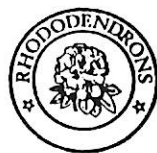


# *The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group*



BULLETIN No. 51 - December 1992

## **Forthcoming Events**

November 3-4	RHS Late Autumn Show, Vincent Square	April 8-12	International Spring Gardening Fair, Wembley incorporating: RHS Daffodil Competition & Main Camellia & Ornamental Plant Competitions
January 26-27	Ornamental Plant Competition — Botanical paintings	April 19	Group AGM 4.30 pm. Vincent Square
February 23	Royal Horticultural Society AGM, Vincent Square	April 20-21	Main Rhododendron Competition at which the group will stage a display
February 23-24	Ornamental Plant Competition — Botanical paintings	May 12-17	Group Spring Tour (see text)
March 16-17	Early Camellia and Rhododendron Competitions		
	Ornamental Plant Competition		

All shows are at New Hall, Vincent Square unless otherwise stated.

## **Chairman's Notes**

As we come to the end of another year it is, perhaps, interesting to look back. The early drought was, to say the least, worrying with the vision of untold lugging of watering cans to the furthest corners of gardens in aid of flagging plants. However, the middle of the summer changed all that and looking around gardens in most parts of the country it is difficult to remember a year in which so much extension growth has been made not to mention the huge crop of flowering shoots which promise to make 1993 something of a vintage rhododendron year. Only pray that we avoid the killing April/May frost!!

It is hoped, this coming year, to repeat the provision of wild collected seed for the seed exchange and approaches have been made to two sources of supply. It would be interesting to learn whether members have been successful with seed or whether they would appreciate a short article on the mechanics of growing both rhododendrons and magnolias from seed. If there were sufficient demand camellias could be included. Did you know, for instance, that the use of sterilised (boiled) water when dampening sowing medium will inhibit the growth of liverwort on the surface of the container? Or that the inner seed (having removed the orange covering) of Magnolia should be soaked for 24 hours in detergent before sowing?

Finally do not forget that other people are interested in your experiences — successes or failures — with the raising of plants. We never stop learning and the Bulletin Editor is always pleased to hear from you.

B.A.

## **Editor's Note**

Copy date for the next issue of the Bulletin — 1st March 1993.

## **Subscriptions**

Once again members are reminded that subscriptions for 1993 are now due. Those who have already paid (including members who pay by Bankers' Order) will receive their copy of the Year Book with this Bulletin. It will be appreciated that a considerable saving in postage is thereby achieved, not to mention the time saved in not having to package them separately, and as it is hoped that this may be possible in future years it makes it even more important that subscriptions be paid promptly. To this end members who do not already pay by Bankers' Order are urged to do so. A Bankers' Order Form will be found on page 3, which when completed should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Alastair Stevenson, 24 Bolton Road, Grove Park, London, W4 3TB (NOT to the Bank).

## **Group Accounts**

The accounts for the year ended 31 October 1991, published in the last Bulletin were represented as the audited accounts. This was due to a misunderstanding on the part of the Editor who regrets having misled the membership. In fact they are presently

with the RHS for the purpose of being audited and it is hoped that the 1991/92 accounts will also be audited in time for publishing towards the end of next year.

## **Errata**

The telephone numbers of two committee members were wrongly quoted in the August Bulletin. I would ask members to make the following alterations to the printed word:

*Under Branch Organisers:* Ireland — Miss Mary Forrest, Tel: 010 353 12 985099

*Under Committee Members:* Mr. David Farnes, Tel: (0246) 272105

Please also note the following changes in telephone numbers:  
*Under Branch Organisers:* Wessex — The Lady Adam Gordon, Tel: 0252 782054

*Under Committee Members:* Dr. Robbie Jack, Tel: 0555 663021  
Dr. Florence Auckland, Tel: 0204 840178

## **Group Spring Tour: 12-17 May 1993**

Next year's tour will be of Surrey gardens, except for one in Sussex. Among the gardens to be visited will be the following:

The Saville Gardens at Windsor (by popular request).

David Clulow's garden at Bletchingly, which has the National Collection of magnolias (400 different types) and 3,500 accurately labelled rare trees, shrubs, rhododendrons and alpine all set in six acres.

Lady Adam Gordon's lovely 25-acre (mostly) woodland garden at Heathersett, underplanted with many fine species and hybrid rhododendrons.

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gunn's garden at Ramster, Chiddingfold, a mature 20-acre woodland of exceptional interest, with fine rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias.

Mr. & Mrs. E. G. Millais famous nursery and woodland garden at Crosswater Farm near Farnham. This has many rare species collected from the Himalayas, and hybrids raised by the owners.

Mr. & Mrs. Graham Ferguson's garden at Malthouse near Rogate, which has four acres of flowering shrubs and exceptional rhododendrons and azaleas, leading to fifty acres of beautiful woodland.

Another fine rhododendron garden in Surrey, but arrangements have yet to be made.

This makes seven gardens, five of which are private gardens, but most of them are open for a day or two under the National Gardens Scheme, but will be opening specially for our Group. For further details please write to me at the address below, and enclose a stamped, addressed envelope (of reasonable size please) to: Mrs. V. Archibald, Starveacre, Dalwood, Nr. Axminster, Devon, EX13 7HH. Tel: (040 488) 221.

## **Pocket Microscopes**

Members may be interested to know that pocket microscopes



with 50x magnification are available from Wheatley Antiques, Stand 106, Gray's Antique Market, 58 Davies Street, London W1Y 1LB at a cost of £20 each plus postage. This offer has been arranged by our Executive Committee member, Clive Collins, to whom we are most grateful. Early application is advised as it is understood supplies may be limited.

#### Book Reviews

*The Rhododendron Species (Vol.III) — Elepidotes M-Z. H. H. Davidian. Batsfords 1992. 381pp. 161 colour plates. 67pp line drawings. 7 b/w photos. 5 maps. £70. (£60 to members — £160 for 3-volume set, using the leaflet enclosed with Bulletin 50). This long-awaited book by an acknowledged expert on Rhododendron species makes another valuable contribution to the coverage of the genus. In his review of Vol.I, W. D. Davidson stated 'Mr. Davidian is not enamoured of the revision on new classification proposed by Drs. Cullen and Chamberlain but the outcome of that controversy — should in no way detract from the value of his work' (*Rhododendrons with Magnolias and Camellias* 1982/83 p53). These remarks still stand following the adoption of the Cullen and Chamberlain revision and the whole work reflects the vast knowledge of the author for his subject.*

The five maps together with a list of names of the new and old forms of Chinese provinces are useful as are the line drawings of leaf and flower forms, scales, seeds and, more unusually, hairs. Included in this volume is a key to the Series and Sub-Series followed by descriptions of species. It contains 11 Series arranged in alphabetical order. Each Series comprises general characteristics, distribution, affinity with other Series, a key to the species and a description thereof, based on herbarium specimens and plants in cultivation, with the more important characteristics appearing in italics. The description is followed by notes on the species in relation to the discoverer, collectors, distribution, native habitats and altitudes, affinity with other species, an account of the plant in cultivation, awards, hardiness and flowering months.

The colour reproduction of the plates is, on the whole, excellent including photographs of some of the more unusual species in flower and some good indications of the attractiveness of new growth. The value of rhododendrons in landscapes as widely divided as U.K., U.S.A., and Denmark is shown together with some well chosen examples of collecting areas in Burma, Bhutan and China. Black and white photographs taken by Joseph Rock during his travels make an interesting addition.

A list of synonyms is followed by botanical descriptions of 17 new taxa, synopsis of Elepidote Rhododendron Species and a further list of Lepidote Species.

I understand that there is yet a further volume on the way which will complete what is probably the most comprehensive review of the genus yet produced and will, almost certainly, not be overtaken for many years to come.

The complete work must surely form part of the library of anyone who is interested in rhododendrons.

B.A.

*Gardening with Camellias. Jim Rolfe. Batsfords. 1992. 176pp. 170 colour plates. 21 line drawings. £25. (£20 to members using the leaflet above referred to).*

Written by a man who has grown Camellias, written about them and judged them for many years, this is a well presented and informed new book. After a general description of the genus, cultivars are discussed in detail with hints on breeding for required qualities. Advice on the selection of plants is followed by growing instructions and the landscaping value of the genus, including container growing. The section on propagation covers the raising of plants from seed, cuttings and by grafting with clear instructions and useful illustrations. Control of pests and diseases is discussed at length. An annotated list of some 400 camellias is followed by an Appendix giving useful suggestions to those who wish to exhibit. The 170 colour plates distributed throughout the book are of high quality and well produced. This major work will be appreciated by those newly introduced to camellias and to the more experienced.

#### Rhododendron Bibliography — Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Spethmann

The decision to hold the 5th International Rhododendron Conference in Germany in 1992 gave the idea to prepare a comprehensive Rhododendron Bibliography for that event. Based on a 20-year collection of separate papers during his work in the genus, supplemented by an extensive search during the

last two years, Dr. Spethmann has put together bibliography in ring binder form, the intention being to publish additions every two or three years.

Articles in all languages have been included and translated into English to reach as many Rhododendron scientists, nurserymen, and amateurs as possible.

The price of this bibliography is 75.-DM and it is offered for sale by: Universitat Hannover, Institut fur Obstbau und Baumschule, Am Steinberg 3, D 3203 Sarstedt. Tel: 010 49 5066 826113.

#### Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group Year Book

Back numbers are available at the undermentioned prices:

1979-80 .....	£1.95
1981-82 .....	£3.20
1982-83 .....	£3.70
1983-84 .....	£3.70
1984-85 .....	£3.70
1985-86 .....	£3.70
1986-87 .....	£3.95
1987-88 .....	£3.95
1988-89 .....	£4.45
1990 .....	£4.95

Prices include postage in the UK at 2nd Class rate. Overseas members should include an additional 30p per copy and the books will be sent by Surface Mail. Cheques should be made payable to "Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group" and sent with the order to the Year Book Secretary, Mr. D. N. Farnes, Scandale, 5 Pine View, off Deerlands Road, Ashgate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 4DN.

#### Autumn Weekend 1992

On Friday 24th October some thirty odd members of the Group assembled at Passford House Hotel in the New Forest for the annual Autumn Weekend. This is always a very pleasant social affair and on this occasion it was encouraging to note that the presence of some new faces.

The following morning, led by our Tours Organiser, Valerie Archibold, we travelled by car to the Hillier Arboretum where we spent a most enjoyable time amongst this superb collection. Most noticeable was the fine autumn colour provided by Acers, Sorbus and other plants. As we were not organised into one group we were able to take our time, each person searching out the things that most appealed. We were lucky with the weather which was a mixture of sunshine and showers — the only shower that might have caused a scuttle for cover occurring when most of the party had retired to the restaurant for lunch. Further time for exploring was available after lunch but, finally and with regret we had to get back to the hotel for a plant and book sale.

The following morning broke wet and very windy as we made our way to Exbury where we were greeted by the owner Edmund de Rothschild and his son, Lionel each of whom very kindly spared the time to take parties round this fine garden. There was much of autumn colour, not least being the Azaleas. As the wind had by that time risen to almost severe gale force those who stopped to consider the finer points of rhododendrons did so at some peril from falling branches. However, all survived and, having thanked Mr. de Rothschild for his kindness we set out for the Park Hill Hotel on the Lyndhurst-Beaulieu road where a very good buffet lunch had been arranged. This ended the proceedings and we broke up to wend our way home looking forward to meeting again next May on the annual Tour. Our grateful thanks must go to Valerie Archibold for providing us with such an enjoyable and well organised occasion when gardens worth seeing in October must be at a premium.

#### BRANCH NEWS

##### Irish Branch

Mary Forrest writes: "I have been assisting the new owners of Ardnamona, a garden beside Lough Eske in Co. Donegal, in the preparation of a catalogue and self-guiding trail of their garden.

Ardamona has recently been acquired by Amabel and Kieran Clarke who have undertaken a restoration programme in the garden. Many paths had become overgrown and *R. ponticum* had become invasive. This Victorian garden, situated between Lough Eske and the Blue Stack mountains was planted in an informal manner with Himalayan rhododendrons and conifers



beneath a canopy of native oak. The rhododendrons include *R. arboreum*, now pink flowering trees, many *R. falconeri* and *R. niveum* and a few specimens of *RR. barbatum*, *griffithianum* and *grande*. Many of the rhododendrons would fall into the category of 'champion trees' (see Bulletin 50 — Ed.) Of the conifers, *Abies*, *Calocedrus*, *Pinus*, *Picea*, *Thuja* and *Tsuga* have attained noble proportions.

The next Irish Branch outing will take place to Ardnamona on 19th April 1993. There are some other rhododendron collections in Donegal and anyone interested in extending the day's outing to a mini tour should contact me before the end of December so that arrangements can be made for such a visit."

#### South West Branch

##### AUTUMN MEETING 1992

On Friday 2nd October, over 60 members and their guests met at the Reed Hall, University of Exeter for our Autumn Meeting.

The evening started as usual with some interesting plant sales, which included a good proportion of expedition material kindly provided by Alan J. Clark, our speaker for the evening. The supermarket checkout-style of layout seemed to alleviate the crush of previous years but stronger lighting would have helped. Thanks are due to all plant donors and also to the sales team, Bruce Archibold, David & Rosemary Quicke, Joey Warren and June Wright. Thanks also to our receptionist for the evening, Valerie Archibold.

John Bodenham organised and ran the Rhododendron Species Quiz with his usual efficiency — thank you, John. Prize winners were Dr. R. Padley, Alan J. Clark, Dr. Alun Edwards, Peter Garwood and Andrew Henderson (in that order).

A Gardener's Quiz was compiled and run by Nigel Wright and this received wide support. The winners of books and plants were (in order) Alan J. Clark, Dr. Richard Scrivener, Barry Starling, Kenwyn Clapp and Terry Vince.

After buffet supper, Alan Clark appeared in what looked like a dressing gown with knobs on but which he assured us was a genuine Bhutanese robe made for a gentleman of high rank, i.e. none other than the Nursery Manager of Leonardslee Gardens, on the Yak Trek. His illustrated talk on "Plant Hunting in Bhutan" gave us a vivid picture of the thrills and spills of botanizing in the wild. I, for one, went home wondering how many leeches I might have about my body and keeping a weather eye open for fresh pony droppings — not to mention the lady who when presented with a Hamlet cigar — ate it, with apparent satisfaction! Thank you Alan for a spell-binding talk.

#### SOUTH WEST BRANCH — DIARY DATES FOR GARDEN VISITS:

Sat. 24th April, 1993 — Sidbury Manor, Fernwood & Longmead

Sat. 8th May, 1993 — Knightshayes, Sherwood & Grebe House, Upton Pyne

Further details and booking forms will appear in January Branch Newsletter.

N.W.

#### Lakeland Branch

25-26 April, 1992 — "Rhododendrons for all". This was a special Rhododendron Weekend held at Muncaster Castle for the beginner as well as the experienced. On both days Alan Clarke gave interesting and humorous talks on his experiences of seed collecting in Bhutan. His knowledge of his subject left us in no doubt that if there was any material to be had he would find it. We also has a guided tour of the collection of rhododendrons and were introduced to basic classification. The remainder of the seminar dealt with methods of propagation and difficulties encountered, particularly in connection with some of the species. Grafting and the use of the 'Nearing' frame were among the methods explained.

June 1992. Visits to the private gardens of Mr. Tom Pollard, Chairman of the Lakeland Horticultural Society and Dr. David Kinsman, Secretary of the Society. These are relatively newly established gardens containing many rhododendron species and hybrids, camellias, etc. within woodland and typical Lakeland contours. Due to the shallow nature of the top-soil great attention to mulching and careful watering during the earlier years have paid dividends.

15 August 1992. Ambleside Jubilee Show. Leaflets were prepared by the Branch Secretary setting out our activities and future programme which were completely sold out. Already several new faces are appearing at our meetings.

27 October 1992. Dr. David Kinsman, after returning from Pakistan on 24 October gave us an illustrated talk on his travels in Nepal and China last year. Dr. Kinsman is an active member of the World Pheasant Federation and his interest in pheasants takes him to parts of the world where rare and interesting plants are to be found. In his talk he emphasised the desirability of reciprocity on the part of the collectors' expeditions in the same way that the Pheasant Federation had helped to finance a local Nepalese school. In return, the teachers, children and families went out of their way to assist the expedition.

#### FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

1 December 1992. 'Commercial production of modern rhododendrons'. A talk by Mr. Ian Glendinning, Manager, Braevallich Nursery, Argyll.

16 February 1993. 'Introduction to rhododendron classification'.

16 March 1993. 'Magnolias'. A talk by Mr. Graham Rankin, Head Gardener, Tilgates.

#### Some thoughts on labelling

Whether one labels one's plants for one's own benefit or for one's visitors, there are at least five criteria which must be met for the chosen method to give satisfactory results. These are:

1. The label itself must be DURABLE i.e. capable of withstanding sunlight, rain and frost.
2. The lettering must be PERMANENT.
3. If the label is affixed to the plant, the means by which it is attached must be SECURE and ROT-PROOF, whilst leaving ample scope for growth of the branch to which it is attached.
4. If the label is stuck into the ground the stem must be inserted to a depth of at least 6 inches; otherwise, sooner or later it will be dislodged either by birds or by frost.

#### BANKERS ORDER

To the Manager ..... Bank plc ..... Address of Branch .....  
 ..... Post Code .....

Please pay to the NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK PLC, ALEXANDER ROAD, FARNBOROUGH (CODE 60-08-13) for the credit of RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA & MAGNOLIA GROUP (Account No. 58319611) the sum of £ : ..... pounds) on the 1st November, 19..... and the same sum on the same date each year until further notice from me/us.

SPECIAL NOTE: This order supercedes any existing Order in favour of Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group. Please ensure that any previous Order is cancelled.

Signature ..... Address.....  
 Name of Account ..... Account No: ..... Date .....



5. Finally, of course, the lettering must be LEGIBLE, ideally without having to leave the path.

There are many types of label which fail to meet one or more of the above criteria, but I have usually found the following to be quite satisfactory.

1. A DYMO strip stuck on a thin strip of hardwood about 2 inches wide and 9-12 inches long, or on an aluminium strip of similar dimensions, driven well into the ground. A good tip, though, is to apply a little clear nail varnish around the edges of the Dymo strip as there is a tendency, after a time, for it to curl up at the edges and eventually to drop off altogether. The varnish helps to keep the weather out.

2. Another ingenious method consists of a straight length of stout gauge high-tensile wire, looped at the top to form a holder for the label which consists of an ear-tag (as used by farmers and stock-breeders on cattle). The tag is black and the name is written using a cylindrical biro-type marker tube containing an oil-based pigment ink which is both waterproof and fadeproof. They come in a variety of colours (though white is preferable) and are called Artline paint markers and are available with fine, medium or broad tips from MBF Ltd., 144 Neilston Rd, Paisley, PA2 6QJ.

3. The same firm supply galvanised steel stabs with replaceable plastic labels. In this case, however, the labels are white so one would use another colour Artline marker (probably black). The stabs are packed in 10's and the labels in 100's, and work out at about 48p each for labels measuring 80x50mm on 300mm stabs.

4. Also available from the same supplier and quite inexpensive, are thin strips of aluminium foil with an eyelet at one end which can be loosely tied to a branch of a tree or shrub. In this case the name is inscribed using a ball-point pen or similar blunt instrument whilst resting the label on a resilient surface. This type of label is undoubtedly permanent but it does not quite meet criterion 5 above, in that it can become lost amongst the foliage and in any case, in order to be read, it must be inspected at close quarters.

5. A really 'deluxe' label is the computer-engraved type consisting of a laminate, incorporating excellent weathering properties together with flexibility to prevent chipping or cracking, and available in textured, brushed or polished finish. The labels are engraved to customer's requirements with, for example the botanical name, the family name and country of origin normally revealing white letters on a black background (although other colours are available) in a choice of styles. The labels can be either hung, or mounted on aluminium stems and are, I think, quite reasonably priced. As an example, a standard label, measuring 77x51mm on a 305mm stem costs 75p plus 35p for the stem (viz. £1.10). This compares with 48p for the labels (including stems) described in 3 above. All prices quoted are, of course, subject to the addition of VAT. These labels are available from I. P. Engraving (Prop: Mrs. Illia Price) Sylvania, Cladach, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8DE. (*Mrs. Price is the wife of David Price, Head Gardener at Brodick Castle which was included in the Group Spring Tour this year.*)

T.W.