

RHODODENDRON AND CAMELLIA GROUP.  
BULLETIN NO. 8. APRIL 1979.

CALENDAR FOR NEXT FEW MONTHS - N.B. See also Branch Activities Report.

MAY 1-2 RHS Flower Show. Rhododendron Show.  
5-10 Rhododendron and Camellia Group Argyll Tour. N.B. dates.  
Revision caused by General Election.  
19 South East Branch visit to Old Woldringfold.  
19 South West Branch visit to North Devon Area.  
20 The High Beeches--private view. 2.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.  
22-25 RHS Chelsea Show.  
24 Rhododendron and Camellia Group visit--Exbury, Spinners.  
27 The High Beeches--private view. 2.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.  
JUNE 26 A.G.M. of Rhododendron and Camellia Group. N.B. See the  
Hon. Secretary's notice below, and cut-off return slip.  
26-27 RHS Early Summer Show, with classes for rhododendrons.  
N.B. New class for a vase of rhododendrons shown for  
ornamental foliage effect.  
JULY 10-11 RHS Flower and Fruit Show.  
AUGUST 7-8 RHS Summer Flower Show.  
30 International Camellia Society Congress, N.Z. (See No. 7).

IMPORTANT NOTICE - ELECTIONS TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.(from the Hon. Sec.)

In terms of the Constitution and Rules of the Rhododendron and Camellia Group, the affairs of the Group are in the hands of the Officers and eight elected members. These are at present:

Chairman: Major E.W.M. Magor. Vice-Chairman: Mr G.A. Hardy.  
Hon. Secretary: Mr J. Waugh Owens. Hon. Treasurer: Mr D.N. Farnes.

Executive Committee:

Mr J.D. Bond. Mr A.D. Schilling. Mr J. Sanders.  
Mr A.F. George. Mr J.T. Gallagher. The Lady Anne Palmer.  
Sir Giles Loder. Lady Adam Gordon.

Mr K.J.W. Lowes, Editor of the Bulletin, was co-opted as a member of the Executive Committee at their meeting on 11 July 1978. In addition, the Regional Branch Organisers are ex-officio members of the Executive Committee. In accordance with Rule 4, Messrs J.D. Bond and A.F. George retire, but are eligible for re-election.

In accordance with Rule 10, Candidates for election to the Executive Committee shall be proposed and seconded by members of the Group and must sign their nomination papers which must reach the Hon. Secretary not later than 12 June 1979, i.e. 14 days before the Annual General Meeting on 26 June 1979.

RHODODENDRON AND CAMELLIA GROUP.

Nomination Paper for two Candidates for election to the Executive Committee.

NAME SECONDED BY CANDIDATE'S SIGNATURE.

Member's signature.....Date.....

Member's name (in BLOCK LETTERS).....

To: J. Waugh Owens, Hon. Secretary,  
The Rhododendron and Camellia Group,  
Jubilee Lodge,  
Yarpole,  
Leominster,  
Herefordshire HR6 OBA.

EDITORIAL.

On Page 6 of Bulletin No.7 I stated my aim to have this one out before the end of April; at the moment of writing I hope to achieve this aim. Some of the Calendar and business announcements make it desirable, to say the least, that this issue should be in the hands of U.K. members by the end of the month, but this does mean that three bulletins will have been produced in five months. I wish to make it clear that this does not represent a change of plan from the original target of four bulletins per annum; rather does it reveal a determination to catch up. Now that I have caught up, my own plan for the future is quite simply to produce the bulletin quarterly. The next one, No. 9, ought therefore to be aimed at the end of July; so it is. After No. 10 in October there follows a regular timing of January, April, July and October in each year. These dates represent purely my personal aim, formed without specific reference to either the Executive Committee or to members. It is therefore subject to modification as a result of future decisions. It is clear that the events of any one quarter might make it sensible to push these dates around a little. As a general statement, January and April are very important because of Calendar announcements; July and October will be useful for reviewing, consultation, discussion and dissertation. So these are now my target dates.

BULLETIN NO. 9.

Contributions for No. 9 should reach me by Saturday 30th June 1979. Where possible, please send them before the last week, as a bit of brooding and rumination, not under pressure, will give me the leisure sometimes needed for consultation and reference. A few suggestions follow.

- (1) Any matter arising from Bulletins Nos. 6, 7 and 8.
- (2) The aftermath of the winter 1978/79; general comments welcome, with specific examples of interesting cases of either damage or survival.
- (3) The 1979 season, irrespective of special winter effects.
- (4) Articles on camellias.
- (5) Articles on magnolias.



The Regional Branches have been active and have provided me with sufficient material for a separate section devoted to their reports.

There is also justification for another American Corner. Mr Potter's notes have stayed my hand on the enlargement of Mr Reuben's notes, promised on page 11 of No. 7. I hope to return to Mr Reuben's contribution to the subject in Bulletin No. 9.

Meantime, may I mention three sources of thinking on the matter of hybridization known to me and easily available via libraries and possibly personal purchase ? They are, in order of publication:

- (1) The Azalea Book. Frederic P. Lee. Nostrand. 1958, 1965.  
See Chapter 11.
- (2) Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Judith Berrisford. Faber. 1964.
- (3) Dwarf Rhododendrons. Peter A. Cox. Batsford and RHS. 1973.  
See Chapter 8.

Still with the American Corner, I draw the attention of our members to the visit of some members of the American Rhododendron Society to the Show at Vincent Square on 1st May. Those of our Group who are able to be there can render a service to our visitors by keeping a look out for them and making themselves known. See the note in American Corner.

Another exhortation - another reminder about exhibiting. By the time members receive this, there will be little time left for decisions. May I exhort those who have any hopes at all of being able to enter something, to obtain a schedule immediately, if they have not already done so ? When it arrives, the weather and the flowers will have the last word, but the waverers will at least have entry forms and know about classes and times.

The file of bulletins promised for the Lindley Library is now installed. I am very grateful to those members who have been good enough to respond to my appeal for back copies; the response has enabled me both to have originals in the file and to have a complete set myself, for necessary reference. One more copy of Bulletin No.2 would be given a warm welcome.

#### ARGYLL TOUR.

Because of the timing of the General Election it became essential to alter the dates of the Argyll Tour in May. For general information the new dates are shown in the Calendar, but members concerned already know the new position.

#### 1980 TOUR - IF ANY.

There may still be time for members wishing to give their views about a tour in 1980; these should be sent to the Hon. Secretary as explained in No. 7. The promotion of a 1980 tour does of course depend on the emergence of a volunteer to undertake the duties and office of 1980 Tour Secretary.

EDITOR.

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#### TREASURER'S REPORT. The Hon. Treasurer, Mr D.N.Farnes, writes: -

I was overwhelmed by the very many letters which accompanied the annual subscriptions received from members during December last. They far outnumbered all the Christmas cards for all of my family ! I had hoped to reply to them all individually, but it soon became obvious that this task would be impossible, even with an unlimited supply of "midnight oil".



Here may I simply say thank you to everybody, and assure them that all the letters were read and their contents noted. It was very heartening to learn that so many members are happy with the way the Group is being organised and run; this fact I was able to report to the recent Committee of Management meeting. The several suggestions, both helpful and critical, have all been noted and passed on to the appropriate quarter.

After some initial problems with our Bank concerning Bankers' Orders I am pleased to report that the system is now in full operation, and I would make a plea for more members to make use of this method of remitting their annual subscriptions. It is easy, convenient and reliable for the member; for the Group it is both time and money saving (which commodities are at a premium for the Hon. Secretary and myself). If the present level of subscription is to be maintained without increase in the immediate future, the Bankers' Orders will prove to be a vital factor.

For the continued success of the Group, it is essential that all subscriptions be paid every year, otherwise an increase will be necessary to cover the losses caused by the defaulters. This, if it were to happen, would be unfair to the majority of the membership who are regular and reliable with their subscriptions. Here may I add a reminder for the current year, that anyone who has received the Year Book 1978 and who knows that he or she has not paid a subscription since 1978, now owes the sum of £3 for this year 1978/79; I shall be pleased to receive this as soon as convenient. (Due date Nov.1978).

At the time of writing, there are 152 members in arrears for this year, and still 30 overdue subscriptions for last year, 1977/78, although these latter have all received their Year Book 1977 and should have a conscience about the debt for this volume at least !

The financial position of the Group is quite healthy at present and a complete and detailed set of accounts will be published well before the Annual General Meeting in June, when I hope to make a full report, with recommendations for the future.

But before then we have the annual events of the Rhododendron Show at Westminster, the Group Tour in Argyll, and the many one-day excursions, all of which are very enjoyable and a source of much pleasure in renewed acquaintanceships. I look forward to meeting many of you on these occasions this year.

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DAVID FARNES.  
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#### BRANCH ACTIVITIES.

We have notes from all four Regional Branches, and some of their confirmed dated arrangements are included in the Calendar. Notes on activities and reports which do not fit conveniently into a calendar are appended.

**SOUTH WEST BRANCH.** Extract from a circular letter dated 4th March 1979, from the Organiser, Mr C.J. Page to Branch members:-

19 May. (Garden visit to the garden of Dr. J.A. Smart at Marwood Hill). "Meet at the garden at 11 a.m. If we take a picnic lunch Dr. Smart has generously offered sherry for our refreshment. Marwood Hill is 4 miles north of Barnstaple turn left signposted Marwood off B3230 Barnstaple - Ilfracombe road. The afternoon visit will be to Tapeley Park, Instow, where Miss Rosamond Christie will show us the garden and the house if we are interested. There is a charge of 50p for each. Miss Christie will also arrange cream teas.

It has been suggested that in early June we might spend a day visiting several smaller gardens of members who would be willing to receive us. If you would like us to see your garden on say the 9th



or 16th June please indicate on the attached questionnaire.

I would like to introduce cutting service for South West members. If you can offer cuttings or require cuttings of particular plants please also indicate on the questionnaire.

The Branch hopes to have an exhibit in the Flower Show at the Royal Cornwall Show in June. Any helpers with or without blooms will be welcomed.

After such a devastating winter I can only hope that there will be something to see when we meet. I look forward to seeing you."

WESSEX BRANCH. 24 May 79 (Chelsea Thursday). Exbury visit. The Organiser, Mr Dudley-Cooke, has sent me confirmation of the arrangements he has made with Mr P.G.G. Chappell at Spinners, Boldre, Lymington, who will be pleased to welcome members of the Group on the morning of 24th May. This is to be on a totally informal basis, i.e., there is to be no organised tour of his garden, and members are to find their own way there. The tour of the Exbury garden is to commence at 2 p.m., the assembly to take place at Exbury at 1.30 p.m. - after lunch.

I have made several visits to Exbury during the last ten years and therefore know the area fairly well in a particular way. With the approval of Mr Dudley-Cooke I therefore did a reconnaissance (World War II seems a long way off now) near the end of March, and made some tentative enquiries about lunch facilities, in hotels and pubs known to me and to Mr Chappell. The following suggestions are based on my personal opinions.

For those visiting Spinners, the Red Lion in Boldre village is only half a mile from the garden, and has an excellent menu of "pub lunches". It is a traditional type of pub and has good facilities (including easy car-parking) on a fair scale. It is recommended by Mr Chappell, and I fully agree after a very good lunch there. On a fine day it might be advisable to book lunch before visiting Spinners and to lunch early. Location is beside the bridge mentioned in the "Yellow Book" directions (1978 issue, p.54; 1979 issue, p.55). Please note, no dogs.

Further away, north of both gardens, the Lyndhurst Park Hotel is large and resourceful, with restaurant and two bars, plenty of parking space, and for those interested in a stay, many bedrooms. The manager told me that if as many as two dozen extra lunching visitors turned up, he would not be too dismayed, but would appreciate them more if they let him know their intention early - before and up to mid-day. A well put-on place, I have known it to be very busy indeed on a fine day in May, so arrive early. Location is the northern edge of Lyndhurst at the junction of A.35 and B.3056, on the left as you arrive at the outskirts from Southampton or Cadnam.

A recommendation of Mr Chappell's is the Bold Forester, near Marchwood. From Southampton, on the A.35, turn left and southwards at Hunters Inn Hill and Colbury. After three miles there is a small junction road to Marchwood; keep right, and head for Beaulieu. The Bold Foresters is on the right, just after the junction. The kitchen staff made the same remarks as others - arrive in good time, because things can get hectic later.

There is a capacious hotel called the Balmer Lawn on the left as you travel southwards towards Brockenhurst on the A.337. There is a big grass frontage about 3/4 mile before the centre of Brockenhurst, where you turn left towards Beaulieu to join the B.3055.

In Beaulieu itself, right in the centre, on the B.3054, there is the Montagu Arms, which can also become very busy in May.

I have not visited either of the last two in recent years. There are many other possibilities for lunch in the area, and I have not mentioned Lymington. There are specially designated controlled picnic places in the New Forest; a little trouble may have to be taken to find one of the pleasanter ones which is not crowded.

There is a certain merit in recommendation, and I hope members do not have cause for disappointment on the day. Bon appetit !



SOUTH EAST BRANCH. On Friday 23rd March 1979 a very successful meeting was held by courtesy of Mr and Mrs Julian Fall, at their home at Pembury in Kent. The subject of a talk given by Mr A.B. MacDonald, B.Sc.(Hortic), was "Propagation". Mr MacDonald is a lecturer in nursery practice at Hadlow College, Tonbridge, and his subject-matter embraced many different spheres of the propagation problem, from plant structure through chemical and physical aids, production in bulk on the Continent and in the U.K., teaching methods, advice to the small-scale amateur and encouragement to the dabbler, to nursery treatment after rooting and examples of successful results, with some hefty specimens in the room.

In the Calendar there is mention of two private-view days at The High Beeches, Handcross, Sussex, the home of the Branch Organizer, The Hon. H.E. Boscawen. These visiting days have been arranged for personal friends, but members of the Group will also be welcome.

This year the South East Branch is responsible for mounting the Group exhibit at the Rhododendron Show at Westminster on 1st and 2nd May. Mr and Mrs Boscawen, who are in charge of the venture, will welcome offers of material and help during the preceding week. The theme chosen promises to arouse considerable interest - for myself I find it of consuming interest because of a personal penchant for the subject-matter; I leave it at that. Offers from South East Branch members should be made to:-

Mrs Boscawen, The High Beeches, Handcross, Sussex RH17 6HQ.  
Telephone - Handcross 400589.

EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH. A very full report of activities past and present has been received from the Branch Organizer, Mr Colin Grainger. Projects for the current season were numerous, but as they were not finalized at the time of the report they are not given here. However, the Summary of 1978 Activities is here reproduced from Mr Grainger's circular to his Branch members.

28.4.78. Hockley Show. Branch Display - a publicity venture. This replaced the scheduled competition which had to be cancelled due to frost damage. Also, visit to 54, Woodlands Road, Hockley - magnolia mollicomata absolutely magnificent, many fine camellias in flower but rhododendrons spoilt by frost.

29.4.78. Visit to East Bergholt Place - 16-acre garden with superb plantings of choice trees and shrubs, many of which are rare. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, it was not possible to inspect the collection of species rhododendrons in the wood. It is hoped that a further opportunity for such an inspection will develop.

3.6.78. Visits to Bishop's Hall, Lambourne End, and Corton Lodge, Hornchurch:

(1) Bishop's Hall - 15 acres of garden including magnificent displays of mature, hardy hybrid Rhododendrons, many of which were very fine indeed even though they were introduced by Waterer in the early years of the century. Magnolia hypoleuca (obovata) was in flower; most impressive.

(2) Corton Lodge - Spectacular coolhouse, housing tender Rhododendrons, Camellias and a wide range of exciting exotics, including Daturas, one of which, D. sanguinea, was especially vigorous. Outside a fair number of hardy hybrid Rhododendrons was in full flower in the 1-acre garden. Our hosts very kindly supplied a generous dinner."

EDITOR.

#### A PLANTING PROBLEM IN A NORTHERN GARDEN.

Notes by the Editor.

Several replies have now been received, although others would still be welcomed both by the owner and by me. I expect to be able to see the garden and the planting site by the time this Bulletin is in the post. I have had a number of interesting telephone conversations on the subject, rather too difficult to record. Some interesting extracts from written replies follow.

Sir Charles Richmond Brown, Bt., Middleton Hall, Pickering, Yorks, writes:- Regarding Rhodo Bulletin No. 7, I might be able to help. My rhodo garden is 30 miles inland from Scarborough, 500 feet and about 35 years old, but I only grow species. If the member is



interested, I suggest he contacts me." (I am sure the fortunate member will be interested, and will contact his generous neighbour).

A quite different approach to the problem comes from Major-General E.G.W. Harrison, whose famous garden at Tremear in Cornwall is known to many members. Now that he has left Tremear, General Harrison writes from Reading, as follows:

"Why spend any money at all? Presumably with a gardener it will take a year or two to get the Ponticum roots out of a dense bank in order to make sufficient room for planting. Presumably also the owner has gardening friends who will let him take cuttings of the great variety of rhodos that 'take' easily. For those that are difficult to raise from cuttings, grow plants from seed, and if the owner does not know much about hybridising, just follow what crosses have proved successful, as shown in complete detail in the Rhododendron Handbook. All so much more fun than buying plants, and the expense nil." Many will endorse this view; with a fairly new garden, started from a piece of pasture, I have a foot in both camps. But the question of the owner's age rears its ugly head - he has told me his age, and he is hoping to see signs of maturity in the new plantings quite soon. Those who know General Harrison's age will appreciate the courage which underlies his attitude.

From Miss J. Colyer of Lea Rhododendron Gardens Ltd, Lea, Matlock, comes a suggestion with the emphasis on hardiness again. Here is an extract from her letter:

"We have read with interest the article in the Rhododendron Group bulletin re the planting problem in a northern garden. The conditions sound very similar to those in our own garden which is described in this year's Rhododendron and Camellia Yearbook and we wonder if we could give any assistance.

The owner of the garden is lucky to have this bank already covered in R. ponticum, as this provides an excellent foundation for planting better varieties which will flourish in small clearings among the ponticum, which will shelter them until they are big enough to manage on their own.

The Easterly aspect implies that early flowering varieties could be at risk from the early morning sun on frost, therefore May and June would be the best flowering period. There is no mention of the availability of water which would be needed for the establishment of good sized plants, and in this connexion it would be important to retain as much ponticum as possible as ground cover to prevent undue drying out and erosion."

Mr M.C. Pratt of Fittleworth, West Sussex has given suggestions in great detail. Most of his covering letter is quoted below, and I propose to hold over the main opus, which I find of great interest, for Bulletin No. 9.

"I enclose a few ideas for that border in N. Yorkshire. I don't know whether they are at all acceptable, but feel that a number of us should suggest something. I cannot plan it all in detail for him, particularly without seeing the site. He should be able to get the plants I suggest easily for £750. The greatest expense, I should say, will be clearing the site of R. ponticum. I suggest deciduous Azaleas, as probably the garden already contains many hardy hybrid Rhododendrons, and if the choice hybrids are suggested many would not be hardy in a winter like the one we have just had.

I have no experience of gardening in N. Yorkshire. I had a garden in Cheshire (Wirral) for many years. In some ways that was better for Rhodos and Azaleas than this one. (West Sussex). I have read that Camellias are not much good outside at Chatsworth, Derby, so hardly think they are advisable for N. Yorkshire at 500'.

Evergreen Azaleas are not very satisfactory even here. For these reasons I have suggested Deciduous Azaleas; these are fairly certain to provide the owner with a lovely show every year, particularly if he 'dead-heads' them thoroughly. Azalea coccinea speciosa is sterile and need not be dead-headed of course."

I wish to express my thanks and the owner's to these members for taking the trouble to help. I hope that further suggestions and opinions about the problem will be forthcoming. I shall reply to all correspondents individually after my return from my garden-visiting holiday in Argyll, in the first half of May.



## AMERICAN CORNER.

I have received the following contribution on pollination from Mr Basil C. Potter of 167, Lampman Avenue, Port Ewen, N.Y. 12466. In combination with the views of Mr Charles Patrick Reuben, of which more in Bulletin No. 9, it should prove both interesting and useful.

### WHY CONTROLLED POLLINATION ?

The need to protect the integrity of a cross between two rhododendrons is not new, nor are the methods. In the wild, nature protected the species with isolation and genetic barriers.

When we bring wild species together in civilization, we confound nature's natural involvement, and have to provide artificial protection to prevent contamination of the species' natural purity; also to assure accurate parentage in a hybrid cross.

There are several methods we can use to protect a properly completed cross, one of which is the aluminium foil tube, which supersedes the white glassine paper bag and cotton method, because it is safer, faster, neater and does the job better. It has been used more than a decade and it is yet to be faulted. The tube solves the condensation problem and takes full advantage of available heat. It is easy to make, quicker to use and provides complete protection. The tube is simple to make, just cut a supply of 2" by 3" strips from a roll of aluminium foil. Then when a pollination is completed, all one has to do is to take one of the foil strips and roll it lengthwise on a short round pencil, slide the tube partly off the pencil, and crimp the end with the thumb and forefinger. Then slide the tube off the pencil and carefully place it over the pistil to a point just above the ovary. Next, gently pinch the tube on each side at the base to form a snug fit around the style. The pollination is now safely protected from natural insect pollinators, wind, rain, etc.

Very often when a flower is prepared for pollination, the stigma is not receptive. A practical procedure is to coat the stigma anyway, and if the foil tube is carefully placed, the pollen will be there when the stigma becomes receptive. The time to remove the foil protection depends on the ensuing weather. If it is warm and sunny for three or four days after a receptive pollination - and by receptive pollination is meant, if the stigma starts to swell or enlarge shortly after the pollen has been applied - it is a good sign the pollen is germinating on the stigma and starting to grow down the style to the ovary where fertilization takes place. If such is the case, the foil protection can be removed within a week.

In the case of the non-receptive stigma coated with pollen, it is best to remove the protective tube after several days and examine carefully. If the stigma indicates it has ripened, recoat with pollen; if not, try again next year. Usually the second or third try meets with rewarding success, for few hybrids are permanently sterile.

For the practical breeder controlled pollination saves time, space and wasted effort. Crossing hybrids of unknown parentage is not unlike searching for a needle in a haystack, whereas a working knowledge of the laws of inheritance, homozygous species and controlled pollination together make it possible to create elepidote hybrids that are new and beautiful in flower, ornamental thereafter and just as climate-hardy as you want them to be. You can create any pure colour within the genetic potential of temperate zone rhododendrons. These laws greatly enhance one's ability to create new elepidotes. Pygmy dwarfs, dwarfs and semi-dwarfs, etc., are as easy to develop as large ones. If you seek nature's pure colours for your hybrids, interspecific crosses can produce them for you. Homozygous species grown from seed collected in the wild and controlled pollination is the scientific way to pure colour, and you do not have to grow on a large number of seedlings from each cross to find this out. Investigation and experimentation have placed these statements on very firm ground.

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY'S TOUR - SEE EDITORIAL.

The party of about 35 will have visited Exbury and quite a few West Country gardens by the time they reach Vincent Square on 1st May. Mr Frank Knight and the Chairman ask members to do anything they can to help the visitors, by explanations and cross-introductions to officers of the English Group, for example. We hope they enjoy their visit.