2')	Leonard Messel (2'6")
Anticipation (3')	Mathotiana Rosea (18")
Are-jishi (3')	Mildred Veitch (18")
Barbara Cook (so labelled)(18")	Mme le Bois (1')
Betty Sheffield (18")	Mrs D.W.Davis (18") *
Brigadoon (1')	Nobilissima (2'6")
Charles Michael (3')	Onetia Holland (2')
Drama Girl (5')	Saluenensis Trewithen Red (5'6")
Guilio Nuccio (18")	Sierra Spring (18")
Hawaii (18")	Tomorrow (2'6")
J.C.Williams (1')	Trewithen White (18")

* Alive, but refusing to grow although looking well.

The reticulata collection enjoyed protection. Of the others, 95 varieties of varying sizes, shapes, pot sizes, etc., perished. The corpses included numerous excellent hybrids usually regarded as hardy. Although one 'Anticipation' survived, three others did not. Two plants each of the varieties 'Debbie', 'E.G.Waterhouse', 'Elegant Beauty', 'Elsie Jury' and 'Parkside' all perished. One plant of 'Brigadoon' survived, while another identical plant did not, and the same happened with 'Drama Girl'. I cannot explain this.

Quite obviously, pot culture is very risky. The collection enjoyed a very protected site, sheltered from the sun for most of the day and exposed to the south at one gap of a couple of feet. The majority of the camellias lay buried for a week under about two feet of snow drift, and when I tried to rescue them the frozen branches just came away in my hand; so I left them. They emerged eventually and did not look too bad, but by March their leaves looked terrible, as if someone had gone over them with a flame thrower ! They appeared to die slowly, from the roots upwards, and no doubt the containerised rootballs could not stand the continuing freeze. A large plant of 'Francie L.' in a 10" pot looked to have survived into May, but failed to grow away and then died. An examination revealed a dead root system, which may have preceded the dead top growth. A small un-named japonica which was planted out, fully exposed to the north, came through the winter without damage. A Fatsia japonica which grows beside it was killed to the ground, but even this has now fully recovered, and you would not accept that six months ago it appeared to be dead.

Pot culture can be very disappointing unless you can provide protection for the restricted root balls. I have learned the hard way. I fear to count the cost. One fact is certain; I shall not be able to afford to replace my losses for some time to come. I only hope that these notes will help others who are camellia fanciers to avoid such heartache. It is just as well that Rhododendrons are my principal interest.

COLIN GRAINGER.

EDITOR'S NOTE. Mr Grainger also supplied me with the detailed list of the 95 varieties which died, a list comprehensive enough to be a good nurseryman's catalogue. It covers the whole gamut of the familiar names, from the oldest to the newest, and it does not seem worthwhile to reproduce it here. What I find most interesting is the list of the 22 which escaped.

The interest in the effects of last winter will not end here, and I will print any other contributions that members may send. I am sure I am still having repercussions from the 1976 heat in my own garden. I do mean the heat, for I combatted the drought element fairly comprehensively. So comments on plant survival are welcome.

CONSERVATION - THE JOHN SANDERS CORNER.

The conservation of rare species and choice hybrids.

Reading through the notes that I have written in previous Bulletins under this title I find that I have had occasion to emphasize, several times, that members have been slow both to respond to fellow members' 'wants' and to offer scions and/or plants of their surplus requirements that may be of interest to others. More happily, I can also point out that I have been able to help several members locate their 'wants', either by exchange within the Group or by directing them to the appropriate retail nursery outlet. If there is a plant that you are seeking, it may be that if it is included within this section of the next Bulletin, someone may be able to help you.

Just in case you are able to offer any of the plants that are still required by members, I have listed them again:-

Camellia japonica 'Nuccio's Ruby'; Camellia reticulata 'tzepao' (Purple Gown); Rhododendrons afghanicum; 'Beatrice Keir'; bullatum Rock 59202; coelicum; 'Englemere'; facetum F24592; bureavii (large leaf form); falconeri - good yellow form; globigerum; 'Grosclaude' x griersonianum; 'Jalisco Eclipse'; Koster 231; kyawii; 'Leonore', pronum; proteoides; 'Royal Windsor'; tsariense 'Yum Yum'; thayerianum; venator KW6285; williamsianum Bodnant form; a very long list of malesian rhododendrons (Veitch hybrids); Franklinia alatamaha; Magnolias 'Caerhays Belle'; stellata 'Norman Gould'.

Finally, in Bulletin No. 6, I directed your attention to the source of 'An account of Rhododendrons in Malesia' by H.Sleumer. You may be interested to know that I have recently acquired a further recent short paper of additions/revisions, printed in 1974, by the same author. It is entitled 'New Species and Noteworthy Records of Rhododendron in Malesia (Ericaceae)'. If anyone wishes to refer to this recent addition, I would be happy to lend them my copy.

I look forward to hearing from you.

JOHN SANDERS.

CONSERVATION - ARE WE TOO LATE TO SAVE THE GHENT AZALEAS ?

Blooming later than most other deciduous azaleas, the Ghents extend the season into late June. Their flowers have an elegance and delicacy of shape reminiscent of large-flowered honeysuckle blooms. Many are especially fragrant and densely floriferous, with colours ranging from soft pure tones to vibrant tints. They are healthy plants of sound and vigorous growth and mostly have especially good autumn leaf colour.

Despite their value as good garden plants they are slipping out of cultivation. From their heyday early last century when over five hundred varieties were known they have dwindled away. About eighty remained as recently as 1960, but today less than fifteen can be found in nurserymen's catalogues, and of these less than half are commonly available. Unless this trend can be changed we will be left with only three or four in the near future.

The reason for the decline is lack of demand. The arrival of large numbers of the wonderful Knap Hill and Exbury azaleas in an ever-increasing stream has diverted attention, so that the Ghents have become completely overshadowed. This is most regrettable, because the modern kinds and the Ghents are complementary, and the Ghents have not been superseded. Being closer to their species parents the Ghents are more appropriate for, and add variety to, natural plantings. In any garden scheme their flower shape adds to that of the modern varieties, and they are later-flowering but just as floriferous. They have historic interest because of their great age, but are still vigorous and healthy.

The earliest varieties probably had their origins at about the end of the eighteenth century following the introduction of some subseries Luteum azalea species from America. 'Phoenicia' is an example of this often white- to pink-flowered group, and has a glandular back to the flowers like R.viscosum, which might suggest a close relationship.

However, the Ghent Azaleas did not really start to be raised in earnest until about 1804, when P. Mortier, a baker from Ghent in Belgium, started to hybridise several species by forcing the late flowering and retarding the early. Working probably with R. nudiflorum, roseum, viscosum, luteum and the newly-introduced vivid orange calendulaceum, he bred a remarkable group of beautiful plants. In 1834 he sold his stock to Louis Verschaffelt, the nurseryman of Royghem near Ghent, who continued the work. New varieties soon appeared, with other nurserymen taking up the hybridising. By 1846 Lisha Seneclause had produced the still famous 'Coccinea Speciosa' and 'Gloria Mundi' amongst others. These bright orange varieties were joined by others such as the pale rose 'Graf von Meran' and the red 'Grand Duc de Luxembourg' in an ever-growing group of plants in colours of white, pink, red, salmon, scarlet, orange and yellow.

Double-flowered varieties emerged, such as the dark pink 'Quentin Metsys' and the white 'Heroine Plena', which was raised by 1871. The still popular yellow 'Narcissiflora' came from Louis van Houtte, another of the Ghent nurserymen, also by 1871. The double varieties were crossed with Mollis azaleas and the resulting double-flowered plants were put on the market in 1888 by Charles Vuylsteke as the Rustica Flore Pleno group. They are very similar to the Ghents and are certainly best grouped with them for discussion purposes. Some, such as the bright rose 'Norma', are still common, but others such as the cream 'Velasquez' seem to have disappeared.

The situation today with both Ghents and Rusticas is desperate, and the only chance for many varieties is if there are plants surviving in gardens. So let us save these beautiful plants - if you grow any of them please propagate them - your plants may be rarer than you think !

STEVEN THOMPSON.

COULD YOU HAVE GUESSED ?

The five rhododendrons are: -

- (a) R. detonsum. Source "The journeys and plant introductions of George Forrest, V.M.H." 1952. Dr J. Macqueen Cowan.
- (b) R. fargesii. Source "A naturalist in Western China". 1913. E.H. Wilson. Where is that deep red one ?
- (c) R. aberconwayi. Source "Bean", eighth edition revised, 1976.
- (d) R. dauricum. Source "The larger species of rhododendron". 1979. Peter Cox. The next four words keep us right; they are "December - April in cultivation".
- (e) R. johnstoneanum. Source "Rhododendrons at Sunningdale". James Russell in a very superior catalogue of the early sixties. The sentence is "On the Isle of Arran it competes with R. ponticum."

EDITOR.

AMERICAN CORNER.

The Chairman has sent me a copy of a letter sent to Mr Chris Brickell of Wisley, by Mr Willard P. Hunnewell, Vice-President of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Anyone interested in obtaining further information should get in touch with any of three gentlemen mentioned. Here is the text. Dear Mr Brickell,

The American Rhododendron Society is holding its annual meeting this May in Massachusetts. One of the highlights of this convention will be the Truss Show of Blooms. Most of these will come from members in the northeastern U.S. However, we are attempting to have a large representation from the West Coast as well as other parts of this country and Canada. We anticipate several hundred exhibitors and would like now to make this an international exhibit with entries from several European countries and Japan.

We would very much like entries from the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens and from some of your members. These I know would make many of our members green with envy.

If you feel any interest in sending trusses, I will send you pertinent information on the various classes in which you might want to exhibit, as well as information on shipping and whatever can be done so that they arrive in good condition and are not delayed by the U. S. authorities.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Willard P. Hunnewell. (Vice-President)

855 Washington Street,
Wellesley, MA. 02181,
U.S.A.

The name of Hunnewell will ring a bell with many browsers through Species Handbooks, although R.hunnewellianum is not so easy to find in gardens; Benmore have it. The Chairman has asked Mr Hunnewell to send him a Show Schedule for reference.

There is news of two recent Camellia publications from America, about which Mr John T. Gallagher has written a note. They are: 'The Camellia', by Mr David Feathers and Mr Milton H. Brown, and 'Camellia Nomenclature 1978', published by the Southern California Camellia Society. I will give Mr Gallagher's note in full in the next Bulletin, No. 11.

Mr Dan Mayers of Lorient, Wadhurst, Sussex has also written to the Chairman, on a quite different topic. I think I have it right in one way that I mention this under the heading of "American Corner"; but in another way it is a very English matter because it concerns Mr Mayers' garden in England. Briefly, he is offering various propagation facilities from the material in his large garden. This is both an interesting and a generous offer, and I shall give the full details in the next Bulletin, No. 11.

EDITOR.

DO YOU HAVE TO COMPLETE AND RETURN

ONE OF THE SLIPS ?

SECRETARY'S NOTICE. Members living in the U.K. will find attached amendments to the "List of Members" dated March 1978. This list is now out of print, and some members who joined the Group after March 1978 may not have received a copy. A complete up-to-date list will be prepared and sent to all U.K. members in about a year's time.