The Royal Horticultural Society

The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group



Bulletin No. 67 **April 1998**

Forthcoming Events.

14-15 April Main Camellia Competition, Westminster. 18 April S.E. Branch Show, Handcross Park School 28-29 April Main Rhododendron Competition,

Westminster

29 April, Annual General Meeting of Rhododendron

Group, Westminster.

Chairman's Report

During the past few months the rhododendron enthusiast has been well served with new books on the subject. Firstly, Peter and Kenneth Cox's excellent "Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Species" arrived on the scene. This is a superb work and a must for all keen rhododendron species enthusiasts. Secondly, the RHS publication "The Rhododendron Handbook", appeared, This long awaited pocket guide is also an excellent publication and will keep us all up to date with new nomenclature and, indeed, several new species. Several members of the Group were in the production team, notably George Argent and David Chamberlain of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, who were so ably shepherded by Alan Hardy, the Group's Vice Chairman. Last but certainly not least our own Year Book appeared on the scene which certainly meets all the criteria in maintaining the high standard of our Year Book. Our thanks are due to Philip Evans, the editorial sub committee and of course all the contributors. These three books will, of course, be reviewed thoroughly in one or other of our publications in due course.

Some of you will be aware that the American Rhododendron Society are considering a title change, possibly to the Rhododendron Society. This apparently has been brought about by the growing society's overseas involvement. The much smaller American Magnolia Society has already made this change for the same reason. Some of our members are disturbed about this possible change as this Group was a society before the war (I wish we still held that title). However there is nothing we can do about this for we certainly have no legal hold on "Rhododendron Society".

Continuing with the American connection, I am travelling to Vancouver and Seattle to talk to our American rhododendron friends during April. I plan, of course, to visit a number of gardens whilst I am there, both with a rhododendron content and otherwise. I particularly want to visit the Rhododendron Species Foundation Garden at Seattle which I have not seen for several years. This garden has had a chequered existence and appears to have had many changes throughout its comparatively short life. I had a great deal of involvement in the early days of this society

8-10 May Malvern Spring Gardening Show 8-13 May Group Spring Tour, Scotland. 19-22 May Chelsea Flower Show. Scottish National Gardening Show, Strathclyde 29-31 May 10-14 June Gardeners' World Live, N E.C., Birmingham.

20-21 June Chatsworth Flower & Garden Show. 7-12 July Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 27-30 Oct.

New Zealand Rhododendron Assn Conference,

Christchurch, S.Island, N.Z.

which was formed to grow well documented and true-to-name rhododendron species. So many of the species grown in North America had been raised from open pollinated seed and were far from true-to-name. In the early days we despatched hundreds of cuttings/scions to Vancouver, BC, where they were propagated and grown on, thus avoiding being boiled, roasted and fried at the port of entry, New York. These plants were eventually shipped to a garden in Oregon and later to Seattle - much travelled plants. Writing about the R.S.F. reminds me that the first talk I ever gave in North America, many years ago, was to this society in a huge open plan office with large windows on a bright, sunny afternoon at 3.00 pm with no blackout. Needless to say, my slides were useless!

The season here as I write (the end of February) has been very mild and once again is running early. Rhododendrons dauricum and mucronulatum were very good and other early species and hybrids are now flowering profusely.

I hope you all have a successful rhododendron, camellia and magnolia season and, of course, much more.

Bulletin Editors Notes

This year we are again putting in an appearance with a stand at Malvern Spring Flower Show and I have been rash enough to undertake its planning and organisation. We have a small core of trusty helpers from around the area, who manned this last year and one or two members are coming up from Pembrokeshire to assist, but if anyone would like to join us and help with the setting up or would be prepared to take a turn on the stand, (even just two hours would be of great use) please do get in touch with me★. You will not be asked to dispense expert advice (unless you feel competent to do so), but we need people to sell a few packets of seed, or help potential new members fill in an application form or just talk gardening to any interested passers by. It's a marvellous way of meeting other gardeners and we shall provide a couple of chairs and a pass into the Showground!

★ Mrs. Eileen Wheeler, Llwyngoras, Velindre, Crymych, Pembs. SA41 3XW Tel. 01239 820464 e-mail wheeler@nevern.u-net.com

Peak Branch tell me they also are arranging a stand for the new Chatsworth Flower Show, which promises to be very splendid and will doubtless be run with Chatsworth's usual seamless efficiency. If you feel you can help, get in touch, but in any event go and see it if you can. David and Eileen Farnes will be giving some of their very popular lectures there as well which is an added incentive to attend.

May I make a plea for as many members as possible to attend our AGM, speak up on issues that concern you, give us ideas and vote for your Committee members? This is the only way you can get the Committee and the Group that you want. We would like to see a packed room and hear what we do right and what we do wrong! Now it's up to each one of you.....

Please note—The Hon. Treasurer, Alastair Stevenson's fax no. is 0181 987 8728; he is still getting attempted faxes to his old number which changed three years ago!

Also two telephone numbers have changed: John Bond is 01344 <u>6</u>35084 and Alun Edwards is 01271 <u>3</u>13324

F.W

Election of Executive Committee at Annual General Meeting, 29 April, 1998, 4.30 pm Room 31, RHS New Halls

There are two retiring Committee members this year, Mr. David Farnes and Mr. Ivor Stokes, who have both served for three years. They are both willing to serve for a further three years.

The Committee members were very sorry to lose Mr. Alan Hardy and Mr. Clive Collins; their resignations leave two vacancies on the Committee.

Members who wish to join the Committee will find a Nomination Form in the December 1997 Bulletin. Nomination Forms must be signed by the Nominee, and also by a Proposer and a Seconder, all three must be members of the RHS and of the Group. The Nomination Form should be sent, together with a brief horticultural curriculum vitae, to the Hon Secretary* at least 48 hours before the Annual General Meeting.

Voting will be at the AGM.

Yearbook Index

The Cumulative Index to the 50 Yearbooks dated 1946 to 1997 is available from the ★ Hon. Secretary, and costs £18 for the Printed Version, and £25 for the Computer Disc Version, both prices include postage and packing. Please make cheques payable to The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group.

★ Mrs. J. Warren (Hon. Secretary), Netherton, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon PL20 7NL Tel. 01822 854022

J.W.

Membership Secretary's Notes

Firstly I should like to give a warm welcome to all our new members who have joined since 1st January last year; they number exactly 100, of whom 31 live outside Gt. Britain and Ireland. I hope that they will derive pleasure from their membership. On the other side of the coin it is sad to have to record the deaths reported to me during the same period of 15 of our members; there have also been some resignations, mostly on account of advancing years. Nevertheless, in total our membership

shows a net increase on the previous year, which indicates a measure of satisfaction on the part of you all.

More people than ever are using e-mail, including me when I get the hang of it, and when the next issue of the Membership List is printed I propose to include members' e-mail addresses, so if you have an address please advise me of it before you file this bulletin away and forget about it.

My own address is tony@rhodo.demon.co.uk

Seed List

I am having difficulty keeping abreast of orders from the seed list; already I have received over 100 and they continue to arrive daily for orders ranging from 5 packets to 200. There is still quite a good supply of most species among the 1995 and 1996 collections, although some are now sold out. The 1997 seed is still being cleaned at the time of writing but I am hopeful of being able to despatch it before the end of March: The remainder has all been sent out.

Please note—I have some late arrivals of seeds to add to the list:

97279 Lotus (Dorycnium) hirsutus - Cowdray 97280 Rhododendron edgeworthii CCHH8016 Cox

97281 R. rushforthii KR2357 Rushforth

97282 Magnolia ashii (OP) Wilson, Australia

97283 Rhododendron carneum aff. KR2247 (OP) Rushforth 97284 Rhododendron carneum aff. KR2260 (OP) Rushforth 97285 Rhododendron dalhousieae var. rhabdotum KR1286

(OP) Rushforth

97286 Rhododendron lyi aff. KR1929 (OP) Rushforth

Members in the USA please note: One of you wrote to me to say that you had been away and had come home to find a reminder about your subscription but that it would be a few days before you could get to the bank to arrange a transfer of cash. I replied that it would be better if he used his credit card. I asked him to confirm that the number was the same as it was when he ordered seed last year and about a week later I received a fax authorising me to charge his subscription to the VISA account which he confirmed was as I had quoted. Unfortunately he did not sign this and there was no indication of whence it had come and, to make matters worse, I had not kept a copy of my letter! If, therefore, there is someone over there who thinks he has paid his subscription for 1998 and is wondering why he has not received his copy of the yearbook, that is the explanation. Could he please identify himself!

A.W.

Vacancy for Group Tour Organiser, 1999

I shall be retiring after the Autumn Weekend this year and a replacement is urgently needed.

This is a challenging post for someone good at organising and with a love of gardens and people. There are many rewards, as apart from the interest of visiting beautiful gardens all over the U.K., there is the opportunity to make many friends with similar interests. Also there is an assured place on the RHS Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group Committee which meets at the RHS New Hall three times a year. Most expenses relating to tours are covered by tour funds.

Any member who would like to consider taking up this post please write or phone me, Mrs. Valerie Archibold, at Starveacre, Dalwood, E.Devon EX13 7HH.. Tel. 01404 881221 V.A.

Photographic Competition.

The Hon. Yearbook Editor would like to remind all members that the Photographic Competition will again be held in the 1999 Yearbook, which will appear next January. Slides or good quality prints of our three genera, taken in the wild, in member's own or other private gardens, or in collections open to the public, should be submitted before 30 June, 1998. There is a prize for the winner and that photograph plus one or more of the runners-up will be published. A brief description of the subject and location is required for each entry.

Please send to Philip D. Evans, Painswold, Broad Street, Cuckfield, W. Sussex RH17 5LL.

P.E.

Branch News

South East Branch

Annual Show sponsored by Phostrogen

The S.E. Branch will be holding its annual show on Saturday 18 April at Handcross Park School, Handcross, W. Sussex.

Once again the event will be sponsored by Phostrogen and supported by leading specialist nurseries who will have stands.

There will be 22 competitive classes, prizes for winning entries and trophies for the show's best rhododendron, camellia and magnolia.

During the show a talk will be given by Mr. Paul Martin, Head Gardener of Exbury whose subject will be "The Gardens of Exbury".

This year, there will also be a Help Desk to assist with plant identification and problems.

An added attraction is that Handcross Park School holds the National Collection of Cherry Trees (*Prunus*), many of which should be in bloom at the time of the show.

Entry is by invitation so anyone wishing to take part or visit the show should contact Brian Wright, the Show Organiser, Tel. 01892 653207, Fax 01892 669550, or write to Kilsaran, Fielden Lane, Crowborough, E.Sussex TN6 1TL

B.W.

Our main spring garden visit will be to Leonardslee, which we have not visited for some time; we shall meet at 10.30 on 9 May at Leonardslee Nursery, which is at the entrance to Cyder Farm, opposite the South Lodge Hotel and just down the hill from the entrance to Leonardslee Gardens. £4 will be collected from each person at the Nursery before we visit the garden. We are seeking permission to go on to see South Lodge Gardens in the afternoon at about 2.30p.m. Any member wishing to visit South Lodge and not able to make Leonardslee, please ring me for confirmation that we are able to do so.

Ann Boscawen has invited us to see the hardy hybrid collection at the High Beeches at 2.30 on 23 May, pay at the gate. Ann has kindly offered tea after the visit.

Mike Robinson and Everard Daniel aim to run a propagation weekend on 26,27 July at Hindleap Lodge, Forest Row. It is hoped to arrange some 'scion collecting' but some scions and cuttings will probably be available at the weekend; understocks will be available, charged for at cost.

Please get in touch with John Hilliard if you might be interested in coming along, Tel 01293 522859, 99 Gales Drive, Crawley, Sussex RH10 1QD

J.H.

N.W. England & N. Wales Branch

The Branch holds two main meetings, one in the back end of the year and the other in February. The speaker at the meeting held in November 1997 was the Chairman of the main Group Mr John Bond, who spoke on the rhododendron collection at the Windsor Savill and Valley gardens. In February the appointed speaker is Janet Cubey, currently a research student at Ness Botanic Gardens; she will speak on her approach to scientific problems she is studying and on trips to the Far East to look at plants in their native habitat. Material of known wild origin is particularly important in scientific studies and this is an added reason for going back to see and take specimens in the wild.

We hold a social event in January and this year we viewed a video entitled "The Realm of the Rhododendron" which is a pictorial account of the rhododendrons growing in New Zealand. The video is of general interest but tends to concentrate on hybrids raised in New Zealand gardens.

In spring we arrange a tour of gardens in other regions and in 1998 we are going in late April to the South East. We shall visit Millais Nursery and Garden on the afternoon of Friday 24 April, Wakehurst and Leonardslee on Saturday 25 and Windsor on 26 April.

On the 9 May we continue our programme of visits to members' gardens, this year we shall go in the morning to Aberconwy Nursery at Glan Conway owned by Dr. Keith Lever, it is one of the finest alpine plant nurseries in Britain and in recent years they have increased the range of dwarf rhododendrons for sale. In the afternoon we shall travel about one mile along the road and visit Bodnant.

K.H.

Wessex Branch

Jim Inskip gave us an interesting talk on "Azaleas from Seed to Flower" at our autumn meeting, accompanied by slides, many of which he had taken in his own nursery which he has created in his spare time, in a field outside Guildford. Here he is propagating and raising an enormous range of deciduous azaleas, some of which will surely be stars of the future. We held an auction of several unusual azaleas, kindly donated by Ted Millais.

In November we again met at Lady Adam Gordon's garden at Hethersett, for a walk followed by tea, and several members showed excellent slides. The absence of colour enabled us to enjoy the structure of the garden on our lovely winter walk, and to see the wonderful shapes of the trees. We admired the new clearings and views that have been opened up, and the delightful new little peat bed.

We had a lively and fascinating talk from Jennifer Trehane in February on "Camellias Round the World" To emphasise what a good natured plant this is we were shown camellias growing in many different and hostile environments round the world, from arid slopes of mountains in China to swampy salt marshes and from small suburban gardens in lush New Zealand to the newly restored plants in the camellia house at Chiswick.

Future Programme

Sunday 19 April, by kind invitation of the Crown Estate Commissioners a walk through the Valley Gardens guided by Mark Flanagan, Keeper of the Gardens. This meeting was limited to the first 20 applicants and was fully subscribed almost immediately.

Sunday 24 May Annual Competition to be held at Ramster, Chiddingfold, Surrey by kind invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Gunn. Mr. John Bond has kindly agreed to judge our competition again. We are introducing two new features: a non-competitive class and a table to which you may take your problem plants for advice and/or identification. For more details please contact Branch Chairman Miranda Gunn, Ramster, Chiddingfold, Surrey, GU8 4SN 01428 644422 or Branch Treasurer, Neil Usher, Applegarth, Effingham Common Road, Effingham, Surrey KT24 5JH. 01372 452652

M.G.

Lakeland Branch

Our winter lecture programme has been very varied and stimulating to our members. At our AGM in October, Dr. W.W. (Bill) Harpur was elected Chairman, Peter Haworth retiring under our constitution rules. It was followed by a workshop led by Jim Fuller on the identification of rhododendrons by their leaves and scales, a theme which we will put to trial in our spring garden visits and tour. In November Neil Huntley spoke on Primulaceae and other companion plants. December we had a visit from John Bond on Magnoliaceae. Since then David Kinsman gave his forthcoming paper on climatic conditions for temperate rhododendrons, putting forward a well reasoned explanation for all those calcifuge plants which thrive in China and elsewhere on underlying limestone rocks. Still to come are lectures from one of our members, Geoff Yates on New Zealand and Steve MacNamara from Branklyn on his Canadian experiences.

The spring tour to Dumfries and Galloway in April is fully booked. Our spring programme of local garden visits is organised: Thelma and Uter Potter on 26 May, Jim and Margaret Fuller on 19 April and Carol Coleman on 16 May.

W.W.H

Scottish Branch

Our weekend visit to Helensburgh has been arranged for 8-10 May and promises to be very interesting, visiting the Scottish Rhododendron Society's flower show, and touring the following gardens. Benmore amd Eckford at Dunoon, Kilarden by Rosneath, The Linn Garden at Cove, Glenarn at Rhu and Ross Priory at Gartochan. We will be staying at the Commodore Hotel Helensburgh where we will be joined by the main spring tour. This will give the Scottish members a chance to meet many members from the South. We will all dine together and share a joint lecture to be given by Mr. Ian Sinclair who was at Benmore and has recently been to Bhutan. There may still be places available for any members interested. Please contact me Tessa Knott, Glenwhan Gardens, Dunragit by Stranraer, DG9 8PH. Tel./Fax 01581 400222

Note: We will not be at the Strathclyde Show this year, but I may be found on The Scottish Rhododendron Society's stand if any member wishes to contact me.

Relationships Between Climatic Limits for Rhododendron Species in the Himalaya Region and in Arboreta.

Professor Ole R. Vetaas writes:

"I would appreciate some help in relation to an ongoing research project on Rhododendron. I am interested to know which arboreta have the listed Rhododendron taxa and the climate where they grow. Please distribute this among your members."

The project is sponsored by the Norwegian Research Council, and the project leader is Ole R.Vetaas It is based at Botanical Institute University of Bergen in collaboration with the Norwegian Arboretum at Milde-Bergen. Collaborators are Prof. Per. M. Jorgensen, Director Per. H. Salvesen and Prof. Ram P. Chaudhary from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The present project aims to identify the climatic limits for selected rhododendron species (see below) found in the Nepalese Himalaya region. Rhododendrons are very popular garden plants due to their colourful and large flowers as well as their large, shiny green leaves. The applied aim is to be able to predict the chances of survival of Nepalese rhododendron species when they are grown in gardens located in temperate climates. The long term aim is to develop this knowledge further within a Nepalese institution, which will then provide seeds and/or seedlings for sale.

Several theories indicate that certain low temperatures are critical in defining the range of evergreen rhododendron species. At the upper end of the temperature range, water efficiency is relatively more important.

The following questions will be answered by the project for selected rhododendron species:

- 1. Which climatic parameters best explain their distribution within their natural habitat, i.e. realized niche?
- 2. Can these parameters predict their survival outside their natural geographical range?
- 3. How different are the climatic limits of related sub-species in their natural habitats and in arboreta?

Target Taxa

The following species are part of the current research. The nomenclature follows Chamberlain et al. (1996: The Genus Rhododendron - Its classification & Synonymy -RBGE)

- 1. Rh. anthopogon; ssp. anthopogon, ssp hypenanthum
- 2. Rh. lepidotum;
- 3. Rh. arboreum; ssp arboreum, ssp. cinnamomeum
- Rh barbatum
- 5. Rh. campanulatum; ssp campanulatum, ssp. aeruginosum
- 6. Rh.wallichii

If you have any of the listed taxa I would appreciate some information on geography and climate. See questionnaire below:

- 1. Address and name of Arboretum/ Botanical Garden
- 2. Geography: latitude, longitude and altitude

	3.	Please write the names of the taxa you have:
	4.	Micro-topography: Slope inclination and aspect
	5. (a)	
	(b)	average minimum temperature of the coldest month
	(c)	average maximum temperature of the hottest month
	(d)	mean annual precipitation
	(e)	rainfall seasonality 1= uniform/bimodal, 2=winter,
	(f)	or 3 = summer number of dry months (mm)
		Please give the addresses of the nearest climate stations, especially if you cannot provide any climate data
	6.	Survivorship: If any taxa have died or have been severely damaged due to climate please write the plant name and climate data for that particular year: Name of plant
	(ii)	date of plantingyear of death or damage climate data for that particular year:
	(1) (2)	annual temperature
	(3)	maximum temperature of the hottest month.
	(4) (5)	annual precipitationnumber of dry (mm) months
The questionnaire may be copied with answers and sent by e-mail to OleVetaas@bot.uib.no or by mail Ole R. Vetaas, Botanical Institute, Allegt. 41, N-5007 Bergen, Norway. Fax +47 5589667.		

The questionnaire may also be found on web-site: http://home.sol.no/~hgrimsla/rhodo/arboret/arborete. htm click Rhododendron at research (home.sol..../query1.htm) or look for Norwegian Arboretum - Milde under www-links at ARS home-page.

Thank you in advance for your help!......Ole

R. Vetaas.

This probably only applies to academic gardens, but some of you individual members may have the information Professor Vetaas requires.

WHITEHILLS NURSERIES

(Mr & Mrs C. A. Weston)

CLOSING DOWN SALE

We still have a fair number of plants which we are offering to members at Trade Prices, especially species. No azaleas except R. luteum. The prices quoted below are ex-nursery and exclusive of VAT.

Hardy hybrid rhododendrons in 5 litre rigid containers

£6.00 Species 5L & 7.5L from £8.00 Dwarfs 3L & 4L from £4.00 Azaleas (Evergreen) 3L & 4L from £3.50 Azaleas (Deciduous) 5L & 7.5L from £6.00

(Minimum order - £50 [excl VAT]. Orders from UK mainland only.)

Packing & carriage (next day delivery) will be charged at cost viz: £15 up to 10kg plus 30p per kg. in excess. (Note: For a very rough guide to weights - see below) 2 Litre - 1kg, 3 Litre - 2kg, 5 Litre - 3kg, 7.5 Litre - 6kg.

For a full list of available plants write to : Whitehills Nurseries, Newton Stewart, Scotland, DG8 6SL. Phone 01671 402049, Fax 01671 403106.



Rhododendron & Garden Weekends

with expert guide

For further information call

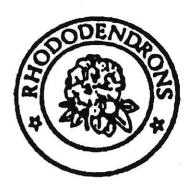
Plants wanted

Our member Dean Woodford is looking for Michelia species, in particular for *M. doltsopa*. Anyone who can help, contact him at Honeybrook, Shinehill Lane, South Littleton, Evesham, Warwickshire WR11 5TB. Tel 01386 830662. Fax 01386 834 030 e-mail dean@linnet.cix.co.uk

Garden Tours

Flora Tours are offering tours in the U.K. which are tailored to small groups There are tours in the S.E., Cambridge and Cumberland. Contact Dr. Barbara Sommerville, 23 Portugal Place, Cambridge CB5 8AF. e-mail flora.garden.tours@home.cam.net.uk

Further afield Pontic Tours specialise in the Pontic Mountains of N.E. Turkey and the Caucasus Mountains of Georgia. Contact Estella Jackson, Hatch Arundell, Loddiswell, Kingsbridge S.Devon TQ7 4AJ Tel./Fax 01548 550449, e-mail pontictour@compuserve.com



The following are the C.V. of the retiring members of the Committee who are standing for re-election. The C.V. of new potential Committee members will be circulated at the A.G.M.

David Farnes

Member of the Group since 1964. Served continuously on the Committee since January 1978. Hon. Treasurer for 8 years from 1978 - 1985 - also Membership Secretary 1981 to 1985. Keeper and supplier of Yearbook back numbers since 1982. Founded the Autumn weekends in 1981 at Wroxton and organised them there for 5 years. Founded the Peak District Branch in 1996 - at present its Chairman. Member of The International Camellia Society since 1975 and maintains active cross-Society ventures. Listed in RHS Speakers Register since 1990 and travels nationwide to deliver lectures on several topics. Frequent exhibitor (and prize-winner) in the Competitive Classes for ornamental plants at the RHS monthly shows, Westminster. In recent years has joined rhododendron plant-hunting expeditions - principally to China, where in 1997 he led own expedition to Yunnan - half the party were Group members.

Ivor T. Stokes

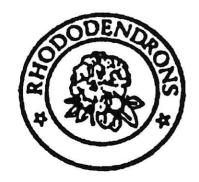
Trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

1979 - Head Gardener at Clyne Gardens, Swansea; responsible for the restoration, cataloguing and further development of the Rhododendron collection planted during the early decades of this century by Admiral Walker-Heneage-Vivian.

1990-1996 - Appointed Curator of the City of Swansea Botanical Complex. The three sites within the Complex included Clyne Gardens; the 9 acre Botanic Garden in Singleton Park and Plantasia, a state of the art Tropical Glasshouse in the City Centre. In 1994 awarded the A.J. Waley medal for work in the cultivation of Rhododendrons.

1996 - Director of Horticulture at the newly formed National Botanic Garden of Wales near Carmarthen.

Travelled widely in pursuit of plants, from S.W. China to S.Africa and gives lectures on many horticultural subjects around Britain





EARLY WARNING—The December Bulletin is about to become the January Bulletin, so that it may be sent out with the Yearbook and Seed List, thus saving a considerable amount of postage. The other two Bulletins will also "slip" a little, but probably only by about three weeks.