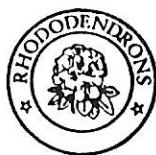


The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group



BULLETIN No. 45 - December 1990

Forthcoming Events 1991

January 29-30
February 19-20
March 12-13

April 9-10

Flower Show
Flower Show
Early Spring Show, Camellia,
Rhododendron Competitions
Spring Show, Camellia,
Rhododendron Competitions

April 30-May 1

May 10-12

May 12-17

May 21-24

Main Rhododendron Competition
Malvern Spring Gardening Show (see text)
Group Spring Tour, N.E. England
& S.E. Scotland (see text)
Chelsea Flower Show

All shows are at Vincent Square unless stated otherwise.

Chairman's Notes

In a year when Magnolia seed seems to have reached almost glut proportions it is sad to report that David Clulow feels unable to continue with the Seed Exchange. I am sure that all members will be grateful to him for the two years in which he organised the Exchange with such good results.

He has very kindly offered to let anyone who would like to take on this interesting but time consuming job, his computer software, and assistance with understanding the programme. The computer required is an Apple Macintosh (and preferably a Laser Writer) and the Omnis 3 database - this would have to be purchased and the Executive Committee would look into this.

If anyone is interested please get in touch with me at "Starveacre", Dalwood, East Devon, EX13 7HH. Tel: (040 488) 221.

We are still looking for a member who would be prepared to run a Branch in the London area and I would welcome an approach at the above address. The same appeal applies to the Midlands Area.

Finally a cry from the heart from our two Editors both Yearbook and Bulletin. Do you approve of the format and contents? Would you like to see more or less of any type of article. Do not forget that these are both YOUR publications and your views and your articles are important, so let us hear them. Write either to me or direct to the relative Editor.

B.A.

Treasurer's Notes

Firstly, I would like to remind members who have not yet paid their subscriptions that these are now overdue and are as follows:

UK and Overseas (surface mail) £7.00 (New members £10.00)

Overseas (airmail despatch) £10.00 (New members £14.00)

Regrettably, due to rising costs, the subscriptions will be increased wef. 1st November 1991 to the new rates as follows:

UK and Overseas (surface mail) £10.00

Overseas (airmail despatch) £14.00

It is hoped that these rates can be maintained for some time to come.

P.A.R.

The Spring Tour, May 1991

Proposed Venue The borders between N.E. England & S.E. Scotland.

Dates Between May 12th & 17th. Later dates have been chosen for next year as S.E. Scotland is two or three weeks behind Southern England, and is often the coldest part of Scotland.

Gardens Probably the following: Howick Hall, Alnwick (Lady Mary Howick), Eglington Hall (Mr Henry Potts) also at Alnwick, Manderston, Duns (Mr Adrian Palmer), Whitechapel House, Longformacus (Mrs Landale), Castle Howard, Beaufort Castle, Hexham and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. One or two others may be added, also there may be

changes in this programme. For the final details - ready in December - please complete the form enclosed and send to me with a s.a.c.

I would like to thank Mr. Clive Collins, a member of our committee, on behalf of the Group for his very generous donation of the funds collected from the sale of his pocket microscopes. This has enabled me to buy an electric typewriter for my use and that of any Tours Organiser following me.

Valerie Archibold

Powdery Mildew

Among the enclosures with this issue, members will find a questionnaire from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. If we are to beat this scourge, collection of information is most important and all members with affected plants are urged to complete and return the form.

New. Hon. Organiser for the South West Branch

On 31st March 1984, ninety members left their armchairs and prospects of watching the Grand National on television to attend the first meeting of the re-vamped South West Branch under the organisation of Major R. A. W. Reynolds. With an invitation to visit Lamellen, home of Major E. W. M. Magor, exotic species and fine hybrid rhododendrons registered by the host and his father, the late E. J. P. Magor, even a day of pouring rain did not dampen enthusiasm. A fine start for the new organiser, but Major Reynolds did not stop there and for nearly seven years the Branch has thrived with an ever-increasing membership taking advantage of his attractive programmes.

However, Major Reynolds has now decided to step down, but true to his organisational ability, has handed-over to Nigel Wright, well known in Group circles and we all wish him every success - may the South West Branch continue to flourish!

Hon. Organiser, South West Branch: E. N. G. Wright, The Olde Glebe, Eggesford, Chulmleigh, Devon, EX18 7QU.

Year Books back numbers available at 1st November 1990.

1978	£1.90	
1979-80	£1.90	All these prices include
1981-82	£3.15	postage in the U.K. at second
1982-83	£3.65	class rates.
1983-84	£3.65	
1985-86	£3.65	Overseas members should
1986-87	£3.90	include an additional 25p per
1987-88	£3.90	copy and the books will be
1988-89	£4.40	sent 'Surface Mail'.

Cheques should be made payable to 'The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group' and sent with your order to The Year Book Secretary, Mr. D. N. Farnes, Corton Lodge, 7 Burntwood Avenue, Emerson Park, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 3JD.

Show News

Schedules for Ornamental Plant Competitions (including rhododendron, camellia and magnolia classes) will be printed mid-December and should be available from The Shows Department, Vincent Square, after that time.

Members may like to know that all shows at Vincent Square up to and including that in July usually have at least one class for rhododendrons.

A joint venture between The Royal Horticultural Society and the Three Counties Agricultural Society, the Malvern Spring Gardening Show should be an attraction to midlands members. Over 80 trade exhibits in addition to amateur competitions and practical demonstrations in horticultural techniques are just a few facets of interest.

Use of the term 'Azalea' (Ref. Bulletin No. 44)

With opinions from members to hand, the following is the substance of a communication forwarded to The Director General of The Royal Horticultural Society:

The name 'azalea' should be reserved for species of the Azalea series in the Balfourea classification and for hybrids between them. Hybrids with species of other series should be termed 'azaleodendrons'.

Using the revised classification, this would mean species listed under the sub-genera *Pentanthera* and *Tsutsutsi* and hybrids between them, with similar rules applying to 'azaleodendrons' as in the previous paragraph.

To avoid confusion, the term 'azalea' should be reserved for use as above and not employed in an adjectival application outside the above parameters.

G.H.T.

Forthcoming Plant Sales

Porthpean House, St. Austell, Cornwall.

A sale of Camellias and other plants, some unusual, will take place at Porthpean House Gardens on Saturday 20th April, 1991 from 2pm until 6pm.

High Beeches Gardens

There will be an important Plant Sale at *High Beeches Gardens*, Handcross, W. Sussex, on Monday May 6th. Tilgates (D. Clulow) are disposing of all their surplus stock of plants, at High Beeches.

David Clulow has been a member of several plant collecting expeditions, and has raised many plants from wild sources. He is also interested in propagating the best available clones of a very wide variety of plant species and hybrids, including many Rhododendrons and Magnolias. Most are not widely available.

The plants are exceptionally well grown.

Admission is £2.00, from 10am - 5pm, and includes the gardens, which should be at their best.

There will be homemade lunches and refreshments served all day, and ample car parking.

A 'Plantsmans Catalogue', listing some of the most interesting of the plants, is available from The Head gardener, Tilgates, Little Common Lane, Bletchingly, Surrey, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

Anyone interested in the rarer plants is advised to come early in the day, as nothing can be reserved in advance.

Contact Anne Boscawen, The High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex, RH17 6HQ. Tel: 0444 400589.

Reaction to Drought

Following two seasons of low rainfall in the U.K. many rhododendrons have died and this may be an opportunity to start work on the susceptibility of species and hybrids to drought. Would members with definite findings, excluding recently planted and ailing specimens, kindly write-in so that we may see if any pattern exists. Regarding rhododendrons, I will start the ball rolling with *R. bureavii* and *R. neriflorum*, each previously growing well in light shade, but now quite dead. Camellias and Magnolias seem not to have suffered here, but further information would be welcome.

G.H.T.

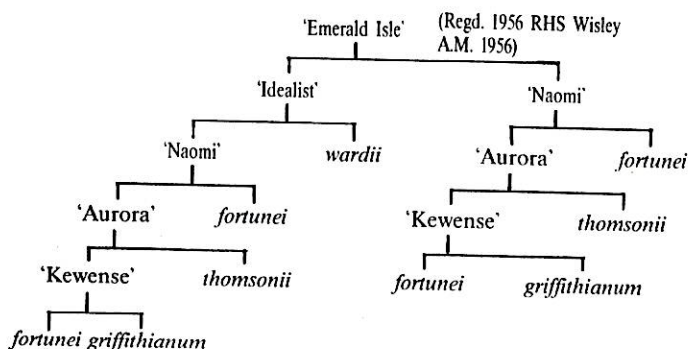
Editorial Note

Would members please note that communications for the April 1991 issue of the Bulletin should reach me by 28th February

1991. Geoff H. Taylor, Hon. Editor, Pant-yr-Holiad Garden, Rhydlewis, Llandysul, Dyfed, SA44 5ST.

Plant Sought

Mrs. Grozkowska, 56 Freeland Road, Bromley, Kent is searching for a plant of rhododendron 'Emerald Isle', a hybrid with flowers of Chartreuse-green. Could anyone help? The parentage of this hybrid may be of interest.



Note: 'Kewense' was the first registered crossing (Kew 1888) of parent plants later to be famous for producing the Loderi Rhododendrons.

Books for Christmas

(Reference numbers are to the RHS October 1990 list of 'Books for Gardeners').

420 The Rhododendron Handbook 1980 - Rhododendron Species in Cultivation Soft Cover £6.00

348 Rhododendron Hybrids - Salley and Greer Hard Cover £60.00

Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh - Revision of Rhododendron Vol. 39 Nos. 1 & 2

Rhododendrons and Azaleas - Mervyn Kessell - Blandford 1990 Soft Cover £5.95

Himalayan Enchantment - An Anthology of Frank Kingdon-Ward's writings, edited by John Whitehead - Serindia Publications Hard Cover £16.95

The following are Out of Print, but worth hunting for around the second-hand booksellers:

Rhododendrons of the World - David G. Leach

Rhododendrons and Magnolias - Douglas Bartrum

Rhododendrons - Gerd Krussman.

Book Reviews

The Larger Rhododendron Species by Peter Cox, 2nd edition, B. T. Batsford Ltd, £35.00. A comprehensive work which provides botanical and horticultural details of all but the smaller species of rhododendron, following the Edinburgh revised classification, now generally accepted. A 34-page addendum covers various taxa that have been named since the 1st edition was published in 1979, including the new species *Rr. balangense*, *bhutanense* and *kesangiae*, and a short chapter on powdery mildew. 82 very good colour plates. A very useful reference book.

Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons by Peter and Kenneth Cox, B. T. Batsford Ltd, £14.95, contains good colour photographs of 60 rhododendron species, 66 hybrids and 13 azaleas. An attractive looking small book, which beginners may find useful.

W.M.

BRANCH NEWS

South West Branch - Autumn Meeting 1990

On Friday 16th November, 82 members and their guests assembled at the Riverside Inn, Bovey Tracey for our Autumn meeting.

It was a first class and entertaining evening. The Plant Sale was our best ever, with the generous support from so many members, £223 was raised for Branch Funds. Thanks are due to all who donated plants, and those who so enthusiastically purchased them. Special thanks are due to Christine, Mary, Peter, Helen and June Wright for their hard work behind the tables.

John and Margaret Bodenham laid on two separate quizzes;

QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH IN POWDERY MILDEW OF *RHODODENDRON*

Rhododendron powdery mildew has been a problem with growers in Europe and Australasia for a number of years and has become serious in Britain during the last five years. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has one of the world's biggest collections of rhododendrons, and we are therefore acting as a co-ordinator of research into the disease. To estimate the spread of the disease we would be very grateful if you could inspect your plants and let us know of the presence and extent of mildew infections in your rhododendron collection.

We would also be grateful if you could send us some dried infected leaf material for examination and confirmation.

Please also supply the following information:

Place of collection:

Date of collection:

Rhododendron varieties (if known):

Extent of damage: () none; () slight; () medium; () severe.

Year in which you first detected the disease in your collection

Do you apply control measures? () no () yes

If yes which?

Any other relevant information (e.g. origin of plants; other diseases present; growing problems; soil & water properties..)

Thank you very much for your effort.

**Please send completed questionnaire, and possibly samples, to: Dr S. Helfer,
Royal Botanic Garden, Inverleith Row, EDINBURGH EH3 5LR, SCOTLAND,
GREAT BRITAIN. (Address label included)**

If you wish to receive correspondence please give your name and address:

after many hours of preparatory work collecting together live plant material, photographs, accurate plant descriptions, etc. Ten prizes were on offer. Richard Scrivenor and Mr. Granlund won 1st Prize in each quiz, and runners up were Bruce Archibold, Terry Vince, Richard Fulcher, and Mr. Santer. Runners up in the easier quiz were Robin Whiting and Joey Warren, our new Group. Hon. Secretary. Afterwards we presented John Bodenham with a large plant of *R. calophytum* for his woodland garden. He said "Watch Out - it will provide material for future competitions!"

After all this excitement our Hon. Treasurer, Peter Reynolds, had a few words to say to remind those who were in arrears, that subscriptions were due on 1 Nov '90. He added that the Year Books would be with him, from the printers, during the coming week, and would be sent out to all those who were up to date with their subscriptions.

An outstanding buffet supper followed with splendid service, under the head waiter. Soon we were all tucking into freshly carved turkey, ham, roast beef, etc, followed by gateau or ice cream and excellent coffee.

John Gallagher then had us fascinated with his beautiful slides of Camellias. First he covered the islands off the west coast of Korea, where the plants grow to gigantic size. Then we travelled to America, where he warned of a dreaded petal blight, to be kept out of the U.K. at all costs. He showed some lovely slides of Camellia 'Dr. Clifford Parks' with huge flowers and also strongly recommended C. 'Brigadoon'; a splendid upright C. x williamsii. This led to pictures of Caerhays Castle, its owner, and the home of the Williamsii Camellias.

Bruce Archibold thanked the lecturer for a most interesting talk. He then thanked the outgoing Branch Organiser for 7 years hard work in building up the Branch to its present strength, with its enthusiastic support at all the meetings.

Nigel Wright, the new Branch Organiser, gave out the diary dates for future events of the Branch next year. He then thanked Dick Reynolds for his efforts in the past and presented him with a splendid plant of Magnolia 'Iolanthe'; and a box of lead labels, which originated from Wayford Rhododendron Wood, and that could not be matched to any existing plants by the owners Michael and Felicity Belfield.

Dick Reynolds then thanked everyone for these splendid gifts, and wished the Branch every success in the future.

Forthcoming Events:

Sat. 13th April - Visits to Trehane and Trewithen in Cornwall.
Sat. 11th May - Visits to Forde Abbey, Wayford Manor, and Wayford Rhododendron Wood in Somerset.

R. A. W. Reynolds

South West Wales Branch

On 4th August, members gathered at 'Garth House' near Builth Wells, where although very dry, the garden had many delights, especially the well established shrubs and herbaceous borders. Although devoid of blossom, the rhododendron plantation was particularly interesting as we were informed by the current owner that his father had received most of the plants as gifts from his friend Admiral Walker-Heneage-Vivian of 'Clyne Castle', Swansea, but that sadly many were devoid of name tags and the identities lost. In this garden are there unknown gems of the Admiral's hybridising? Next spring we hope to find out, when members of the Branch will do their best to do a bit of identification work.

In the afternoon, we visited 'Llysdyman' at Newbridge-on-Wye where we had the pleasure of seeing a garden of Victorian times, maintained to a high standard. Among the herbaceous plants, a variegated form of *Polygonatum multiflorum* was attractive while the extensive traditional greenhouses evoked interest. With the swimming pool water temperature at 86°F (30°C), we were only too happy to accept the iced drinks so kindly offered by our hostess.

G.H.T.

Wessex Branch

The garden visit in April to Mr Phillips and Lady Anne Cowdray's gardens was much enjoyed by some 26 members and many cuttings were taken at Mr Phillips garden - with the permission, one must add, of the owner. We would like to thank both these owners for taking so much trouble with our Group and for personally showing us their both very different but superb gardens.

The competition held at Polshot Manor the first weekend in June, by courtesy of Mr and Mrs James Hall, produced some 77 entries and we were fortunate to have Mr John Bond as our judge. The older Hardy Hybrids were much to the fore and the cup was won by Mr L. Linney with Rh. 'Purple Splendour'. Members also brought some interesting plants for sale which helped considerably the finances of the Branch. It is hoped to have further plant sales as well as your questions answered - if possible after lectures in the New Year.

OPEN FORUM - Notes from members on Group genera

Second flowering of Magnolia hybrids

At the time of writing (21st August) two of the Pickard Hybrid Magnolias in the garden are in the midst of a heavy display of blossom having first flowered at the normal time. This second flush is just as great as the first and, if anything, the flower colour is deeper and this despite nearly drought conditions in Devon since early June. The Gresham Hybrid 'Heaven Scent' is also flowering but only the odd one or two. It would be interesting to learn if this has been a general occurrence this year or perhaps restricted to the South West.

B.A.

As I commence getting together the Bulletin in late October, *Magnolia liliiflora* Nigra is in full bloom outside my study window!

G.H.T. (West Wales)

The Influence of *Rhododendron catawbiense*

Interest in the antecedents of a very old cultivar called 'English Roseum', a seedling of *R. catawbiense*, registered by A. Waterer before 1851, has prompted an inquiry about other rhododendrons derived from *R. catawbiense*, as it was felt that they would be really hardy, and so of great interest to rhododendron growers in cold climates.

R. catawbiense is a species of subsect. Pontica, a native of the slopes and summits of the highest mountains of the Alleghenies in Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Carolina, particularly near the source of the Catawba river, where it was first discovered at 6000ft by John Fraser and his father in 1808, and introduced into England by them in 1809. It first flowered here in 1813, and there is a description and illustration of it in the Botanical Magazine for 1814, t.1671.

Its chief claim to fame is as one of the progenitors of the hardy hybrids, and it has been much used by nurserymen for this purpose, notably in this country by the Waterers, in Germany by Hobbie, and in America by Gable, who have crossed it and its hybrids with *arboreum*, *ponticum*, *caucasicum*, *maximum* and their hybrids.

Professor C. S. Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum, after studying the species in the wild on the Roan Mountain in North Carolina in 1894, wrote that rhododendrons of *catawbiense* blood require rich, moist, well-drained soil, constant atmospheric moisture and protection from high winds, under which conditions they can support excessive winter cold.

1831 saw the appearance of *R. 'Russellianum'*, the 'Cornish Early Red', a cross between *catawbiense* and *arboreum*, a feature of the older Cornish gardens, which I have seen flourishing as far afield as Brazil. Also of *R. 'Altaclarensis'*, which resembles it; a cross between *arboreum* and the hybrid of *catawbiense* and *ponticum*; this was awarded the F.C.C. in 1865.

Crossed by Veitch with *R. griffithianum*, *R. catawbiense* produced *R. 'Manglesii'*, F.C.C. 1885. It has been used to a limited extent in the present century too: *catawbiense* 'Grandiflorum' x *discolor* by Hobbie in 1948 to give 'Astraa' and (*catawbiense* x *thomsonii*) x *forrestii* var. *repens* by Hobbie in 1962 gave 'Isaac Newton'. *R. catawbiense* var. *compactum* x *dichroanthum* by Haworth-Booth gave 'Zanna', registered in 1961.

Numerous *catawbiense* hybrids have been made in America, some of which are available in this country, but there is no longer much demand here for the *catawbiense* hybrids, and only the following appear in current nurserymen's catalogues:

'America'	'Nova Zembla'
'Catawbiense Grandiflorum'	'Old Port'
'Everestianum'	'Roseum Elegans'
'Fastuosum Flore Pleno'.	

W.M.

Comments from Texas, USA

While a little ambitious perhaps, but with success extremely rewarding, I am spending part of my retirement in finding ways to make rhododendrons viable plants for growing in the Gulf Coast regions of the United States of America. While camellias grafted on to *Sasanqua* stocks do very well here, I have been repeatedly told, "There ain't no way y'ever gonna grow them things here", referring to rhododendrons, heat and humidity being quoted as the preventative. However, 'Southern Indica Azaleas' derived from *R. simsii* have flourished right across the Gulf Coast States since before the civil war, often with minimal or no attention.

Information regarding the precise climatic conditions prevailing in rhododendron habitats would be welcome, but I believe *Phytophthora cinnamoni* to be the main problem and that there is a possibility that successful culture of rhododendrons may be achieved by grafting 'regular' varieties on the 'Southern Indica Azalea' understocks. My current experiments in this direction show promise with a good percentage of the grafts in growth and I hope to report further progress in due course.

I would be very pleased to hear from any member with a climate similar to that here in Texas.

Geoffrey Wakefield

"Rungi Koti"

Rt. 21, Box 1176, Conroe,
TEXAS, 77301, U.S.A.

Rhododendrons - Aluminium tolerant plants

Aluminium is not said to be necessary for plants. However, results of many experiments show that aluminium plays an important role in plant vital functions. A plant's response depends on aluminium concentration in the soil and their tolerance. The most suitable concentration has proved to range from 0.5 to 5.0 ppm for many species. Soil acidity is an important factor influencing the absorption of this element by plants. Usually the highest concentration is found in acid soils.

The German physiologist Faber (1925) noted that *Rhododendron javanicum*, *R. malayanum*, *R. retusum*, *Vaccinium varinifolium* and *Gaultheria leucocarpa* which belonged to the Java mountain flora were found growing on sides of solfataras, where there was more than 50% of aluminium sulphate in the soil and more than 4.5% of sulphuric acid in the water, which caused soil acidity of pH 1. Faber proved that these plants were protected from the destructive effect of the sulphuric acid by the strong absorption of the aluminium. An ash of some of these plants collected at the solfataras contained 68% Al_2O_3 (aluminium

oxide). It was also proved by Faber that these plants were not physiologically xerophytic but transpired quite normally.

Also results of Ticknor's and Chaplin's (1978) experiments showed absorption of a great quantity of aluminium by rhododendrons. The best plants of *R. 'Vulcan'* growing in containers were composed of 106 ppm d.m. Al, whereas the poor growing ones only 66 ppm. Probably such a large amount of this element would be injurious for many other species.

Aluminium content (expressed as Al) in 1, 2 and 3-year-old leaves of rhododendrons growing in Poland was investigated. In the 1-year-old leaves the highest content was recorded in *R. pachytrichum* - 1063 ppm and *R. brachycarpum* - 1035 ppm. It was more than the content of manganese, phosphorus, iron, sodium, zinc, copper and molybdenum. Other species and hybrids contained as below: *R. 'Cunningham's White'* - 420 ppm, *R. schlippenbachii* - 420 ppm, *R. ponticum* - 320 ppm, *R. luteum* - 392 ppm, *R. maximum* - 338 ppm, *R. Catawba* hybrids - 385 ppm and *R. Ghent* hybrids - 420 ppm. The aluminium content in 2-year-old leaves was slightly decreased. In the case of *Catawba* hybrids it was 30 ppm less than before. A small increase was recorded in 3-year-old leaves - 20 ppm more than in 2-year-old ones. The content variability connected with places of plant origin was not significant. Most of the rhododendrons, whose leaves were taken for analysis, were grown in soil containing rather high aluminium concentration. Moreover very acid reaction and high soil humidity caused transformation of this element into soluble form which is available for rhododendrons (Czekalski 1980). In spite of high aluminium content in leaves no damage was visible on investigated shrubs.

It seems that rhododendrons have a special action which controls aluminium absorption. Because rhododendrons require low pH they tolerate high aluminium concentration which usually accompanies acid soil reaction. It is known that aluminium in large quantities retards absorption of calcium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc and some other elements. How rhododendrons are able to resolve this problem is still not explained.

Tomasz Anisko, Mieczysław Czekalski
69-220 Osno Lubuskie
ul. Jeziora 21, POLAND

References

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3. Tickner R. L., Chaplin M. H., 1978. Effect of slow release fertilizer sources on flower formation and nutrient composition in rhododendrons. Proc. Inter. Plant Prop. Soc. 28:101-105.