

The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group



BULLETIN No. 56 - August 1994

Forthcoming Events

Aug 12-14	Wisley Flower Festival-RHS Garden, Wisley	Nov 1-2	Ornamental Plant Competition, Botanical Paintings.
Sep 13-14	Great Autumn Show		
16-17	Harrogate Great Autumn Show - in conjunction with the North of England Horticultural Society. Exhibition Halls, Harrogate.	22-23	Ornamental Plant Competition, Botanical Paintings.
Oct 21-23	Group Autumn Weekend	Dec 9-10	RHS Christmas Show

Chairman's Notes

On 21/22 June last at Vincent Square the Group staged an exhibit of hybrid rhododendrons which received a Silver Gilt Medal. Plant material for this display was generously donated from many sources and to all those who contributed we send our grateful thanks. To Ivor Stokes and all those who helped to stage the exhibit we send heartiest congratulations. A full report will be published in the next Yearbook.

Members will see that a full list of the Executive Committee is enclosed with this issue, giving their addresses and telephone numbers, so that should members wish to get in touch on any matter they will have a point of contact. Particularly, the change of Membership Secretary should be noted. The names and addresses of the Branch Organisers show that there are certain areas in the country which are not covered and if any member living in such an area feels that he or she would like to start up a Branch I should be pleased to hear from them. Likewise, there are two Branches, Midlands and Scotland, which do not have an Organiser. Would anyone care to volunteer?

From time to time it may come to the notice of the Group that unofficial expeditions are being undertaken for the purpose of collecting seed, and sponsorship is sought in exchange for which the sponsor would receive seed. Should sufficient notice be given, a note could be included in the Bulletin, but it must be stressed that any subsequent negotiations between the parties are the sole responsibility of the prospective sponsor.

BA

Editor's Notes

The deliberate mistake in Bulletin 55 was in the name of David Clulow's lovely garden, referred to in Clive Collins's article and which is, of course Tilgates and not Tilstones. Two members wrote in to correct me but Miss Dorothy Turner's letter was the first to arrive. She received a packet of wild-collected seed of *R. racemosum*. By way of a hint the DM in this issue occurs twice, so if you don't spot it the first time I am giving you a second chance! The prize is a 2-year-old seedling of *R. macabeanum*.

Letters

From C L Coles O.B.E., Hyde, Nr. Fordingbridge.

Game and Wildlife Consultant

Re: Damage to gardens by deer.

I am hoping that some of your readers who live in or around the Forest maybe able to help me compile a list of plants and shrubs that have proved to be unattractive to deer and more or less immune to

damage. It would also be useful to record species that seem to be particularly appetizing. At this stage I am not concerned with damage by fraying or thrashing, or with preventatives such as synthetic lions dung, human hair and so on; nor the use of cattle grids (which deer will cross) or special fencing. Neither am I concerned with damage to trees in forest plantations but simply with the problem of deer in gardens, and aim to pool the experience of local gardeners with a view to producing in due course a guide which could save us all money and disappointments.

It will be necessary to record data around the four seasons. When deer are hungry in winter they will eat things that they will not normally touch when food is plentiful in the Forest. Fallow and roe should be reported on separately, though many of their food preferences are common to both. Perhaps deer tend to be capricious when it comes to tasting food under different conditions! If any reports on this subject are known to have been published I would be glad to know; it will enable me to append a brief bibliography.

During the last decade the fallow population in this corner of the Forest has increased greatly, and with the increased use of the forest by ramblers, campers, riders and sightseers in general the deer have lost their fear of humans. They come into the garden in broad daylight and crop the roses climbing up the walls of the house. It is not easy to be sure about the plants that deer damage; occasionally they will nibble a few camellia leaves but not so as to destroy an established plant, though a newly planted one will no doubt succumb.

I shall be grateful for any titbits of interest which will assist in the preparation of a list of deer-resisting plants. Anyone willing to co-operate should please send me a sae for a basic guide, outlining the sort of data to collect.

From Logan A Edgar O.B.E., Wedderlie House, St.Helen's Avenue, Hastings TN34 2JT.

Re: Rhododendrons from seed.

At the Rhododendron Show at Westminster this year I displayed, on our Coghurst Nursery stand, a plant in bloom grown from seed distributed by David Clulow in the 1990 Seed Distribution. That this was the last distribution which David was able to organise was, for many of us, a major catastrophe. The plant I showed was an unnamed hybrid obtained by crossing R. C.I.S. with R.New Comet (Idealist x Exbury Naomi) x R.Skipper (Fawn x Indian Penny). The parents of the pollen-bearing hybrid are said to be mimosa yellow, flushed pink and empire yellow respectively, whilst the seed parent is described in Peter Cox's list as having orange-crimson blooms gradually changing to creamy-apricot. It is not surprising, therefore, that the notes told me to "expect enormous deep yellow trumpets". In fact the

florets were large, the trusses full and the colour a lovely cream, so much so that at least a dozen members of the public wanted to buy the plant! The main reason why I showed it was because it flowered so well after only 4 years from sowing the seed and it is by no means a dwarf. I hoped that by showing it in bloom and giving the date of sowing, it might encourage other rhododendron growers to try their luck also. David Clulow has, on several occasions, urged us on by emphasizing that hybrid rhododendrons can be brought into bloom relatively quickly. I tried to produce solid evidence of just that. Although I have done quite a bit of hybridising and seed growing over the years, I am but a beginner, so I hope that others may profit by my experience and even, perhaps, produce some better hybrids than our American friends! Incidentally, several species, including *R. rubiginosum*, sown at the same time, also came into bloom after the 4 years.

Lindley Library

It is proposed to lodge the following papers with the Lindley Library, R.H.S., 80, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE from November 1994:

1. Acta Horticulturae, Number 364, May 1994, published by International Society for Horticultural Science - Papers and Full Report on the FIFTH INTERNATIONAL RHODODENDRON CONFERENCE at Bad Zwischenahn, Germany, 18-24 May 1992, edited by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Spethman.
2. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RHODODENDRON IN THE BRITISH LANDSCAPE, a Master's Degree dissertation, The University of York, by Christine Kerkhof-Ruijter.

Scottish Rhododendron Society

On 26th November 1994 there will be a lecture at R.B.G., Edinburgh, (probably on nomenclature), followed by a tour of the propagation unit. Anyone interested in attending this meeting should apply to Mr Ian Stewart, 571 Lanark Road West, Balerno, Edinburgh, EH14 7BL, phone: 031 449 5232.

New Zealand Rhododendron Association 1994 Golden Jubilee Conference.

The 50th Jubilee Conference will be held from November 7-11. The organisers are expecting more than 300 to register for the conference which is being held at the Angus Inn, Hastings. On the morning of Monday, 7th, prior to the opening of the conference there will be a Celebratory Day at Kimbolton Garden, the landscape development of which is nearing completion and which will eventually be one of the sites for the National Collection of Rhododendron species in New Zealand.

The Conference will be opened in the evening by the Mayor of Hastings and on Tuesday there will be further visits to gardens and a Floral and Trade Show in the evening. More garden visits will take place on Wednesday followed by a Conference dinner after which Mr Warren Berg of the USA will show slides and speak on "*Rhododendron Exploration - The Endless Search*". Following the AGM on Thursday there will be visits to more gardens and a lecture by Mr Lynn Watts also of the USA entitled "*Rhododendrons - Indumented Species*". The Conference will conclude on Friday with a visit to the Mission Vineyard. Established in 1851 by French Missionaries, the Mission Winery was the first commercial vineyard in New Zealand and produces wines with an attractive flavour.

The 1994 Pacific Region International Rhododendron Conference is being held at Burnie, N.W. Tasmania from 28 Oct - 2 Nov. Topspeakers from UK, USA and Australasia. Tours of Gordon River, Central Highlands, Huon and Hobart areas. The Burnie and Hastings conferences are back to back so you can attend both.

Plants etc Wanted

Any member able to offer any of the undermentioned hybrids as scions, rooted cuttings or young plants is requested to contact the

advertiser direct:

Mr Jim Inskip, 9 Beech Close Court, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2HA (Tel: (+44)0932 865606)

R. Goldsworth Crimson, R. Prince of Wales, R. Sun of Austerlitz, R. Soldier Sam (Reuthe Cross)

Group Autumn Weekend - Oct 21-23 1994.

Accommodation has been reserved for our party at the Royal Cambridge Hotel, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1PY, Tel: 0223 351631. We will meet as usual in time for dinner on the Friday evening. On the Saturday morning we will have a guide to take us over the Botanic Gardens (a few minutes walk from the hotel). Arrangements have been made to have lunch at the Gilmour Room, following which there will be a lecture (probably on taxonomy) by Dr James Cullen.

There will be several options for Sunday morning. Attending morning service at King's College Chapel will be one of them, and visits to places of historic interest will be another. A visit to Wimpole Hall (National Trust) which is 8 miles south of Cambridge is a possibility. This is the most spectacular mansion in Cambridgeshire and also has a 350 acre park of some note. This is open only in the afternoon, so would be of interest to those intending to stay on after lunch.

There is a reduced price for the Sunday night for any members wishing to stay until the Monday morning.

The cost of the weekend will be about £110 for those sharing a twin room. (Single Room supplement £40). This includes lunches, garden entrance, hire of lecture room etc. as well as accommodation in the hotel.

A deposit of £20 per person is required to secure a place (if still available). Please send to me, Mrs V Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, E Devon, EX13 7HH. Cheques should be made payable to the Group.

Finally, I must thank Lady Cynthia Postan (who lives in Cambridge) who has been instrumental in arranging much of the weekend, in particular for getting us such a distinguished lecturer.

New Members

The following new members have joined since the last Bulletin (Branches in brackets):

Mr & Mrs Richard Robinson, North Furzehill Farm, Barbrook, Lynton, N.Devon.EX35 6LN. (SW)

Mr J Baldock, Duffryn, Liphook, Hants. GU30 7EJ. (WX)

Mr Brent McKenzie, 55 Mayfield Ave, Wakari, Dunedin, 9001 New Zealand (OS)

Miss Catherine Philo, 2, Herons Place, Lion Wharf Rd, Old Isleworth, Middlesex. TW7 7BE. (SE)

Mr J D Enoch, Buckleigh, Whisselwell Lane, Bovey Tracey, Devon.TQ13 9LA. (SW)

Mrs Frances Ahern, Ardnagashel House, Bantry, Co.Cork, Eire. (I)

A very warm welcome to all these members. Please let me know if any of the above details are incorrect.

Branch News

N. Wales & North West Branch.

The Branch devoted their Spring 1994 meeting to a presentation of the Branch Project. This is to collect all the species of Rhododendron in the Section Pogonanthum, the subsect. Maddenia and, for clarification, members of the similar subsect. Edgeworthia. The aim is to encourage members of the Branch to help assemble the collection and to propagate whenever possible. Propagation could well be undertaken jointly, some members having considerably better facilities than others. Duplicate plants will eventually be supplied to the University of Liverpool Botanic Garden, Ness. In due course, the chosen Sections and subsections may be registered as "National Collections" with the N.C.C.P.G.

Wherever possible plants of known wild origin will be chosen, but this is not an absolute requirement. It is not immediately anticipated

that the plants will be used in taxonomic research. Material which agrees with the descriptions in "Notes R.B.G. Edinburgh, Vol.39 No.1" By J Cullen, Ph.D, D.Sc. will be acceptable.

The spread of plants between private collectors and large public gardens offers the best conservation strategy. There are batches of seedlings in some establishments which are unmanageable within one organisation. If the spares are spread there is greater opportunity for some to survive in periods of adverse climatic conditions. Mr John Harsant will keep a computer record of all the plants drawn together within the Branch. The Section Pogananthum is almost completely represented, albeit by a single plant of some species. A fair number of plants in subsect. Maddenia are held by members. One member with a garden on the Menai Straits has a very good selection of species in this subsection, as one might have anticipated. However, it came as a surprise to learn that there was a semi-mature specimen of *R. nuttallii* in a garden on the foothills of the Pennines.

South West Branch.

On 23rd April 1994 over 90 members and guests assembled at Heligan, Cornwall for a tour conducted by Mr Tim Smit, Project Restoration partner and Robin Leach, Head Gardener. The "Lost Gardens of Heligan" were abandoned in 1914 and became a jungle over the next 76 years. For our previous visit in 1987, machetes had had to be used to clear a path through to Flora's Green where a magnificent specimen of *R. niveum* was in full flower.

A dynamic restoration project was put in hand in 1990. Fifty public companies were approached for support and all agreed. Craftsmen were brought into rebuild and restore the four walled gardens, the kitchen garden, as well as the pineapple, peach and banana houses, the vinery, the gardener's bothy and the bee boles. Kew is donating its collection of antique garden implements. The jungle valley has had its lakes and fallen trees cleared. It is to be replanted with sub-tropical rain forest, many tree ferns having already been planted. Metal detectors were used to locate original plant labels and seed of the old varieties of fruit and vegetables is being sown. The aim is to work up to a labour force of 42 gardeners so that the gardens can be operated in the old way, e.g. growing pineapples in specially designed houses heated by rotting stable manure. For those who enjoyed the TV series on "A Victorian Kitchen Garden" this was a most exhilarating visit. We will be due for our next visit at the turn of the century, by which time some of the original Rhododendrons may well have been identified and labelled. R. John Tremayne (*griffithianum x arboreum*, blood red form) is one such.

There was a cold, blustery wind when we reassembled that afternoon in the Beach car park at Veryan Bay for our visit to Caerhays Castle, the home of Mr Julian Williams. As we walked up the drive we gained the shelter of the woodland and were met and escorted by Mr Charles Williams, Mr Philip Tregunna, Head Gardener and his nephew, Philip. These important but informal gardens were created by J. C. Williams, who sponsored plant hunting expeditions by E.H. Wilson and George Forrest.

Some of the hybrids which originated here include:

Rhododendrons: Blue Tit, Crossbill, Humming Bird, and Saffron Queen;

Camellias: Cornish Snow, J.C. Williams, and St. Ewe; and

Magnolias: Caerhays Surprise and Caerhays Belle.

Michelia doltsopa was in full and fragrant flower. Introduced by George Forrest in 1918, this is now a very large tree. A new hybrid of *R. yakushmanum x R. decorum* with large pink or white bells was about to be registered. R. Michael's Pride (*burmanicum x dalhousiae*) was looking lovely with its lime green buds and its large waxy, fragrant, creamy yellow, lily-shaped flowers, growing happily in the open here, but normally recommended for the cool greenhouse.

In thanking our hosts we presented R. Crest and were delighted to learn that Caerhays had never had one.

On 7th May about 76 members and guests met at Lukesland, near Ivybridge on the southern edge of Dartmoor. We were welcomed by the owners, Brian and Rosemary Howell in the Billiards Room of

their house, which was built in 1862 in Victorian Gothic style. Brian's father planted many Exbury hybrid rhododendrons in the 1930s. Since 1975 the family have planted a pinetum of about 60 different and unusual conifers. Alan Mitchell has recorded specimens of the Maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), the Handkerchief tree (*Davidia involucrata*) and a magnificent specimen of *Magnolia campbellii*, probably the largest in the country. A moor and brook provide a string of waterfalls and pools and the reason for a most unusual (reverse suspension) bridge. Brian is now trying to create another bridge out of live trees.

R. Fortune (falconeri x sinogrande), considered to be superior to either of its parents, grows and flowers well in the open here. There was also a specimen of *R. Beauty of Littleworth (griffithianum x campanulatum)* with its very large trusses of pure white, spotted reddish-purple. Notebooks were out to record *R. sanguineum var. haemaleum* with its blackish-crimson bell-shaped flowers.

Lukesland has excellent views and vistas as well as a fine collection of plants in various stages of maturity. In thanking our hosts we presented an unnamed hybrid, *R. Lodauric x R. Aladdin* and asked to be kept informed of the resulting flowers which we forecast might be late, large, pink, and, hopefully, scented.

In the afternoon we reassembled at Higher Knowle, near Lustleigh, the home of David and Rosemary Quicke. This steep woodland garden of 3 acres has Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias on a carpet of primroses and bluebells. The view of Dartmoor from the terrace is stunning. *Embothrium coccineum* was in fiery flower. *Magnolias denudata*, *sprengeri diva* and *veitchii* had already flowered but *M. grandiflora* would follow in the summer. All too soon it was time to leave for Richard and Eileen Padley's garden, St. Olaves, near Chagford at the N.E. corner of Dartmoor. This garden runs down to the River Teign. Richard and his gardener showed us many interesting trees and shrubs which have been planted over the years. There is a working ram which pumps water to a higher level by means of a head of water. The ingenious use of corrugated roofing tiles creates a ripple effect in a mogul inspired series of waterfalls. The day ended with a welcome glass of wine and snacks and in expressing our thanks we presented *R. yakushmanum F.C.C.*

Wessex Branch.

On 15th March the Branch held a meeting at Wisley when Dr. David Chamberlain addressed the subject of Rhododendron species using electron microscope slides to illustrate the inner structures of the plants, thereby giving members an insight into the latest developments in this field. On the first day of a glorious Bank Holiday weekend Branch members were invited to enjoy the beauty of a predominantly woodland garden at The Old House, Silchester, the home of Mr & Mrs Jurgens. Leaving the house by way of a pergola purchased from the Wembley Exhibition of 1924 Mr Jurgens showed us a wide variety of plants from the new plantings of the past few years to older plantings now reaching maturity. Camellias, in abundance were mostly still in flower and although past their best, we were still able to enjoy the beauty of the magnolias. The beauty of the plants was enhanced by the woodland setting, running with streams and carpeted with bluebells. Our hosts kindly augmented our picnics with salads, desserts and liquid refreshments.

Our second garden visit was to Sandling Park on 29th May by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Alan Hardy. The 25 acre garden was badly devastated in the 1987 gale and the subsequent clearance and replanting has resulted in a much changed garden. Sandling Park is a garden of great beauty with a wide range of plants, with many varieties of deciduous azaleas, including North American species and *occidentale* hybrids. Mr & Mrs Hardy kindly gave us a conducted tour of the garden, including the rose garden and the impressive greenhouses.

Our Annual Competition was held at Hydon Nurseries on 8th May by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs George. The identification contest was won by Lady Adam Gordon with Mr Malcolm Nash and Mrs Margaret Hall as runners-up. The cup for the best exhibit in the show was won by Mr & Mrs Linney with a lovely bloom of *R. Nancy Evans*, whilst the shield for the most points gained was won by Mr & Mrs Beard with Mr & Mrs Linney as runners-up. Mr and Mrs George's

hospitality was much appreciated and thanks were expressed to Messrs Bond and George for their expert judging.

In conclusion thanks are due to all those members who made the effort to enter the competition. This is not a "cut and thrust" competition, more of an enjoyable time when members can show each other what they grow and compare notes. The pleasure is in taking part, even with only one or two blooms.

Autumn and winter meetings will include:

Friday 21st October, *Rhododendrons & Associated Plants*. An illustrated talk by Dr. Alfred Evans in the Saunders Room, Charterhouse School, Godalming.

Friday 25th November, *Rhododendrons of Vietnam*. An illustrated talk by Mr Keith Rushforth - Lecture Room, RHS Garden, Wisley.

Friday 24th February 1995, *Camellias around the World*. An illustrated talk by Miss Jennifer Trehane venue to be announced.

Enquiries to the Hon. Sec. of the Branch: Mrs Margaret Hall. (Tel: 0252 783222)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at RHS New Hall, Vincent Square, London on 3rd May 1994.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr.F.Auckland, Miss M.Forrest, Mr.R.Redford, Mr.C.A.Weston and Mr.E.N.G.Wright.

The meeting was chaired by Mr.Bruce Archibold with 20 people present. Minutes of the 1993 Annual General Meeting, which had been printed in Bulletin No.53, August 1993, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Dr.Florence Auckland and Mr.Ray Redford had resigned from the Committee. Miss Cecily E. Perring was re-elected and Mr Maurice Foster was elected to the Committee. Dr.Alun Edwards was confirmed as South West Branch Organiser.

The Treasurer reported that The Royal Horticultural Society's accountant had audited the accounts, but they had not yet had them typed; as no copies were available to hand round, they are printed below. (*See separate page*)

The Treasurer reported an annual income of £7000 and a present surplus of £1500. He is trying to increase savings to fund other activities. Arrangements have been made for members to pay their subscriptions by VISA.

There was no other business.

The date for the next Annual General Meeting is provisionally 2nd May 1995.

Miss Perring expressed gratitude to the Chairman for the way he chairs meetings.

Chairman's Report to the 1994 Annual General Meeting

Firstly, may I welcome you to the 1994 Annual General Meeting of the Group.

At the last AGM in 1993 the membership of the Group consisted of 605 members in the UK and 109 overseas. The present figures are 597 in the UK and 99 overseas. 33 new members have joined since 1st November 1993 and as at today's date, 34 subscriptions remain unpaid and may have to be regarded as losses in due course. In view of the adverse financial climate this, you may agree, is not a bad result.

You will very shortly hear from the Hon. Treasurer, Alastair Stevenson

and I do not propose to comment further on the Group's financial affairs other than to thank Alastair for his excellent housekeeping which has resulted in an eminently satisfactory financial situation.

I am pleased to report that our Branches continue to flourish under the able guidance of their various Organisers but it is with sadness that I must tell you that Nigel Wright, who has so effectively run the South West Branch following the sad death of Dick Reynolds, now feels that he must give up his office so as to be able to concentrate more fully on other matters. However, he has suggested that Dr.Alun Edwards should take his place and the Executive Committee, subject to confirmation by the Council of the RHS has agreed.

It is also my unhappy task to tell you that Ray Redford, the Hon. Membership Secretary, has indicated that he wishes to stand down from that post with effect from the date of this meeting. Members may not be aware that Ray has served the Committee and the Group with great devotion and much hard work, both as Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Membership Secretary, and in the latter capacity transferred all the membership records on to a computer. We shall miss him greatly and I am sure that all members would wish me to express our sincere thanks for all that he has done for the Group. However, I am pleased to tell you that a volunteer in the person of Tony Weston has come forward to take on the job and has been accepted by the Executive Committee. Tony is, of course, also Hon. Bulletin Editor and already a member of the Executive Committee.

Another resignation which will lose to the Committee a fund of experience and sound judgement is Dr. Florence Auckland who has felt that the time has come for her to resign. The Committee, in accepting her resignation, wishes to acknowledge with grateful thanks, all her help and advice in the past. Mr. Maurice Foster has been proposed and seconded to fill the vacancy and, there being no other nomination and the RHS approval having been given, he is hereby elected.

The Yearbook, in the capable hands of Lady Cynthia Postan, goes from strength to strength for which she is greatly to be congratulated. Perhaps I may be permitted to say now that in 1995 it is proposed to issue a Jubilee Number of the Yearbook to celebrate 40 years of the existence of the Group. I understand that it will contain many articles by worldwide experts in their own fields on the theme of the history of rhododendrons.

I wish also to congratulate my wife, Valerie, for the excellent and highly professional way in which she, and she alone, organises both the annual tour and the Autumn Weekend on behalf of the Group. As a dutiful husband, I speak only when spoken to - on matters of tours and weekends, of course! Very shortly the tour will set off to visit gardens in Scotland.

Tony Weston continues to produce excellent Bulletins, both amusing and informative, and somehow always manages to get them out on time - as I recall, not an easy job.

I feel that some comment is called for regarding the seed exchange. Ken Hulme continues to operate this most effectively but the constant supply of reliable seed, both as regards viability and provenance, is proving something of a problem as more and more countries are forbidding parties to bring out material. However, the Seed Sub Committee under the Chairmanship of Alan Hardy is constantly looking for new sources of supply for the future.

Finally I should like to express my personal and heartfelt thanks to all the members of the Committee for their unfailing support and wise councils without which the Group could not operate.