

RHODODENDRON AND CAMELLIA GROUP.

BULLETIN NO. 13. JULY 1980.

CALENDAR FOR NEXT FEW MONTHS.

SEP	23	RHS Show. Great Autumn Show. N.B. opening times.
	24	-do-
	25	-do-
OCT	7	RHS Show.
	8	-do-
	28	RHS Show. Late Autumn Show. Tree and Shrub Competition.
	29	-do-

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MATTERS OF IMMEDIATE OR CURRENT INTEREST.

1. SUBSCRIPTIONS - HON. TREASURER'S NOTE. As mentioned in the last Bulletin, individual reminders about subscriptions for the current year are being issued, and enclosed with this Bulletin. It was decided that, in future, Year Books would only be sent to members whose subscriptions were paid to date, so if you have not received your copy, then please first check your bank records before contacting the Secretary or Treasurer.

Many members have requested Bankers Order forms for their renewal subscription due next November 1st, and these will be sent to them during September - well in time to be completed before the due date. Already, well over a hundred members are or will be paying by Bankers Order from next November and to these the Treasurer is very grateful as it saves him much time and trouble in his very busy daily life.

For those who prefer to make an annual payment by cheque, the next Bulletin, No. 14, will contain the usual details and tear-off payment slip, and with the hope of prompt publication of the next Year Book, it will be important to make prompt payment in order to secure the Year Books for Christmas. The rate of subscription for 1980-81 will remain (as reported to the A.G.M.) unchanged at £3.00.

2. RHODODENDRON HANDBOOK 1980. ( The "Species Handbook". ) The August copy of the Journal ("The Garden") contains a note about the publication of the eagerly-awaited revised Handbook (on P. 304). I have confirmed by telephone that copies have in fact been received and are on sale. The Group's Honorary Secretary has a supply and can accept orders. The price of £6.50 quoted in the Journal includes postage costs. Callers at Wisley should be able to collect the book from supplies there and thus save the postage costs.

3. SEED-COLLECTING TRIP TO WESTERN CHINA. A note about a trip to Western China by Mr Keith Rushforth, during which he hopes to collect seed of rhododendrons, appears further on.

4. RHODODENDRON ILLUSTRATIONS FROM KEW. A note from Mr David R. Hunt of Kew, about separate copies of the illustrations of rhododendrons from Curtis's Botanical Magazine, appears in the Editorial section.

5. PENCARROW HOUSE, CORNWALL. Pencarrow House is open to the public until the end of September. Lt.Col. J.A.Molesworth-St.Aubyn, who is a member of the Group, has supplied an interesting note on the garden, with times and conditions of opening, and this is given in the Editorial section further on.

6. NEW GARDEN HISTORY PUBLICATION. I have received information about the impending appearance of a new journal concerned with garden history, to be named 'Garden History Quarterly'. I imagine a great many readers of this bulletin will be interested in the new venture, and I hope to be able to give much fuller detail in our next issue, number 14. The editor of the new journal is Professor John Dixon Hunt.

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BRANCH REPORT. A report from the Honorary Treasurer about the East Anglian Branch.

"Activities within the Branch during the 1980 season were confined to those of the Organiser, who moved house, home and garden during the early part of the year. One cannot but admire the courage and determination of Colin Grainger in moving over 400 rhododendrons from the open ground, in addition to many camellias, magnolias and other shrubs in pots and other containers.

In addition, Clone number 3 of the Grex "Grainger" arrived in mid-May, just in time for Chelsea! We do congratulate Colin and Jennifer on the birth of their son - a brother for their two little girls - and wish them all every happiness and success in their new home and garden.

We look forward to 1981 and to a renewal of the more traditional Branch activities, which we hope will be better supported than in the past, especially as there are now a number of new members within the area. Our Organiser works very hard on our behalf and deserves every encouragement for his efforts.

D.N.F.

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EDITORIAL.

CONTRIBUTIONS. The quality of the Group's Quarterly Bulletin must, by its nature, relate directly to the contributions submitted for publication. One of my own aspirations - among others - is that the range of matters covered by the submissions which arrive in my post will enable me to cover a wide range of subjects in every issue, ranging from the purely administrative to the leisure-reading-only variety. Once again I am gratified to find that members have provided me with this essential variety. I thank all those concerned and hope that they will feel satisfaction at the knowledge that their time and trouble have helped to provide pleasure and interest for other members of the Group.

I was pleased that in response to my request for notes on a favourite camellia, three members have sent contributions. These are reproduced further on. I am grateful to their authors for their co-operation. I hope to receive a steady flow of these little eulogies so that I can use some in each bulletin for some time to come. We have many recognised camellia growers, not to say camellia authorities, among our members, and I hope articles from some of them will be forthcoming in due course. I recognise that they are, almost inevitably, busy people; so I will be patient. There are also a lot of smaller-scale enthusiasts - my own category - and I hereby encourage them to enter the lists. May I particularly beg one or two of these to send me a note on their own chosen candidate in time for the October bulletin? It occurs to me that the first twelve varieties featured would make an interesting "Beginners' Collection". Or, perhaps, someone who has, say, five of them already might be stimulated to acquire the other seven.

There are of course other kinds of contribution that I should like to receive, and I have mentioned some of these before. In addition to anything that may have occurred to me, I occasionally learn of the views and wishes of other members. One subject that arose recently was the need for articles intended for beginners; so I extend a welcome for these too. An obvious difficulty here is that experienced gardeners, precisely those in fact who would be highly suitable as authors of articles on the basic aspects of growing rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias, may well consider the matters in question to be so simple that they do not seem worth elucidation. However, this attitude can be very disappointing to the really raw recruit who wants to discover the essentials, and avoid pitfalls with the ensuing waste and discouragement. He or she is anxious to learn from the expert. We all realise that there are very good books which give this kind of instruction, but I know also that for some people the very size and completeness of an authoritative book can be forbidding. A short article, in our own quarterly, could provide a useful stepping-stone to the more comprehensive specialist book. Some of the latter have been written by members of the Group, and I

can give further information on this point on request. Meantime, I would welcome either articles or correspondence on the general matter of help for the beginner. Some aspects which might appeal to a prospective contributor occur to me, as follows.

- (1) Planting. Choice of planting sites, where choice exists; drainage; shelter; aspect; improving unsuitable soils; levels and depths.
- (2) Aftercare. Water supply and supplementing the rainfall; top-dressing and feeding; disbudding and dead-heading; dead-wooding; treatment of die-back; moving to more suitable sites.
- (3) Guidance on selection of varieties; recommendations as to easy plants for the tiro and warnings about some tricky ones; those well proven by long experience; speed of growth and likely "ultimate" size (very perplexing to the beginner, yet very important).
- (4) Propagation at a simple level, using the methods and equipment which the beginner may reasonably expect to handle fairly well.
- (5) A guide to the understanding of the (now obsolescent) Bayley Balfour system of classification of rhododendron species by series; the salient and therefore more discernible characteristics of some of those series most often encountered in gardens. Some beginners confess to being overwhelmed and perhaps put off by the apparent complexity of classification, yet a "primer" of two or three pages of foolscap might open the door to fuller understanding and easier handling of the subject.

Sections (1)(2)(3) and (4) apply to all three of the Group's flower families, and should preferably be written about separately. Many members of the Group have the necessary knowledge, experience and authority to compose articles which would certainly help the beginner-amateur, and I hope some of them will be able to find the time in some less-congested week to provide a contribution for a future bulletin. They should not be too bashful.

Finally on contributions, it has been suggested that the bulletin suffers from a lack of articles of a more extended and comprehensive nature. I would not myself dispute this, considered as a very simple and unqualified statement. However, it could not remain unqualified. In case there are members who have thought about this, yet not had any opportunity to discuss it or exchange views, a few lines of explanation of my own views may help.

The Bulletin is one of two regular publications of the Rhododendron and Camellia Group. The Year Book has by now a considerable ancestry and has acquired, from its own substance and excellence, an importance to which the Bulletin can not be thought to aspire; this at any rate is my opinion. Official dividing lines as to content are not laid down, and if they were to be devised and adopted, unwelcome difficulties would immediately arise for this Honorary Editor, and perhaps for the Editors of the Year Book too. It is a purely personal feeling, but I do consider our Year Book to be fit and suitable for the shelves of the libraries of not only horticultural but also botanical and other scientific institutions - anywhere in the world. It is probably obvious that I would neither say nor think this about the Bulletin, from which it follows that I would always wish and expect that the most substantial and valuable contributions should be directed to the Year Book. In practice, this is what usually happens. The size of the Year Book must of course have certain limits imposed upon it for 'practical' reasons, so any surplus to requirements might become available for use in the Bulletin. This too is what usually happens, and I have often been grateful to the Honorary Editor of the Year Book for offering me something which the current Year Book could not accommodate for one reason or another. At this juncture I cannot resist observing that an increase in the volume of 'substantial' contributions to the Year Book might well result in a heavier overflow to the Bulletin - to my advantage and great pleasure. The Year Book Editors would be presented with a greater choice of material, which would I hope please them, and those who wish to see more 'substantial' articles in the Bulletin would have it both ways - provided they are wise enough to ensure they always subscribe to the Year Book.

So although an increase in weightier articles would be most welcome, that, I think, is how it will work. So far as I am concerned I should like prospective authors to roll up their sleeves and start now - but please submit the finished product to the Honorary Editor of the Year Book.

RHODODENDRONS 1979/80 (i.e. the new Year Book). To my great relief the Year Book has now appeared, and been sent off to those who had already become entitled to it in one way or another. Other readers should note that it is now available, and may be obtained from the Group's Honorary Secretary:-

Mr. J. Waugh Owens,  
Jubilee Lodge,  
Yarpole,  
LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE HR6 0BA.

ADDRESSES OF TREASURER AND EDITOR. Merely a refresher - no changes.

HONORARY TREASURER:-

D.N.Farnes,  
"Corton Lodge",  
7, Burntwood Avenue,  
Emerson Park,  
HORNCHURCH, ESSEX RM11 3JD.  
Telephone: HORNCHURCH 40536.

HONORARY EDITOR OF THE BULLETIN:-

K.J.W.Lowes,  
Rout Lodge,  
Colwood Lane,  
Warninglid,  
Sussex.

I cannot comprehend the mysterious force which ensured that all three bought 'lodges'.

NEW MEMBERS. For the purpose of giving information about the Group, and the method of joining, a leaflet has been prepared which embodies a form of application for membership. Should any existing member like to have a copy for a friend he can have one either from the Honorary Secretary, or from me, on request.

REQUEST FOR HELP IN OBTAINING SEEDS OF ERICACEAE. A member, Mr John Harding of "Starcombe", Framfield Road, Buxted, Sussex, has asked for help in obtaining seed of the following. Please write to him direct.

Gaultheria spp. blue-berried.  
" rupestris  
Menziesia spp.  
XPhyllothamnus erectus  
Tripetaleia (now Botryostege) bracteata

SPARE COPIES OF RECENT BULLETINS. I have a few surplus copies of Bulletins Nos. 6 to 11 inclusive, which members may apply for until the surplus runs out. Please apply direct to me only. I propose to put copies requested in with applicant's next bulletin, so as to keep costs down.

THE OLDER YEAR BOOKS, 1967 SPECIES HANDBOOK, AND OTHERS. There are several notes for this issue of the Bulletin.

(a) Bulletin Editor. I have been fortunate in obtaining another three years from a co-operative member. I now only need the five years listed:- 1950, 1955, 1959, 1961 and 1965. In addition I still badly need a copy of the 1967 Handbook Pt. I (Species).  
(b) During conversation with Mr S.F. Ingall (of Corsock and the famous lacteums) I discovered that he too would like to fill the last few blanks in his near-complete collection. The missing years are:- 1946, 1950, 1959, 1961. Offers either direct to Mr Ingall or to me.  
(c) When supplying the notes on Pencarrow to be found later under 'Gardens Open', Lt.Col. Molesworth-St.Aubyn mentioned that he, too, would like to acquire a copy of the 1967 Species Handbook, condition and, within reason price, being immaterial.

Now to what is being offered.

(d) The Honorary Secretary recently gave me a note of the present position of his stock. A further supply of the 1978 Year Book was obtained from Vincent Square to buoy up the dwindling reserve.

Year Books:-	1948	£0.93	3 copies
	1970	2.25	6 "
	1973	1.20	21 "
	1974	1.20	35 "
	1977	1.75	2 "
	1978	1.75	18 "

The prices quoted include postage and packing in the UK and by surface mail abroad.

(e) Now a very substantial collection, offered only as one lot. Mr David Mico of Hurtwood House, Winterfold Heath, Albury, Nr. Guildford, Surrey, GU5 9ES has written:-

"Further to your recent remarks about YEAR BOOKS, you may be interested in the list attached, which I could offer you. The price would be £200, and I would deliver them anywhere in Surrey or thereabouts. I would not get involved in selling individual items."

RHODODENDRON NOTES AND YEAR BOOKS.

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY NOTES:

Volume III No.	1	1925.
"	2	1926.
"	3	1927. (Three copies)
"	4	1928. (Two copies)
"	5	1929-31.

R.H.S. Year Books.

Pre-War.

1929 Spine discoloured.  
1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1933 Supplement.  
1934 Supplement. 1935, 1935 Supplement (two copies)  
1936, 1937. The above were presumably published without dust-jackets.

R.H.S. Year Books.

Post-War.

1946 two copies, one paper bound, one cloth bound  
1947 three copies, one without dust-jacket  
1948 two copies, one without dust-jacket  
1949 three copies, one without dust-jacket  
1950 two copies, one without dust-jacket  
1951-1952 no dust-jacket  
1955 no dust-jacket  
1956 this is only a "Garden Book Club" edition  
1957  
1958  
1960  
1962 two copies  
1964  
1965  
1966  
1967 two copies  
1968 two copies.

(Editor's note:- It appears to me that a prospective buyer might be dissuaded from buying the collection by the large number of duplicate copies. May I say that in this event the help of the Bulletin may be called on so that others interested in single copies may know of the situation ?)

(f) I recently came across a single copy of the "Garden Book Club" edition of the 1956 Year Book, which is usually cheaper than the pukka R.H.S. copies, at the reasonable price of £2.00. It is in unmarked condition. I decided to snap it up for someone else, as I already have one. The first member to get in touch with me may have it; please add postage for about 390 grammes.

(g) By now I have had quite a few requests for older Year Books, some by word of mouth and some by correspondence. The 1967 Species Handbook is also needed. Anyone able to make an offer may, if he or she wishes, inform me of what is available so that I may forward information as to what may be had to whomever is head of the queue for any individual book.

An extract from Mr Rushforth's letter:-  
"I shall be going to West China in October.....I will be attempting to collect seed of as many trees and shrubs as possible and would like to hear from any members of the group who might be interested in participating." Please communicate direct, to:-

Mr Keith D. Rushforth,  
10, Greenacres,  
Bordon, Hants.

RHODODENDRON ILLUSTRATIONS FROM KEW. (noted on Page 1). In Mr Hunt's letter to the Bulletin Editor he makes the following kind offer:-  
"Members who do not subscribe to Curtis's Botanical Magazine may like to know that separate copies of the illustrations of rhododendrons from the most recent volumes can be bought at the Orangery Bookstall at Kew, price 30p each (single-page plates) or 40p (double-page plates) (PERSONAL CALLERS ONLY). Should any member be particularly interested in having a copy of any rhododendron plate with text published in the past few volumes (N.s.t. 572 onwards x), they may write to me.

x N.s.t. 575 orbiculatum	673 aequabile
587 wardii	682 zoelleri
600 suaveolens	726 brookeanum
610 rarum	748 ludwigianum
623 valentinianum	766 phaeochitum
634 concatenans	771 yakushimanum
638 sidereum	787 aurigeranum
653 wrightianum	

David R. Hunt. "

The address is:- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey.  
I thank Mr Hunt for his co-operation.

NORTHERN GARDEN. In the event, I was unable to see the newly-planned and planted area at a time when the owners were at home. (Paradoxically, they were in another rhododendron area - China - but not, I believe, re-tracing the footsteps of either George Forrest or Frank Kingdon-Ward). However, with their kind permission my wife and I were able to call during their absence and have a rapid look at the new layout. We were most impressed by the transformation brought about in such a short time in the part of the garden concerned; but without the assistance of the owners, a record of our 'received' impressions would lack the value and interest of the full authentic story. This I now hope to be able to give in a later bulletin, perhaps 14 or 15.

GARDEN VISITS. I am always glad to publish news of garden visits, both before and after the event. This year I have myself done less visiting with Group members than for some time, but as this is due to the fact that my wife and I have 'done' three rhododendron areas as holidays - Cornwall, Argyll and Galloway - visiting sixteen gardens, I can scarcely complain about the resulting inability to join in some of the single-day Group visits. I would welcome reports whether from Branch Organisers or from individuals, as they arouse a great deal of interest and curiosity among other garden-visiting readers. Reports intended for Bulletin No. 14 should reach me at the address already given by 30th September.

GARDENS OPEN. I have not received any notifications of gardens being open for Autumn Colour in time for inclusion in this issue, but I do hope to receive some for the October issue. Any Group member who wishes to draw my attention to a garden (whether his/her own or not) should send me the necessary information by 30th September and I will do what I can.

PENCARROW HOUSE, CORNWALL. (noted on Page 1). The garden is open to the public every day from 15th March to end of September annually during reasonable hours. The House itself is open also from Easter to end September on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 1.30 to 5.30 (last tour 5.00); Bank Holiday Mondays and 1st June to 10th September 11 am. - 5.30 pm. The current

charges are House and Gardens; adults 95p, children 50p: Gardens only; adults 50p, children 25p. From the leaflet sent, it is clear that the house itself is of great interest. With regard to the garden I append an extract from the covering letter, as I think it will quite possibly induce anyone who may be in the area to pay a visit, if not in 1980, then in some future rhododendron, camellia and magnolia season. The location of Pencarrow is Washaway, Bodmin or Wadebridge, road A.389.

"Like most large Cornish gardens the specimen conifer collection and some of our large rhododendrons were damaged by the storm of 14th December last, and shelter is becoming sparse in many places. Yesterday afternoon, however, (letter was dated 29th April 1980. Ed.) I counted, amongst many examples of large old hardy hybrids, particularly 'Cornish Red', over fifty different species and more modern hybrids, some of them yet unnamed, in flower at the same time. We have, in addition, a further fifty or so mature different species and hybrids which are either over or not yet out. The most interesting of the former is probably a shapely specimen of R. magnificum, which flowered profusely for the first time five years ago, aged 33 years, and has subsequently produced early each March a disappointingly small number of blooms; but it managed, perhaps surprisingly, to survive undamaged the sustained 10°C frost of Jan/Feb 1979. I have, also, during the past two years, planted a further seventy-five different species and hybrids, many of which came from Hydon and Glendoick nurseries.

The many camellias flanking the drive, shrubbery and rockery were probably at their best a fortnight ago, and again include numerous cultivars, some named, but too many as yet unidentified. Young specimens of a few of the former are usually on sale in the plant shop and I hope to be able steadily to increase both the number and the variety of these, as well as of young rhododendrons, in the coming years. "

J.A.Molesworth-St.Aubyn.

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CONSERVATION - a note from John Sanders.

Still not much more to add under this heading! Yes, two or three members did respond to my previous insert. There were several 'wants' amongst them; I include them for your interest, and trust that, in the event that you are able to offer any plants or material, you will write and advise me accordingly. I am aware that some of them are very rare indeed, but it is interesting to note what members are searching for.

Rhododendrons catacosmum; clementinae; coelicum; ericoides; erubescens; hookeri (scarlet); nakotiltum; pocophorum; praestans; santapauli; saxifragoides; serotinum.

Also, if anybody is able to help me locate surplus RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Year Books (or earlier) I have had several enquiries from members. I am also looking for a copy of 'The Species of Rhododendrons' by J.B.Stevenson. I look forward to hearing from you and, maybe, helping you, at Badger Cottage, 101, Guildford Road, Bagshot, Surrey GU19 5NS.

ALKALINE WATER SUPPLY PROBLEM. The Secretary has received a letter from Sir Peter Snithers in which he sets out the problem his now very alkaline water supply is causing. I reproduce it in full.

"Methods of correcting water supply PH for Rhododendron culture?."

When we began planting Rhododendrons in this garden in 1970, we had available a water supply slightly on the alkaline side of neutral. As however our soil was slightly on the acid side of neutral (it is useless to give a precise figure as the value varies in different parts of the garden) and as we plant with a good deal of peat, this seemed satisfactory.

However, with the growth of development, the spring water from the hillside has had to be supplemented by the local commune with water pumped from Lake Lugano and subsequently filtered and treated. This now comes out of the tap at PH 8, which is uncomfortably high

when we have to water heavily for long periods. This sometimes occurs under warm weather conditions (75-80°F) in August and results in damage to many Rhododendrons, particularly Alpines. In addition I am inclined to think, though this is only guesswork, that a serious incursion of *Armillaria mellea* from the neighbouring chestnut woods, is encouraged by this. The weakened plants seem susceptible to attack.

I am aware of the usual suggestions for dealing with alkaline water; mulching with peat, and applications of ferrous sulphate to the soil. And of course we use rainwater as long as we can. But we have several hundred species and hybrids, and this soon runs out.

My question is whether anybody has evolved a method of treating water at the tap so as to reduce the PH from say 8 to say 6? There are available on the market here various devices for adding liquid fertilizer to the water supply at the tap. Possibly a solution of ferrous sulphate could be injected in this way when watering. But we have a lot of rare species and newest hybrids here, particularly in the *Maddenii* series which does particularly well with us out of doors, and before experimenting myself I would like to know if anybody else has worked on this and with what success.

I find nothing precisely on this point in the standard works on Rhododendron, but of course if there is a paper in research literature that would be most helpful.

Any advice would be greatly appreciated. Peter Smithers.

Sir Peter Smithers,  
6911 - Vico Morcote,

Switzerland,

27th April 1980.

PS. I believe it is the fact that ordinary domestic water softeners are not suitable for use with plants? "

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NEWS FROM A DEVON GARDEN.

from MR. G.A. JUDSON.

Rhododendrons in my Exmouth Garden - 1980.

The Spring of 1980 has given me added interest and pleasure because, mainly due to the generosity of our Chairman, Major Magor, I have had the thrill of seeing the first blooming, here, of a number of rhododendron species and hybrids, many of which were new to me.

I have always been a lover of the tender, scented rhododendrons, which I grow in a cool greenhouse, having lost 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' and 'Princess Alice' in former years, through attempting to grow them outdoors. In this report I will deal first with the rhododendrons in the greenhouse in order of blooming. First to open (March 20th) was *Chrysodoron* - an excellent clear yellow with handsome blooms, but scentless. This was quickly followed by my old, big plant of *Ciliicalyx* - to my mind one of the most beautiful, with a lovely scent. (A smaller plant of this species, an air layer from the other, did not bloom till May 8th). The latter days of March saw the first blooms on *Scopulorum*, *Johnstoneanum* and *Veitchianum*. The *Johnstoneanum* was the so-called Pink form - not really pink, but pale yellow flushed pink, particularly at the edges - a very attractive bloom, with a strong, exceptionally sweet scent. *Scopulorum* and *Veitchianum* seem almost indistinguishable, both in foliage and flowers, which are handsome and a good size, *Scopulorum* being well scented, while *Veitchianum* seems almost scentless. Next, 'John Bull', my own *bullatum* x *Johnstoneanum* cross, whose blooms and foliage incline more to *Johnstoneanum*, but smell like *bullatum*; and *ciliicalyx* x *negacalyx*, which seems just like *ciliicalyx* (perhaps a bee got there before I did!). April 6th saw the first blooms on *intricatum*, which I was keeping in the greenhouse till I could assess its floral worth: it seems well worth garden space, with attractive pale mauve blooms. Next, *Lyi* - a disappointment, the blooms much smaller than *ciliicalyx*, and almost scentless, peculiar in that its stamens are only about half as long as its pistil.

April 18th - May 5th saw the first blooming of a new hybrid of nine, *inaequale* x *ciliicalyx*, of which I have six plants. This was

indeed a thrill. The blooms, four to a truss, resembled an enlarged inaequale, being about 3" long and 4" across, with a beautiful rich scent, in which the influence of inaequale predominates. The other plants of this cross show slight variations in leaf shape and hairiness, and it will be interesting to see in future years whether any of these have better blooms. Near the end of April, inaequale itself, and bullatum (R. 59202) started to bloom - two species hard to beat for beauty and scent. It is puzzling that some botanists lump together bullatum and edgeworthii. Bullatum, I find, has no hairs on the bud scales, while edgeworthii has, and also it blooms much later. This year, eight weeks after bullatum started, the buds of edgeworthii show no sign of opening, and the delay was the same in 1979. Manipurensis opened on June 18th - blooms rather like crassum, but smaller, and not much scent.

Outdoors, 1980 has been an excellent year for bloom, though some plants suffered from frosts, and a six weeks drought in early Spring. The young growth on mucronulatum was ruined by frost, necessitating hard pruning. Albrechtii died at last, victim of the 1976 drought and several severe winters. The winter of 1978-9 caused severe damage and several losses, and glaucophyllum, davidsonianum, a 'Fabia' x 'Lascaux' cross, and tephropeplum had to be cut back to half their previous size in Spring 1979. However, this year they were all covered with bloom, though tephropeplum had a number of buds killed by frost. My own cinnabarinum v. roylei x brachysiphon cross this year had 95% of its buds killed by frost, and all buds on cinnabarinum v. roylei itself. However my own crosses haematodes x smirnowii, haematodes x bureavii ('Suede'), dichroanthum x fortunei, and oreotrephes x 'Lady Chamberlain' ('Olive Judson') never flowered better, as did haematodes, Metternichii, saluenense, trichostomum, lepidotum 'Reuthe's Purple', russatum, scintillans, yakushimanum and others. 'Olive' and 'Parnigan' suffered frost damage in bloom, but were otherwise good, and 'Fabia' x 'Goldsworth Orange' did well. The blooms on 'Fabia' x 'Lascaux' and 'Mrs A.T. de la Mare' were marred by weather damage to varying extent. Still, on the whole an excellent rhododendron season. Unfortunately it seems likely to be my last, at least as far as this garden is concerned, as owing to ill health and advancing years, my wife and I have put the bungalow up for sale, and are looking for a flat. Whether when we get moved, there will be any facilities for growing rhododendrons, remains to be seen. At best, it will mean some agonising appraisal, somewhat similar to the dilemma faced by the guest in the Radio Programme 'Desert Island Discs', but with rhododendrons instead of records.

Meanwhile, if any Group members are passing this way during the next few weeks and would care to call in, they might be able to acquire a few pot plants of interest at a modest price, and at the same time see my Rhododendron 'Suede' in all the beauty of its young growth, contrasting with the dark green of the old leaves and their foxy red woolly undersides, which give it its name. Please ring Exmouth 75853 if contemplating a visit. G.A.Judson.

(The Editor cannot pass this point without wishing Mr and Mrs Judson the kind of luck they would wish themselves in their moving.)

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#### THE RHODY AND THE IVY !

MR. F.C.BARNES.

Many years ago I decided to plant Hedera helix in quantity, though not variety, to cover the bare close-boarded fences which are about twelve yards apart in this long and narrow garden. Needless to say, the ivy preferred to become ground cover. So it remains to this day as a splendid mulch and weed-smotherer; and yet, though it has in places covered the fence, it has not, with one significant exception, attempted to climb some thirty or so Rhododendrons for which it seems to provide a welcome groundcover.

In direct contrast to this is its behaviour towards a Cedrus deodara, a Salix babylonica and a Sorbus sp., all of which it has colonised to about half their height, which varies between fifteen and thirty feet. The only exception I can find is an attempt of about four vertical inches up the stem of R. succothii; in this case

the haustoria of the ivy shrank from their purpose and withered.

This is merely an observation, which members may care to compare with their own experience: whatever may induce this apparent allergy of ivy to the bark of Rhododendron is beyond my guess. F.C.B.

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CAMELLIA CHOICE. (In alphabetical order of contributors' surnames).

(a) Camellia x williamsii 'Brigadoon'. When my father and I first started to take an interest in camellias about 1960, few other than old clones of C.japonica had been attempted in eastern Scotland. On hearing of our wishes to try out new camellias, an American friend sent us cuttings of some of the latest cultivars. Amongst these was C.'Brigadoon' which reached us in 1962. It was raised in America and introduced in 1960, being a x williamsii hybrid with the parentage C.saluenense x C.japonica 'Princess Baccocchi'.

The first time we realised the true value of this plant was a year when a severe frost hit us about mid-April. In those days we only had a few of the earliest C.x williamsii hybrids of flowering size. All buds were one to two weeks off flowering. Ten days after the frost, C.'Brigadoon' was in perfect bloom with full sized flowers. Not one flower opened on any other camellias.

C.'Brigadoon' is a strong grower of upright open habit with large, thick leaves. Both foliage and habit would indicate the apparent presence of some C.reticulata blood. The large semi-double pink flowers are bigger than C.'Donation' and of better quality.

While the flower buds may be perhaps the hardiest of our camellias, the foliage is unfortunately not. Three to four year old plants, planted out in an open situation, sheltered only to the west and further away to the north by walls, were almost de-foliated and in some cases killed by the 1978-9 winter. Other cultivars definitely came through better. But given a sheltered sunny position, this is probably the finest camellia that we can grow outside in Scotland.

We took some cut branches to London to put up for an award about 1971 but nearly every bloom shed before reaching the Committee room. We might have realised that somebody would soon succeed where we had failed, as it was given a much-deserved F.C.C. in 1975.

Peter A. Cox.

(b) 'Adolphe Audusson'. 'Adolphe Audusson' was introduced in France just over a hundred years ago, and still holds its own in every respect against the competition of all the recent introductions and modern hybrids. The habit of growth is neat and bushy, so essential for a small garden, the foliage is a lovely dark glossy green, and the flowers, which are a bright true red, appear during late March and early April to brighten the spring scene, especially in association with yellow daffodils, whose colour seems to be heightened with the background of dark camellia foliage and complements the central boss of golden stamens of the camellia flowers. Being semi-double, the flowers have more substance than the single reds, and withstand the elements better. Under glass the flowers, of course, are even bigger and brighter in colour and the plant makes a superb conservatory specimen, needing little attention in the way of pruning, and the flowers fall off whole when finished, thus keeping the plant clean and tidy at all times.

David N.Farnes.

(c) Camellia 'Yours Truly' - USA 1949.

Thanks to Mr. Trehane and to generous Japanese friends, we grow about three hundred different Camellias here, with a strong preference for Higos, followed by hybrids. But if I had to select one Camellia only, it would be a Japonica, 'Yours Truly'. Trehane states in his catalogue that the flower is 3" in diameter, but in this garden it is a consistent 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The particular beauty of the flowers consists in the regularity of arrangement of the eighteen or so petals around the central boss of stamens and petaloids. While it is true that the petals are 'pink edged with white' this does less than justice to the most beautiful pink veining on a white ground which is a conspicuous feature of the bloom. Our plant, a narrowish cone eight feet high eight years from planting, covers

itself with bloom from tip to ground level. The blooms are rather weather resistant so that the tree looks tidy. The leaves are a particularly attractive feature of the plant in and out of flower. Leaving aside the botanical terms, they are pointed and beautifully twisted so that the lustrous surfaces catch the light at different angles.

This year I gave a bloom to a friend who is a learned authority on oriental art, and he commented that the extreme symmetry of the bloom offended him. I was then able to go to the tree and select ten flowers varying from the pure type of this variety, through serial degrees of variegation with solid red colour, the variegation always being in the form of a perfect geometrical sector. In my opinion these sporting (or reverting?) blooms are the most beautiful of all and prevent a large floriferous plant from becoming overwhelming by repetition.

In fact, I cannot fault this beautiful and hardy Camellia in any way, except for its ridiculous and hideous name.

Background note: rainfall 75", soil slightly acid, maximum frost -12°C but of short duration, location of 'Yours Truly', a north-west wall. Season, mid - late.

Peter Snithers.

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AMERICAN CORNER.

Mr Dan E. Mayers seems to have cornered the American Corner from a corner of Sussex. The only possible objection that occurs to me is no fault of his; there ought to be some competition - American competition. This quarter, Mr Mayers provides two notes.

(a) Books. I quote from a recent letter. "The books which I have offered continue to be in good supply and I have a number of very appreciative letters from those to whom I have supplied them. In addition, although I am not sure to what extent this will be of interest to your members, I am arranging to supply copies of a recently-published Japanese work

Index to Japanese Bambusaceae

by Sadeo Suzuki

at £34.00 post paid.

This is a remarkable book, profusely illustrated in both colour and black and white, and seeking to completely revolutionise bamboo taxonomy. A quotation from the foreword is in order:

"Should the readers through this book come to entertain friendly sentiments to bamboo I should be unable to contain my joy."

I am sure this book will appeal to any members interested in bamboo. I inflict this upon you as it seems unlikely that this book will be otherwise available in Britain. "

(b) The Rhododendron Society Notes. Mr Mayers has received a note from the Pacific Rhododendron Society regarding their reprint of the Rhododendron Society Notes. The price for the three volumes of the Notes is \$34.00 postpaid, with a book binder available for \$4.00 postpaid. The relevant address is:-

Nadine Henry,

30207 - 52nd Avenue E

Graham, Washington 98338 USA.

Finally from Mr Mayers in a letter to the Chairman, something to make us all sit up - "The Brooklyn Botanic Garden has just introduced a splendid new hardy Yellow Magnolia....."

(Form a neat queue, please. Ed.)  
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A NOTE FROM AUSTRALIA. This is an extract from a letter to the Group Secretary; the writer is Mr Ian Innes.

"This season has been a disaster for rhododendron growers on the Australian East Coast, with temperatures so high and the long drought. I am only beginning, and have only a small collection of 'Indica' cultivars, which have survived well; but species collections have generally suffered badly. Only now in the cooler autumn and early winter climate with some reasonable falls of rain have our plants shown any signs of new growth. Luckily we generally escape serious winter frosts....."

Ian Innes.