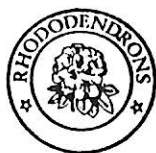


# The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group



BULLETIN No. 50 - August 1992

## Forthcoming Events

August 11-12  
September 15-16  
October 23-25

Summer Flower Show  
Great Autumn Show  
Group Autumn Weekend in Hampshire (see text)

November 3-4  
November 24-25

Late Autumn Show  
Ornamental Plant Competition

All shows are at Vincent Square

## Chairman's Notes

It would be interesting to learn how those members who received seed from the Group's seed exchange have prospered. If a good germination has been obtained and plants grown on, then there is probably a quantity of plants in many parts of the country surplus to raisers' requirements. South West Branch has circulated to its members a list of those with plants for sale or exchange so that other members may have the chance to obtain plants many of which will have been grown from wild-collected seed. Other Branches may consider this to be a worthwhile exercise and decide to do likewise.

Batsfords, the publishers, have offered useful discounts to members of the Group on the purchase of certain books, the titles of which appear elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Finally, notice has been received that the old rhododendron wood at Wayford, near Chard in Somerset is on the market. The wood is some 19 acres in extent and planting commenced in the 1920s. The wood contains not only rhododendrons, but also camellias and magnolias together with many other interesting shrubs and trees. There is also a lake and much interesting wildlife, including a heronry. Full details can be obtained from Michael Belfield, Blanda House, Chaffcombe, Chard, Somerset, TA20 4BL. Tel. 04606 3066.

B.A.

## Editor's Note

Please remember copy date for the next issue of the Bulletin — 1st November. T.W.

## Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1993 are due on 1st November 1992 and those who have not completed a Bankers' Order are requested to assist the Hon. Treasurer by sending their remittance promptly. The rates remain unchanged, as follows:

UK and Overseas (surface mail) ..... £10.00  
Overseas (airmail) ..... £14.00

## Group Autumn Weekend Meeting (23-25 October, 1992)

The meeting will take place in Hampshire at Passford House Hotel, near Lymington (Tel: 0590 683494). This is a Country House Hotel with leisure facilities, e.g. an indoor swimming pool, etc. The main object of our visit will be Hillier's Arboretum, which we will visit on the Saturday, and then Exbury on Sunday. The cost will be in the region of £120-£130, including lunches (not arranged yet). There will be a single room supplement. Owing to the size of the hotel, our numbers will have to be limited, so early application is recommended. Please send a deposit of £10 if you intend coming and send a s.a.e. for further details to Mrs. V. Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, E. Devon, EX31 7HH. (Tel. 040488 221). (The public rooms are rather small, so non-smokers will be especially welcome).

## South West Branch 'Autumn Evening'

Nigel Wright advises me that this event will take place from Friday 2 October 1992 — probable venue: University of Exeter. For further details, please write, enclosing a s.a.e. to Mr. N. Wright, The Old Glebe, Eggesford, Chulmleigh, Devon, EX18 7QU.

## Control of Vine Weevil in Rhododendrons

by John Adlam, Dove Associates, Diss, Norfolk

There are many pests that can create unseen damage to rhododendrons and when it is seen it is too late to save the plant, but none so voracious as

the humble vine weevil larvae. This pest has seen increase over the last few years with the loss of Aldrin from a gardeners' armoury and milder winters that allow the survival of the larvae.

The adults are 7 to 10mm long, black, ribbed and shiny without wings. They emerge in May and June and are most active at night, feeding on the foliage with distinctive serrations around the edge. Up to a few hundred eggs are laid which emerge from July onwards feeding on the roots and stem base. The larvae are 8 to 10mm long, milky white with a black head.

The damage caused by the adults in early summer whilst feeding prior to and during egg laying is notching of the leaves. The most important damage, however is caused by the larvae which destroys the finer roots or burrows into the fleshy parts of roots. Affected plants lack vigour, may suddenly wilt or collapse and die. Over the past few years this damage has been very extensive in the modern open composts used by nurseries.

Control of adults can be carried out on a small scale by placing strong scented, yellow bedding plants such as Tagetes or French Marigolds amongst the infested plants. This will attract the adults at night and first thing in the morning they can be picked off, often in handfuls. The use of Fumite General Purpose Insecticide smokes or Murphy Pest and Disease smoke in a glasshouse is effective or Kerispray, Murphy Tumblebug or Sybol on outdoor crops.

The larvae are a little more difficult to control. Traditionally bantams running around your garden under the rhododendrons will scratch out and eat with relish the fat larvae. Chemically, Murphy Soil Pests Killer or Bromophos are the only products that have any major effect on the pest and should be applied when the larvae are active, which this year was from March onwards outside and earlier in glasshouses. A new biological control system using predatory eelworms is working very effectively on commercial nurseries and may soon be available on the retail market.

## Burchardia umbellata — A case of mistaken identity

On the occasion when a party of Group members came to Whitehills during their tour of South West Scotland, several members went away with plants labelled *Burchardia umbellata*, which were grown from wild-collected seed. Recently, when comparing the flowers of this plant with a photograph in a book on Tasmanian flora, whilst our plants bore a striking resemblance to the illustration, it was observed that the latter had a superior ovary, whereas ours have an inferior one. We came to the conclusion that our plant was a species of *Libertia* and on reference to the RBG, Edinburgh it was confirmed that it is in fact *L. pulchella*, a member of the family, Iridaceae, with short creeping rhizomes and, like *Burchardia*, bearing terminal umbellate clusters of small white flowers on slender pedicels. It is said to be hardy to about — 10°C.

T.W.

## New Publications

As mentioned under Chairman's Notes, B. T. Batsford Ltd have quoted special offer prices to members of our Group as follows:

THE RHODODENDRON SPECIES VOLUMES I, II AND III (Davidian). £60.00 each (Normal price £70.00)  
SET OF 3 VOLUMES — £160.00 (Normal price £175.00)

RHODODENDRONS (van Gelderen/van Hoey Smith). £50.00 (Normal price £60.00)

RHODODENDRON HYBRIDS (Salley/Greer). £45.00 (Normal price just reduced to £50.00)



**GARDENING WITH CAMELLIAS** (Rolfe). £20.00 (Normal price £25.00)

**SMALLER RHODODENDRONS** (Cox). £30.00 (Normal price £35.00)

**LARGER RHODODENDRONS** (Cox). £30.00 (Normal price £35.00)

A descriptive leaflet is enclosed with this bulletin, which includes an Order Form, and when ordering please be sure to make use of this as evidence that you are a member of the Group. When I was speaking to Mr Davidian the other day, he informed me that Vol. III of his work (Elepidotes M-Z) had left the printers in Japan and should be available during August. He added that he was already two-thirds of the way through Vol. IV (Azaleas), although, judging by the time it has taken for the publishers to produce Vol. III, it may be a year or two before it is available!

## BRANCH NEWS

### South West Branch

Trebah. On 25 April over 50 branch members and their guests were welcomed by Philip Macmillan Browse, a former Director of Wisley, on behalf of Major and Mrs Hibbert, the owners. After an introductory talk about the work of the Trebah Garden Trust, which now attracts some 50,000 visitors a year, he conducted us around the glorious 25 acres ravine garden, so favourably situated on the Helston estuary. Summer flowers were already in full bloom.

On the zig-zag path we noted the Strawberry tree *arbutus unedo* as a useful evergreen windbreak for mild, sheltered conditions. Next, the powerful scent of (perhaps) *R. Princess Alice*, then on past tree ferns, Gunnera and Chuzan palms, not forgetting a fine Handkerchief tree (*Davidia involucrata*). This is the home of *R. Trebah Gem* (*arborescens* × *griffithianum*) and we saw a fine example of *R. Cornish Cross* (*thomsonii* × *griffithianum*) with its pink bark. Standing underneath a large *R. Loderi* 'King George' (*griffithianum* × *fortunei*) we inhaled its fragrance.

Penjerrick. In the afternoon we explored Penjerrick under the guidance of Jane Bird and Dick Challinor Davies. *R. augustinii* was towering in full bloom, a perfect foil to the various forms of *R. Penjerrick* (*campylocarpum elatum* × *griffithianum*). *RR. johnstoneanum*, Michael's Pride and Bert's Own were also noted. Some fine Camellias included *C. Jupiter*.

Pencarrow. On 9 May we were given a warm welcome by Lt. Col. Sir Arcott and Lady Molesworth-St. Aubyn at Pencarrow. The fine house is set in formal Italian gardens. The woodland garden contains many fine conifers, including *Pinus radiata* planted only 4 years after its introduction, the largest Deodar in the country, a Brewer's Spruce planted in 1926, *Abies fargesii* and *Pinus patula*. We managed to identify a large dark purple ponticum hybrid as *R. Joseph Whitworth*. We thought that *R. Roza Stevenson* was much better than Peter Cox's description. *R. Mystic* (*griffithianum* × *williamsianum*) attracted attention. We were told that *R. Robert Keir* (*lacteum* × *fortunei/thomsonii* hybrid) always wins 'best plant in the show' award. A most enjoyable morning, not forgetting the Cornish pasties.

Tremeer. A short drive took us to Tremeer, former home of the late General Harrison and Roza Stevenson. So much packed into a relatively small garden. The Azaleas in front of the house were a fine show. Elton Rowe, the Head Gardener ably fielded our questions and Mrs. Catherine Hopwood joined us on the terrace to receive *R. Surrey Heath*. N.W.

### Wessex Branch

In February, we had a most interesting talk by Mr Archie Skinner on the garden at Sheffield Park. Following on this in April he took us round the garden and in spite of the weather for the few of us who braved the elements it was a most interesting morning and so good of Mr Skinner to spare the time.

In March Mr Ken Hume gave a talk on Ness Gardens and the collectors particularly connected with them. A most interesting evening.

The Branch Competition for members was held on May 10th in the garden of Mr R. Beard at Rogate in collaboration with Mr R. Barber whose garden is close by. Both gardens were looking superb. The standard of exhibits, in the opinion of Mr John Bond who once again judged the entries, was excellent. Mr and Mrs Arthur George won 'Best in Show' with *R. Hydon Concorde*; they also also won the Kathleen Beadle Memorial Shield for the highest total points scored. We were so pleased that Mr John Beadle was able to present the shield personally. Other prizewinners included Mrs Hazel Pelmore, Mr Denis Clarke-Hall, Mr Derek Ratcliff, Mr & Mrs Linney, Mrs James Hall and Mr R. Beard. The Plant Sale raised a welcome addition to the funds. Tea was kindly provided by the Beards and the Barbers generously rounded off the day with wine. Most cordial thanks to both families for such a splendid occasion.

### Dates for the diary

On October 25th at Millais Nurseries, Churt a demonstration is to be given by Mr Millais on the propagation of rhododendrons.

On 20th November (at 7.45 for 8pm) Mr Christopher Grey-Wilson will give a lecture on the Himalayas and South West China with particular reference to ericaceous plants. Venue: United Reform Church Hall, Elstead, Nr. Godalming. Tickets price £4.00 obtainable by sending s.a.e. to Mr D. Ratcliff, 15 Wellesley Close, Bagshot, GU19 5HB. Members of other Branches welcome. P.G.

### East Anglian Branch — Garden Visits 1990 and 1991

13 May 1990: East Bergholt Lodge, East Bergholt. 8 acre garden of Captain and Lady Anne Wake Walker, developed since 1912 and featuring over 350 varieties of trees and shrubs. The garden included a large number of superb mature specimens of 'Pink Pearl', 'Countess of Derby' and 'Cynthia' carrying unbelievably large trusses. Only too often the profuse nature of these hybrids causes them to become twiggy, the narrow stems lignify and the sap is restricted, leading to very unsatisfactory plants. Clearly, given shelter and adequate moisture they will delight for a lifetime. It was interesting to see that the garden also contained a small collection of young *R. yakushimanum* hybrids, more often encountered in suburban gardens, and the rarely seen late white camellia japonica 'Auburn White'. A good form of *Arbutus menziesii* attracted attention as did a form of *Ceanothus* 'Italian Skies'. Among the unusual trees were a weeping Ash and *Betula pendula aurea*.

13 May 1990: East Bergholt Place, near Colchester. The 16 acre plantsman's garden has been developed since 1900, initially by Charles Eley, V.M.H., founder member and secretary to the Rhododendron Society, then by his son, the late Maxwell Eley, O.B.E. He is succeeded by his son Oliver Eley. This is an extraordinary garden more typical of the South West than East Anglia. A full account of this garden was featured in Bulletin No. 25.

Whilst the mature garden is still lovingly maintained the adjoining wood, which contains many fine forms collected by George Forrest and numerous Cornish hybrids, has suffered badly from the chainsaw owing to the extraction of the supporting hardwood shelter to provide an income to finance the cost of maintaining the garden. As a consequence many choice plants have perished. Still surviving is the tallest *Acer griseum* in the British Isles (recorded by Alan Mitchell).

Drought, wind and frost damage has badly affected parts of the wood and garden and inevitably the plantings will change over the years to reflect these natural phenomena. New hybrids have been introduced and these young plants are becoming noticeable among the earlier established introductions.

It would not be possible to write about this garden without repeating the account of our last visits on 19.5.79 and 20.5.82 (Bulletins 11 and 25) as the foundation planting is primarily unchanged and the new planting is relatively young.

19 May 1991: How Hill Garden, Ludham, Norfolk. Originally owned by the Boardman family then by Norfolk Education Authority but now administered by How Hill Trust. 300 acres in all, the garden features a formal Edwardian terraced garden around the house leading down to a 3-acre mature water garden and woodland with massed Azaleas and Rhododendrons. The garden is excellently maintained (almost weed-free) and displays a sizeable collection of mainly hardy hybrid Rhododendrons, some of which have been cut back and rejuvenated. Massed displays of coloured deciduous and evergreen Azaleas are a prominent feature. These include fine, scented *R. occidentale* hybrids. Especially notable Rhododendron hybrids included the seldom-seen *campylocarpum* hybrid 'Mary Swaythling', 'Loders White' and a number of mature *arborescens* hybrids and a splendid old white, possibly 'White Pearl' or 'Standishii'. Attractive wooden bridges and wooden water edging further enhanced the restful feel of the garden.

19 May 1991: How Hill Farm, Ludham, Norfolk. This fine garden was created by and is maintained by Peter Boardman. The branch had visited this garden previously on 2nd June 1979. The farm includes a very large garden for the most part on acidic peat, varying from pH 2.5 but parts are alkaline (up to pH 7.5) and features a 3-acre man-made 'Broad'. The acid, moisture-retentive soil and proximity to water results in favourable growth. (Oh! that we should be so fortunate!). The garden includes a very interesting comprehensive Rhododendron collection in fine condition including many choice Exbury hybrids. Particularly outstanding were large specimens of 'Fred Wynniatt FCC' (large maize-coloured flowers and fine fortunei foliage) and 'Diva' ('Ladybird' × *griersonianum* — fine large trusses of a blend of red shaded orange and pink). These were especially notable for their excellence, as was a fully mature 'Vintage Rosé', fine-foliage yakushimanum hybrid with 'Grilse' (Jalisco × 'Fusilier') possessing unusually large flowers of various shades of pink. The natural moisture has enabled this dwarf to grow beyond 6 feet! Also notable were *RR. 'Vanessa'*, 'Loderi', 'Britannia', *decorum*, *sinogrande* 'Furnival's Daughter'. Large-leaved species and hybrids also flourish here as would be expected, and a bank of deciduous azaleas, grown from seed, provided an eye-catching



spectacle. Even R. 'Shilsonii', which, at least in some forms of the cross, can be very difficult to grow well, grows here to perfection (regrettably we were too late for the flowers). Many hybrids succeed in full sun with little or no shelter owing to the nearness of water. Of course the garden features many superb ornamental trees of distinction including many rare conifers. Adjoining is a collection of English and American Ilex grown commercially for their crop of berries.

5 May 1990: The Gables, Stowmarket. One acre garden created from a potato field since 1980. Damage from 1987 gales evident particularly where very large oak blown down. Dreadful bark split from two consecutive nights of  $-7\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{C}$  in April 1990 causing half of the several hundred Rhododendrons to split, and be bound up corkscrew fashion with garden twine in an effort to prevent the bark totally separating from the cambium layer. 1989 drought had caused die-back, and much smaller foliage than normal and signs of chlorosis in some plants where large volumes of chalky tap water had had to be used, especially where mole damage had damaged root systems. Bearing in mind these difficulties the garden offers good trial facilities.

The garden features several hundred Rhododendrons (species and hybrids) plus supporting top cover, as well as Magnolias, Camellias (mainly under glass), Azaleas, Pieris, etc. We were too late for most of the species but numerous varieties of R. Loderi were still flowering and providing scent. Especially notable for fragrance, texture and size were RR. King George, Stag's Head and Sir Joseph Hooker, the latter having silky veining to the pale lavender-pink flowers. The Loderi hybrid with decorum, R. W. Leith, was equally fine while 'Leonardslee Giles' had very fine griffithianum-like flowers in fine trusses. The old griffithianum hybrid R. Beauty of Littleworth displayed its gigantic candyfloss trusses to perfection (a fine legacy of Mangles resulting from a late 19th century cross).

Numerous varieties of R. Naomi were still in full flower including the popular clones and also some rarely seen such as R. Hope (fine buff-pink of good substance), R. Paris (large pale blush, almost silvery), R. Orpha (smaller flowers with red throat), R. Molly Buckley (later version of the original cross with quite different dusky pink flowers but, strangely, savagely split by frost and in danger of death, although all the varieties from the original cross appeared not to have been damaged) and R. Birthday Greetings (Naomi-Glow selfed — outstanding orangey-pink, very large sumptuous foliage).

Different varieties of RR. Angelo and Albatross added further scent, the R. Angelos especially. These varied from the enormous pale A.M. form to the frilly, silvery-pink form received from Exbury as R. Exbury Angelo FCC, R. Solent Queen being almost intermediate.

The 'Jalisco' grex showed considerable variety, the rarely seen form 'Janet' having unusual orange-pink flushed flowers. The 'Fred Wynniatt' grex attracted special interest. These hybrids between R. Jalisco and what must have been a superb R. fortunei are of extraordinary quality in foliage, habit and flower. The FCC form is fairly well known to enthusiasts but another form 'Stanway', has recently also received an FCC. This has very large, waxy mimosa-yellow flowers. R. Joyful is a paler, almost luminous yellow, R. Jerez is closer to 'Stanway' (another fine yellow), while R. Bach Choir is more dusky with orangey-pink undertones. R. Trianon is as fine but with different coloured flowers, being rose-pink shaded amber. There are other clones: 'Simita' and 'Duggie Betteridge' but not present at 'The Gables'. This inspired 1963 cross is extraordinarily outstanding and a considerable improvement on both the popular yellow grexes of 'Hawk' and 'Jalisco' for they have inherited the sturdiness of habit, foliage and wax flowers from R. fortunei and the distinctive colour from R. Jalisco. Once in the garden centres these plants will experience great fame.

Yet another Exbury hybrid, R. Happy Occasion (Snow Queen  $\times$  Crest), was much admired for very large pale yellow flowers and handsome leaves on a stout plant. The 'Carita' grex and 'Idealist' were almost over but still impressed with their pastel-coloured flowers, and the few remaining flowers on the 'Yvonne' grex attracted interest, especially 'Yvonne E' with various shades of pink from rose to blush with a crimson throat.

The 'Lady Bessborough' grex was represented by both FCC forms (cream form and 'Roberte') plus the rarer 'Moyra' (equally fine pink), 'Montreal' (pinkish-cream) and 'Ottawa' (cream). This grex is inclined to overflower here and benefits from disbudding.

Another recent Exbury award winning hybrid, R. Jancio, displayed primrose flowers like its sister seedling 'Prelude' (fortunei  $\times$  wardii) but the flowers were less wide open and had a red throat. Nearby R. Elizabeth de Rothschild (Exbury Naomi  $\times$  'Lionels Triumph') had paler flowers but of considerable charm. R. Falkner Winton (same cross was 'New Comet': Idealist  $\times$  Exbury Naomi) had widely flared fine yellow flowers. R. Bonito showed the best qualities of its parent, R. discolor, large blush flowers with a distinctive eye on a strong upright plant. Just in flower as R. Avocet, another fine discolor hybrid with R. fortunei displaying characteristic discolor attributes. A large 'General Sir John du Cane' (discolor  $\times$  thomsoni)

showed a fine inheritance from both parents. Another splendid discolor hybrid, R. Gardis, (other parent 'Gladys Rillstone'), had exceptionally fragrant, lavender pink flowers. This is seldom seen but very choice. R. Pilgrim (fortunei  $\times$  'Glory of Penjerrick') complimented it with a different shade of pink but was equally good. This is a personal favourite of Charles Coe of Slocock nurseries.

Especially large white scented flowers were borne by a plant carrying the Exbury label 'Akbar'. This should be rose pink. 'Akbar' is the same cross as 'Albatross'. The foliage was clearly incorrect for 'Akbar' which has shorter, wider leaves. The discolor  $\times$  arboreum hybrid 'Ayesha' exhibited typical dropped leaves of arboreum and sumptuous bright pink trusses. The hybrid displayed the best of both parents. Exbury reds were well represented by R. Kilimanjaro (enormous redcurrant with deeper spotting) R. Grenadier (dark, dusky red), R. Firebird (superb trusses — one deep red, another salmon and named var. 'Salmon Queen'), R. Hesperides (deep rose red with fine trusses), R. Fusilier (pure bright red but slightly tender here if it throws a second flush of growth), R. Lady Montague (similar to Exbury 'Cornish Cross'), 'Karkov' (fine hybrid from 'Red Admiral' and griersonianum but strangely quite hardy), and the more common 'Romany Chai' and 'Romany Chal'.

The wardii hybrids R. Innamorata and R. Josephine were just opening but the quality of their flowers was clearly discernible. The garden is an advertisement for the marvellous achievements of Lionel and Edmund de Rothschild. Rhododendron enthusiasts are especially indebted to Exbury Gardens for an exceptional range of quality Rhododendrons in every conceivable colour.

The garden also featured some American hybrids; the more notable being R. Halfdan Lem (large trusses of dark red), R. Virginia Richards (blend of pastel buff, cream and rose), R. Markeeta's Prize (enormous red trusses), R. Red Walloper and R. Pink Walloper (both hybrids of R. Marinus Koster and similar to the parent but sufficiently different to merit attention, (they, perhaps possess more charm), R. Platinum Pearl (discolor  $\times$  'Pink Pearl' — large upright trusses), R. Cotton Candy (another fine 'Marinus Koster' hybrid) and R. Hotei (superb, deep yellow). Sloccocks were represented by the pale orange R. Goldsworth Orange and its hybrid R. Tortoiseshell Champagne, RR. Prawn, Sunbeam and Ripe Corn all aptly named, Queen Souriya (similar to Naomi Nautilus), Torch (iridescent orangey red), Ice Cream (large pale buff with green and yellow markings (similar parentage to Jalisco and not unlike Fred Wynniatt grex), the extremely profuse Faggetters Favorite (fine pink and white fortunei hybrid), Letty Edwards (prolific cream), The Master (bold pink) Goldsworth Pink (rose pink) and China (both A and B forms — the first a pale buff with loose trusses and of spreading habit, the latter A.M. form, upright, cream with red throat).

Two plants of R. Beauty of Tremough have perished here through late spring frost. However Loder's R. Dame Nellie Melba, Lowinsky's R. The Don and Slocock's R. Rainbow are just as fine but much hardier and very reliable. The difference is that these are not the direct result of crossing R. griffithianum and R. arboreum but using a hybrid as one parent. Hydon Nurseries' excellent 'Lodauric Iceberg'  $\times$  discolor hybrids RR. Veldstar, Sea Foam, Northern Star were well budded while R. Southern Cross was just opening splendid flowers of blush-flushed strawberry in the style of R. auriculatum. (R. Starcross perished several years ago).

The fine red R. The Hon. Jean Marie de Montague was indistinguishable here from the earlier release R. Mrs A. M. Williams, and are probably synonymous, but show no influence of the reputed parent R. griffithianum (but neither does R. Gills Crimson, also succeeding here). R. Mrs A. M. Williams was one of many hybrids produced by Otto Schulz when working at the Royal Porcelain Factory, Berlin in 1892. 200 of his crosses were sold to C. B. van Nes in 1896. Van Nes released R. Jean Marie de Montague some years later. It could well be the 1892 plant or an identical seedling.

This East Anglian garden experiences hard, late spring frosts and summer drought having soil that is sandy and porous. Selective disbudding and dead heading are essential. Foliar feeding using maxicrop with iron is necessary to replenish nutrient levels. Shade is provided by pines, cherries, sorbus, conifers and snake-bark maples but their roots are competitive for moisture. If Rhododendrons can be grown here they could be expected to succeed in most other gardens.

Large-leaved Rhododendrons can be grown here, except for R. sinogrande which like R. macabeanum, is very susceptible to hard frost in April, although a pale primrose R. macabeanum has reached 5'  $\times$  5' and does flower regularly. A few other large-leaved Rhododendrons have exceeded 6' and now flower well. They are however vulnerable for the first 4' of growth. R. griffithianum flourished until severe frost in April 1990 and is now in a poor state, except for the hardy white form but this is clearly a hybrid. R. Tally Ho succeeds as does R. Barclayii Tremeer; R. Barclayii Robert Fox is barely alive while R. Helen Fox is dead. Conditions are borderline for these varieties.



## VISIT TO HERGEST CROFT — 5 April 1992

When the Group visited Hergest Croft in the autumn of 1991, the owner, Mr Lawrence Banks, suggested that a day visit might be arranged for a Sunday in the Spring of 1992 when the garden would be at its best.

We were met by Lawrence and Elizabeth and first given a brief history of the garden which Lawrence's grandfather started to lay out in 1912. He was a keen plant collector and some of the earliest plantings include species collected by well-known collectors such as Ernest Wilson and later Rock, Forrest and Kingdon Ward. Lawrence's father, Richard, carried on the good work from 1954 until 1988 extending the garden and establishing what are now the National Collections of *Acer* and *Betula*. We proceeded straight to the Park Wood where we met Dick, who still takes a great interest in the wood and the rhododendrons although the gardens were taken over by Lawrence and Elizabeth in 1988.

An abundance of skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) adorns the banks of a pond in the centre of the wood making a great show with their yellow spathes. Below the pool, hybrid rhododendrons planted between 1912 and 1914 cascade down the side of a valley called Flower Fall, among them *R. Shilsonii* (*barbatum* × *thomsonii*) with its blood-red flowers, as well as a large specimen of *R. meddianum* with bell-shaped crimson flowers. There was also a lovely plant of *R. campylocarpum* subsp. *caloxanthum* covered with yellow flowers and a big *R. williamsianum* (White form).

We passed what was thought to be *R. oreotrephes* until Kenwyn Clapp, with the aid of his pocket magnifier, identified it by the cells as *R. oreodoxa*.

Amongst other plants of interest we noted *R. ambiguum* 'Jane Banks' (A.M. 1976) with its yellow-green flowers, *RR. lutescens*, *sutchuenense*, *hodgsonii*, *fargesii*, *mallotum* (brownish red woolly indumentum), *eximeum* (dense rusty indumentum), *floccigerum*, *nitidum* (collected by Richard Banks on Mt. Omei, Szechuan), and a number of *Acers* and *Betulas*. Our grateful thanks to Lawrence and Elizabeth Banks and to Dick Banks for a most enjoyable visit and for their hospitality.

J.H.

### The Tree Register of the British Isles

Victoria Schilling who, as Victoria Hallett, used to assist Alan Mitchell with his tree measuring project has asked me to sound out, through the Bulletin, the views of members who have tree Rhododendrons (e.g. *R. arboreum*, *R. barbatum*, etc.) as to whether they might be included in the above Register. The information recorded includes the origin, location, planting date (if known, height, circumference of main stem (at 1.5m from ground level) and the condition of the plant.

The aim would be to compile a 'Champion Rhododendron List' to which reference could be made by anyone interested (e.g. authors of books on rhododendrons) in the same way as for other types of trees. I understand that there is already in existence a list of Champion Magnolias but up to now only a handful of rhododendrons on the books.

Registration Forms can be obtained either from me or from Tony Schilling Associates, 2 Church Cottages, Westmeston, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8RJ.

T.W.