

the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Patron: HRH The former Prince of Wales

Bulletin 141 / March 2023 / www.rhodogroup-rhs.org



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As I write, it is the beginning of February and, as I suspect I have mentioned before, it is one of my favourite times of the year. Various camellias are in flower along with some very early rhododendrons. However, more importantly to me as I walk amongst the plants is the feeling that I get that everything is awakening from the dormant winter period and is eager to start growing again. I can almost see the buds on the rhododendrons growing in size as I watch.

I stated in the last *Bulletin* that we had had a shortage of rain. Right after that we had a cold ten days here – some of the coldest that I have known in Cornwall in the last 30 years. I am just hoping that my *Cycas revoluta* is going to make it, having survived the last 24 years planted outside. However, Nature must have been reading that edition since it then started raining and hardly stopped until a week ago. Now I am wanting another long dry spell! February can often be our coldest month but hopefully not this year.

Unfortunately, we have lost officers from the Management Committee and we need new Volunteers to come forward for these roles.

Treasurer

We are in urgent need of a new Treasurer since this is a key role, looking after our day-to-day financial administration activities and producing a set of accounts once a year.

Yearbook Lead Editor

We need a new Lead Editor as soon as possible so that they can see the 2023 yearbook come to fruition and take over for the 2024 edition.

Events Co-ordinator

The Group Tour to Germany taking place later this year is now organised but we do need a volunteer to look after future tours and other events.

If you feel that you can help to continue the success of this group by volunteering for one of these posts then please contact me for more details.

Legacy

One of our members, Pauline Haworth, passed away in 2020 and bequeathed a 5% share of her residuary estate to the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group of the Royal Horticultural Society. This amounted to £13,629.20 and was duly sent by the executors to the RHS. The RHS realising that it was meant for our Group has now transferred it to us.

This has improved our finances and the Management Committee will be deciding how it should be used to best effect in line with our charitable objectives.

*The Centenary Competition
with the Group AGM
is at Ness Botanic Gardens*



Rhododendron oreotrephes in David Whalley's garden.
Photo: David Whalley (see page 2)

Shows

As we go into the spring, our minds turn to garden visits and our annual competitive events at the various RHS Gardens. This year will mark the first Spring Ornamental Plant Competitions to be held in the new venue at RHS Garden Wisley and I hope it will be well attended and be a memorable event. Do try to visit the show even

if you are unable to compete. The later event at RHS Garden Harlow Carr has been poorly supported in recent years and how marvellous it would be if we could revive its fortunes. RHS Garden Rosemoor will once again host the

Early Camellia and Main Rhododendron Competitions – check out the diary on the back page for all the details.

Annual General Meeting

The Centenary Cup Competition and Group AGM will be held at Ness Botanic Gardens on Saturday 13th May at 1.45pm in the Lecture Theatre. Further details will be made available about these joint events by email and on our website but do make a note of the date now and make every effort to attend. The AGM is your chance to air your views!

Graham Mills chairman@rhodogroup-rhs.org 01326 280382

EDITOR'S NOTE

The next issue of the *Bulletin* will be no. 142, August 2023. In the meantime, I hope you will find much pleasure in your own garden and in visiting other gardens and collections. Some of you may be inspired to write for the *Bulletin*. It depends largely on your contributions. I was delighted to receive the article by David Whalley on his garden in North Staffordshire and wish I could have published more of his wonderful images.

The correspondence section has made a good start with Caroline Bell's reply to a query raised by Maurice Foster in *Bulletin* 140. You can read this on page 8.

Copy date for the next *Bulletin* will be Friday June 30th.

Peter Furneaux

MEMBERS' NOTES

Magnolia purpurea

I am having fun scanning 3,500 botanical illustrations that have been given to the Herbarium of the National Museums Liverpool, which I then import into the NML object database. One of the other tasks is to identify the source of each illustration.

Recently I came across this illustration of a magnolia, which I have found is from Volume 11 of *The Botanical Magazine* compiled by William Curtis in 1797. As you can see it is No 390.

The description says 'it is a new and beautiful species, differing materially from all the others in the colour of its flowers. This picture has been drawn from a flower on a plant a foot high given by the Countess of Coventry. It is a native of China, and is reported to have first flowered in the collection of the Duke of Portland, at Bulstrode.'

The issue I have with it is that although it has been given the species name *purpurea* by Curtis, an earlier owner of my scanned picture has written on it in pencil '*hypoleuca*' and NML have created an entry in the database calling it *obovata*! Now I know that *Magnolia hypoleuca* has been renamed *M. obovata*, but I don't think it looks at all like *M. obovata*.

If I was asked to guess, I would say it looks like a *M. x soulangeana*. However, the French plantsman Étienne Soulange-Bodin (1774–1846), who crossed *M. denudata* with *M. liliiflora* to make the first *x soulangeana*, did this in 1820 and he did not get a flower until 1826!

I note that Wikipedia says that '*Magnolia purpurea* Curtis' is a synonym of *M. liliiflora*, which interestingly, has never featured in Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*? Any advice on what name I should be recommending to NML?

Stephen Lyus



The illustration of *Magnolia purpurea* in *The Botanical Magazine* of 1797

School House, Moddershall

As a member of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group, I have composed some notes that might be of interest with regard to our experience of growing magnolias and rhododendrons in North Staffordshire.

Our garden is situated in a small village two miles south of Stoke-on-Trent on a south-west facing slope of a glacial valley at 500ft with uninterrupted views over the Trent valley and to the Long Mynd in Shropshire beyond.

A one-acre sheep-grazed field formed the basis of the main part of the garden started 25 years ago. The free-draining clay/loam, acidic, stoney ground proved difficult to cultivate and all the plantings and



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Part of the author's garden in spring

beds had to be double dug by hand with a garden spade and fork. We grow a wide range of woody and herbaceous plants that include a small collection of magnolias and rhododendrons, and a few camellias, the first being planted 20 years ago. The only protection to the rectangular plot is an old mixed hedge of mainly holly up to 30ft high on the north boundary; the top of the hill forming the eastern boundary reduces the effect of the east winds, and the south and west aspects are open to the prevailing south-westerlies. No doubt the steep slope to the valley bottom has been beneficial in mitigating the effects of that scourge of the inland magnolia grower, the late spring frosts.

The first criterion for the choice of all our plants is beauty, beauty of flower and form; novelty and rarity alone is not the first consideration here. Our first magnolia, the familiar *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel', has all the desirable characteristics, readily available, floriferous, good form with flowers from ground level and the capability to withstand a few degrees of frost. Not so *M. 'Iolanthe'*, a blousy beauty that collapses at the mere mention of Jack, but worth growing for some brief extravagant vulgarity. The large refined blooms of *M. 'Apollo'*, on the contrary, come later and over a long period, shrugging off any late frost.

Over the years we've added a wide range of species and cultivars, none of which have proved failures, from the earliest flowering *M. campbellii* ssp. *mollicomata* 'Lanarth' to the latest to flower here, the *M. acuminata* hybrid *M. 'Yellow Bird'*.



Magnolia 'Iolanthe'

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All plantings have grown robustly, with some of the earlier planted magnolias reaching 20 to 30ft, some of the *M. x loebneri* hybrids being pruned to improve their shape and allow rhododendrons to grow beneath.

A borderline hardy *Magnolia laevifolia*, planted at the base of a south-facing wall, has gone through winters unscathed and flowers well each spring.

One intriguing magnolia is one bought as *M. sprengeri* 'Lanhydrock'. A grafted plant that's now 30ft tall after fifteen years and took twelve years to show its first flowers. The deep crimson flowers seem to differ in hue from a group of this form growing in a nearby arboretum and show an overall difference in growth, with our tree leading us to question its provenance. *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Victoria' had grown so well in an open bed it outgrew its location and had to be felled but

Continued overleaf



Magnolia 'Emma Cook'



Magnolia 'Galaxy' with *M.* 'George Henry Kern' in the foreground

has since regenerated from its stump, showing that accommodating characteristic all magnolias possess, of not relinquishing life easily. Not for no reason is the *Magnolia* genus the most ancient of flowering plants preceding the evolution of flying insects.

This ability to readily regrow is a property we exploit, enabling shaping and reinvigorating without any fear of fatality; on the other hand it has a characteristic that is not helpful for its survival in the wild as it produces excellent firewood.

Other species and cultivars we grow include *M.* 'Emma Cook', *M. stellata* 'Jane Platt', *M.* 'Galaxy', *M.* 'Vulcan', *M.* 'Shirazz', *M. denudata* hybrid 'Yellow River', *M. x loebneri* types 'Donna', 'Wildcat' and 'Merrill', and more.

The rhododendrons have been planted alongside the magnolias in the spring garden and now form a complementary under storey.

A wide range of rhododendron species and cultivars are grown, ranging from the rare and supposedly tender *Rhododendron scabrifolium* var. *spiciferum* to a 3m high x 2m wide *R. falconeri* grown from wild collected seed. The earliest is *R. dauricum* 'Midwinter', the latest *R. auriculatum*, giving us rhododendron flowers from January to August. Other types include *R. augustinii* 'Electra' and *R. augustinii* ssp. *chasmanthum*, *R.* 'Vanessa Pastel', *R. oreotrephes*, *R.* 'Loderi King George' and 'Loderi Venus', *R. viscosum*, *R. albrechtii*, *R. schlippenbachii*, *R.* 'Hawk Crest', *R.* 'Boskoop Ostara', *R. cinnabarinum*, *R. davidii*, *R. yunnanense* and many more.

One trend that has been noticeable over the years has been the shortening and less cold winters, allowing us to grow and enjoy the more sensitive magnolias and rhododendrons on our exposed hillside. With the milder winters we have experienced episodes

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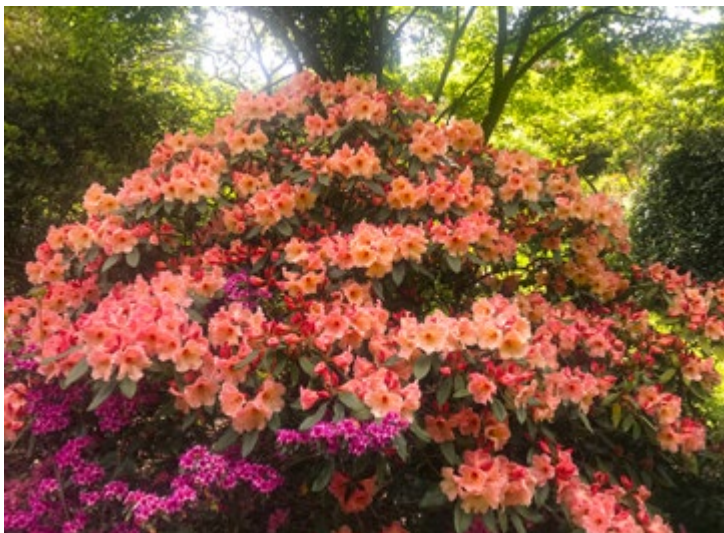
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Rhododendron augustinii ssp. *chasmanthum*

of more intense rainfall and in the summers, longer, hotter dry spells and although we don't water plants after the initial first year following planting, we rarely suffer losses. Two factors are important in ameliorating the more extreme conditions. The stoney clay-based ground contains many rounded pebbles, from small to large (up to 150mm dia.), which causes much heartache and backache but conversely provide two benefits – firstly we have an inexhaustible supply of paving material and secondly, the pebbles appear to capture and retain tiny amounts of moisture which support plants in extreme dry conditions. The second factor is the beneficial practice of using copious amounts of homemade compost and well-rotted manure as a top-dressing/mulch. Both these factors have the effect of mitigating the extremes of water-logging and drought.



Rhododendron 'Vanessa Pastel'

All in all, our tentative foray into growing a wider range of borderline exotics has produced good results. Not only do we enjoy the glories of the early magnolias, rhododendrons and camellias (we have a few *Camellia sasanqua* varieties sheltering under a north wall), but such tender subjects as *Pinus patula*, *Mahonia lomariifolia*, *Illicium simonsii* and *Berberis valdiviana*.

David Whalley

All photos by the author.

South East Branch

Visit to Colwood House, Warninglid 18th May 2023

So far, a very up and down winter. Very mild for long spells, getting buds probably too advanced, then rather bitter weather, for me down to -5°C . Some fairly young large leaved rhododendrons have lost their leaves, although it LOOKS as if there are new buds in the axils. I hope so.

For our spring visit, we are invited to Colwood House, Cuckfield Lane, Warninglid, RH17 5SP by Mrs Rosy Brennan; this will be a new experience for many of us, but some might have been there under the National Gardens scheme. The garden is very general purpose, about 12 acres, that is to say it has many features that will appeal to a wide range of interests. You can find out more on the National Gardens Scheme website. The house is on the south side of the B2115, Cuckfield Lane, on the east side of Warninglid. Signs will be put out in advance of the visit. We should meet at 2.00pm on 18th May 2023.

Our show will be a part of the Early Rhododendron Competition to be held at Wisley on 1st and 2nd April 2023 with staging in the afternoon of the 31st March or in the morning of the 1st April. Easter has caused this show to get even earlier than it has been in the past, so it might be a challenge to have much in flower. The schedule is available from the RHS website, as normal. The South East Branch will present our trophies in the same format as before.

Please come along and show, we are not well represented, these days!

Barry Haseltine

Wessex Branch

We wish all Wessex members a very happy gardening year with good gardening weather.

Here is some news from the branch about our upcoming activities for the spring.

Visit to Springs Hanger Garden 26th March and 22nd April 2023

We thank Jane and Ian Anderson very much for the opportunity to visit their garden in Bedham, Pulborough, Surrey. Here is Jane's summary of the garden and its development:

'Started in 1994, Springs Hanger is a garden of some 6 acres, made entirely from scratch. The major part is woodland on an east-facing slope, and the overhead cover from existing large trees has helped accelerate the growth of the magnolias, rhododendrons and camellias. The garden supports a small collection of Subsection Maddenia rhododendrons which seem to thrive, especially helped by the free-draining greensand.

A flatter, smaller part of the garden, in much more sunlight, supports herbaceous planting, vegetables, greenhouses and a collection of shrubs and trees. In addition, the microclimate allows the opportunity to enjoy growing more tender plants. Recently, we have been concentrating on more underplanting in the woodland. For the most part, the main paths are wide, but there are many slopes, and some narrow paths. Decent footwear is vital.'

Due to logistical reasons, we will need to car share the last mile of the journey to the garden. Details of the event are at the back of the Bulletin for booking purposes.

Continued overleaf



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Ramster Gardens Wessex Branch Flower Show 29th April 2023

We welcome all members to the show and will be sending out more details about the event soon. We have been holding Wessex Branch flower shows for a very long time and it will be 45 years ago to the day since the Branch encouraged every single member to bring along at least one exhibit; this was in 1978. Just like then, this will be an informal and inclusive event. This is your show, it is a small and friendly show, and we will be encouraging new members to join in and enjoy the rewarding experience which taking part brings. More information will be sent out soon on the arrangements for the day, classes and logistics. The 1978 Show Notes explain that all exhibitors were asked to bring their exhibits in milk bottles. How things have changed!

Tour of the Magnolias at Windsor Great Park early May 2023

It is more than ten years since a branch tour of the magnolias at Windsor. Following the inspiring article by John Anderson, Keeper of The Gardens in the 2021 yearbook, we are keen to go again, and John has kindly agreed to show us the magnificent National Collection. We will see the showstoppers, old favourites, and woodland classics of this historic National Collection. More information to follow on dates and booking.

Autumn Lecture and November AGM Event

Wessex Branch will be holding events into September/October and November – these will be a signature lecture and our AGM event. Please let us know if you have thoughts for this – already we have some speaker and topic ideas and we are keen to hear from you.

Sian Thomas

Irish Branch

Magnolia Week March 6th-11th

Over the past few years the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland Kilmacurragh has hosted Rhododendron Week. This year sees a change of theme to Magnolia Week, running from March 6th to 11th. The week will include walks, talks and video releases.

To conclude the week, on March 11th at 2pm, at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, Jim Gardiner, Magnolia expert and former Curator of the RHS Garden Wisley will present an illustrated lecture entitled:

‘Magnolia Introductions from the UK and Europe and Collections of Excellence’

Lecture summary: The presentation will provide an overview of the genus, highlighting the individuals who have helped establish and shape these collections in gardens. Magnolia species and cultivars that have been raised and grown in their gardens will be profiled, enabling these gardens to be revered as gardens of excellence.

On Thursday March 9th at 2pm, at the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland Kilmacurragh, Jim Gardiner and Seamus O’Brien will co-lead a tour of the gardens at Kilmacurragh. Booking is necessary and details will be available on www.botanicgardens.ie or by contacting seamus.obrien@opw.ie

Video releases throughout the week on the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland’s YouTube page and details of walks will feature on our website in advance of fixtures.



Part of the Herman Dool Walk at Mount Congreve, Co. Waterford, with colour forms of *Magnolia campbellii* at their best. Photo: Seamus O’Brien

Visit to Mount Congreve March 16th 2023

Tour led by Seamus O’Brien, RCMG Irish Branch Chairman and Michael White, Curator of Mount Congreve Gardens. Mount Congreve boasts extraordinary collections of rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias, planted by the late Ambrose Congreve (1907–2011) in emulation of Exbury, the garden of Lionel de Rothschild, Congreve’s mentor and friend.

By mid-March the *Magnolia* collection (one of the largest in Europe) is at its best and no one knows the collection better than Michael White. The tour departs at 11am sharp from the entrance to the walled garden and advance booking through seamus.obrien@opw.ie is essential. Admission fee.

Seamus O’Brien

Chinese Rhododendrons at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh

爱丁堡皇家植物园的中国杜鹃花



Authors: Li De Sheng [Ai Er Lan] Da Wei Po Wei Si [Ying] Da Wei Zhang Bo Lun. Cai Shui Hua Bian
ISBN: 978-7-5727-0318-8
Softback: 316pp (heavily illustrated)
Format: Portrait (210mm x 285mm)
Publisher: Sichuan Science and Technology Press
Publication date: December 2021
Price at time of review showed considerable variation: £41.26 free postage (lowest) to £155.00 + postage (highest) Available at a discount through Amazon

A recent plea from the Bulletin Editor for a contribution in the form of a book review or a bibliophile's ad hoc comments provoked a search of my bookshelves. Unless I am mistaken, to my knowledge, there hasn't been an abundance of recent publications containing *Rhododendron*, *Camellia* or *Magnolia* in their titles! Consequently this little publicised and unsung title caught my eye as worthy of bringing to the attention of members.

It is my guess that many members will already have their copy of *Rhododendron Dissected – Flora in Close-up* by David Purvis (published April 2021 : RBGE) which features double page spread close-up images of the intricate floral and leaf characteristics depicting 66 species from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. By contrast, this Chinese Edition is a somewhat larger format and illustrates a massive 150 species through 316 pages. In this edition each species also receives the benefit of a double page spread but differs slightly from the above in that images of trusses, buds and flower close-ups are also included on the left hand pages for each species described. I presume that the images of foliage and flowers etc are in the main from plants in cultivation rather than habitat records and likely also originate mainly from the camera skills of David Purvis?

Whilst the body of the text is in Chinese (and to me sadly unintelligible) I am consequently unable to identify any textual errors if such exist? The book scores heavily by what is readily gleaned from the images of photographic excellence to include measurement scales which contribute to its usefulness and credibility.

I have lifted one sample illustration – *Rhododendron lacteum* – to convey the flavour of its contents. All the species included are dealt with in a similar page-by-page manner.

Would this reader buy the book? Yes - he would. The old adage of a picture is worth a thousand words comes to mind. The images are in the main visually stunning whilst at the same time are also educational. If interested, my suggestion is to search for copies at the lower end of the price range. It is quite difficult to locate via a website search using only its English translation title; however all is quickly revealed by using an ISBN search engine whereby a range of outlets and alternative prices present on screen! No idea of the initial print run so who knows about its future long term availability. I have

learnt lessons from the past in that it is sometimes prudent to take advantage whilst the opportunity exists; or may be rue the day!

Nit picking – not sure that production reaches quite the same high standards as *Rhododendron Dissected*. I think it is the high quality, heavier weight paper used for that title that just gives the images their edge but that is to take nothing away from this Chinese edition which scores heavily by containing details of nearly three times the number of species described.



As a final gesture from someone who is in addition a botanical art enthusiast particularly in its 'traditional' or 'old-school' format, I would best describe the illustrations as educational 'hybrids' being an amalgam between photography and botanical art. Exceptional works of art in their own right making them both highly diagnostic and visually stunning. I would be enthused by this book even if my knowledge of rhododendrons was nil.

John Sanders



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CORRESPONDENCE

The *Camellia yunnanensis* / *C. henryana* alliance

I write in response to the recent article by Maurice Foster in the November 2022 *Bulletin* and his later request for comments from other members. What good photos and what an interesting subject! I grow three plants within this group here in mid-Devon, and the labelling of all three is only as I received them. Two are labelled *Camellia yunnanensis* and the third is labelled *C. henryana*.



The seed-raised *Camellia yunnanensis* in the author's garden photographed in March 2022. This photo shows a slightly larger flower than the other two plants.

The photo shown here of the *C. yunnanensis* raised from RCMG seed was taken in March 2022, but this year it started flowering in our November 2022 heatwave. It has a viable bud – still there today (6th February 2023) – and possibly shows more bud-hardiness from the recent cold spell than the other two; all having suffered –10°C overnight, on 18th December. The plant labelled *Camellia henryana* gave a good November display, but its flower buds have now dropped after more frost with a second –10°C episode.

What impresses me most about my supposed *C. henryana* and my two differing, supposed *C. yunnanensis* is their very similar, if not identical scent, which emanates from their also very similar white flowers, each with a good boss of dark yellow (egg-yolk colour) stamens. I have also come across a small tree-like specimen labelled



Camellia henryana

C. trichocarpa at Tregrehan, which I saw flowering in March some twelve years or more ago and I think it had a similar scent. On smelling a bloom from my *C. henryana*, Pam Hayward was reminded of the scent of delicious, ripe mangoes and I agree with her description. It is a distinctive, sweet scent and I have had the pleasure of it occasionally wafting in my garden this past warm November; while in contrast with most camellias, you notice they are scented only by putting your nose close to a flower. I would say the camellias in this group share a strong and evocative, sweet scent.



Camellia henryana leaf and buds

All of my plants have globose buds, much like *C. sinensis* and *C. taliensis*. This is the third characteristic to link the three together, but then the differences start to appear.

My *C. henryana* starts flowering from late October or November. It was a gift originating from Tregye in 2017, via an intermediary, and labelled 'Henryii' on arrival, which name did not fit with either the Register or the *Camellia* species authorities of Sealy (1958), Chang and Bartholomew (1996), or the most recent book of Drs Clifford Parks, Gao & Du (2005); so I re-named it *C. henryana* immediately, and that description seemed to fit. Once it starts flowering, and it flowers very well, only stopping at the onset of minus temperatures, resuming as and when – which may be early March – then finishing quite quickly; so its main season is probably November. Its new growth colour is not as spectacular as Maurice's plants, just a bronzing; but this might be partly explained by the planting situation, time will tell. In its first year, frost damaged and removed some leaves (and this has been repeated this January), so I re-planted it about 8 feet from a wall, where it recovered well. My records show it has now taken $-9/10^{\circ}\text{C}$ in this sheltered position. However, what has been more obvious this year and less so previously, has been the effect of frost on its buds: we have possibly experienced one night of -10°C this January, and the unopened buds have not stood up to the frost, going brown and dying slowly. Its leaves are around 6cm long and its flowers are 4–6cm diameter, often facing downwards.

My two plants, labelled *C. yunnanensis* on arrival here, are different. One is very like the *C. henryana* but with slightly bigger flowers not facing downwards, but is almost identical in its upright growth habit and its matt mid-green leaves, save that they seemed slightly more leathery or coriaceous in September before they hardened

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(Above) *Camellia yunnanensis* fruit in the author's garden

(Below) Another *C. yunnanensis* grown by Jeremy Wilson of Stretegate Camellias (see text)



up for winter. I grow this plant side-by-side with the one labelled *C. henryana*, in the same conditions of no overhead shade and good light with shelter from the wall. By contrast with its companion, it only ever flowers in spring, usually in mid-March. Its buds are also tougher and are still viable despite this year's -10°C episode and its leaves are also standing up to the 2023 frost well. I purchased it from Trehane's in 2016 and they have recently told me it came to them from Nuccio's with the *C. yunnanensis* label attached. I was thrilled when, in 2022 for the first time, it set interesting, unusual and distinctive, knobbly seedpods which were cream with a pink blotch, as in my photo, and measuring 12cms in circumference. I sent a photo of them to Trehane's who confirmed they were identical on their stock plant. In the 2020–21 season with a milder winter, this *C. yunnanensis* started to flower on 18th March 2021 and the

Continued overleaf

C. henryana re-started on 21st March beside it, after its autumn flush of flowers!

My second plant labelled *C. yunnanensis* is, I believe, more accurately named but its leaves are different from the first, although in winter the differences are less obvious because they become matt; they are about 6.8cms in length. This plant started flowering on 23rd October 2022. Last season, it started to flower as a young plant on 20th February 2022; but my guess is it responds to an upturn in the weather, and its remaining buds should flower later in 2023. As mentioned already, this plant originates from our seed list from seed provided by Camellia Forest Nursery, the home of the late Dr Clifford Parks, co-author of the most recent *Camellia* species book and once a plant hunter in China. His son, David Parks, on a recent visit to the UK, inspected my plant and confirmed its naming. My small plant has wavy, shiny, thinner leaves than the Trehane plant and pendulous branches, and produced a very different style of seedpod in 2021. My photograph is of a seemingly identical but much larger plant lent to the ICS Chelsea Flower Show stand in September 2021 which belongs to our member, Jeremy Wilson of Stretegate Camellias; it was also seed-raised from RCMG seed and flowers with similar timings (although principally in the autumn) and you will see its stems have a slight reddish tint which mine has not yet shown. Jeremy's plant lives inside, while all mine are grown outside and that could be significant, of course. It too is scented, and both Jeremy's and my plants have set seed, as can be seen in my photograph from Chelsea. The flowers on my plant are a little bigger and thinner-textured than my plant labelled *C. henryana*. Despite the softer, thinner leaves, the buds and leaves on this *C.*

yunnanensis have stood up to the -10°C episode this year and are still viable.

Looking at the published material, the photographs are often too indistinct to aid identification. The photographs for *C. yunnanensis* on the Camellia Register's page seem to show leaves which are not thin or shiny but matt green in colour, possibly not unlike the plant from Trehane, but the flowers look larger than on either my *C. henryana* or the Trehane plant. *Camellia trichocarpa* is described there from Parks, Gao & Du as found at 'Elevation: 1,000–2,300m' and the flowers as only 3–3.5cm, which might account for greater hardiness, but the flower size does not fit any of my plants. *Camellia yunnanensis* is described by the same authors as having flowers 3–9cm in diameter, and *C. henryana* 'sometimes over 5 cm' with leaves 6–11cm long. My Trehane plant in fact has leaves up to 8cms long! Scent is mentioned for only one of the three species – *C. yunnanensis*! The wavy leaves and pendulous branches are not mentioned for *C. yunnanensis* but the seedpods in their photo look like those on Jeremy's plant.

My conclusion is that possibly all my plants could represent variations in the one species, *Camellia yunnanensis*, the only one described as 'fragrant'. I look forward to quizzing the Chinese Camellia Registrar for more illumination, as he lives in Yunnan and works at Kunming Botanical Institute, and he should be at the ICS Congress in March 2023!

Members further observations on this matter would be much welcomed.

Caroline Bell

All photos by the author.

Replies to the Editor please: peterfurneaux@gmail.com



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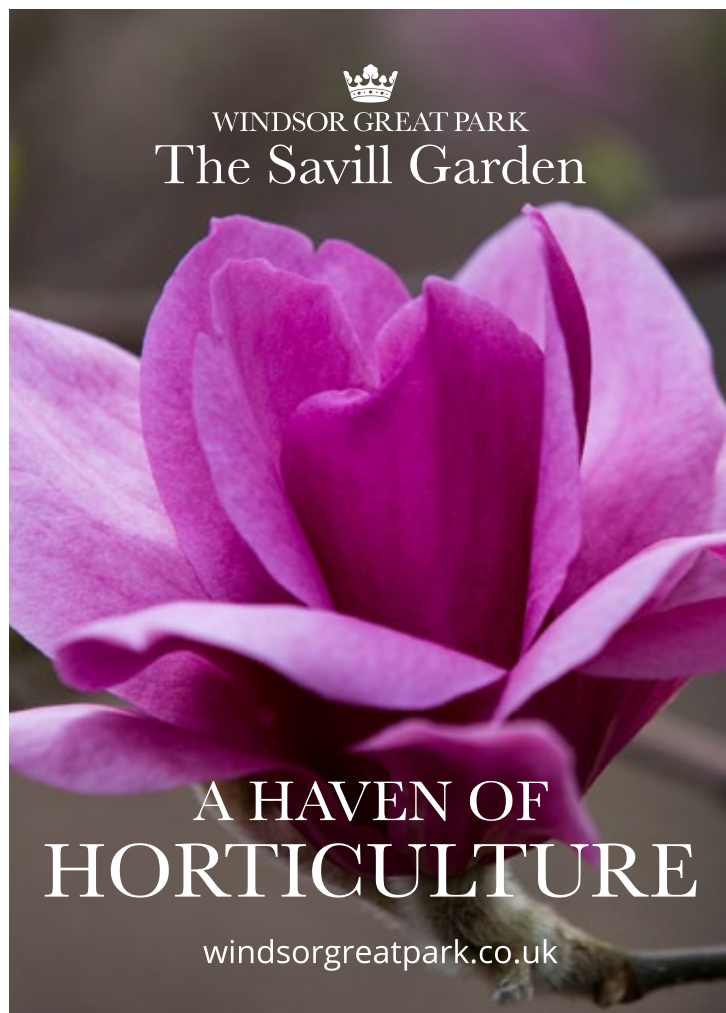
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We welcome the following new members and hope they will enjoy all the benefits of the Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group.

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Laura Jones	Wales
Miles Hayward	West Sussex
Peter Butler	Surrey
Diana Gilding	Devon

EUROPE

Gerard O'Neill	Ireland
Margie Phillips	Ireland
Arne Mickerts	Germany

REST OF WORLD

Pierre Page	Canada
Jonty Somers	New Zealand

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Sandringham Estate	Norfolk
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Windsor Great Park, The Savill Garden	Surrey

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Tim Atkinson seeds@rhodogroup-rhs.org

Outstanding Garden Scheme Co-Ordinator

Nick Butler ogs@rhodogroup-rhs.org

WEBSITE: www.rhodogroup-rhs.org

Japanese Garden Society



Clipped evergreen azaleas at Keisu-en garden
(Photo Graham Bowyer - japanesegardens.piwigo.com)



To find out more about the Japanese Garden Society please look at our website
www.jgs.org.uk

the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

Forthcoming Group & Branch Events

MARCH 2023

Mon 6th / Sat 11th

Irish Branch

Kilmacurragh

MAGNOLIA WEEK

including:

Thurs 9th

Tour of Kilmacurragh Gardens led by Seamus O'Brien & Jim Gardiner

Sat 11th 2pm

Talk by Jim Gardiner 'Magnolia Introductions from the UK & Europe, and Collections of excellence'

Seamus O'Brien
seamus.obrien@opw.ie

Sat 11th / Sun 12th

RHS & South West Branch

RHS Garden Rosemoor

RHS Early Camellia Competition and the SW Branch Magnolia, Rhododendron and Spring Ornamental Competitions

Georgina Barter
020 7821 3142
georginabarter@rhs.org.uk

Dr John Marston

01271 267091
artavianjohn@gmail.com

Thurs 16th

Irish Branch

Mount Congreve Garden

Tour of the Garden led by Seamus O'Brien & Michael White
Seamus O'Brien
seamus.obrien@opw.ie

Sat 18th

North Wales/Northwest Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens

Talk by Joe Wainwright 'The Gardens of the North West and Wales - A Photographer's View'
Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193
angela.brabin@btinternet.com

Sun 26th

Wessex Branch

Pulborough

Garden Visit to Springs Hanger

Sian Thomas
07767 751276
wessex@rhodogroup-rhs.org

APRIL 2023

Sat 1st / Sun 2nd

RHS

RHS Garden Wisley

RHS Main Camellia, Early Rhododendron & Spring Ornamental Plant Competitions

Georgina Barter
020 7821 3142
georginabarter@rhs.org.uk

Sat 22nd

Wessex Branch

Pulborough

Garden Visit to Springs Hanger

Sian Thomas
07767 751276
wessex@rhodogroup-rhs.org

Sat 22nd / Sun 23rd

RHS & South West Branch

RHS Garden Rosemoor EX38 8PH

RHS Main Rhododendron Competition and the SW Branch Camellia, Magnolia and Floral Display Competitions

Georgina Barter
020 7821 3142
georginabarter@rhs.org.uk

Dr John Marston

01271 267091
artavianjohn@gmail.com

Fri 28th

South West Branch

Redruth

Garden Visit to Trevince
Garden Visit to Burncoose
Ian Gillbard
ian@trebeigh.co.uk

Sat 29th

Wessex Branch

Ramster Garden

Wessex Flower Show

Sian Thomas
07767 751276
wessex@rhodogroup-rhs.org

Sat 29th / Sun 30th

RHS

RHS Garden Harlow Carr

Harlow Carr Rhododendron Competition

Georgina Barter
020 7821 3142
georginabarter@rhs.org.uk

MAY 2023

Early May (Details TBA)

Wessex Branch

Windsor Great Park

Tour of Magnolias led by John Anderson

Sian Thomas
07767 751276
wessex@rhodogroup-rhs.org

Thurs 4th

South West Branch

Sidmouth

Garden Visit to Sidbury Manor

Ian Gillbard
ian@trebeigh.co.uk

Sat 13th

RCM Group

Ness Botanic Gardens

Group AGM & Centenary Cup Competition and Show

including:

Morning Tour of the Garden
AGM 1.45pm

Presentation of Centenary Cup
Afternoon Tour of the Garden

Robbie & Barbara Sampson
secretary@rhodogroup-rhs.org

Ted Brabin

0151 353 1193
angela.brabin@btinternet.com

Sat 13th / Sun 14th

North Wales/Northwest Branch

Ness Botanic Gardens

Branch Show

Ted Brabin
0151 353 1193
angela.brabin@btinternet.com

Thurs 18th

South East Branch

Warninglid

Visit to Colwood House

Barry Haseltine
01342 713132
bhaseltine@btinternet.com

JUNE 2023

Wed 21st

New Forest Branch

Sculpture by the Lakes, Dorchester

Guided Tour of the gardens

Martin Gates
mgates@talktalk.net

OCTOBER 2023

Sat 28th

South West Branch

RHS Rosemoor
Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH

Branch AGM & Autumn Meeting
Plant Sale, Quiz, Bring & Tell
Lecture (Details TBA)

Entry free to young horticulturists

Dr John Marston
01271 267091
artavianjohn@gmail.com

Members are
more than
welcome to
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any branches

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