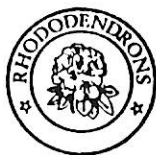


The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group



BULLETIN No. 43 - March 1990

Forthcoming Events 1990

April 12	Visit to Savill and Valley Gardens, Windsor	May 13	High Beeches, Handcross, W. Sussex (see text)
April 24-25	Main Rhododendron Show Vincent Square	May 22-25	Chelsea Show
April 24	Group AGM, Committee Room, New Hall, Vincent Square	May 26	Seedling Exchange, Tilgates, Bletchingly, Surrey (see Bulletin No. 42)
April 27-30	Visits to Gardens in S.W. Wales	June 19-20	Flower Show with Classes for Rhododendrons & Magnolias, Vincent Square
April 27-30	International Camellia Society Somerset Week End	July 17	Flower Show, Vincent Square
May 6-11	Spring Tour Lake District and S. W. Scotland	August 7-8	Show for Specialist Societies, Vincent Square

Chairman's Notes

In this first issue in 1990 it is very pleasing to report the formation of a new Branch named North West and North Wales Branch under the capable guidance of Ken Hulme who will need no introduction. If members of the old Midlands Branch feel that distances involved are not too great they would receive a warm welcome from the new Branch. The Secretary is Mr. Nottingham of "Wyncote", Burton Road, Ness, South Wirral, L64 4AQ.

Our very best wishes go out for the future progress of the new Branch.

In a year where rhododendrons and camellias seem to be flowering anything up to six or eight weeks ahead of themselves we can only hope that what has come in like a lion will go out like a lamb! Here's wishing us all a more peaceful and good growing 1990.

B.A.

The Photographic Competition - 1990

No convenient show and potential prize-winning blooms in the garden - no downheartedness please, for there is a show for all seasons in the Year Book Photographic Competition, so out with the camera and send the resulting colour transparencies or prints and negatives to: The Hon. Yearbook Editor, The Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH. Please enclose S.A.E. if a return of material is required.

Cornwall County Flower Show - 21st & 22nd April 1990

Camellia enthusiasts will be pleased to know that this year there is a special focus on camellias at this show.

Venue: Lanhydrock House, Nr. Bodmin.

Invitation to visit High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex

An invitation is extended to members and their friends to visit these gardens between 2 and 6 pm on Sunday 13th May 1990. We are informed that this attractive woodland garden has weathered the January storms with little in the way of damage.

Honours for those associated with the group

We are pleased to record the award by the Royal Horticultural Society of the Victoria Medal of Honour (VMH) to: Mrs. Carolyn Hardy, Vice Chairman of the RHS Council, whose husband, Alan Hardy is a former Chairman of the Group; and

A. D. (Tony) Schilling, Deputy Curator RBG Kew, in charge of Wakehurst Garden in Sussex, who is a member of the Rhododendron & Camellia Committee and a former member of the Group Executive Committee.

Fourth International Rhododendron Conference 1988

Copies of the proceedings of this conference, held in New South Wales, are available from: Mrs. M. Rickard, 27 Bulwara St., Keiraville, New South Wales, Australia 3129. Price \$20 (Australian).

Subscriptions

To avoid removal from mailing lists, would any members who have not renewed their subscriptions kindly do so without delay.

Change of Address

Would any members moving house please advise the Membership Secretary promptly, noting specifically any change in Branch areas.

Elections to Executive Committee

Due to other commitments, Mr John Gallagher, who has served on the committee for a very long time and is deserving of our heartfelt thanks, is not seeking re-election, at least for the time being. Attention is drawn to the nomination slip in this Bulletin.

International Rhododendron Union Membership

The objectives of the IRU are, very briefly, to provide an international forum for communication on the genus Rhododendron and to encourage international co-operation in matters relating to the genus. If you think global on the genus Rhododendron, then membership of the International Rhododendron Union is for you! The International Rhododendron Union is now opening its membership to include individual membership under Article iv, Section 1 of its constitution.

The advantage of joining as an individual member is that you will have direct access to data on the genus Rhododendron which the IRU is in the process of building up and to be a part of an expanding organisation which is aiming to achieve the above objectives.

At this stage of the IRU's development we have 2 communication officers who publish twice a year a Newsletter about events and what is happening in the International Rhododendron field.

The annual individual membership fee is £6. To avoid individuals each paying a separate bank charge and exchange rate on their fee, the IRU Board has requested the local IRU representative to be responsible for collecting the individual membership fee in his/her country and forward the consolidated membership list with fees to the IRU Secretary/Treasurer.

Your sterling cheque (made out to Dr. A. C. Leslie) should be enclosed with your application for membership together with a stamped addressed envelope to your local representative:

Dr. A. C. Leslie, RHS, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.

Mr. Ralph Sangster, the President of the International Rhododendron Union

Pocket Microscopes

The Chairman has managed to obtain a supply of pocket microscopes which have a 25X magnification and are most useful for the study of leaf scales and other material. This

particular model is no larger than a fountain pen and needs no batteries. The price is £10 plus 40p p&p. Any enquiries to Bruce Archibold, "Starveacre". Dalwood, East Devon, EX13 7HH.

Treatment of Powdery Mildew

Members are advised that the fungicidal sprays 'REPULSE' and 'BRAVO' mentioned in the article 'Inverewe Expects' by Nigel Price, published in 'Rhododendrons with Camellias and Magnolias' 1990 are restricted to professional use only and anyone supplying or using these preparations for amateur employment is open to prosecution. Anyone who has stocks of 'REPULSE' and 'BRAVO' and is not a professional user is recommended to dispose of the chemicals, contacting either the local Safety Executive or County Council on the means of disposal. Please do not tip them down the nearest drain!

Recently, regulations concerning the application of chemicals have become more stringent. Briefly, only chemicals approved by MAFF may be used in horticultural weed, pest and disease control. All preparations must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and may not be mixed, (the addition of 'spreaders' appears to be a 'grey' area at the moment).

Providing 'amateur grade' preparations are used, rules about spraying are largely common sense - avoiding contamination of persons, watercourses and prevention of drift. However, one important point concerns spraying other than on one's own property (which presumably includes tenanted land) - without a Certificate of Proficiency in Chemical Spraying, it is an offence to spray beyond the boundary of one's own land.

These regulations apply throughout the UK - overseas members are recommended to check locally.

Note: It is hoped to include a more helpful item on powdery mildew in the next issue.

Would members wishing to submit items for Bulletin publication please note that copy should be sent to:

Geoff H. Taylor, Hon. Editor, Pant-yr-Holliad Garden, Rhydlewis, Llandysul, DYFED, SA44 5ST.

Latest date for August issue: 1st July 1990.

BRANCH NEWS

South West Branch - Autumn Meeting 1989

On Friday 24 November, 97 members and their guests, assembled at the Dartmoor Motel, Ashburton, Devon, for our Autumn meeting. This was a new venue and proved most popular.

The plants sale, was the first event, it was keenly supported. Thanks to the generosity of our members in donating and buying so many plants, £171 was raised for Branch Funds, in a very short time. Thanks also to Christine, Mary, Peter, and Helen, for their hard work behind the long tables!

John and Margaret Bodenham excelled again in setting up a splendid plant quiz, which was much appreciated by the many competitors.

This year many more could participate as the quiz was divided into two sections, in the conference room. An easier section for those who had not previously won a prize, and a harder one open to all. Ten prizes of books and rhododendrons were on offer, and the first prize a copy of "The Sichuan Rhododendrons of China" was won by Barry Starling. Afterwards we were all delighted to present John with a copy of "Rhododendrons of China Vol I" in appreciation of his many hours of hard work, and for making this part of our evening so enjoyable.

A superb buffet followed. Frank Lavin then entertained us with a splendid slide show of rhododendrons and camellias. His commentary was most informative, and enjoyably relaxed, with many interesting hints based on his 34 years of gardening at Greenway Gardens, the home of the late Agatha Christie.

Bruce Archibold then kindly proposed a vote of thanks from us all, auctioned two books, generously donated by Nigel Wright, and outlined future events for the Group in the coming year.

Forthcoming Events:

Sat. 7th April: Visits to Trewidden and Trengwainton, Cornwall.

Sat. 5th May: Visits to Abbotsbury and Minterne, Dorset.

South East Branch

Forthcoming Events:

Plans are afoot for a 'Rhododendron Workshop' where members may learn and practise the skills of propagation under the eyes of a master in these techniques, Alan Clark, and will take place over a two day weekend period in July.

Fri. 6th April: Visit to Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, West Sussex.

Sun. 29th April: Visit to High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, W. Sussex.

Sun. 6th May: Visit to Tilgates, Bletchingly, Surrey.

Wessex Branch

At the October meeting, Mr. Phil Knox gave a talk with slides on 'Peat Gardens'. This was well attended and much enjoyed by all those present.

Mr. Knox described in detail the method of constructing such a garden using sedge peat blocks, best sited on a north-facing slope, possibly in the shadow of the house. He pointed out that peat has no nutritional value, so fertilizers should be added and of course, the bed kept from drying-out. Among the many plants he suggested which would thrive in a peat garden were rhododendrons, ericas, primulas, lilies, meconopsis, soldanellas, ferns, gentians and many other rare species.

In November, the Branch held its annual Members' Evening, to which many brought slides. This is always an interesting evening with photographs of gardens, plant portraits and travels abroad.

1990 started with a most interesting talk in February by Miss Jennifer Trehane. She told of the history of the Camellia and its introduction into this country, arousing much interest in slides and live plants of scented Camellias and showed a photograph of a most delectable yellow Camellia (*chrysantha*). We learned how the growers in New Zealand were hybridising and of the new introductions which she and her father had brought to this country. It was indeed a memorable evening and much enjoyed by all.

Our plans for the rest of the year include a visit to Lady Anne Cowdray's and Mr and Mrs Phillips' gardens near Devizes in April. On June 2nd, we shall hold the Annual Competition for the Branch Challenge Cup at Polshot Manor, Elstead, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs James Hall. In October, Mr Jim Gardiner, Curator of Wisley Garden is talking on Magnolias, while in November, we hope Mr Royal Lancaster will be lecturing on his recent travels.

Ending on a sad note, I have to report the untimely death of Mrs Kathleen Beadle, who was Branch Secretary from 1982 - 1989 and was much loved by all the members - she will be sadly missed, but remembered always with great affection.

South West Wales Branch

Forthcoming Events:

Sat. 28th April: The Hall, Angle and Four Ashes, Cosheston, Dyfed.

Sat. 19th May: Members' meeting at Post House Garden, Cwmbach, Dyfed.

Sat. 2nd June: Hergest Croft, Kington, Herefordshire.

Sat. 16th June: Carrog, Llanddeiniol and Botany Garden, Aberystwyth.

Sat. 4th August: Garth, Nr. Builth Wells and Llysdinam, Newbridge-on-Wye, Powys.

Ireland Branch

Forthcoming Event:

Sun. 6th May: Annual visit to Moyola Park, Castledawson, Co. Derry and Portglenone, Co. Derry.

OPEN FORUM - Notes from members on group genera

The Maddenii Rhododendrons

In 1981, before we moved from Windlesham to Devon, I was given several maddenii rhododendrons by a chap who had turfed them out of his greenhouse to make room for orchids. These were:

R. burmanicum, *R. cubbittii*, *R. dendricola*, *R. formosum*, *R. johnstoneanum* (3 forms), *R. parryae*, *R. valentinianum*, *R. crassum*, *R. manipurens*, *R. polyanthum* and *R. rhabdotum*, plus two hybrids, 'Michael's Pride' (*burmanicum* x *dalhouseiae*) and 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' (*said to be ciliatum* x *edgeworthii* - FCC 1881).

I had not grown maddenii rhododendrons before and as I had no spare room in my greenhouses, they had to take pot luck outside. *R. cubittii* and *R. rhabdotoxum* cashed in their chips the following winter. The others were moved to Devon in 1983 and that same year I acquired some rooted cuttings of *R. ciliatum* from one of the Scottish gardens.

Whereas they grow quite well here and do not seem fussy about sun or shade and are also quite drought resistant, they do, with the exception of *R. ciliatum* and 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam', have one big failing - the flower buds are not hardy.

The lowest temperatures I have recorded since we moved here have been - 5°C and -6°C on two separate nights only, which were of too short duration to cause much damage, but we have had several days running in February with cold east winds and temperatures around freezing and this seems to cause the damage. They start the winter with lots of fat buds, but I have yet to see one open on *R. formosum*, *R. dendricola* or *R. parryae*. *R. ciliatum* and 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' are the only ones to come through unscathed. The others rarely produce a truss fit for the show bench. On the other hand *R. sulfureum* (s.s. Boothii) performs very well.

if I had my time over again, I would have a large frost-free greenhouse for the best of the maddenii and the vireyas - I am sure they would get on well together.

Reg. P. Pohlmann

Little Acre, Duncannon Mead, Stoke Gabriel, Devon TQ9 6QW
Reg would be grateful for contact with any other growers of Maddenii (subsect. Madderia) Rhododendrons with a view to exchanging propagation material.

From North Cornwall, Walter Magor rates the hardiness of the Madderia subsect. as follows: *R. crassum* H4, *R. brachysiphon*, *maddenii* & *manipurensis* H3 and *R. polyandrum* H2.

Crossed with species or hybrids of subsect. Cinnabarina, the above group have produced several hybrids, of which 'Royal Flush' is perhaps best known, attracting a hardiness rating of H3. The late E. J. P. Magor crossed *R. crassum* and *R. cinnabarinum* to produce a distinctive hybrid 'Cinnocrass' with creamy-white tubular flowers, which survived at Lamellen to this day.

In 1936, 'Pan' was registered, a hybrid from crossing *R. griersonianum* with *R. crassum* Registered by Sir John Stirling-Maxwell (a founder member of the Rhododendron Association) of Pollok House, Pollokshaws, Glasgow. 'Pan' pre-dated by a year the registration of another elepidote/lepidote cross (*griersonianum* x *dalhousiae*) from Clyne Castle, possibly using the A.M. form of *R. dalhousiae* exhibited from Clyne in 1930. Records show that in 1941, 'Griercalyx' (*griersonianum* x *megacalyx*) was registered with raiser unknown, but the A.M. form of the pollen plant was again shown by Clyne. With the use of *R. griersonianum* in these elepidote/lepidote crosses, one wonders if there is a special affinity with the Madderia subsection. Any up-to-date information on these hybrids would be of great interest.

Regarding the hardiness of the Madderia group at Clyne Castle, Ivor Stokes tells us that temperatures of -12°C were recorded in the early 'eighties', but the garden does enjoy a degree of protection from the east.

Postscript: We are informed by the Curator of Pollok House (Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries) that many of Sir John Stirling-Maxwell's rhododendrons remain in the garden and that the horticultural staff are endeavouring to trace the elusive 'Pan'.

Vireyas

With reference to his communication in Bulletin No. 39 (December 1988), John Bodenham advises that the growth promoting 'Alfalfa Juice' may be prepared from an alternative brand of alfalfa tablets known as 'SOLGAR', manufactured in the USA and considerably cheaper than the original source. SOLGAR is obtainable from most health food shops.

Formula of SOLGAR:

Alfalfa	5,000 mg
Dibasic calcium phosphate	621 mg
Hydrated silica	117 mg
Vegetable cellulose	27 mg

We await the results of John's experiments with this new preparation. From the American Rhododendron Society Journal, it is apparent that the growth promotor in alfalfa is a

long chain alcohol, which is most critical when applied as a pure chemical and thus the use of an alfalfa extract is the most satisfactory way of applying it in the field.

John furnishes an additional note on the limited viability of vireya seed, which should be sown immediately on receipt. However, viability may be extended by storing at low temperature, the seed being perfectly dry.

Stephen Fox, who was recently in S.E. Asia has kindly suggested two recent books on vireyas:

'Rhododendrons of Sabah' by G. Argent, A. Lamb, A. Phipps & S. Collette. Sabah Parks Publication No. 8 (1988), 144 pp. Descriptions with colour plates of 35 species and 7 natural hybrids growing in the parks of Sabah (formerly North Borneo). Beautifully produced paperback. Available through RBG Edinburgh, price £6.00

'Vireya Rhododendrons' by J. Clyde Smith (1989) Australian Rhododendron Society (Sec. Mrs. L. Eaton, PO Box 21, Olinda, Victoria 3788, Australia) 76pp. with colour and monochrome plates. Cultural information with general description of species and hybrids. Paperback, price \$15.00 + \$9.00 (Australian) p&p. Note: According to 'Which' magazine, postal orders may be the cheapest way of sending money to Commonwealth Countries.

Wayford Rhododendron Woods 1990

Wayford Woods have suffered catastrophic damage in the recent gales and the paths are all impassable at the moment; it will be some time before they are reopened and then it may be a depressing sight with damaged plants trying to enliven the wilderness with their flowers.

The extent of the damage is so great that reinstatement of the previous conditions will be out of the question for years. It is not just a matter of clearing up the debris; the woods are unrecognizable. The task of clearing up will be a protracted one, even with the help of volunteers, since the new plantings that have survived so far could all be put at risk by carelessness in the clearing. Many of the fallen trees will have to stay where they lie until new paths for their removal can be opened up.

Bluebells, camellias and rhododendrons show promise and will be flowering in due course, but none will be seen to advantage this year. Next year the new shape of things in the woods will be more evident and it will, perhaps, be negotiable again for devotees of this unique piece of Somerset. For the time being the place is in mourning for the many fallen giants of the past century which met their end on January 25th.

Trees for Shade and Shelter

Following the recent depletion of trees by gales, members are discussing replacements, with fast growing species in mind. From the extreme south west, ideas favour indigenous species with the addition of Escallonia, Pittosporum and Griselinia. *C. x leylandii* is not spurned while *C. macrocarpa lutea* and the cultivar 'Donard Gold' are praised. Rather surprisingly, *Populus x robusta* is mentioned, but in drier areas, the high rainfall of the south west must be taken into consideration, as the rampant roots of poplars could be detrimental to any nearby rhododendrons or camellias.

From both Wales and the eastern counties of England, members suggest planting conifers such as *P. sylvestris* or *P. radiata* on the northerly aspect to protect well spaced plantings of different birches (note: Hergest Croft, Nr. Hereford holds the National Collection) with rhododendrons and camellias planted between.

At Golden Acre Park, Leeds, the hurricane of 1962 devastated cover of mountain oaks beyond recall, exposing many rhododendrons to sun and wind. This area was successfully replanted with mixed Sorbus and Betula species, together with *C. lawsoniana* and *T. plicata*, the conifers being gradually removed as shade increased. Among the Sorbus *S. esserteauiana* and *S. sargentiana* show great promise as trees for underplanting. In a collection of mixed Sorbus at Carew Gardens, we hear that *S. vilmorinii* is performing well and now seeding-down freely.

Nothofagus species have been mooted as fast growing trees suitable for western parts, but the shade cast by most is considered too dense and although wind-firm, the wood of some such as *N. procera* is proving brittle with semi-mature trees being snapped-off at ground level during spring gales. The smaller leaved *N. antarctica* is however proving satisfactory, providing it is adequately secured in early years.

T.S.C. - P.P. - G.H.T. - G.W.

Forward thinking on deciduous azaleas - the 'Solent Range'

Recently, while going through some old papers I came across the enclosed "Family Tree" of the hybridisation of deciduous azaleas, which I think may be of interest to members. From this can be seen how the species were used by different horticulturists commencing with the Belgian enthusiast, M. P. Mortier. Resulting from his efforts, the Ghent azaleas were presumably named in his honour. Later in the 19th century many British enthusiasts tried crossing the Ghent and Mollis strains, but progress was limited by lack of method. Around 1850, Anthony Waterer senior of Knaphill took the important step of adding to his nursery stock and starting to hybridise more scientifically - his results were successful and became famous as the Knaphill deciduous azaleas. His son then carried on his work, but sold some plants to Slocock's nursery and to Edgar Stead of Ilam Riccarton in New Zealand. Around 1920 the surviving Knaphill clones became the breeding stock of the Exbury strain of deciduous azaleas pioneered by my father, the late Lionel de Rothschild.

During World War II, after the death of my father in 1942 and just before I went overseas with my regiment to North Africa, Exbury House was requisitioned by the Royal Navy and became HMS Mastodon, one of the centres for the planning of "D" day. Incidentally, the gardens were unharmed by the 1,500 or so persons billeted in or around the house. Francis Hanger, who became curator of Wisley after the war, was the head gardener during the last years of my father's life. He had a disability and so

was not called up and became the de facto agent. In 1943, his wife became ill and went into a nursing home run by a Mr. and Mrs. George Hyde. As a "Thank you" for looking after his wife, Mr. Hanger gave Mr. Hyde some Exbury deciduous azaleas. George Hyde interested himself in hybridising these azaleas and succeeded in growing some with larger and tighter trusses which enabled these azaleas to be more sun tolerant. After the war the collection was bought from the Hydes and renamed the Solent range of Exbury azaleas. In the book, "The Rothschild Rhododendrons - A Record of the Gardens at Exbury" written by Peter Barber and C. E. Lucas, there are several plates of the Solent range of Exbury azaleas and one, Beaulieu Manor, gives an indication of the magnificence of this strain.

Considerable work has been carried out on the classification of the many varieties to differentiate them from the other known strains and new trial ground has been planted at the bottom of the Winter Garden at Exbury with some 80 varieties of Exbury and Solent strains.

At the moment of writing, the plants are small and in groups of three, but they will be able to be studied in greater detail as sadly, in the great gale of 1987, the wood where the azaleas were in profusion was the worst damaged, though nearly all the plants were saved. Of the Solent range, 46 have been named so far, but are not yet in multiple cultivation. Furthermore, there are quite a few other hybrids that have been crossed at Exbury which will also be put on trial in the future.

Edmund de Rothschild

Four azaleas native to eastern North America and four more from the Black Sea region, Japan, China and western N. America

