THE RHODODENDRON HYBRIDISERS: HANGER, HARRISON, HORLICK & HYDE

Julian Taylor-Whall

The Rhododendron Hybridisers:

Volume Three explores the work of Francis Hanger, Curator at RHS Wisley between 1946 and 1961; Eric Harrison, of Tremeer in Cornwall; James Horlick, of Achamore House & Gardens, on the Isle of Gigha; and George Hyde, owner of the little-known Woodlands Nursery Gardens, in Ferndown, Dorset.

As before, an array of photographs portraying their most widely planted introductions feature throughout, these preceded by historical articles on each hybridiser and the gardens they created, plus a listing of all their registered combinations.

THE RHODODENDRON HYBRIDISERS

Julian Taylor-Whall

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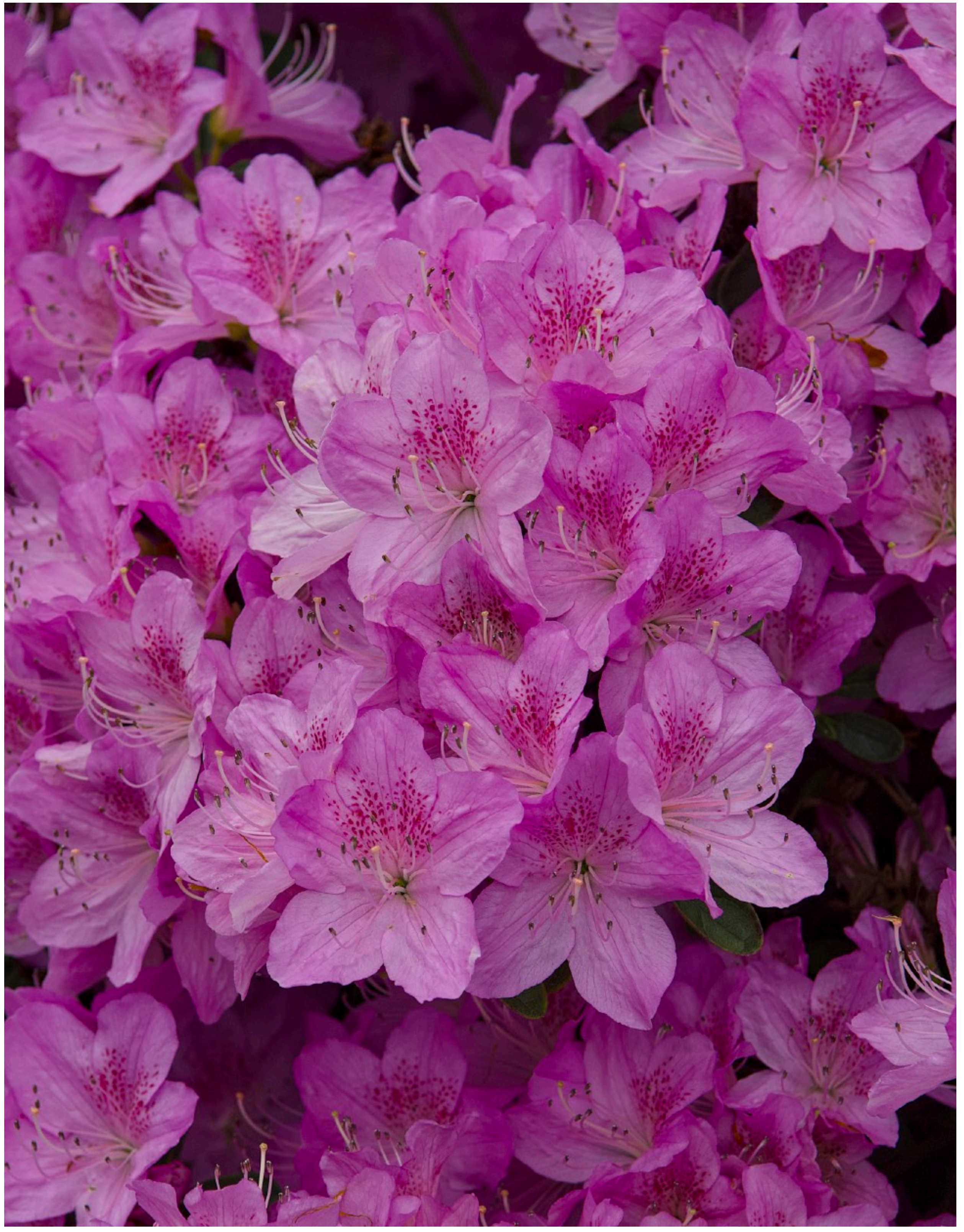



Francis Hanger:

Francis Hanger – the father of modern rhododendron breeding.

by Colin Crosbie.

The name of Francis Hanger will be remembered by few apart from an earlier generation of staff and students at Wisley and some in the rhododendron world. The impact of his work on hybridisation still lives on however, especially in his beloved rhododendrons.

Hanger learned his horticultural trade in the typical way, by working for a number of estates and gardens, as well as spending time as a soldier in the Devonshire regiment. He first came to prominence as head gardener at Exbury, a position he held from 1934 until he moved to RHS Garden Wisley in 1946.

This was one of the great periods to be working in British gardens, with many new plants being introduced from abroad, especially China. Lionel de Rothschild, the owner of Exbury, subscribed to many plant hunting trips by people such as George Forrest and Frank Kingdon-Ward. He was developing a large woodland garden, which is still one of the finest in Britain, and in Hanger he had a head gardener who had great vision, a passion and understanding, and a steely determination to succeed. Hanger also became a great showman and his exhibits at Vincent Square and Chelsea were of the very highest standard and much enjoyed. A strong but friendly rivalry developed between Lord Aberconway's head gardener at Bodnant, North Wales, and Hanger, as to who would have the greatest success at the RHS Shows.

He had a good eye for selecting plants, especially the best forms of plants grown from wild collected seed and he used this to good advantage when selecting rhododendrons and azaleas for his breeding programme that was taking place at Exbury during this time.

In 1946 Hanger became curator of RHS Garden Wisley, at a time when many areas of the garden were being developed, especially the area of woodland known as Battleston Hill. Work here had started in 1937, but had stopped during the war. It started again in earnest under Hanger, with the removal of some 200 large trees and 150 stumps. (It is worth noting that, at that time, they did not have the mechanisation that we have now!) Hanger had realised that the acidic Bagshot sand would be ideal for establishing many of the rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias and other woodland plants that he loved. Donations of plants arrived from great gardens and nurseries, such as Exbury, Bodnant, Charles Williams at Caerhays, from Sunningdale Nurseries and John Barr Stevenson at Tower Court, many because of the relocation of the Rhododendron Trials from Exbury to Wisley.

Hanger continued his rhododendron breeding during his time at Wisley. However, he will always be remembered for showing one plant that would change the face of rhododendron breeding. That plant was *Rhododendron yakushimanum,* which received great acclaim and caused much excitement when it was exhibited at Chelsea in May 1947. It really did steal the show!

First introduced by Lionel de Rothschild to Exbury in 1934, Hanger brought one of the two *R. yakushimanum* plants with him to Wisley. This plant received a First Class Certificate when exhibited at the 1947 show and Hanger described how, when it was planted on Battleston Hill in 1946, it had outgrown the Exbury plant, thanks to a "liberal supply of spent hops and water". When seen at Chelsea, Hanger reported that "its white flowers commanded appreciation, however, if it had been seen a week earlier, it would have been more beautiful, as the buds of the upstanding compact trusses were rich pink, fading to a pale pink as they developed to be finally pure white when opened". The FCC clone is now known as 'Koichiro Wada' after the discerning and highly influential owner of the renowned Hakoneya Nurseries in Japan from where the plant was imported.

- opposite -
Francis Hanger at Wisley in the early 1950s.

Hanger continued with his rhododendron and azalea breeding and his studbook provides a fascinating insight into his methodical approach. From 'Fabia' x 'Romany Chal', which was late sown in February 1947, two seedlings were named. R. 'Tensing' received an AM at Chelsea in 1953 and R. 'Burma Road' was shown at Vincent Square in 1958.

One of his most successful crosses in 1947 was 'Adrian Koster' x *R. litiense* [now sunk into *R. wardii*], which gave rise to the wonderful yellow 'Moonshine' Group of hybrids and he was without doubt the first person to hybridise with *R. yakushimanum* when, in 1947, he crossed *R. yakushimanum* with *R. dichroanthum*. In subsequent years he crossed *R. yakushimanum* with R. 'Beau Brummel', *R. eriogynum* [*R. facetum*], R. 'Naomi', R. 'Fabia', R. 'Sir Frederick Moore' and R. 'Pilgrim'. Crossing R. 'Pilgrim' with *R. yakushimanum* resulted in the cultivar R. 'Lady Bowes Lyon', which is still popular today.

Crosses for two of his best *R. yakushimanum* hybrids were made in 1951, R. 'Renoir' (*yakushimanum* x 'Pauline') and R. 'Tequila Sunrise' (*yakushimanum* x 'Borde Hill').

Hanger favoured primary crosses between species, however, primary hybrids themselves opened doors for interesting possibilities. R. 'Beefeater' was a back cross using *R. elliottii* and R. 'Fusilier' (a *griersonianum* x *elliottii* hybrid).

Hanger quotes the advantages:

> "It must be remembered that trusses of *R. elliottii* are very full with many more flowers per truss than *R. griersonianum* and when mated it is highly probable that the resulting hybrid will carry lax trusses with fewer flowers, but back crossing rectifies this fault and improved the colour, making a truly intense red".

During this period Hanger was also hybridising with deciduous azaleas. The best plants were named after rivers throughout the British Isles and some are still growing on Battleston Hill today but regrettably, not all. How marvellous it would be if more of Hanger's 'Rivers' could be found and planted there again.

Francis Hanger is very much the father of modern rhododendron breeding. Hybridisers like Peter Cox, David Leach, Hope Findlay at Windsor, Arthur George at Hydon Nurseries, Waterers, Harkwood Acres, Ken Janeck and Hans Hachmann have all used *R. yakushimanum* to produce compact, floriferous plants with attractive foliage. A trial of *R. yakushimanum* hybrids has recently finished which included over 120 individual hybrids.

Former Wisley students will remember a strict disciplinarian with a strong work ethos, a man who set and expected high standards in all areas of horticultural work and above all, an outstanding and talented plantsman.

From its rebirth after the war until 1953, he was a member of *The Rhododendron Year Book* Editorial Committee, contributing the very first article in 1946 on Exbury Rhododendrons. He remained a regular provider of sage advice and opinion on all matters rhododendron and camellia right up until the year of his death in 1961.

In 1939 Hanger was awarded the RHS Associate of Honour, and at 38, he was the youngest ever recipient. In 1953 he received the VMH. His show exhibits were legendary - his 1957 Chelsea exhibit was regarded as one of the best ever seen, with a mossy glade of primula, meconopsis, lilies and of course, rhododendrons.

The next time you admire a *R. yakushimanum* hybrid growing, remember the work done by Hanger many years ago. Even though Battleston Hill at Wisley has changed much since the gales of 1987, its very existence as a woodland garden is largely due to Francis Hanger.

Addendum:

Colin Crosbie was Superintendent of Woody Plants at RHS Wisley when he wrote his appreciation of Francis Hanger for the RCMG Year Book *Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias 2008,* however, there is more to the *R. yakushimanum* transfer between gardens than he reveals. For instance, he might not have been aware of Edmund de Rothschild's comments at the American Rhododendron Society Convention held in April 1989, which were reprinted in Volume 43, Number 4, of the *Journal American Rhododendron Society:*

> 'Also on the crossroads is the plant *R. yakushimanum*. That great nurseryman Mr Koichiro Wada sent two plants back from the island of Yakushima off the southern tip of Japan. My father's then Head Gardener was Mr Francis Hanger and just before I was demobilised, the Royal Horticultural Society, not thinking that Exbury Gardens would be carried on, invited Mr Hanger to become Curator at Wisley. Mysteriously one of the *R. yakushimanum* found its way to Wisley and that plant was granted the FCC, but the Exbury *R. yakushimanum* is far superior'.

Equally, A. F. Serbin wrote that "the modus operandi for this transfer remains shrouded in mystery" (*JARS,* Volume 19, Number 2, 1965).

And curiously, in an article for the *RHS Journal* of 1947, Hanger himself wrote that the Wisley plant was "a layer from the original introduction" (quoted in *Additional Notes on R. Yakushimanum,* by Alleyne Cook, *JARS,* Volume 13, Number 1).

Major de Rothschild, at that time still finding his feet at Exbury, was at least asked by the RHS if he would help with a name for their newly-awarded FCC clone. His choice: Koichiro Wada.

Switching to a *Report on the Proceedings of a Hardy Nerine Study Day* held at Wisley in October 2007 and posted on The Nerine and Amaryllid Society website:

> 'The variant first received an Award of Merit when exhibited by Mrs F. Hanger on 2 Oct 1946, when the Hangers were still at Exbury. Subsequently they moved to Wisley, when Francis Hanger became Curator of the RHS Gardens and where *N. bowdenii* 'Mark Fenwick' was photographed'.

Exbury was of course noted for its collection of Nerines prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, as *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (Barber & Phillips, Cassell Ltd., 1967) documents:

> 'The greater part of the greenhouses however was devoted to orchids, for which Lionel became almost as famous as for his rhododendrons. Predominantly he cultivated cymbidiums, cattleyas and cypripediums, among other genera. Cymbidiums took pride of place and in this genus he raised many superlative new hybrids that won high awards and which were, after his death, to fetch fantastic prices in the United States. The same was true of Nerines, in whose orbicular form and gold-dusted petals he took particular delight and of which he raised some beautiful new cultivars in pink and red. They had their own house to themselves, as also did clivias and hippeastrums, of which, before long, he had assembled the best collections extant'.

So more than just a few rhododendrons appear to have travelled up the A3 eighty or so years ago, though absolutely no suggestion of impropriety should be construed as apparently Mark Fenwick, the respected plantsman of Abbotswood, Gloucestershire, had personally given the bulbs to Mrs Hanger when he visited Exbury in the mid 1930s (*Nerines for a lifetime,* in the 1975 *RHS Gardens Club Journal,* Volume 68, pages 65-68)…

Rhododendrons at Wisley.

by Francis Hanger.

Fellows and visitors enquiring at the entrance gate to the Royal horticultural Society's Gardens for the whereabouts of the Rhododendrons would naturally be directed by the gatekeeper to Battleston Hill. There, much has been accomplished during the past two and a half years. The hardy Rhododendron trials have been greatly enlarged and re-arranged. A collection of Rhododendron species has been planted in their series and sub-series and a beginning has been made with the establishment of a "Kurume Carpet" with variants of *Rhododendron obtusum* var. *japonicum* [*R. kiusianum*]; over the bridge hundreds of the newer hybrids, mostly given to the Society by the leading amateur gardeners of the present century, are planted and growing well. However, it is the writer's intention to begin with those Rhododendrons which grow in the older part of Wisley known as the "Wild Garden".

On entering Wisley we walk along the front of the laboratory and pass by the greenhouses down the wooden steps into what is now one of the choicest parts of the Garden. This was one solid mass of *R. ponticum* overhung with with oaks and birch when the late Mr. G. F. Wilson began its development approximately seventy years ago. Clearings were made among the *R. ponticum,* winding paths mapped out and the area replanted with the leading rhododendron species of that time, together with many hardy hybrid Rhododendrons, Magnolias, Camellias and choice shrubs, mostly belonging to the Ericaceous family. The whole ground was carpeted with such gems of the woodland as *Cornus canadensis, Narcissus cyclamineus, Shortia galaceifolia, S. uniflora, Schizocodon soldamelloides,* Gaultherias, Trilliums, Erythroniums, Lillies and Primulas, making the garden a real joy to a lover of plants.

In this garden with its moist, acid soil these dwarf "woodlanders" simply ramp away and have established themselves in no uncertain manner, but it is sad to relate that this part of Wisley, lying as it does low down near the River Wey and surrounded by ponds, is a natural frost trap. During cold spells in the winter, the heavy cold air drops down into this low part of the garden, settles amongst the high Rhododendrons, and fails to get away. This locality is most susceptible to late spring frosts which do untold damage to the early-flowering plants, making the Wild Garden most unsuitable for the cultivation of early-flowering and tender Rhododendrons.

Away on Battleston Hill we have a very different climate. From records kept during the past two years there has often been the welcome difference of eight degrees Fahrenheit between the hill and the Wild Garden [4°C]. On the morning of May 3, 1948, five degrees below freezing point was registered in the Wild Garden [-2.8°C], spoiling all the Rhododendron blooms including some of the more forward buds, whereas all those growing on Battleston Hill came through the cold spell undamaged.

Some of the precarious and early-flowering Rhododendrons have already been transplanted to Battleston Hill. More will probably be given the same ride and opportunity to grow and bloom with less fear of frost. In their place it is hoped to substitute hardier and later-flowering species and hybrids.

A beginning has already been made in this direction. This is soon evident as we enter the Wild Garden by way of the wooden steps, for where Bamboos grew and prospered, such gems of the newer hybrid Rhododendrons as the stone-cream coloured R. 'Lady Bessborough' (F.C.C. var.) (*discolor* x *campylocarpum* Elatum) is romping away and during late May and early June, will be one of the sights of Wisley.

In the same bed R. 'Sir Frederick Moore' (F.C.C. var.) (*discolor* x 'St. Keverne') with huge pink trusses, the perfect biscuit-coloured R. 'Naomi' (Exbury var. A.M.) ('Aurora' x *fortunei*) and R. 'Redcap' (*didymum* x *facetum*), a medium growing Rhododendron with deep, crimson-red, bell-shaped flowers during late June, are all established and delight in the moist acid soil.

Passing by the small group of *R. wardii* and beyond the first bank of high *R. ponticum* hybrids we are met with a huge plant of *R. obtusum* var. *amoenum* [*R. kiusianum*], now well over fifty years old. This particular giant, 45 feet in circumference [14m], has the usual bright magenta coloured flowers, but growing further along into the heart of the Wild Garden are several scarlet forms of *R. amoenum.*

We are now amongst the thirty feet high banks of hardy hybrid Rhododendrons. Towards the end of May and during June these huge monsters are covered with masses of pink, white, mauve and red flowers. Viewed from the path high up on the rock garden we get a good view of the whole parade of colour low down beyond the ponds. These huge plants form a beautiful shelter from the rough winds. The whole area of this wild garden lies moist, and in the past attempts have been made to grow the monarchs of the genus Rhododendron, i.e. *R. sinogrande* and *R. falconeri.* But, alas, we "live to learn". These glorious species can make only a pretence to grow in this part of Wisley and, instead of being the magnificent foliage and flowering plants we know them to be in favoured positions, they are only a shadow of their real selves. *R. sinogrande* I believe will be found to be too tender for Wisley, but in the happier conditions on Battleston Hill *R. falconeri* should give us ample dividends and in years to come flower and grow to perfection.

Rhododendron fictolacteum grows and flowers well in the Wild Garden, but all our plants are raised from early introductions with rather small flowers, and we must journey up Battleston Hill to see the much better form of Kingdon-Ward's sending, possessing the much larger and finer flowers.

The new path made during the past winter on the north side of the large planting of *Primula japonica* and *P. pulverulenta* passes under the almost tree-like R. 'Kewense', now 22 feet high and 19 feet wide [6.7 x 5.8m]. Standing clear of all other plants it made a majestic picture during the favourable April of 1948, with its thousands of large almost R. 'Loderi'-like white, scented blossoms. This path skirts a lovely planting of Rhododendron species which have been given room to grow and develop. Here we find *R. praevernum, R. sutchuenense* and *R. calophytum,* all with noble foliage, all possessing an irritating precociousness in flowering; yet quite worthy of retaining their positions for foliage alone, and during the mild early springs, giving us trusses of flowers as an added interest.

These species of Rhododendrons are duplicated in the Battleston Hill collection where there is little doubt that we shall enjoy their flowers more often than in the colder Wild Garden. "Calophytum" means "beautiful plant", a description justified by the leaves alone, but in addition the writer cannot think of any Rhododendron with a more beautiful truss of flowers than a fine form of *R. calophytum, R. lacteum* and *R. macabeanum* excepted. *R. wardii* and numbers of *R. thomsonii* all grow well and flower a little later than the other plants previously mentioned along this path, while at the extreme east end is a large plant of *R. wallichii,* a Rhododendron very similar to *R. campanulatum;* when it was covered with its lilac-spotted-with-rose flowers last spring, I thought it quite good.

We travel towards the west end of the Wild Garden and here much work needs doing before we have this portion worthy of Wisley. Good specimens of *R. auriculatum, R. oreodoxa* var. *fargesii, R. thomsonii, R. maximum* and *R. auriculatum* hybrids exist and will remain, but it is hoped to replace *R. arboreum* and others of less hardy constitution with hybrids of *R. discolor, R. dichroanthum, R. griersonianum,* etc. These should be hardier and later flowering and will make all the difference, giving us a good show of flower from mid-May until well into early July.

A fine plant of R. 'Azor' (*discolor* x griersonianum) with its deep rose coloured flowers in late June and early July always demands admiration. This Rhododendron hybrid originated from Tower Court, and its lateness and hardiness make it the perfect plant for this, the colder part of Wisley Gardens.

Strolling along the many narrow paths of the Wild Garden, visitors can discover many of the dwarf-growing Rhododendrons such as *R. forrestii* Repens, *R. williamsianum,* a magnificent plant of *R. keiskei,* that wonderful Bodnant hybrid R. 'Cilpinense' (*ciliatum* x *moupinense*) and also drifts of *R. canadense* three to four feet high [1 to 1.3m], with rose-purple flowers.

Here and there, edging the larger plants and incidentally making a wonderful ground cover for Lillies, are various evergreen "Kurume-type" Azaleas. These forms of *R. obtusum* var. *japonicum* are showy floriferous shrubs, ideal for this purpose and are much hardier than was generally believed.

Before we leave this portion of Wisley mentioned should be made of the popular hardy deciduous Azalea hybrids growing there. These are old varieties and now long surpassed by the newer *molle-japonicum,* Ghent and *calendulaceum* hybrids. Grown amongst the overhanging oak trees they obtain a certain amount of shelter from early spring frosts, but in such shade they are apt to get drawn, becoming unsightly leggy shrubs with just a few flowers on their top branches, which can only be viewed and admired from a distance. Here a thinning of the overhanging tree branches and replanting with good up-to-date varieties might be the answer, but, failing that, a severe pruning back of the existing old varieties, sacrificing the flowers for a season or two, would result in an improved display.

Azalea Garden:
We now leave the Wild Garden and, passing through the Award of Merit Collections towards the herbaceous borders, we come to a lovely planned formal Azalea garden, with spacious grass paths and no overhanging trees to spoil the habit of the deciduous Azaleas. In full sun these plants have grown well in a heavier soil than is general at Wisley and great is the pity that this collection is growing in the lower regions of the garden, so subject to late spring frosts. Planted more or less as a general mixture of deciduous Azalea hybrids, with no attempt being made to devise a colour scheme, the effect during a favourable spring is one blaze of riotous colour.

Rock Garden:
Before we journey off to Battleston Hill, we must look into the Alpine Meadow and the Rock Garden. Here we shall find most of the dwarf Rhododendron species belonging to the Section Pogonanthum, and Subsection Lapponica and Subsection Campylogyna of Section Lepipherum that are suitable for the Rock Garden. Some beds in the Alpine Meadow and around outcrops of stone contain *R. impeditum, R. calostrotum* and *R. flavidum,* while away on the far west side of the Rock Garden, *R. keleticum, R. chryseum, R. pemakoense, R. riparium, R. campylogynum* Myrtilloides, *R. trichostomum, R. sargentianum,* etc, are massed together on a bank.

The white form of *R. flavidum,* which received an Award of Merit in the spring of 1948, does well in a favoured, especially prepared pocket and for its companions it has *R. imperator, R. patulum,* the dwarf form of *R. hanceanum* and the hybrids R. 'Carmen' (*didymum* x *forrestii* Repens) and R. 'Humming Bird' (*haematodes* x *williamsianum*); near by the dwarf-growing hybrid R. 'Temple Belle' (*orbiculare* x *williamsianum*), R. 'Blue Tit' (*impeditum* x *augustinii*), R. 'Bluebird' (*intricatum* x *augustinii*) and R. 'Blue Diamond' ('Intrifast' x *augustinii*) can be found.

Battleston Hill:
Battleston Hill was acquired by the Council of the Royal Horticultural Society during the year 1938. This portion of land, approximately 26 acres in extent, lies at the south end of Wisley and is the highest point of the gardens. Forming a ridge running more or less from east to west, it has soil most suitable for the culture of Rhododendrons and other acid-loving-plants. On the very summit, mostly in that portion which has been developed into the species garden, the soil was found to be much too sandy for the retention of the necessary moisture, and humus in the form of leaf-mould, peat and bracken has been added; if continued yearly this will counteract the deficiency.

A large grass glade 30 feet wide [9m], running due south and beginning about the middle of the "old rose terrace" passes through the trial grounds with the Dahlia and Delphinium trials on either side. From there it continues on to Battleston Hill, with the hardy Rhododendron trials on the immediate left and the Kurume collection and Daffodil trials on the right; and so to the summit of the hill. During the winter of 1946-47, this grass glade was continued over the brow with a Rhododendron species garden on either side. Later, in the winter of 1947-48, it was extended still further through the flowering Cherry collection until the glade reached the edge of the gardens at the Portsmouth Road.

Hardy Rhododendron Hybrid Trials:
As already stated it was as late as 1938 when the Royal Horticultural Society purchased the Battleston Hill property and owing to the commencement of war in 1939, little could be done towards the layout and development until the winter of 1946-47. However, a beginning was made in 1938 and approximately one acre of land on the north side was prepared to receive the hardy Rhododendron hybrid trial plants from the late Mr. Lionel de Rothschild's garden at Exbury. The portion of ground selected had to be cleared of all unwanted trees, undergrowth and brambles, and the whole area bastard-trenched before the four hundred plants could be safely transferred. I do not intend to write at length about those trials as I wish to describe more fully the recent developments on Battleston Hill; further, the trials are fully described and reported in the *Rhododendron Year Book* of 1946. I need only add that these plants grew well during the war years and at the first opportunity in the autumn of 1946 the whole trial of plants had to be thinned out and given a much larger area. This necessitated the removal of the deciduous and evergreen Azaleas to other positions. Almost every other Rhododendron was lifted with an ample ball of soil attached and transplanted to newly prepared positions. The trial plants growing too near the Acers and Sorbus were also moved to give them more light and less competition at the roots. The new arrangement has given the whole collection ample room for development for many years to come. The water supply, a most important item in successful Rhododendron culture, was extended and improved, giving every facility for good cultivation.

Rhododendron Species Collection:
The site selected for the formation of this collection is far from ideal, there being little or no shelter against the prevailing wind (south-west). It lies on the very crest of the hill undulating and sloping away a little to the south towards the new collection of Flowering Cherries. Being thickly planted with trees (mostly Larch, *Larix europaea*) to the west, with a very good assemblage of *Pinus pinaster* to the east with thick undergrowth of Oak scrub beneath, much hard work was required before all was correct and ready for planting.

- overleaf pages 14 & 15 -
The Rhododendron Trials in 1948.

Practically all the Larch were dead or dying, having been attacked severely by the bark beetle (*Myelophilus piniperda*) which had bored thousands of holes in the timber until some were riddle like honeycombs.

Tractors and bulldozers began work about the middle of September, 1946, and from Battleston Hill as a whole, removed 200 trees and 150 old stumps; 75 of these were uprooted from the acre and a half which comprises the species garden. Quite 60 of those 75 were dead Larch; every possible good tree was left but since 1946 several more Larch have died and will have to be removed. Unfortunately this wholesale destruction made the west portion very open and sunny for Rhododendrons but this difficulty was surmounted by a careful arrangement of the series which will be explained later.

As soon as the trees and stumps were removed the whole area was bastard-trenched, leaving 12 feet from the foot of each large tree untouched [3.7m]. The soil was found to be most disappointing and not nearly as good on the north and south sides of the ridge, being too sandy and, in places, gravelly. Loads of leaves, peat and spent hopes, together with rotten bracken, had to be collected and dug into the surface soil, while large heaps were placed in positions ready to incorporate into the soil around the plants at planting time.

It was now almost December. The target was to have everything planted in the species garden before Christmas to enable the newly planted Rhododendrons to settle into their new homes during the hoped-for winter rains, and before the severe frosty weather began.

With the help of Mr. J. B. Stevenson of Tower Court, a small selection of the better species of each subsection was chosen. A list of those already growing at Wisley had been drawn up, and Mr. Stevenson volunteered to present to the Society as many of the missing ones as he possible could, the remainder being given by Mr. Edmund de Rothschild and Mr. J. P. C. Russell. The Tower Court gift contained over 150 species, and a total of over 300 plants, some of the larger ones being 8 to 10 feet high [2.4 to 3m].

Tower Court is 16 miles from Wisley and on the morning of November 23, 1946, the Curator, with a bus-load of students and trainees, together with two lorries, set off to get the promised plants. The three days we worked lifting the plants were very enjoyable, everyone joining into the spirit of the thing. The continuous fine rain on the last two days could not prevent the echoes of laughter ringing through the Tower Court woods, reminding the owner of the days when more lenient Chancellors of the Exchequer made it possible to employ a reasonable number of gardeners in the larger gardens of England. The plants were transported to Wisley, and on arrival placed in groups in their subsections. Informal winding paths had been provisionally marked out on that portion of the ground allotted for the species collection.

Although everything was now ready for planting, much thought was necessary before the final placing of the plants could be decided upon. As previously stated, owning to the severe attack of bark beetle, practically all the trees on the western portion of the species garden had been rooted up for timber, leaving little windbreak to the west and one part open to full sun and wind. Conditions improved towards the east. There, really fine trees of *Pinus pinaster* (the Cluster or Maritime Pine) and oaks gave more shelter and shade, while still further east over the public right of way, the dell with its magnificent Scotch Pines (*Pinus sylvestris*) and oaks gave us all that we could wish for in the way of shade and shelter.

We began the layout by allotting to the Azalea species the portion of ground open to the full sun and wind. Here these deciduous plants seem to be quite at home, and although

- *opposite* -
The Dell, Battleston Hill, in 1948.

beautifully pruned by rabbits the first winter of planting, they are now growing away in first-rate order. Next, the large Subsection Triflora, containing so many floriferous garden plants, was planted on the west side. Having smaller leaves than many Rhododendrons they, like the Subsection Heliolepida placed nearby, would weather the prevailing winds better than most.

Each side of the wide grass glade is rather open to the sun and here species from the Saluenensia, Lapponica, Campylogyna and Lepidota subsections and Section Pogonanthum were accommodated, where they give a rich promise of succeeding. The planting of these dwarf Rhododendrons on either side of the main path serves two purposes. It not only provided a site for the successful planting of a difficult bit of woodland, but it also allows visitors to see well into the species garden.

Having planted the worst bit of the species garden it became easier, the more we moved east towards shelter and shade, to find happy homes for the other subsections. Care was taken to provide a place in a prominent and sheltered spot for that most interesting subsection, Thomsonia, which contains so many beautiful and popular plants. Near by, beneath the pines are the Barbata and Arborea subsections, while the Neriiflora edge the the path and the Subsection Neriiflora Series Haemaguinea species, its members all possessing that glorious rich brown leaf indumentum, is given a bed of its own near the bridge. The 'Sanguineums' of this series, all dwarf, neat plants, are planted in a valley-like depression which we call the "Sanguineum Gorge". The large plants belonging to Subsection Fortunea at present seem rather sparse, but these will need room for development to make perfect specimens.

Rhododendron lacteum and *R. x wightii* seem happy nestling behind the shelter of large-growing plants and in a less favoured spot a few members of that uninteresting subsection, Taliensia, can be found. In this subsection *R. bureavii* gets a place for its marvellous indumentum and *R. roxieanum,* for its neat dwarfish habit with attractive linear leaves and dainty flowers [respectively of Subsection Taliensia Series Bureavia, and Subsection Taliensia Series Faberia]; and one day *R. microgynum* must be included, as few dark crimson Rhododendrons can rival this plant for beauty when in flower.

On the brow are the Rhododendrons belonging to Subsection Pontica; outstanding amongst these are *R. yakushimanum,* the rare *R. macrophyllum,* the true *R. ponticum* (from Asia Minor), and the almost creeping Japanese species *R. aureum.*

Trespassing amongst the hybrids over the public right of way, but in the ideal setting and shelter of a deep dell are the large-leaved monarchs of the genus, the Grandia and Falconera subsections. Two attempts have been made to establish at Wisley that King of Rhododendrons, *R. sinogrande,* with its large, "tropical"-looking foliage, but the writer has found from experience that Wisley cannot be classified as one of the favourably sheltered gardens of England. If *R. sinogrande* and *R. sidereum* of Subsection Grandia refuse to grow with us, we have our consolations with *R. macabeanum,* which, given to us by the Hon. Mrs. Spencer Clay, seems to enjoy Wisley and will in further years present us, we hope, with trusses of yellow flowers which cannot be surpassed even by *R. sinogrande.* As it appears that we are denied the pleasure of seeing the ashy-grey indumentum on the underside of the leaves of *R. sinogrande* when disturbed by the wind, we hope to glory in the sight of seeing the rusty-red indumentum of *R. falconeri.* This Rhododendron will, I believe, do quite well on Battleston Hill, and other members of the subsection, i.e. *R. basilicum, R. coriaceum, R. arizelum,* and *R. fictolacteum* (Kingdon-Ward's form), all seem quite happy and will, as the years roll by, help to give the woodland that exotic appearance which is the joy of all Rhododendron lovers.

Kurume Azalea Collection:

We must leave the Rhododendron species garden but before we go and view the beginnings which have been made to create on Battleston Hill a general woodland garden with a planting of Rhododendrons, Magnolias, Acers, Sorbus, Eucryphias, Camellias, Hydrangeas, Viburnums, cotoneasters, Lillies, etc., we should turn back to the wide grass avenue to study the Kurume collection. These wonderful free-flowering evergreen Azaleas are ideal dwarf plants for the edging of our woodland garden paths, and, with but few exceptions, are much hardier than is generally believed.

Here at Wisley we have two plantings, one large bed which it is hoped will form a "Kurume Carpet" and another, nearby, planted more or less in a formal manner, containing E. H. Wilson's original 50 selected varieties. Perhaps it would be appreciated by many readers of this *Rhododendron Year Book* if a little time was devoted to explaining how and why this group of Kurumes became known as "Wilson's 50".

During 1914, the late Mr. E. H. Wilson was sent by the Authorities of the Arnold Arboretum to the Orient in search of new and rare plants. While in Japan, he was taken by the then principal of the Yokohama Nursery Company on a visit to the nurseries and gardens in the district a few miles north of Tokyo. It was here that he first became acquainted with the many variants of Kurume Azaleas. He was so impressed that he obtained specimens, dried them, and sent them to the Herbarium at the Arnold Arboretum, but it was not until 1917 that the first "Kurume Azalea" plants were introduced into America.

These Azaleas did not originate in these gardens and nurseries north of Tokyo, but at Kurume, a town some 800 miles south-west of that city. The original parents of these many hybrids are said to come from Mount Kirishima, the sacred mountain of Japan. Wilson states in his *Monograph of Azaleas* that "Japanese experts recognise by name more than 250 kinds of Kurume Azaleas".

It was neither possible nor wise to introduce to the Occident all these varieties and Wilson selected what he considered to be the best 50, which are now known as "Wilson's 50".

Of this 50, with the help of the Japanese experts, Wilson selected the following six as the very best of them all.

No. 2. 'Kureno Yuki' - flowers white, hose-in-hose.
No. 11. 'Takasago' - flowers pale apple blossom pink.
No. 16. 'Azuma Kagami' - flowers deep pink, hose-in-hose.
No. 22. 'Kirin' - flowers deep rose, shading to silvery rose.
No. 29. 'Kumo-No-Uye - flowers pure salmon.
No. 40. 'Kurai-No-Himo - flowers carmine, hose-in-hose.

This historical and valuable collection of plants was, to the writer's knowledge only complete in two private gardens in this country, Tower Court, Ascot, and Caerhays, Cornwall, and The Royal Horticultural Society is indebted to the owners of these two famous gardens, the late Mr. J. B. Stevenson and the late Mr. C. Williams, for providing the cuttings during July 1946 for the attempts to establish at Wisley the "Wilson 50".

These Azaleas root very easily from soft cuttings and a complete set was planted in the October of 1947. Unfortunately the hard weather of February 1948 caused a few to split their barks and these have since died. This set-back does not mean that these plants are not hardy, but rather that we had grown our young plants a little too well and in consequence they were green and not hard as is more advisable before being planted into their permanent positions. It should be recorded that it was only odd plants here and there of a variety that died, and only in one instance did the whole batch of the variety die completely out. This was number 38 'Waka Kayede', a plant with red flowers.

This collection of Wilson's 50 Azaleas will be allowed to grow naturally, and when they are large enough to flower profusely they should be of good service to growers and buyers alike for identification purposes [but see page 54 of *The Rhododendron Collectors: Ernest Wilson* for an addendum update regarding such verification].

No attempt as yet has been made to arrange the plants intended for the "Kurume Carpet" in their final positions. Rather, they are planted in a large bed to grow on until such time as they flower sufficiently to be able to judge their colours correctly, after which it should be possible to form the "carpet" in an attractive manner.

It was not the intention of the writer to give long lists of plants when asked to write this article, but the short list of Wilson's 50 will no doubt be appreciated.

No. 1 'Seikai'
No. 2 'Kureno Yuki'
No. 3 'Shin Seikai'
No. 4 'Yurozuyo'
No. 5 'Nani Wagata'
No. 6 'Tancho'
No. 7 'Hachika Tsugi'
No. 8 'Irohayama'
No. 9 'Hoo'
No. 10 'Suiyohi'
No. 11 'Takasago'
No. 12 'Kasumi Gaseki'
No. 13 'Bijinsui'
No. 14 'Asagasumi'
No. 15 'Kimigayo'
No. 16 'Azuma Kagami'
No. 17 'Osaraku'
No. 18 'Otome'
No. 19 'Aya Kammuri'
No. 20. 'Shintoki-No-Hagasane'
No. 21 'Saotome'
No. 22 'Kirin'
No. 23 'Tamafuyo'
No. 24 'Kiritsubo'
No. 25 'Omoine'
No. 26 'Oino Mezame'
No. 27 'Katsura No Hana'
No. 28 'Sin Utena'
No. 29 'Kumo-No-Uye'
No. 30 'Benifude'
No. 31 'Suga No Ito'
No. 32 'Kasane Kagaribi'
No. 33 'Tsuta Momiji'
No. 34 'Suetsumu'
No. 35 'Fudesute Yama'
No. 36 'Ima Shojo'
No. 37 'Rasho Mon'
No. 38 'Waka Kayede'
No. 39 'Yayehiryu'
No. 40 'Kurai-No-Himo'
No. 41 'Agemaki'
No. 42 'Hinodegiri'
No. 43 'Aioi'
No. 44 'Sakura Tsukasa'
No. 45 'Tama-No-Utena'
No. 46 'Gosho Zakura'
No. 47 'Ukamuse'
No. 48 'Hinode-No-Taka'
No. 49 'Osaraku Seedling'
No. 50 'Hana Asobi'

Battleston Woodland Garden:

To complete this account of Wisley Rhododendrons it only remains for me to take you over one of the bridges which span the public right of way. Here we are in a truly magnificent setting with some of the finest Scotch Pines it has been my pleasure to see. Intermixed amongst these Pines are a few Oaks, Silver Birch and Sweet Chestnut trees.

This piece of land of nearly twelve acres holds out great possibilities for the future welfare of Rhododendron culture at Wisley. Nothing is really perfect in the world and if we must find some fault with the contours of our Battleston, it is a little too open to the full blast of cruel east winds. This of course can be rectified as planting continues. The hill rises steeply from the north, east and south to the summit, where there was a large pit on the west end of the ridge, recently developed into a valley gradually ascending from the deepest potion on the west to the apex of the ridge on the extreme east. Local Residents claim that this pit, completely covered by trees and situated less than 200 yards [61m] from the Portsmouth Road, was made by Dick Turpin to use as a hide-out while committing his robberies on the adjacent highway. We have no highway robbers dwelling there now, but badgers are very happy scampering about on the steep banks.

But back to Rhododendrons! A beginning had been made before the war with the planting of this dell, and also part of the north side, with Rhododendrons and other trees and shrubs; but as the whole project was only in its infancy, little had been accomplished in the way of a plan of the general lay-out. Nevertheless, the plants then obtained and planted grew well during the war years and at present time are doing much to form the backbone of our present developments.

Much propagation will be necessary before this wood is filled with the plant treasures we know will grow there and, in future years, give unbounded pleasure to visitors to the garden.

This part of Wisley Garden is unfortunately separated from the remainder by a fenced-off public right of way. There are two bridges at present over this path, one from the Hardy Hybrid Rhododendron trials to the Camellia Garden, and one at the top near the dell. Later it is hoped to have a third which will lead from the plantings of Rhododendrons on the south-west into the 300-yard [91m] avenue of Flowering Cherries.

During the war of 1914 to 1918, hundreds of trees were taken from the wood for timber but unfortunately all the stumps were left in the ground. Some 150 of these were removed by tractors and bulldozers during the autumn of 1946 since when about 100 have been excavated with the help of a tree-puller and the ground cleared for planting.

The pre-war planting in the dell gave a valuable start and the work was taken up again in the winter of 1946-47 but the descent down the steep banks to attend to or view the plants was very awkward. By uprooting about a dozen trees at the east end, and with the help of a bulldozer, a valley was cut into the dell transforming the whole appearance of the landscape.

Just fourteen hours with the bulldozer in the sandy soil pushed hundreds of tons of soil from the valley and piled it against the abrupt ends of the dell creating ideal planting positions. The valley is so cut as to enable one to enter at the far eastern end and gradually drop down into the depths of the dell with plenty of steps to ascend at different points.

The second main feature of this portion of Battleston Hill is a twelve-foot [4m] road which will encircle the hill at its lower level, from the bridge on the north-west, eastwards along the south side to the new bridge to be erected on the south-west opposite the cherry collection. The main drive will more or less zig-zag its way around the wood, and from it will spring numerous small paths to give easy access to any particular tree or shrub.

A very creditable collection of the newer and better hybrid Rhododendrons is already in this woodland. All are clearly labelled giving the name of the plant, its parentage and the garden of origin. The following is a selection, arranged under the Gardens in which they originated.

Bodnant, N. Wales (Lord Aberconway)
R. 'Aspansia' A.M. ('Astarte' x *haematodes*)
R. 'Astarte' A.M. (*dichroanthum* x 'Penjerrick')
R. 'Bluebird' A.M. (*intricatum* x *augustinii*)
R. 'Cardinal' F.C.C. (*arboreum* x 'Barclayi')

R. ‘Charmaine’ A.M. (‘Charm’ x ‘May Day’)
R. ‘Choremia’ F.C.C. (*haematodes* x *arboreum*)
R. ‘Cilpinense’ A.M. (*ciliatum* x *moupinense*)
R. ‘Cowslip’ A.M. (*williamsianum* x *wardii*)
R. ‘Dainty’ F.C.C. (‘May Day’ x ‘Elizabeth’)
R. ‘Ethel’ F.C.C. (‘F. C. Puddle’ x *forrestii* Repens)
R. ‘Elizabeth’ F.C.C. (*griersonianum* x *forrestii* Repens)
R. ‘Fabia’ A.M. (*dichroanthum* x *griersonianum*)
R. ‘Laura Aberconway’ F.C.C. (*griersonianum* x ‘Barclayi’)
R. ‘Vanessa’ F.C.C. (‘Soulbut’ x *griersonianum*)

Exbury, Southampton (Mr. E. de Rothschild)
R. ‘Albatross’ A.M. (‘Loderi’ x *discolor*)
R. ‘Angelo’ F.C.C. (*griffithianum* x *discolor*)
R. ‘Avalanche’ F.C.C. (‘Loderi’ x *calophytum*)
R. ‘Bonito’ A.M. (*discolor* x ‘Luscombei’)
R. ‘Bow Bells’ A.M. (‘Corona’ x *williamsianum*)
R. ‘Fusilier’ F.C.C. (*elliottii* x *griersonianum*)
R. ‘Golden Horn’ A.M. (*dichroanthum* x *elliottii*)
R. ‘Grenadier’ F.C.C. (‘Moser’s Maroon’ x *elliottii*)
R. ‘Grosclaude’ A.M. (*haematodes* x *facetum*)
R. ‘Idealist’ A.M. (*wardii* x ‘Naomi’)
R. ‘Lady Chamberlain’ F.C.C. (*cinnabarinum* x ‘Royal Flush’)
R. ‘Lady Rosebery’ F.C.C. (*cinnabarinum* x ‘Royal Flush’ pink form)
R. ‘Naomi’ A.M. (‘Aurora’ x *fortunei*)
R. ‘Romany Chal’ F.C.C. (‘Moser’s Maroon’ x *griersonianum*)

Tower Court, Ascot (Mr. J. B. Stevenson)
R. ‘Amor’ (*griersonianum* x *thayerianum*0
R. ‘Azor’ A.M. (*griersonianum* x *discolor*)
R. ‘Polar Bear’ F.C.C. (*diaprepes* x *auriculatum*)
R. ‘Red Cap’ (*didymum* x *facetum*)
R. ‘Romarez’ (*kyawi* x *griersonianum*)
R. ‘Tessa’ A.M. (‘Praecox’ x *moupinense*)

Royal Gardens, Kew
R. ‘Arthur Osborn’ A.M. (*didymum* x *griersonianum*)
R. ‘Impeanum’ A.M. (*impeditum* x *hanceanum*)

Caerhays, Cornwall (Mr. J. C. Williams)
R. ‘Blue Tit’ (*impeditum* x *augustinii*)
R. ‘Moonstone’ (*campylocarpum* x *williamsianum*)

Muncaster, Cumberland (Sir John Ramsden, BT.)
R. ‘Huntsman’ (*barbatum* x *campylocarpum* Elatum)
R. ‘Lodauric’ x *griffithianum* [later named ‘Muncaster Icicle’]
R. ‘Lodauric’ x *auriculatum* [not registered]

Leonardslee, Sussex (Sir Giles Loder, BT.)
Grafts of a representative set of varieties of R. ‘Loderi’

This is only a selection of the good modern hybrids which are being established at Wisley from these and other notable gardens. Most of these plants have been layered to enable us to extend our planting and together with over one hundred different crosses made at Wisley during the past two seasons Battleston Hill in years to come should be a Rhododendron enthusiast’s dream. In this woodland Rhododendrons will not by any means demand the whole area, but as we have very few evergreen shrubs and trees more beautiful than the Rhododendron this, the aristocrat of the evergreen world, must be fully represented.

Francis Hanger’s portrait of RHS Wisley Gardens was published in *The Rhododendron Year Book 1948.* The botanic nomenclature of the original text has been updated to reflect the current classification.

Mr. Francis Hanger, V.M.H., with the Hon. Lady Bowes Lyon, at the British Exhibit at the Ghent Floralies, in 1960, looking at Rhododendron 'Lady Bowes Lyon' which won a First Prize as the best new plant in the Show, having been raised by Mr. Hanger at the R.H.S. Gardens, Wisley.

The Propagation of Rhododendrons.

by Francis Hanger.

(Paper read at the Rhododendron Conference on April 27, 1949, with Sir Edward Salisbury, F.R.S. in the Chair).

The first word in the title of this paper, "propagation", immediately excites interest. I firmly believe that there is no operation in the art of gardening more fascination, nor one which gives more pleasure to the grower. Next to seeing the tree or shrub in all its flowering or berrying glory what can give one more pleasure than to watch the seed germinate or the cuttings produce roots and grow?

When we possess some really good hybrid or precious plant we naturally wish to propagate it. This enables us to share our good things with friends, for all true horticulturists are generous and derive much pleasure from giving their fellow gardeners a portion of a novelty or rarity. Again, happy is the grower who, when he has lost a really good plant during some cold winter or by some other cause, can go to the nursery or cold frames and find a duplicate, which he has propagated in readiness for such an occasion.

The skilled gardener is not the person who just plants the tree or shrub in good soil when it is say three to four feet high [0.9 to 1.2m], but the person who has produced that plant either from a seed, a cutting, a layer or by grafting. Surely this is the essence of good gardening?

My paper today, which I feel honoured to be giving to this Conference, is entirely devoted to the "Propagation of Rhododendrons". There is perhaps no other genus of plants which exhibits such an enormous variety of size, form, habit and growth, and it is therefore not surprising that, to get the best results, we have to adopt various means of perpetuation.

Harvesting The Seed:

In their wild homes Nature's chief method of regeneration of Rhododendrons is by seed. Another means of reproduction occasionally encountered in nature is by layering, but this is far less common. The great majority of the Rhododendrons in our gardens today are the result, in the first instance, of plants raised from seed introduced by such great plant explorers of the past as Sir Joseph Hooker, Robert Fortune, E. H. Wilson and George Forrest. Outstanding amongst present day collectors are Capt. F. Kingdon-Ward, Dr. J. Rock of America, and Messrs. F. Ludlow and G. Sherriff.

The advent into this country of so many new species of Rhododendrons during this century has enabled Rhododendron enthusiasts to create thousands of new hybrids, and amongst them are some of the very best evergreen flowering shrubs in cultivation. Some of these hybrids will flower in five or six years, but other, with *R. discolor* blood, may take fifteen years to bloom. "To know how to wait is the secret of success".

From the day the flowers are prepared for hybridisation by emasculation and removal of the petals, until the seed is gathered, great care will be necessary to see that nothing harmful happens to the developing capsules. I find that a wise precaution is to push a bamboo stake into the ground near that portion of the bush where the cross has been made. This answers several purposes. Firstly it warns the persons who are responsible for the removal of the dead flower heads to go carefully when "picking off" near the branch with the label attached denoting the cross, and secondly it enables the collector to find easily the position of the capsules. Should the garden be large and many hybrids made yearly, a list should be made in a book at the time of creation.

From the end of October onwards will be the time to watch the seed pods very carefully, and at the first sign of the capsules opening they must be gathered for safe keeping. Leave the seeds on the plants as long as possible to enable them to be fully matured, when the pods will have attained that brown, "dry" appearance denoting ripeness.

Any hybrids between the Subsection Lapponica or Triflora species will be ready first, but late December may arrive before *R. discolor, R. auriculatum* or their hybrids are fit for gathering. Should any very special hybrid made during the season remain late on the parent plant it will need constant watching, especially after frosts, or the splitting of the capsules may scatter the whole crop of seed in a day or so, and another year at least must elapse before the cross can again be made.

If at all possible collect the seed during dry weather; place it in carefully labelled packets, and at the first opportunity enter the crosses in the stud book, giving each new hybrid a different number. Store the packets of seed in a tin box for safety from pests, and place it in a dry cupboard until early January.

The seed should then be cleaned ready for sowing, when it will be found that most of the capsules will have opened and the seed become easy to extract. Pods still intact may be easily forced with the aid of a penknife. It is most important to clean the seed well, removing all chaff and pieces of capsules formed by the breaking down of the seed pods during the extraction of the seeds. Should any waste be sown with the seed on the surface of the seed-pans it usually attracts a fungus which speedily causes trouble amongst the tiny seedlings.

Most elementary, yet none the less important, is the necessity of great caution during the cleaning period to prevent seeds of the different hybrids being mixed while the cleaning operation is in progress. The seed being so minute it is quite possible to mix it without knowing. Care must be taken that no seed remains on the cleaning paper or on the operator's hands after each packet of hybrids is cleaned. Just a few small seeds adhering to the warm hand and carried into the next packet mean much confusion when the seed germinates and the plants flower. The writer has several times wondered when shown some new hybrid Rhododendron of a supposed parentage whether that particular plant was not a stray from another packet of seed at cleaning or at sowing time.

Seed Sowing:

The middle of January to the middle of February is the best time to sow the seed of Rhododendrons and deciduous Azaleas, providing a propagating frame inside a greenhouse with bottom heat and a temperature of 55°-60° F. is available [12.7 to 15.6°C]. My seed is sown as soon as possible, usually by the middle of January, as this early start enables the plants to have a good long season and to become strong enough to withstand the coming winter.

Various different composts have been tested by the writer during his experience of raising tens of thousands of Rhododendrons from seed, and he is convinced that nothing beats a good granulated peat properly prepared with a little silver sand added. This mixture has a low *p*H value of somewhere near 4.0, yet the seedling plants will live and exist in it for years, and once they have become hardened off no disease or fungus seems to affect them.

To prove the lasting qualities of granulated peat I need only describe one little incident. At Exbury I was in the habit of placing all the Rhododendron seed pans containing surplus seeds behind a tall north wall, there to remain indefinitely. The late Mr. Lionel de Rothschild flowered a particularly good *R. griersonianum* hybrid and rather regretted having such a small number of them. On returning to the garden a search was made of the old seed pans, and although five years had elapsed since being placed there, a pan was found containing the remainder of the seedlings of the desired hybrid. Naturally they had become woody and about six inches high [15cm], yet it was possible to single them off and grow them on.

Except where very large quantities are required Rhododendron and Azalea seed is best sown in pans or shallow boxes according to the amount of seed available. The receptacles should be perfectly clean and half filled with washed crocks. Pass the peat moss through a quarter-inch sieve [6mm], then mix a little silver sand with it, and it is then ready to place in the pans or boxes. Being of a spongy nature, a little patience is necessary to press the material evenly in the receptacles. Do not try to fill the containers in one operation, but rather in layers, until the pan is filled to within a half inch of the top [1.3cm]. Finish the surface off with a layer of the same compost passed through a much finer sieve and press firmly. This gives a very even surface on which to sow the seed. To prepare these seed vessels perfectly one must have the compost in the correct state as regards moisture. Usually it is necessary to add water, which of course must be soft rain water. Gradually add the water and at the same time well mix the peat by constant rubbing between the hands. When the pans or boxes are prepared they should be really well soaked again with rain water and allowed to stand all night ready to be sown on the following morning. Sow the seed evenly and reasonably thinly on the surface, label each receptacle when completed, but do not cover the seed with the exception of the largest Rhododendron and Azalea seed. These are rather wingy and apt to move easily and should be just covered for rigidness. All is now ready for the receptacle to be plunged in the propagating frame which has previously been well cleaned out and new granulated peat placed ready for plunging.

With a bottom heat of 55° to 60° F. [12.7 to 15.6°C], one must guard against fluctuations between dryness and saturation. A uniform moisture is essential, and on no account must the surface of the seed beds become dry, or the sprouting seed may become scorched through lack of water almost before one has noticed that germination has commenced. This is even more important with the "alpine" species of Rhododendron. Here the seed is so small and the ultimate growths so threadlike in appearance that a magnifying glass is necessary to view the primary germination. These small Rhododendrons need removing from the very close propagating frame earlier than their larger growing cousins and are much better placed on a bench in the house, to be covered with pieces of glass, as soon as it is possible to see movement.

I have many times been approached as to the cause of failure to germinate these alpine Rhododendrons. In some cases the seed have been covered too deeply, but in the majority of instances the grower had not realised the germination of his seed, and lost it through various means, such as one overhead "drowning" immediately the threadlike growths are trying to establish themselves. Another fatal mistake with this type of seed is lack of air as soon as the cotyledons are developed. However, with the majority of Rhododendrons, and especially deciduous Azaleas, it is quite easy for any ordinarily observant person to see the commencement of the germination.

As soon as the first cotyledons appear an anchoring of the seed will be necessary. This is easily accomplished with a fine layer of silver sand applied when the seedlings are dry, taking care not to overdo the operation and bury the cotyledons. From now on air should be given to the propagating frame, to be gradually increased as the seedlings grow. Eventually they become strong enough to be placed on the bench in the house outside the frame. Approximately a fortnight will pass before the commencement of germination and another fortnight before removal from the propagating case. Care must be taken to keep the sun's direct rays from shining on the seedlings. All watering if at all possible should be capillary, i.e. by placing the pans in containers of rain water and allowing the moisture to creep through the bottom until the pan is thoroughly soaked. This is to be preferred to overhead watering with a fine rose.

There are other means of raising Rhododendron seedlings but the foregoing method is advised for maximum development in the first season. Seeds sown in the same compost and placed in a warm house covered with a sheet of glass or even in an unheated house, although slower, will give very good results. Excellent results may also be obtained by sowing Rhododendrons, especially Azaleas, into cold frames and keeping them shaded and close until germination takes place. In this case the last week in March will be early enough to sow the seed and if precautions are taken to show thinly the young plants can remain undisturbed until the autumn or the following spring. With such treatment a compost of equal parts of granulated peat and lime free loam is advised, with a surface layer of fine sieved granulated peat and silver sand.

The writer has sown spare seed outside in the woodland nursery with excellent germination, which proves how simple it is to germinate Rhododendron seed. However, where the conveniences are available, the warm treatment is very much quicker and by far the better way.

Seedlings And Their Cultivation:

The pans of young Rhododendron seedlings must be kept growing freely in a warm greenhouse. To encourage them it will be necessary to syringe between the pans and over the seedlings in the morning and afternoon on all mild sunny days; and at the same time keep the paths, etc. of the house damped to create those ideal growing conditions so essential for the production of free clean growth.

Arrange the seedlings as near the glass as possible, and protect them from mid-day sun. It is not advisable to have permanent shading at the commencement, but just a temporary light covering, which should not be placed immediately on the pans, or boxes, of seedlings. As April approaches and the sun becomes more powerful a permanent shading may be painted on the glass, taking care not to apply the covering too thickly.

Always keep a sharp look-out for attacks of greenfly amongst the seedlings. These will, if allowed to remain long unnoticed, speedily cause a severe check in growth, and also disfigure the tiny young leaves. A fumigation with nicotine compound as soon as the pest is discovered, making sure that the seedlings are dry overhead, will easily dispose of the trouble. As "prevention is better than cure" a fumigation of the house containing the seedlings once a month during this seedling stage assures the grower of seedling plants free from pests. By the month of April the seedlings will have produced their first true leaf and then preparations must be made to prick out the plants into boxes without delay, to prevent any check in growth.

If possible it is advisable to make or buy good strong boxes for Rhododendron and Azalea seedlings; a very convenient size for handling is 18 in. long, 12 in. wide, and the inside measurement of the depth should be three inches [46 by 30 by 8cm]. Should boxes less in depth than three inches be used there is the risk of them drying out too frequently when the seedlings are established in the hot summer months. If this is allowed to happen the results would be fatal. Where it is found compulsory to use shallow boxes the wisest plan to assure uninterrupted growth is to transplant your seedlings from the boxes into the cold frames, before they become starved. Prepare the boxes in the following manner. Commence by using clean boxes which should have all cracks between the strips of boarding covered with a layer of thin clean crocks, over which, place a layer of medium size granulated peat.

The remainder of the box should be filled with a compost of two parts of lime-free loam, one part granulated peat, one part clean oak leaf-mould and one part coarse sand. Should there be the least doubt regarding the pureness of the leaf-mould replace it with an extra part of good granulated peat. This compost must be made quite firm in the boxes, paying special attention to the corners. The boxes are now ready to receive the seedlings. Commence by pricking off the most forward plants. These no doubt will be the deciduous Azaleas, followed by *R. discolor* and similar species or their hybrids, and finally the tiny little growers. These dwarf creeping varieties seem to prefer to be grown in square earthen pans, and need to be grown much closer together. In a box of the size mentioned 32 to 40 seedlings can be grown according to their vigour, and care must be exercised to handle all the seedlings by their cotyledons, and not by their stems.

When dealing with hybrids it is a wise policy to work two boxes at once, pricking the large seedlings into the one box, and the small ones of the same variety into the second box. On no account should the strongest plants be selected and the smaller ones destroyed, for being hybrids no two may flower alike, and it may be a case of "Quality - not Quantity". Too often with the raising of hybrid Rhododendrons we have found the strong coarse growers are the least attractive of the batch.

As soon as the seedlings are pricked out, give them a light watering-in with rain water, and keep the house on the closed side for a couple of weeks. Give the plants at this stage plenty of overhead fine spraying rather than too much watering. Under such conditions the young Rhododendrons will soon get root hold and grow away. While the plants are small they are like babies needing coddling, but as they grow larger they must have more air and become gradually hardened off until they are fit to be transferred to their cold frames.

At Exbury last year seed of deciduous Azaleas sown early in January produced seedlings six and more inches high by the end of June [15cm], which were then transplanted into a woodland nursery to become well established plants by the winter. Grown in this ideal manner the owner will have the pleasure of seeing the majority of these hybrid Azaleas flower after two years' growth.

Once the plants are hardened off they may be wintered in their boxes, to be transplanted into the frames during July and August of the same year as sowing. With this treatment the plants make a second late-growth, and care must be taken to guard against early autumn frosts, by closing the lights over them each night.

Before planting, the frames should be prepared with ample drainage, covered with dead bracken, to keep the soil from washing downwards. Four to six inches of soil will be quite sufficient [10 to 15cm], using the same compost as that used for the boxes, and making sure to leave considerable headroom between the soil and glass to prevent the young plants from touching the lights the first winter.

Plant the seedlings in rows, using discretion as to the distance apart, which should vary according to the type of Rhododendron being planted. It should be borne in mind that the plants will occupy their positions for over a year, and therefore the very strong growers will need to be planted 6 in. x 6 in. each way [15 x 15cm]. This distance will allow for ample balls of soil to be taken with the young Rhododendrons at shifting time. Immediately after planting in the frame shading will be necessary and for this purpose wooden laths are first rate.

During the summer following planting the plants may become too tall and touch the glass lights; in which case the glass should be completely removed and stored for safety. Mulch the uncovered seedlings with granulated peat or really good leaf-mould, and keep them well watered. Under such conditions no harm will come to the young Rhododendrons. During the summer months any Rhododendron growing under glass frames should have the lights removed during the evening, to remain off all night and be replaced in the early morning. The night rains and dew will help considerably to keep the plants growing in a healthy manner and save much watering and syringing.

The Effect Of *p*H On The Growth Of Rhododendron Seedlings:

Numerous composts of soil have been put forward as being the best for raising young Rhododendron plants from the seedling stage to the time of planting-out. Several workers have reported experiments designed to demonstrate the best *p*H for the growth of Rhododendron, yet these are difficult to compare because of the widely differing conditions of their experiments.

Chemists when referring to the measurement of the reactions of soils speak in terms of *p*H - this being a measure of the hydrogen-ion concentration. A *p*H of 7.0 is the neutral point where acidity and alkalinity are in balance; above this reaction you find the alkalinity increasing as the figures rise, while below a *p*H of 7.0 the reaction is acid, becoming more acid as the figures decrease. It is this acid range, from *p*H 3.0 to *p*H 7.0, in which Rhododendron enthusiasts are interested.

Dr. M. A. H. Tincker (see *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society,* Volume 61, pp. 200-204, 1936) found that his best results were obtained by growing Rhododendrons in the high fertility loam plots at Wisley, where the *p*H of the soil was 6.8. Tincker, however, only experimented with *Rhododendron ponticum* and *R. obtusum* var. *amoenum* [*R. kiusianum*], and was concerned with their capacities to withstand the full sun without watering or mulching. In such an experiment he naturally found the plants withstood the test in good loam much better than in a sandy or very acid soil.

American growers seem to vary considerably in their claims to have found the optimum *p*H for Rhododendrons. Carl. S. English Jr. and Edith Hardin English, writing in the *Handbook of Rhododendrons* published by "The Arboretum Foundation", Seattle, Washington (1946) state on page 37, that "Soils for Ericaceous plants such as Rhododendrons must be of acid reaction - *p*H 6.0 being about the common average reading of conditions under which these plants grow most successfully".

Mr. J. Wells (a large commercial American grower) writing in the *Nurseryman and Seedsman,* August 21, 1947, p. 28, claims that 4.0 is the best *p*H reading for the maximum results with Rhododendron seedlings. He cuts top loam soil and proceeds to mix peat and sand with it; he then finds he has a mixture of *p*H 6.0 to which he gives generous dressings of flowers of sulphur. Three months later his soil has dropped from 6.0 to 4.2, near enough to his required 4.0. Mr. Wells was dealing with the raising of *R. ponticum* seedlings for grafting stocks only.

The writer of this paper presumes that our American friends in the past have dealt mostly with the older hybrids of *R. catawbiense* and *R. ponticum.* These differ greatly from the more recent English hybrid Rhododendrons obtained by crossing the various new species imported into this country during the present century from Tibet, China, Burma and other oriental counties. To talk or write generally of the optimum *p*H for all we must realise the great differences between the various subsections which make up this genus. Species like *R. sinogrande* have very large leaves; when well grown they are up to 30 inches in length and half as wide [0.8m]. Others have leaves of various smaller sizes until we come to the alpine forms with almost Thyme-like foliage.

The difference of habit and growth is also fantastic. *R. protistum* attains 80 feet [24m] in height in its natural home while *R. keleticum* and *R. patulum* can be no more than an inch or so high [2.5cm]. Some are tender and others quite hardy; some need good shelter, others will grow in the most exposed conditions. Other members of the genus are epiphytic and in their wild state are guests of other plants, finding sustenance in the lichen, etc., which accumulates on the branches and trunks of large trees and shrubs.

With such a wide range of differences in their make-up it requires a very bold person to lay down definitely the true optimum *p*H to suit the hundreds of Rhododendron species with their thousands of hybrids now grown in this country.

During the past year, with the help of Mr. R. E. Tincknell of the Imperial College of Science, it was decided to carry out an experiment at Wisley designed to obtain the most suitable *p*H for the cultivation of the various types of Rhododendron seedlings. Although nothing conclusive has yet arisen from these preliminary experiments, it has certainly given much food for thought and opened up a field of research very little explored in this country up to this present date. The Wisley experiment deserves a long detailed account; this, however, is not the intention of the writer, but rather to write briefly, in a practical manner, giving his views as a grower, of the work carried out and to summarise the preliminary results.

At the commencement it was decided to test Rhododendron species belonging to seven different subsections in seven different mixtures of soils with *p*H values varying from 3.4 up to 6.8. Great difficulty was experienced in obtaining soil with a *p*H as low as 3.4, but with the addition of aluminium sulphate this low acidity was attained. The mixture was kept for three weeks before being used, but unfortunately the quantity of aluminium sulphate essential to produce this low *p*H seemed to exceed the limit of plant tolerance, resulting in the death of the majority of the seedlings. with great regret therefore, it was decided to delete this *p*H of 3.4 from the experiment, leaving six different composts with *p*H values of 4.0, 4.4, 5.3, 5.7, 6.3 and 6.8 respectively.

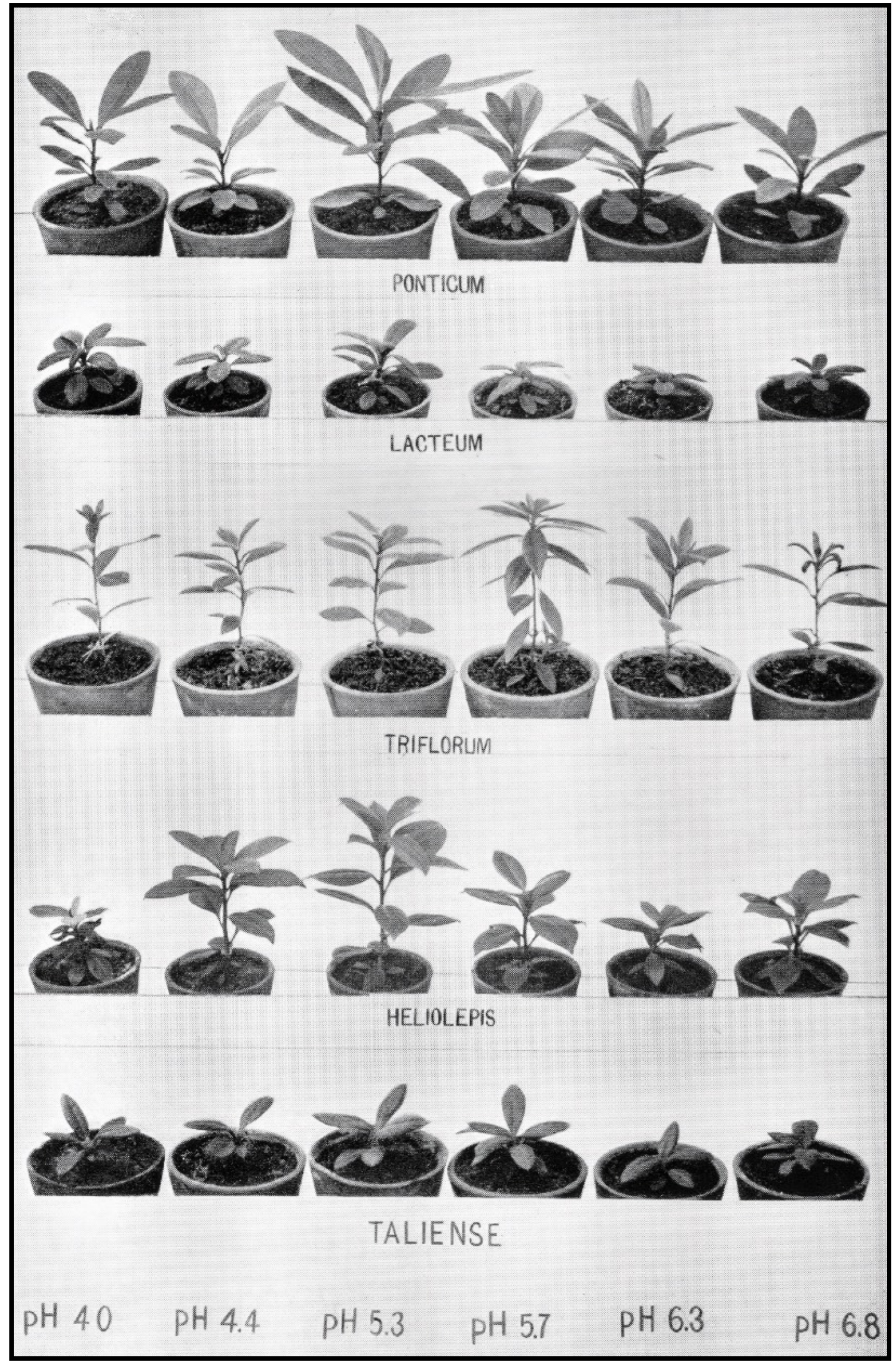
These various *p*H values were produced by mixing different proportions of granulated peat, leaf, lime-free loam and sand, the amount of loam used in a mixture more or less determining the value of the *p*H.

The compost with a *p*H of 5.3 consisted of the John Innes potting compost minus the ground limestone or chalk, i.e.: 7 parts loam by bulk, 3 parts peat by bulk and 2 parts coarse sand by bulk. To each bushel of compost was added 1½ oz. [42 grams] of Hoof and Horn ⅛ fine grist, 1½ oz. of superphosphate, and ¾ oz. [21 grams] of sulphate of potash. The highest *p*H mixture of 6.8 consisted of the same John Innes potting compost mixed with ¾ oz. of carbonate of lime per bushel. A Cambridge *p*H meter was used to obtain correct readings, as this method of recording *p*H values has proved the most accurate.

Rhododendron seedlings direct from their seed pans were pricked into boxes or pots containing the different composts as soon as the plants had developed their cotyledons. At the subsequent potting off, 12 plants of each species were established in pots with the corresponding soils.

By using seedlings and growing them in ideal conditions the effect of the different soil conditions would be quickly shown by the plants. It is well known that long established plants take some time to react to changed environment, and using such plants it would probably be necessary to continue observations for some years before conclusions could be reached.

The amount of growth made by the plants in the period of the experiment is shown in the photographs [opposite] which represent the best specimen from each group after twelve weeks of growth. Although the best plant of each group was chosen for photographing, there was no really great difference of growth between between the plants from any one compost.



The remaining plants (eleven of each group) were cut off at soil level, air dried, and weighed in order to get a more precise measurement of growth.

A visual assessment of growth from the photographs is also important however, as the production of a large weight of plant material is not the only desirable feature. For example a tall spindly plant may well weigh more than a compact sturdy one, although obviously the latter is to be preferred. Generally speaking there was a good agreement between the evidence of the photographs and that of the air-dried weights.

Discussion of Results.

As the writer has previously mentioned, he does not intend this paper to print tables of weights and measurements, as the experiment was of a preliminary nature, and of short duration, needing fuller investigation of the findings as the opportunity allows. However, it has more or less established certain important points. Outstanding amongst these is the fact that *Rhododendron ponticum* grows equally well over a wide range of different soils. This proves its worth as the best stock for use in grafting of the hardier hybrid Rhododendrons for general planting in many different soils and positions. It is also worthy of note that the *R. ponticum* plant growing in the compost *p*H 6.8, with lime added, is flourishing reasonably well.

Also of great interest is the fact that the *R. lacteum* plants appear much more at home in the more acid soils of 4.0, 4.4 and 5.3, and here it is regretted that the experiment did not contain the very acid soil of 3.4 which had to be deleted. This lovely Rhododendron is fast dying out in cultivation; many of the established large plants in this country are gradually fading away, and one wonders if this particular species needs a very high degree of acidity for perfect cultivation.

The Subsection Triflora plants, judging from their appearance in the photographs, need a moderately acid soil and will definitely not tolerate any trace of lime as shown by the miserable looking plant which has endeavoured to grow on *p*H 6.8 containing carbonate of lime.

This is not the case for Subsection Heliolepida, for here the plant in *p*H 6.8 does not object to that little degree of alkalinity, nevertheless it does best in a reasonably acid soil from 4.4 to 5.7. These particular plants are *R. rubiginosum,* which rather emphasise the late Mr. Lionel de Rothschild's theory that *R. rubiginosum* would grow in soil which was slightly alkaline; so much so, that we wondered if this particular plant held possibilities as a stock for such soils.

The rather uninteresting Subsection Taliensia plants seem to grow moderately well in most lime-free soils with a definite preference for a *p*H of 5.3 to 5.7, but in the case of the Section Pogonanthum species the best sets of plants were in the less acid soils.

Summary of Experiment.

Bearing in mind the rather severe limitations of the experiment, I believe that the optimum range of *p*H for Rhododendron seedlings is somewhere from 4.2 to 5.5, with the higher *p*H for the small-leaved varieties, and the more acid soil for the large-leaved species.

It should also be noted that the addition of fertilisers in the John Innes compost in the *p*H of 5.3 certainly seemed to benefit the plants. In fact, this point appears to be so important that in any future work to find optimum growth conditions, the feeding of the Rhododendrons should be studied as well as the *p*H values.

The writer has always been successful in raising Rhododendron seedlings in the following compost: 2 parts lime-free loam; 1 part granulated peat; 1 part good decayed oak leaf mould; and 1 part sand. Should there be any doubt as to the purity of your leaf-mould, or it is found impossible to obtain it, 2 parts lime-free loam, 2 parts granulated peat and 1 part sand will be quite a successful mixture. These soils usually have a *p*H somewhere about 4.2 to 5.5 according to the loam make up, and in such soils the majority of Ericaceous plants grow really well. The amount of sand may be altered to vary the texture of the loam, bearing in mind that sand added to soils does not in any way alter their *p*H values.

Rhododendrons From Layers For The Amateur And Commercial Grower:

This means of propagation is probably the most popular amongst amateur and commercial growers alike. Being very easy to perform it gives the amateur without any glass department the best and most successful means of increase. It has other advantages, as it can be done at any time of the year, frosty weather excepted. Naturally some seasons are to be preferred to others, but from the amateur's point of view he can stop and layer suitably placed branches just when he feels most inclined.

I propose to deal with the amateur and the commercial grower separately, as the former will be more than satisfied to get a few duplicates for himself and his friends, whereas the latter grows for sale and must think in terms of thousands.

The amateur, when selecting the branch he intends to layer, will not, I hope, make the mistake generally made, i.e., try to obtain a matured plant by layering too long a branch. If he does, the wood will be much too old and hard and will take far too long to respond to the wishes of the propagator; the resultant layer will be too leggy and unsightly ever to make a really good well-shaped plant. Instead he should peg his long branch down to the ground right up to the very young wood and instead of one large layer he will be able to obtain perhaps up to a dozen; for every tip, if properly fastened, will root much quicker than the larger wood and eventually make an ideal plant. Having selected the branch to layer, remove the soil to form a little narrow trench and before replacing your soil peg your branch sufficiently far from the tip to enable it to be turned and secured in an upright position. Remove all leaves attached to the portions about to be buried. The abrupt bending of the elbow below the soil is of the utmost importance, as upon it success or failure depends. This acute turn to form the elbow is the means of checking the flow of sap and thus creating for the branch the necessity of forming roots to obtain food for its existence. I seldom twist or in any bruise or cut our layers at the elbow, but rather peg it securely between the elbow and the parent plant. A small bamboo is pushed into the ground immediately past the elbow, leaving a portion out of the ground to secure the layer by tying it in a perfectly upright position.

To anchor layers and also to form the elbow, large sand stones may also be used. Should the soil be of poor quality good soil must be placed in the trench and around the layers. Guard against too sandy a soil, as this will be difficult to keep moist and uniform moisture is necessary for quick rooting. For this reason it is not advisable in districts with moderate rainfalls to mound up the soil over the branch to be layered, but rather to dig a small trench. Rhododendrons vary a great deal in the time taken for their layers to root. *R. hookeri, R. campylocarpum, R. barbatum* and *R. thomsonii,* most of which have a smooth type of bark, are slow to respond, and may take up to three years, while others with a rougher bark, will be fit to remove from the parent plants after a year to eighteen months. The majority, however, will need two years before producing sufficient roots.

The commercial grower needing numbers of plants must have a well organised stool-bed of Rhododendrons. The site chosen for this purpose should be in a sheltered position with full light, and my ideal would be to have irrigation overhead to reach all parts of the stool-bed. By this means I feel confident that in a large commercial undertaking the irrigation would be more than paid for by the quicker returns from rootings in the first crop.


A rhododendron completely layered to provide the maximum number of new plants.

With continued moisture through the dry summer months when the ground is warm, the layers would in many cases be ready to cut from the parent plants and lined out into nursery rows, quite a year earlier than without the watering. The soil in this stool-bed must not be on the heavy side, but sandy enough, without being too sandy, to encourage quick root action. Should it be poverty stricken, steps must be taken to improve its condition by adding spent hops or really short extra-rotten manure.

With but few exceptions the majority of the Rhododendrons layered in the large commercial nurseries in the country are of the old "Ironclad" type with plenty of *catawbiense, caucasicum* and *ponticum* blood in their make up. It is a well-known fact that such plants benefit from feeding. This may not be necessary in a garden or woodland of virgin soil, but in a nursery where crops of plants are continually being lifted something has to go back into the soil. I believe it was Goldsmith who wrote "Take a farthing from a thousand pounds, it will be a thousand pounds no longer". To form a large stool-bed a great number of parent plants will have to be sacrificed. These would have to be lifted with good balls of soil attached and arranged in double rows across the bed, and planted well on their sides in opposite directions, to enable every available branch to be easily layered into the ground. With very large parent plants of uneven size it would be difficult to arrange the stool-bed so as to be able to walk between the double rows of plants, but with moderately young even plants, about 3 to 4 ft. high [0.9 to 1.2m], quite a good arrangement can be made. With this type of layering it is seldom necessary to use pegs, yet occasionally good long ones will be needed to hold into position some stubborn branch. Before commencing to layer a plant the leaves must be removed from that portion to be placed underground. Experienced labour will be wanted to bend the young steps abruptly upwards and to make the whole thing rigid in the soil. To fix the layers firmly into the soil without pegs is not easy for beginners, and if there is any doubt at all use pegs. After the first year with plenty of moisture some may be rooted, and it may be wise to top-dress the ground around the remaining layers with peat or decayed bracken. By this time the layers will have grown considerably and will benefit with mulching. Keep the stool-bed free from weeds at all times. As soon as layers have developed sufficient roots they should be parted from the parent plant with a pair of secateurs and allowed to remain for a short time before being lifted and planted into the nursery beds. All leggy layers should be pruned back to form more bushy plants.

With Rhododendrons used for stooling in this manner only one crop can be obtained, but with a well-established deciduous Azalea stool-bed, crop after crop is possible. To make such a bed, first class Azalea plants on their own roots are most essential. The position selected must be in full sun, with rich lime-free soil of sandy composition, and completely free from perennial weeds. This is important as once the Azalea bed is established it can remain in the same position for upwards of fifty years, and with good culture produce a crop of layers every third year. If such a stool-bed is wisely managed one third of the bed of layers can be arranged to be ready the first year with the remaining two-thirds in subsequent years, giving a crop of layers continuously.

The Azalea plants should be planted in perfectly clean ground in rows 4 ft. apart and with 4 ft. between the plants in the rows [1.2m]. When well established the stool plants must be cut completely back to the ground level during the early spring when young growths will be furnished from the base.

As these become about 2 to 3 ft. long [0.6 to 0.9m] by the following spring they are ready to be bent over and layered leaving just their tips showing above the soil. Some should be rooted in twelve months, but in two years all layers are ready to be removed; then the stools are again pruned back to the base, resulting in a further supply of shoots ready to go down the following spring.

This cycle of events can be made to rotate almost indefinitely providing the beds are kept perfectly clean of weeds, and the stools are well fed with good short manure and peat after each crop. As the stool plants become older and are kept well nourished, the harvest of young shoots becomes more plentiful and stronger with each crop. Treated in this way Azaleas root easily from young wood making good healthy plants which are preferred to layers taken from old wood which seems slow in getting away.

The dwarf alpine Rhododendrons may be easily increased by layering. Simply cover some of their lower branches with sufficient sandy soil to keep them stationary, while leaving a portion of the leading growths above the soil level.

Rhododendrons From Cuttings:

The swinging bells of Rhodos, which glitter as they sway,
Are lovely things to "strike" and tend and grow to give away;
So mind you take some cuttings from all the plants that blow,
For there's not a single Rhodo that from cuttings will not grow.

Few of the Rhododendron growers of this country really believe the words of the verse which I have written to commence this section. They do, we know, strike thousands of evergreen "Kurumes" and I was glad to see, while visiting several growers recently, that attempts were being made to root a much wider range of Rhododendrons; but not quite the full range that is possible.

I would not go as far as to say that all Rhododendrons are a commercial proposition when grown from cuttings, but I do know that quite large numbers of species, together with their hybrids, do root easily enough to demand serious consideration. This means of increase is most important with many of the grand new hybrids, as only by vegetative reproduction can they be perpetuated. The writer, before the last war, had perhaps more than partial success with rooting most of the species of Rhododendrons and he firmly believes that it is possible to strike all Rhododendrons from cuttings.

When it is realised that as an experiment just one leaf of *R. sinogrande* was tested, and after a few weeks it produced plenty of roots, it certainly gives hope for the rooting of practically any from cuttings. The leaf was so large that it could not be placed in the propagating case in an upright position, and I well remember how I regretted having to cut such a beautiful, large leaf in half, leaving the bottom portion, which was 9 in. long and 7 in. wide [23 x 18cm], to be placed in a pot. This rooted curiosity was kept for more than a year, but as the leaf had no growth-bud attached when inserted, there was no possibility of its making a plant.

This experience has only been recorded to try and illustrate to growers that, given the right material and the right conditions, cuttings of Rhododendrons will produce roots. To root the many *Philadelphus* species and their hybrids the propagator could make a tour of the garden one day during the summer months, gather cuttings of the complete genus, insert them, and probably obtain 100 per cent. success. This would be most unprofitable with Rhododendrons, as they differ tremendously in their behaviour; some commence to flower in January or February while the latest do not bloom until July or August.

With the exception of the "alpine species", all Rhododendrons are best grown from cuttings consisting of the current year's growth. When it is realised that these new growths do not break and grow until after the flowering period, it is obvious that it is impracticable to treat them all the same if first class results are to be expected. In these days of scientific discoveries, it is not surprising that the scientist has come to our aid with growthpromoting substances, both in liquid and powdered form, called "Hormones". I have seen and heard of good results from using either kind, for general propagation, and there is no doubt that these preparations do stimulate and accelerate the formation of roots on cuttings.

Although there is help to be obtained from these growth substances, the scientist cannot wholly succeed without the aid of the practical man; the two, I feel, should travel hand in hand and take all that each has to offer. Success in propagation will always attend the gardener with "green fingers", and the more difficult plants, trees and shrubs will still need the expert hand and expert knowledge. Unless we know the type of cutting necessary, and the correct time to take that cutting, we shall never succeed with certain difficult-rooting subjects, even if we soak our cuttings for a month in growth substances.

The successful propagator must study his Rhododendrons, and get to know them and their history thoroughly. For example, it would be disastrous to take hundreds of cuttings of the Subsection Lapponica species and place them in a heated frame with bottom heat. The percentage of rooted cuttings would be very small, as the majority would damp off owing to the too damp and warm conditions. On the other hand the larger-leafed species, which come from lower and warmer altitudes, must have those warm, moist, closed conditions which are death to the Lapponica. Javanese Rhododendrons again, must, of course, have warm treatment to root, and grow well and are definitely warm greenhouse plants.

Here we have, then, this vast and most interesting genus of plants, all related, but all demanding more or less different treatment if we are to be wholly successful in propagating them from cuttings. It is useless to take all on the same day; a matter of months separates the optimum time for inserting cuttings with such widely differing types of wood.

It might seem that I am endeavouring to make the rooting of Rhododendron cuttings appear very complicated, but this is far from my thoughts. The whole secret (if secret there be) of success is to remember that:

(1) The larger the leaf and wood of the plant the softer the cutting and the warmer the conditions needed.

(2) The smaller the leaf and wood, the harder must be the wood of the cutting and the colder the conditions for rooting.

All cuttings, if possible, should be taken from good, free-growing, healthy stock-plants. Should these plants be suffering from drought they should be well watered and allowed to recover before cuttings are taken. Propagating material received by post is best placed in water for a few hours and allowed to revive before insertion into their rooting compost. Personally I prefer to take soft cuttings of all shrubs early in the morning before the sun is hot, or during a dull misty day, as then the plants are at their maximum vitality. When making soft heel cuttings do not strain the cutting when separating it from the parent plant, but get the thumb well down to the base of the cutting and press downwards, at the same time holding the branch firmly with the other hand. These heel cuttings must be taken with discretion or the plant may suffer in consequence.

Three parts of good sharp sand, and one part fine granulated peat make an ideal rooting medium for Rhododendron cuttings, providing arrangements are made to pot-off the cuttings as soon as they are rooted into the same compost as advised previously for seedlings. Good results have been obtained from a type of mica heated to expand to 10 to 15 times its original volume, producing a product which is highly absorbent and retentive of both air and water. This "Vermiculite", as it is called, is sold in various grades of acidity and alkalinity, and care is necessary to obtain the former type for Rhododendron cuttings, leaving the latter for the lime-loving plants.

After much experience I strongly advise placing the soft cuttings of the larger-leafed Rhododendrons around the inside edge of pots, rather than into the propagating bed itself. Such cuttings demand a moist and uniform atmosphere, a porous soil, and to be provided with bottom heat; they must not be permitted to flag at any time. The cuttings should touch the side of the pot when inserted, as the extra uniform drainage so afforded encourages the formation of roots.

With such easy rooting subjects as the Kurumes, R. 'Malvaticum', *R. obtusum* var. *amoenum* or *japonicum* [both now classified as *R. kiusianum*], *R. kaempferi* and their hybrids, together with the members of the large group of evergreen Azalea species, there is little to be gained by using pots. These can safely be dibbled straight into the bed of the propagating case during the month of July, with every prospect of complete success.

With the larger soft cuttings, 2½, 3, 3½ or 4 in. pots [6.4, 7.6, 8.9 or 10.2cm], according to the size of the cuttings, will be found convenient to hold several in each pot, allowing a reasonable space between each cutting around the inside of the pot. Short, new current year's growths should be removed from the parent plants with heels attached, and if the cuttings are correctly selected, no removal of superfluous leaves will be necessary, as such cuttings will be found to be well balanced.

Where a large range of cuttings have to be struck a commencement with the very large-leafed ones would be necessary towards the end of June, others during July, then September and October, to finish up with the finer-leafed Lapponica species during December. These smaller alpine Rhododendrons root very easily from firm, even two year old wood without bottom heat under bell-glasses in the cool greenhouse or on a shaded north border.

A summary of the times to take cuttings of the various kinds of Rhododendrons may be helpful; I shall not endeavour to give anything like a complete list, but sufficient, I hope, to serve as a guide for the propagator. It must be remembered that to give dates for the correct timing of cuttings of any tree or shrub is a rather dangerous undertaking, as in different years the seasons may vary as much as several weeks either early or late.

If an attempt is to be made on the Grandia, Falconera, Fortunea, Arborea and Irrorata subsections, a brisk bottom heat will be necessary and the cuttings inserted about the middle of June. Edgeworthia, Tsutsusia, Maddenia, Thomsonia, Barbata, Campanulata and Choniastrum subsections and sections, with their hybrids, are best rooted in July with the aid of bottom heat. Cinnabarina and Neriiflora subsections containing such good plants as *R. cinnabarinum, R. concatenans, R. keysii, R. forrestii* Repens, *R. catacosmum, R. chaetomallum, R. haematodes, R. pocophorum, R. neriiflorum* and Euchaites Group, *R. sperabile, R. aperantum, R. dichroanthum, R. didymum, R. sanguineum, R. scyphocalyx,* and many others are, in my opinion, best taken in August and early September. The large Triflora subsection with *R. augustinii, R. yunnanense, R. hanceanum, R. oreotrephes, R. x exquisitum, R. keiskei, R. lutescens, R. triflorum, R. xanthocodon, R. davidsonianum, R. searsiae,* and *R. siderophyllum,* all small-flowered free-blooming shrubs, you should strike in late September or early October with slight bottom heat. The Glauca subsection, all with bent styles, root equally well during October.

Section Pogonanthum, and Subsections Campylogyna and Saluenensia, embracing *R. calostrotum, R. prostratum, R. saluenense, R. cephalanthum, R. primuliflorum, R. anthopogon, R. campylogynum* Myrtilloides Group, *R. sargentianum, R. trichostomum* and *R. kongboense,* all dwarf treasures, root easily if taken in late October or early in the month of November and inserted around the inside of small pots, later to be placed in a cold house or on a north border under bell glasses.

Last of all the Rhododendrons to be rooted, are the thin-leafed, Subsection Lapponica species, including *R. x microleucum, R. rupicola* ssp. *chryseum, R. flavidum, R. impeditum, R. nivale, R. fastigiatum, R. intricatum, R. scintillans* and *R. telmateium;* all these may be taken during open weather in December with every hope of successful rooting.

I will not dwell longer on Rhododendrons from cuttings, except to add a few lines on deciduous Azaleas. These root easily enough from cuttings taken soft about the end of June or early in July, and placed in a propagating frame with bottom heat. The difficulty is not with the rooting, but when efforts are made to winter them. Should the apex of the cutting develop a flowering bud the plant usually fails to start into growth the following spring. When selecting cuttings it is wise to take the less strong ones as these may retain their growth tips. However, fair results are obtained by striking deciduous Azaleas in cold conditions under bell glasses during the early autumn, and allowing them to remain until the following spring, but the best means of multiplication of these plants is by layering.

The Grafting Of Rhododendrons:

Present-day Rhododendron propagation is a vast subject and to do justice to this paper I should write at length about the art of grafting. However, I am fast using up my space and time in this conference, and rather than write of different types of grafting I intend to give the majority of my space to a few suggestions on stocks. I have already mentioned earlier in this paper the adaptability of *R. ponticum* to a wide range of different *p*H values and types of soils. I think it is true to say that *R. ponticum* will grow successfully in a wider range of soils than any other Rhododendron. This obviously makes it most acceptable for grafting Rhododendrons generally. It has other advantages, being quite hardy, and having foliage easily identified should suckers develop at the base of the stock. This cannot be put forward as an excuse for the use of *R. luteum* as stock plants for the grafting of deciduous Azaleas.

Although we must, from a commercial point of view, accept the grafting of Rhododendrons, this writer does not consider it necessary to graft Azaleas. Very little of this is done in this country, but Belgian and Dutch growers use this stock intensively, and the plants find a ready sale over here. I cannot agree with the theory that grafted Azaleas make better shaped plants than layers. If these layers are taken as they should be, from young maiden growths, they break low and make perfect plants. Suckers of *R. luteum* are very hard to distinguish from the grafted scion and should the opportunity be missed to remove the suckers when they are in flower, the chance has gone for another year, when by that time the suckers have more or less taken command. We have accepted in principle that *R. ponticum* is the best stock obtainable for the grafting of practically all Rhododendrons, but I am almost convinced that the possibility of incompatibility of stock and scion cannot be excluded when the grower wishes to graft a *R. sinogrande* or *R. falconeri* hybrid.

Judging from my experience, there is no difficulty making the union, as the scion callouses over quite easily, but afterwards the plant fails to grow satisfactorily. About the year 1938 the late Mr. Lionel de Rothschild received a First Class Certificate for his most beautiful yellow-flowered hybrid R. 'Fortune' (*sinogrande* x *falconeri*). At the same time he gave scions to some of the leading growers in this country. Now, eleven years afterwards, I do not know of a grafted plant from those scions which has grown well. At the end of March, 1948, I personally grafted three scions of this particular plant. Two were saddle grafted on *R. praestans* from Subsection Grandia and the other on *R. basilicum* from Subsection Falconera. Unfortunately the stocks were just lifted from the open with small balls of soil attached, grafted and then plunged in granulated peat in the propagating frame. Yet all three calloused beautifully and have grown away well. This should

A rhododendron saddle graft.

prove most interesting, as at the moment they appear to have more leaves than the plant on Battleston Hill which was grafted eleven years ago.

Just the reverse is my experience with hybrids of *R. lacteum.* Many of the progeny of this glorious plant seem fastidious, yet at Wisley *R. lacteum* hybrids root-grafted on *R. ponticum* are wonderfully good healthy plants three years from grafting. I have mentioned these little experiences hoping it may give food for thought to propagators who may have to perpetuate, by grafting, some of these newer Rhododendron hybrids.

It was my intention to write at length about stocks for grafting as I am fully aware that some of our leading growers have of recent years had much difficulty in getting the success they anticipated with their grafting.

There is no doubt that some commercial growers are missing the old craftsmen - the dear old men who had lived in the same jobs all their lives. These experts of their profession worshipped the knife which did their work for them, and was that knife sharp! Perhaps the steel in those older days was better, it certainly kept a sharp edge longer than present-day knives. Today much is heard about a fungus which ruins the scions and makes them fade off, and to counteract this it is held that the *p*H of the potting soil and the plunging material must be 4.0 or below. The fungus concerned is *Phytophtora cinnamomi* and seems to be well known in the United States of America, where it attacks the stock plants with disastrous results.

It is only natural, therefore, that growers in this country should be concerned when they notice their scions wilting after grafting, and that, if they observe any fungus, they think that it must be the cause of the trouble.

To date *Phytophtora cinnamomi* has been little studied over here, and it seems to the writer most likely that the fungus on scions of Rhododendrons in our establishments is a secondary agent, and that part of the trouble is bad workmanship caused by a blunt knife injuring the tissues of the cambium and thus preventing a perfect union.

There is no doubt at all that the condition of the stock has much to do with the take of Rhododendron grafts. This being so, more attention should be given to the selection of seed for grafting stock purposes. Do not gather the seed from any *R. ponticum* without due thought, for many growing plants will have been cross-fertilised with some other pollen.

Pay full attention to the growing of the young *R. ponticum* seedlings, which must be sown, pricked off, and grown-on under ideal conditions, and when potted and stood outside, they must be plunged to save watering and to keep them in an upright position so that they have every chance to form straight-stems, and to become well established in their pots before being brought in for working.

How often do we see *R. ponticum* stocks in small pots, just more or less thrown about - like so much rubbish. Left to look after themselves and only getting water haphazardly, during the hot summer months? These are plants that will be carefully gathered up in the spring with the expectation of a high percentage of takes when grafted, but to get first class results from grafting Rhododendrons the operator must have first class material to work with. Some growers use the side graft when grafting their Rhododendrons, others like the saddleback best. Personally I prefer the latter; however, the most important thing to remember is to graft as low as possible, this giving much less risk of suckers, with a much greater chance of getting the scion in time on its own roots.

The most difficult times with Rhododendron grafting is the period immediately following the callousing over of the scions. Then pains must be taken to harden the callus off sufficiently, to enable the grafted plants to be taken out of the propagating case from the close conditions and bottom heat to be placed on open benches in the same house without flagging taking place.

It is of no use just hoping that all is well - dumping the whole lot, on the open bench, and, in a day or so, rushing half of them back into the propagating case once more.

Every morning while the Rhododendrons are in the propagating frame the lights should be lifted to give a little air and to dry off the excessive moisture which accumulates on the glass. During the early weeks these should be up only long enough to be dried, but as the weeks pass so must the lights be lifted for longer periods, increasing to an hour each day.

After about six weeks many of the scions will have calloused over, and it is at this period that the propagator must be more than observant and study his plants almost individually. Continue to lengthen the lifting period of the lights daily to more than an hour, and at the same time keep a sharp look-out for the least signs of flagging. If this occurs, syringe the plants and close the frame immediately. On the other hand, if only a few suffer, these must be given a place on their own at one end where it will be possible to give them the warmer closed conditions for a longer period. As the lights are left off longer, so will the callus on the scions become harder, preparing the plants to be fit enough for lifting out and placing on benches in the same house. Failing this the lights on the propagating case may be removed altogether, leaving the grafted plants where they are. The selection of the wilting Rhododendrons must continue the whole time placing them with other members of their own category. "Patience and perseverance will overcome most difficulties".

Root Grafting:

Much has been written during recent years singing the praises of root grafting of Rhododendrons, yet to date I have not heard that it has been taken up commercially by any firm. The difficulty of procuring the necessary amount of suitable roots for stocks may be the cause of this, or the little extra time involved over the complete operation. With high wages to meet at the end of the week, experiment is certainly discouraged, but even if our nurserymen cannot entertain the thought of a graft without suckers, it certainly should appeal to private owners of Rhododendron gardens, and to Botanical Gardens. Here the question of numbers and price of production does not arise. Root grafting is by no means a new form of grafting, and it can probably safely be argued that had it proved practical it would have been universally adopted years ago.

January and early February is the best time to root-graft, and it is therefore not advisable to continue right up to the end of March, which is possible with the usual mode of stem grafting.

A good supply of *R. ponticum* roots should be obtained and accommodated in congenial conditions, i.e., in a warm house, and covered with damp peat or moss, for on no account must the roots be allowed to become dry and hardened. These roots are readily procured at will under old *R. ponticum* plants in established thickets in woodlands of long standing. Should grafting time coincide with the destruction of large unwanted bushes of *R. ponticum* an opportunity is afforded to select really ideal portions. Try and obtain roots to correspond with the size of your scions and have a fair amount of fibrous roots attached. The thick part of the root to be used for the grafting must be cut down to an inch and a half above the bunch of fibrous roots [3.8cm]. This is important as, after grafting and tying firmly with raffia, the graft is potted with the union beneath the soil. It is then placed in the propagating case with bottom heat of 60°-70° F. [16 to 21°C] and treated in the same way as advised for ordinary grafting. Again the writer prefers to use the saddle graft for these roots, but many advocate the side graft. By so doing they consider the plant has a better opportunity of eventually becoming established on its own roots.

In this method, a small incision is made in the scion starting about half an inch above the basal end [1.3cm]. The cut is continued upwards for a distance of nearly three quarters of an inch [1.9cm]. Next take the root and cut the top into the shape of a wedge, which is pressed firmly into the incision in the scion. Care is needed to ensure that both cambiums meet perfectly. The union must be bound together with raffia or soft string, afterwards to be potted as if it were an ordinary plants with roots, bearing in mind the necessity of covering the union with soil.

Conclusion:

It is hoped that this paper will, perhaps, help some grower to perpetuate a beautiful hybrid or obtain the germination of a rare species or new hybrid. If this should prove to be the case, the author will be amply repaid for the time taken in writing the article.

Discussion:

The Chairman:

Mr. Hanger has given us a very interesting talk. My experience with regard to propagation is that almost every propagator has slightly different ideas, and when it comes to the interpretation - even if they do the same thing - they very often differ as to why they do it.

First Question:

In layering, do you believe in cutting away the layer eventually from the parent or leaving it until the last - in some cases about twelve or eighteen months - before cutting it away from the parent?

Mr. Hanger:

It is advisable to cut it away from the parent and leave it in its established place quite a while before removing it to your nursery or wherever you like to put it. You should not cut it away from the parent until it is well rooted. You can easily test when it is advisable to cut them away from the parent, but leave them in that position for a few more weeks, perhaps a month, before shifting. But you should never leave your layers on a plant - if it is a good hybrid - longer than a short time after they are well rooted. I am talking now, more from the amateur's point of view. When you put down layers on a plant and leave the layers there attached long after rooted, the parent plant deteriorates terribly. Again, if you leave the layers there after being cut off for too long a time they rob the parent plant of food. You should remove your layers away from the parent plant as soon as possible after they are well rooted.

Second Question:

Do you make an incision in the layer by cutting it in two, or do you make a light cut?

Mr. Hanger:

No, I make no incisions at all. I have tried all ways, and I find - especially with the rough-barked Rhododendrons, provided they get that very abrupt turning - if you put down your layers (as advocated this morning) with the young growth, you can make that abrupt turning quite easily. By making an abrupt turning, you will, by that means, check the flow of sap and the plants start to grow and root quite easily. It is a real knack. Should you fail to make that abrupt turning without stakes, I should advise you to have stakes. Of course, you can make that abrupt turning with the aid of sandstones, and the stone is a very good thing because it keeps the layer very moist. Hold them down with stones.

Mr. Nearing:

How much soil do you put down on top of your layer? How deep is the branch in itself?

Mr. Hanger:

Well, you would require a trowel and dig down in a scoop quite several inches. Get down to the moisture, it is no good just putting it a couple of inches under - not in sandy soil [5cm]. You want to get down and make a real good scoop, quite 4 inches down [10cm].

Fourth Question:

Propagating by seed - have you tried sowing them on sphagnum moss?

Mr. Hanger:

Yes, I have tried all kinds of things and you can get good results on sphagnum moss, but I find that granulated peat is quite easy. No trouble at all. It is just child's play, and they do grow so very well in it and what is more, they live for years in it.

Fifth Question:

Can I ask if you have had any experience of using sawdust as a mulch for Rhododendrons?

Mr. Hanger:

Yes, there is a "for" and "against". I have heard about good results, but I have seen some very bad results, and I am not sure about it. I do know this much, that if you are keen to use sawdust, you must be very very careful. It must be old sawdust and, of course, it should be Oak or something like that - not the Fir type. But I myself remember a nursery which was mulched with sawdust - new sawdust - only two or three years ago, and within six weeks the whole bed of layers turned yellow (the layers that had just been planted out) and the sawdust had to be raked off. I have heard from certain people that it is a very good thing when mixed with certain soils, but I have never found very much help from it.

Sir G. Loder, Bt:

We have heard yesterday, that the Rhododendrons in their native habitats each select their particular bit of soil they like. I suppose you have got no reasons about the acidity of those types of soil to help us? Nothing is known about them?

Mr. Hanger:

No; these different *p*H values for various species or various subsections are a thing we have not yet gone into. I, myself, think there is a lot in it. Of course, there does not sound much difference between, shall we say, 5.8 and 3.8, but there really is a lot of difference - a tremendous lot of difference. The lower you go in acidity, the higher the percentage of differences. There is a far greater difference from 4 to 3.4, than it is from 5 to 4.4, but I cannot help you in your question. I have never read or heard about it. It would be very interesting too, very interesting.

Seventh Question:

At what age should the hybrid 'Fortune' flower? It should be approaching its flowering age at a size of about 6 or 8 feet [1.8 to 2.4m]. Should it begin to flower soon?

Mr. Hanger:

Is that from seed?

Questioner:

No, it is a graft.

Mr. Hanger:

If it is grafted, there is nothing to stop it flowering right away, is there?

Questioner:

I have one at 6 or 8 feet that is already starting to flower.

Mr. Hanger:

One that I grafted last year has a flower this year. If you take a graft or layer you have a portion of the old plant. If you have a seedling you have a new plant and you may have to wait twelve or fifteen years.

Mr. Rose:

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to ask a question, but I am going to presume for two minutes to give some comments on the value of root grafting. I started root grafting about twelve or fourteen years ago, and the results of that grafting can be seen today. I think it is a very fine form of propagation. We know that *R. ponticum* is a hardy also a stronger rooting plant. I do not think that root grafting will ever be taken up commercially unless the nurserymen are more successful than I have been, because about 85 per cent. is the most I have ever got to take, but the results of those which have been grafted onto the roots of the *ponticum* are rather remarkable. I could show you at Townhill one plant of 'Loderi King George' which is 10 feet high [3m], a really magnificent plant, which is growing in nothing but pure yellow clay, and I have many other Rhododendrons growing in similar soil today which have been root-grafted. I know that all species of Rhododendrons are not compatible with *ponticum* and possibly it is for this reason that those mentioned by Mr. Hanger failed. But *lacteums,* 'Wightii', and most of the hybrids grow very well indeed on the roots of *ponticum* and we have the additional advantage that we get no suckers, and I would strongly recommend, to anyone who has a Rhododendron garden, that special method of propagation.

Dr. Bowers of U.S.A:

Mr. Chairman, with regard to an enquiry which was made on testing the *p*H of Rhododendrons in the wild, I would like to say that a number of tests made by Dr. Parry (?) and also by the late Dr. Colville in the United States on the native Rhododendrons growing in the wild, indicate that the optimum range seems to be from about 4.5 to about 5.3.

There is this other observation also. The work of the physiologist Dr. Knudsen, indicates that the solubility of iron salts in the soil, which seems to be the critical matter concerned in *p*H, varies with respect to whether the acid is an organic acid or whether it is an inorganic acid. In the case of an inorganic acid such as aluminium sulphate, the solubility of the iron salts only goes to a certain distance. For instance, with an iron salt in the ferrous or soluble stage, it will remain ferrous only to about 4.5 or a little higher, but with an organic acid it will go up one full *p*H higher and still remain in its ferrous condition.

Ninth Question:

Could you tell me how you lowered your *p*H in your experiments on hybrids? Did you use aluminium sulphate or sulphur?

Mr. Hanger:

We used aluminium sulphate, and we had to use it to the extreme to get, or try to get, a *p*H of 3.4. There it became absolutely toxic to plant life, and all the Rhododendrons died off.

Questioner:

Sulphur itself would not do?

Mr. Hanger:

We have tried flowers of sulphur, and Mr. Slocock has been using it a lot. It does bring down the *p*H greatly - flowers of sulphur added to the soil. I cannot tell you what the proportion is, but there is a test being made now by Mr. Hannon of the Imperial College of Science, and by the end of this summer I believe we shall have all the answers to the amount of flowers of sulphur necessary to bring down the *p*H, shall we say from 4.6 to 3.6.

I would like to stress Mr. Rose's few remarks about *Rhododendron ponticum* as a stock. At Wisley you will find on Battleston Hill Rhododendron 'Loderi' root-grafted on a *ponticum* about 3 feet high [0.9m], in full flower with twelve fine flowers on them after four years. You will also find quite a lot of the better *lacteum* Hybrids which are being rather tiresome to grow on their own roots, upon this *ponticum* root stock. They are really fine healthy-looking plants. That may be the answer for good *lacteums;* instead of finding low *p*H put them on the *ponticum* stock.

The Chairman:

Well, we have had an interesting Paper and an interesting discussion. We might discuss here the matter of relation to *p*H for all day and all the week, but, as has already been indicated, when one speaks of the range of *p*H in normal soils, one is really dealing with a whole complex of phenomena. You not only have this extraordinarily wide range of hydrogen ion concentration - and those figures Mr. Hanger referred to are of course negative logarithmic numbers; when you speak of *p*H 3, of course you are dealing with a concentration of hydrogen ions which is 10,000 times greater than it is at *p*H 7, which is some difference! That is just one fact, this enormous range of hydrogen ion concentration, and there are corresponding changes in the reciprocals of hydroxyl ion concentration. The hydroxyl ions are important for some species, the hydrogen ions for others. But with these changes in concentration you have, as has already been referred to, the changes in solubility. At those low *p*H values, that is high acidities, you have high solubility of iron salts and of aluminium, and we know that plants vary enormously, even in the same genus sometimes - I do not know what it is in Rhododendrons - as to their tolerance of aluminium ions. Aluminium ions come within a comparatively narrow range with some plants in the change from toxicity to tolerance. In the same way, you have considerable tolerance for the "ions of iron" if you will forgive the use of that rather confusing phraseology. Then when you pass beyond the *p*H 7, you have increased availability for ions like molybdenum, which we know are necessary for plants, and of course, a decrease in the availability of ion salts, for instance the ions of iron, and also the ions of manganese. So the whole thing is a very complex picture, and I only hope that Mr. Hanger will be able to analyse that very complex picture for Rhododendrons.

I am sure you wish to accord your very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Hanger for his interesting paper.

Francis Hanger's propagation paper was published in *The Rhododendron Year Book 1949.* The botanic nomenclature of the original text has been updated to reflect the current classification, while a shorter updated article *The Raising Of Rhododendrons From Seed,* can be found in *The Rhododendron And Camellia Year Book 1957.*

The Deciduous Azalea Registrations:

Avon
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Medium

Calder
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Medium

Cam
AM 1959
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Medium

Cherwell
AM 1967
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Low

Clyde
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: Mid May
Height: Medium

Dart
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Pink

Deben
AM 1969
Flower Colour: Yellow

Dee
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Medium

Derwent
AM 1967
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: Mid May
Height: Medium

Deveron
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Medium

Fal
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink
Height: Medium

Frome
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow-reddish-orange
Height: Medium

Hanger's Flame
Flower Colour: Orange
Flowering Time: May

Humber
AM 1962
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Tall

Kensey
AM 1963
Flower Colour: Yellow-pink
Height: Medium

Liffey
Flower Colour: White
Height: Low

Medway
AM 1959
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Medium

Mersey
AM 1963
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Nene
Flower Colour: Pink-yellowish-pink
Height: Medium

Orwell
AM 1966
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Medium

Ribble
AM 1963
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Medium

Severn
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Medium

Stour
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Tamar
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Medium

Tay
AM 1959
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Medium

Tees
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Medium

Thames
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Neyron Rose
Height: Low

Trent
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Yellow-orange
Height: Medium

Tweed
Flower Colour: Red

Tyne
AM 1962
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Mid May
Height: Tall

Wansbeck
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Medium

Waveney
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: Mid May
Height: Medium

Windrush
AM 1970
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink-white
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Wye
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Medium

R. 'Avon' AM 1958


R. 'Avon' AM 1958


R. 'Avon' AM 1958


R. 'Avon' AM 1958


R. `Calder'

R. 'Calder'


R. 'Calder'

R. 'Cherwell'

R. 'Frome' AM 1958

R. 'Frome' AM 1958

R. 'Frome' AM 1958

R. ‘Hanger’s Flame’


R. 'Hanger's Flame'

R. 'Medway' AM 1959

R. 'Medway' AM 1959

R. 'Stour' AM 1958

R. 'Stour' AM 1958

R. 'Tay' AM 1959

R. 'Trent' AM 1958

The Elepidote Registrations:

Arena
haematodes X 'Matador'

Beefeater
elliottii X 'Fusilier'
AM 1958 & FCC 1959
Flower Colour: Geranium Lake
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Tall

Billy Budd
'May Day' X *elliottii*
AM 1957
Flower Colour: Turkey Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Biscuit Box
discolor X *elliottii*
AM 1964
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Burma Road
'Fabia Tangerine' X 'Romany Chal'
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Yellowish-apricot-rose
Flowering Time: Late June-July
Height: Medium

Constable
'Jervis Bay' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1961
Flower Colour: Chartreuse Green
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Medium

Coral Island
'Fabia' X *elliottii*

Coral Reef
'Fabia' X 'Goldsworth Orange'
AM 1954
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink-apricot
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Medium

Degas
elliottii X *haematodes*
Flower Colour: Red
Height: Low

Eddystone
'Adriaan Koster' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1964
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow

El Greco
'Jalisco' X 'Break of Day'
AM 1961
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink
Height: Medium

Emerald Isle
'Idealist' X 'Exbury Naomi'
AM 1956
Flower Colour: Chartreuse Green
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Gloriana
'Fabia' X 'Goldsworth Orange'
AM 1953
Flower Colour: Claret-rose-empire-rose
Flowering Time: June
Height: Medium

Lady Bowes Lyon
'Pilgrim' X *yakushimanum*
AM 1962
Flower Colour: White-rose-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Lascaux
'Fabia' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1954
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Moonshine
'Adriaan Koster' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1952
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Moonshine Bright
'Adriaan Koster' X *wardii* Litiense
Flower Colour: Lemon Yellow
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Moonshine Crescent
'Adriaan Koster' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1960
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Moonshine Glow
'Adriaan Koster' X *wardii* Litiense
Flower Colour: Uranium Green
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Moonshine Supreme
'Adriaan Koster' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1953
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Nestucca
fortunei X *yakushimanum*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Mid May
Height: Low

New Comet
'Idealist' X 'Naomi Exbury'
AM 1957
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow-pink
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Perfect Lady
yakushimanum X *scyphocalyx*
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Low

Petia
'Albatross' X 'Sarita Loder'
AM 1962
Flower Colour: White-Amaranth Rose
Height: Tall

Pink Ghost
yakushimanum X 'Pauline'
AM 1987
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Raspberry Ripple
yakushimanum X 'Pauline'
Flower Colour: White-purplish-red
Height: Medium

Renoir
'Pauline' X *yakushimanum*
AM 1961
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Royal Blood
elliottii X 'Rubens'
AM 1954
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Serena
'Jalisco' X 'Vanessa'
AM 1956
Flower Colour: Carmine-rose

Shepherd's Morning
'Norman Gill' X 'Naomi Stella Maris'
Flower Colour: Pink

Telstar
'Pauline' X *yakushimanum*
AM 1966
Flower Colour: Rose Madder
Height: Low

Tensing
'Fabia' X 'Romany Chal'
AM 1953
Flower Colour: Camellia Rose
Flowering Time: June
Height: Medium

Tequila Sunrise
yakushimanum X 'Borde Hill'
AM 1985
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Tall

Tosca
'Exbury Naomi' X *wardii* Litiense
AM 1959
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Medium-tall

Weybridge
'Sir Frederick Moore' X *yakushimanum*
Flower Colour: Pink-white-Tyrian Rose
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Wisley Pearl
yakushimanum X *smirnowii*
AM 2004
Flower Colour: White-purplish-pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Medium

Woodcock
'Elizabeth' X *hyperythrum*
AM 1986
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

R. 'Beefeater' AM 1958 & FCC 1959

R. ‘Beefeater’ AM 1958 & FCC 1959

R. 'Beefeater'
elliottii x 'Fusilier'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H4 Late May-June 2m x 3m

Backcrossing 'Fusilier' with its seed parent *R. elliottii* did nothing to improve the hardiness of the subsequent generation, but Francis Hanger's 'Beefeater' is much more suited to smaller gardens than either of its progenitors, being a wide-spreading dome rarely more than 2m high rather than a small tree. The flowers are held in flat-topped trusses of up to 26 corollas, geranium-lake-red in tone and fairly heavily (but palely) spotted on all the lobes, with five dark crimson nectar pouches at the base of the throat. The colour intensity, however, quickly fades if subjected to prolonged spells of strong sunlight, so a planting site providing ample shade for the two or three hours either side of midday is essential in the south, with that requirement morphing into a dappled situation for west coast gardens in the north. Such provision should also ensure the shrub is protected from the worst wiles of winter, with temperatures below -10°C best being avoided.

The foliage is a dull mid-green above with a thin and patchy floccose indumentum below, the leaves medium-long.

Francis Hanger was a former head gardener to Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury, and then, after the Second World War, curator of the Royal Horticultural Society garden at Wisley. He has 34 deciduous azalea hybrids registered to his name in the 2004 Second Edition of the *IRRC* and 37 elepidotes, 71 crosses that in total have garnered some 46 Awards of Merit. Which if nothing else, proves that he was tutored by a master.

Yet 'Beefeater' is his only FCC award-winning plant. Which when covered head to toe in dozens of glowing red globes, makes a mind-blowingly obvious statement to any onlooker as to why it found favour with the floral committee.


R. 'Beefeater' AM 1958 & FCC 1959


R. 'Beefeater' AM 1958 & FCC 1959

R. 'Beefeater' AM 1958 & FCC 1959

R. 'Biscuit Box' AM 1964

R. 'Biscuit Box' AM 1964

R. 'Burma Road' AM 1958

R. 'Burma Road' AM 1958

R. 'Burma Road'
'Fabia Tangerine' x 'Romany Chal'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 June 2m x 2m

While the yellowish-apricot, almost orange flowers of R. 'Burma Road' stand out from the pinks, reds and whites that otherwise dominate June in a woodland rhododendron garden, Francis Hanger's choice of epithet is somewhat perplexing:

The Burma Road was built by the British to supply Chinese forces during the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1937 to 1945, linking Kunming, the capital city of China's Yunnan Province, with the Burmese town of Lashio, the largest population centre in Shan State and the terminus of the Mandalay-Kun-Long railway. Except its use to do so effectively led to Myanmar's three-year occupation by the Imperial Japanese Army. Of course, along its 717-mile length, rhododendrons will certainly be found, but the lives sacrificed to keep it open throughout the war should be remembered in a more appropriate manner.

Honorifics apart, Francis Hanger's hybrid displays flat-topped trusses of up to 11 openly-campanulate corollas; within, apricot-yellow suffused pale rose; their reverse, pink, with a darker pink staining. The spear-shaped leaves are concave in profile and thinly indumented at first, dark matt green and up to 15cm long. Unfortunately however, the habit then lets the flowers and foliage down badly, for even in full sun it is very straggly, the shrub developing into an open collection of individual branches rather than a more coherent bush.


R. 'Burma Road' AM 1958


R. 'Burma Road' AM 1958

R. 'Tensing'
'Fabia' x 'Romany Chal'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 June 2m x 3m

'Tensing' is a stepsister to R. 'Burma Road' with camellia rose flowers. It was crossed at Wisley in 1947 and introduced in 1953 after its blooms scooped an Award of Merit from the RHS. Timing being everything, it was then named for the Nepalese Sherpa, Tenzing Norgay, who, a week or so earlier, had accompanied Edmund Hillary on the first successful ascent of Mount Everest, the World's highest mountain. Regrettably however, despite the epithet spelling suggesting the hybridiser was waiting anxious and nervous in anticipation of the floral committee's decision, the substitution of an 's' for a 'z' - now preserved for all eternity in countless botanic tomes - was clearly an unfortunate faux pas.

The cross itself is as close as you can get to being a doppelgänger without actually having the same genetically-identical parents, as 'Fabia' rather than 'Fabia Tangerine' nurtured the seed. Yet if that parentage equation is correct, there seems to have been very little genetic input from the pollen provider - itself the outcome of a 'Moser's Maroon' x *facetum* pairing - with the flowers, foliage and form all solely reflective of the seed parent, if somewhat larger. Morphologically, funnel-campanulate corollas, up to 10cm across at the mouth, camellia-rose in colour with a tint of orange in the throat and a fan of darker spots and speckles on the dorsal lobes, are held in a loose, flat-topped truss of around 13 trumpets. The leaves are elliptic-lanceolate in shape, dark green above, hairy below at first, often with a shallow V-shaped profile. These are held for two years and the blades adequately fill the well-branched if somewhat straggly habit, the bush spreading out wider than it grows tall. Unfortunately, they also appear to be a magnet for munching insects.

Peter and Kenneth Cox, in their 1988-published *Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* are eloquent beyond measure when they describe 'Tensing' as 'hardly worthy of the man who already enjoyed such a fine selection of rhododendron species in his native land', their invective aimed at the habit. Yet they also report that the plant is not very free-flowering. Both failings are undoubtedly true in northern climes, especially along the east coast of the UK, where shelter requirements in tandem with the less intense sunlight will reduce bud set and exacerbate the frowsy framework, but in the southern counties such is not the case, as the photographs evidence.


R. 'Tensing' AM 1953


R. 'Tensing' AM 1953

R. 'Tensing' AM 1953

R. ‘Tensing’ AM 1953

R. 'Constable'

'Jervis Bay' x *wardii*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6. May 2.5m x 3m

Creamy-yellow in bud, this 1947 Francis Hanger cross opens fine, greenish-yellow flowers in a balled but open truss of twenty broadly campanulate corollas, each with two crimson rays and a little speckling at the base of the dorsal lobe. The foliage is glossy, elliptic in shape and with a distinct yellow midrib, with the leaves held for two years. But they simply cannot disguise or fill the upright and completely wide-open habit, which is a major drawback. So too the fact that the blooms are easily disfigured in inclement weather and flower bud formation reduced in northern climes because the slanting summer sunlight is not as strong as in the south, even though the day length may be longer.

Thus north of Hadrian's Wall, 'Constable' gets the Glendoick cold-shoulder, Peter and Kenneth Cox describing the hybrid as 'indifferent and undeserving of an AM' in their *Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids* (Batsford, 1988), the entry concluding that the plant should remain 'rightly scarce in commerce'. One must hope then that the epithet is an honorific for P. C. Plod rather than one of England's most revered landscape painters.

However, on a positive note, the cross is reportedly immune to mildew attack.

The seed parent, 'Jervis Bay', is an AM-winning selection from Lionel de Rothschild's 'Hawk' pride.

R. 'Constable' AM 1961

R. 'Constable' AM 1961

R. 'Constable' AM 1961

R. 'Constable' AM 1961

R. 'Coral Reef' AM 1954

R. 'Coral Reef' & R. Gloriana'

'Fabia' x 'Goldsworth Orange'

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 Late May-June 1.8m x 2.5m

'Coral Reef', the second clone selected from Francis Hanger's 'Fabia' x 'Goldsworth Orange' cross was introduced following the successful showing of 'Gloriana' the previous year in 1953. That plant also pocketed a perhaps not unexpected AM from the Royal Horticultural Society as the garden charity employed the hybridiser in the distinguished capacity of Curator at its Surrey show garden, Wisley. That the organisation also 'officially' named, introduced and registered the progeny - as it did all of their employee's azalea and rhododendron hybrids, including the dubiously-acquired *R. yakushimanum* 'Koichiro Wada' clone - might today be seen as the botanic equivalent of insider trading on the Stock Market, especially as the Floral Committee that handed out the awards was also convened under the charity's auspices.

That said, in the case of 'Coral Reef', the Award of Merit citation was totally justified. In spades. For the flowers are completely alluring:

Salmon-pink, edged rose and tinged apricot in the throat when they first open, apricot-orange tones predominate with age as the darker hues that flush the lobe margins pale. The tubular-funnel-shaped corollas are carried a dozen to each loose truss and en masse, and spread liberally across a mature bush, their impact will stop you in your tracks.

In contrast, the foliage is decidedly unappealing, the dark green and matt, narrowly-elliptic leaves twisted, bent and curled, though they provide an adequate enough foil for the blooms in spring. At all other times, best simply to look away - perhaps at a nearby garden shed. How delightful. And with a resinous stain.

Returning to the morphology, the habit will be found to be spreading, the scaffold of ascending branches tightly clustered. Hardiness is sufficient for southern and west coast gardens, but along the east coast and inland a sheltered position should be set aside.

R. 'Gloriana' AM 1953

R. 'Gloriana' AM 1953

R. 'Coral Reef' AM 1954

R. 'Coral Reef' AM 1954

R. 'Coral Reef' AM 1954

R. 'Emerald Isle' AM 1956

R. 'Emerald Isle' AM 1956

R. 'Emerald Isle' AM 1956

R. 'Emerald Isle' & R. 'New Comet'
'Idealist' x 'Exbury Naomi'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 Late April-May 2.5m x 3m

Francis Hanger registered two selections from the 'Idealist' x 'Exbury Naomi' pairing he made in 1948: 'Emerald Isle', introduced by the RHS in 1956, and 'New Comet', shown the following year, with both plants receiving an Award of Merit when first exhibited. Others might disparagingly suggest 'in accordance with established tradition', but there is a quiet and subtle beauty in the bloom of both clones that completely warrants the floral committee's largesse. As there should be, given the pairing's exalted parentage. For the combination marries two of Lionel de Rothschild's most lustrous creations.

Opening from flesh-pink buds, the flowers on 'Emerald Isle' are carried in a loose but not lax truss of 9 corollas, each widely-campanulate floret chartreuse-green in tone and without the blemish of blotch or spots, the colour merely deepening into the throat and mirrored in the stamens and style. The leaves are dark green and matt, broadly elliptic through near orbicular in shape, and though only held for one year, the branch-tip whorl is sufficiently large to mask much of the shrub's latticework. Unfortunately, the foliage is susceptible to chlorosis, and when present, the leaf margins will be flushed yellow, with the discolouration sometimes spreading across the whole blade (as shown in the bottom right quadrant of the photograph opposite). Habit is dome-like, slightly wider than high, mature plants free-flowering, but youngsters slow to bud up.

'New Comet' has mimosa-yellow flushed pink corollas, these shallowly funnel-shaped and held in a tighter globular truss of twelve. The plant's foliage is a might less susceptible to the powdery mildew fungus than its sister, though the leaves are often unattractively bent or twisted at the apex. Habit can be somewhat open due to quite long internodal growth, but the branches are stout, rarely bending under the weight of the blooms.

R. 'New Comet' AM 1957

R. 'New Comet' AM 1957


R. 'New Comet' AM 1957

R. 'Lady Bowes Lyon' AM 1962

R. 'Lady Bowes Lyon'
'Pilgrim' x *yakushimanum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 Early-mid May 1.4m x 2.5m

In 1946, when Francis Hanger moved from the Head Gardener post at Exbury to take-up the role of Curator at the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley in Surrey, one of only two specimens of *R. yakushimanum* then growing in UK cultivation went with him. That plant, awarded a First Class Certificate in 1947 - and in redress for what many would regard as theft, given the clonal name of 'Koichiro Wada' by it's previous and privately incensed owner, Edmund de Rothschild, son of Lionel - effectively gave Hanger a head start in the race to combine its qualities with another rhododendron and so produce a stunning new hybrid.

In 1949 he made his first two pairings, placing pollen from *R. yakushimanum* onto the styles of the hybrid 'Sir Frederick Moore' (*discolor* x 'Saint Keverne'), one of his late employer's crosses, and a shrub that Rothschild had introduced for J. Johnston in 1926, a *fortunei* x 'Gill's Triumph' combination named 'Pilgrim'. Many would regard these as surprising choices; especially when the bevy of potential recipients available to receive such largesse is taken into account. But none the less…

'Weybridge' resulted from the mating with 'Sir Frederick Moore'.

Its pale-pink flowers, white at the margins and shaded darker on the outside, were generally not rated highly and the bush itself, is reportedly not very free-flowering.

'Lady Bowes Lyon' however, the selection from the combination with 'Pilgrim', was in a completely different league.

It received an Award of Merit for its white flushed rose-pink blooms in 1962 and until being superseded by the host of hybrids pouring out of the Waterer, Slocock and Hydon nurseries in the 1970s and 80s, was widely distributed. For it was perfect for the small gardens of suburban Britain: low, but strong growing and hardy; with fine foliage that was retained for three years giving the shrub a bushy mien; and in early May, from a young age, the hybrid was smothered under a mass of globular trusses each composed of up to twenty campanulate funnels 9cm wide at the mouth.

The shrub's epithet is not, as would be suspected by most, an honorific for the late Queen Mother, Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon, but for the wife of her younger brother David, a past President of the Royal Horticultural Society (actually succeeding Lord Aberconway in 1953), who had married Rachel Pauline Clay in February 1929 (pictured with Hanger on page 19 of this volume, admiring the shrub named for her, whilst attending the British Exhibit at the Ghent Floralies in 1960).

R. 'Lady Bowes Lyon' AM 1962

R. 'Lady Bowes Lyon' AM 1962

R. 'Lady Bowes Lyon' AM 1962


R. 'Lascaux' AM 1954


R. 'Lascaux' AM 1954

The 'Moonshine' Pride
'Adriaan Koster' x *wardii*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 May. 4m x 4m

Named Forms:
Moonshine - AM 1952
(pale greenish-yellow to pale yellow-green, blotched dark crimson).
Moonshine Bright (pale lemon-yellow).
Moonshine Crescent - AM 1960
(pale greenish-yellow to pale yellow-green).
Moonshine Glow (uranium green).
Moonshine Supreme - AM 1953
(pale yellowish-green, dorsal stained darker and faintly spotted).

According to the entry for R. 'Moonshine' in the online version of *Bean's Trees & Shrubs,* Francis Hanger's goal in making this cross was 'to produce a hardy yellow of compact habit with a full, upstanding truss'.

'Adriaan Koster' x *wardii* was the pairing he determined would achieve this end and pollen was transferred to style in 1946 according to *BT&S,* or a year later in 1947 if the *IRRC* entries for all the registered clones are accurate. But the results that sprang-up from the seed trays were decidedly mixed:

A hardiness rating down to -18ºC was attained, as well as pale yellow flowers, but the habit of all five of the named selections is at best upright and open, and far from compact. Moreover, the leaves are quickly discarded by several of the clones, leaving the branch framework overly exposed, and the flower trusses are either flat-topped or dome-shaped, not upright and conical. However, the pride have one saving grace: the luminous blooms. These are in various shades of pale greenish-yellow, some clones showing a crimson blotch or streaks at the base of the dorsal lobe, others with barely visible deeper yellow spotting. The corollas will either be funnel-shaped or broadly campanulate, between 4 to 6cm long by as much as 6.5cm across, and 9 through 22 of these trumpets or bells will emerge form each inflorescence.

The leaf blades vary from elliptic to elliptic-ovate in shape, may be up to 12.5cm long by 5.5cm wide, and are all basically a dull dark green above.

A number of negative reports on the hybrids have been filed over the year, the most dire from Peter and Kenneth Cox. Referencing the 'Moonshine Supreme' clone - Hanger's favourite selection - they stated that at Glendoick it was 'liable to abort most of its buds (including growth) some seasons for no apparent reason' (*The Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* Batsford, 1988). Leaf spot is another detraction.

'Moonshine Bright' is probably the most garden-worthy clone and it also has the best habit, retains its foliage for two years or more, flowers with the most fecundity, and those blooms are unblotched, unspotted, and simply pristine. That it is the only clone not gifted an Award of Merit by the RHS Floral Committee of the time - 'Moonshine Glow' excepted, though this selection has now virtually vanished from UK gardens - is an oversight that probably speaks volumes, in a twisted sort of way.


R. 'Moonshine' AM 1952


R. 'Moonshine' AM 1952

R. 'Moonshine Bright'

R. 'Moonshine Bright'

R. 'Moonshine Bright'

R. 'Moonshine Crescent' AM 1960

R. 'Moonshine Crescent' AM 1960

R. 'Moonshine Crescent' AM 1960

R. ‘Moonshine Supreme’ AM 1953

R. 'Perfect Lady'

R. 'Perfect Lady'
yakushimanum x *scyphocalyx*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 May 1.6m x 2.5m

'Perfect Lady' is an F1 *yakushimanum* x *scyphocalyx* pairing that was introduced by Roy Drayson from his Dorset-based Harkwood Acres nursery in the early 1990s. Yet it is a Francis Hanger cross, most likely made at Wisley sometime between 1949 and 1951, which is the period when Hanger's other *R. yakushimanum* hybrids were being conceived. Why this gem then took so long to be noticed is a mystery, because the flowers and foliage rival and indeed surpass any number of pairings involving the Japanese species marketed by a host of other hybridisers over the previous twenty years.

The dark green and somewhat glossy leaves are ovate in shape, around 7.5cm long by 2.5cm broad, sport a thin cloak of orangey-yellow tomentum when they first extend and retain a persistent woolly indumentum on the leaf underside at maturity. They are held on the bush for two years, so the neat upright framework of branches is fairly well covered with foliage if grown in near full sun, but the habit turns decidedly leggy if specimens are set in too much shade. The funnel-campanulate corollas, 4.5cm long by 5.5cm across, are carried in an open and pendent truss of ten bells, each held on a long pale green pedicel. The tube, within and without, is pale orange at first becoming yellowish, while the lobe margins open with a deep reddish flush, this becoming pale pink before fading completely. A few lines of darker spots grace the dorsal, but these are so discreet as to be near invisible.

Free-flowering from a young age, 'Perfect Lady' is just that: easy to grow; eye-catching when the blooms first open; and as one expert, sadly no longer with us, would say: 'well worth a place in every collection of rhododendrons'.

R. 'Perfect Lady'

R. 'Perfect Lady'

R. ‘Perfect Lady’

R. 'Renoir' AM 1961

R. 'Renoir'
'Pauline' x *yakushimanum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 Late April-May 1.6m x 2.5m

Deep purplish-pink in the bud, the flowers on Francis Hanger's 'Pauline' x *yakushimanum* cross open rose-pink with a white throat and a dark crimson blotch on the dorsal that is usually split into two thick rays joined by a plethora of spots and speckles. These retain their depth of colour until the flowers drop, but elsewhere the neyron-rose hues quickly fade to pale pink and then white. Ten to eleven campanulate corollas comprise each domed truss, these produced in quantity and from a young age, but many observers consider the floral display somewhat harsh on the eye, at least when first expanded.

In contrast, the foliage is easy on your photoreceptor rods and cones, being dark green in tone, semi-glossy, flat or convex in profile and basically elliptic in outline. Although lacking any indumentum, the medium-sized blades are held on the bush for two years, with some leaves persisting for three, so the whole provides an attractive and adequate cloak across the upright-ascending crisscross of branches. Youngsters will take a decade or more to breach the 1m height or width markers, but the oldest specimens found in gardens are now domes to around 1.6m high, with a corresponding spread of 2.5m.

Paired in 1951 and introduced a decade later, Wisley's then Head Gardener and Curator received yet another Award of Merit for his toils despite the fading blooms, which of course, are now known to be typical of a *R. yakushimanum* F1 cross. 'Renoir' has also outlasted many of its later-released - and some would say, frankly, better - competitors on the sales benches of the DIY and garden centre chains, with new consignments of juveniles arriving each spring. The honorific too is well chosen, for the impressionist paintings of Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) are noted for their vibrant colours.

'Telstar' is a second selection introduced in 1962 that has rose-madder-coloured blooms (at least when the buds first open). Somewhat remarkably, the RHS Floral Committee managed to hold out until 1966 before bestowing its almost obligatory AM.


R. 'Renoir' AM 1961

R. 'Renoir' AM 1961

R. 'Renoir' AM 1961


R. ‘Tequila Sunrise’ AM 1985

R. ‘Tequila Sunrise’

yakushimanum x ‘Borde Hill’

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 Late April-May 2.5m x 4m

It may well have been *R. yakushimanum* that matured the seed that then germinated into R. ‘Tequila Sunrise’, but it was the ‘Borde Hill’ genes, with their *R. arboreum* heritage through that hybrid’s ‘Doncaster’ and ‘Mrs. A. M. Williams’ parents that proved dominant in the habit, foliage and flower colour of Francis Hanger’s cross. Only in the 13-flowered globular truss does the influence of the Japanese species come to the fore.

Those corollas are widely funnel-shaped, 5cm long by 6cm across, and strong purplish-pink in tone over a base of pale pink. A dark red hue stains the base of the throat and extends up the dorsal lobes, becoming a narrow fan of spots and speckles at the mid-point. The creamy white stamens and anthers and style tube provide a good contrast, while the muted red stigma adds punctuation. Oblanceolate-shaped leaf blades, dark green and glossy, 13cm long by 4cm wide, not only offer a perfect foil for the blooms, but are insect resistant and held on the shrub for three years, so provide a dense, unbroken cloak across the framework of rigid, upward-ascending branches.

Some reports suggest that ‘Tequila Sunrise’ is low growing: dismiss them, for this is a shrub that in little more than a decade or two will breach 2m in height and, if left to its own devices, gradually extend out to almost double that figure in width. It has but one fault, shared with virtually all F1 *yakushimanum* hybrids - the initially deep tonal pigmentation in the blooms, quickly pales.


R. ‘Tequila Sunrise’ AM 1985

R. ‘Tequila Sunrise’ AM 1985

R. 'Tosca' AM 1959

R. 'Tosca' AM 1959

R. ‘Tosca’ AM 1959

R. 'Tosca'
'Exbury Naomi' x *wardii* Litiense
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 May 3m x 3m

There are not many rhododendron hybrids that have an epithet borrowed from a full-blown Italian opera and even fewer that can stand up to a comparison between the two, but Francis Hanger's 'Tosca', while perhaps not quite in the same league as Giacomo Puccini's masterpiece, nonetheless holds it own, for it is one of the Wisley Head Gardener's most quietly beautiful creations and certainly not a 'shabby little shocker' to misappropriate Joseph Kerman's overused musicological diatribe. Pollen from a member of *R. wardii* Litiense Group was dabbed onto the style of Lionel de Rothschild's 'Exbury Naomi' in 1948, but any biscuit-coloured tones inherited from the seed parent will only be seen flushing the blooms as they first emerge from the bud. For when the flowers of 'Tosca' are fully unfurled, only a pristine yellow-green will be in evidence, with this eventually paling over a week or so, to white.

The shallowly-campanulate corollas, 9.5cm across at the mouth, are carried in open, flat-topped trusses of ten, give or take the odd bloom, and mature specimens will bear a multitude of such. The leaf blades are dark green ellipses, matt, with a flat profile that are carried for up to two years, though much of the shrub's framework will still be visible. Placement should be in dappled shade in the southern counties to preserve the delicate hues in the blooms, plus wind shelter, to stop the trusses from bumping against each other and so marring their unblemished finish. Vegetative and floral bud break occurs at the same time, with the new growth from any terminal buds on the few shoots not blessed with a flower truss, the only negative to impair the display.

Rhododendron hybridisers who are also opera fans might like to know that although 'Madame Butterfly' and 'Turandot' have already been snapped-up, the titles of several other Puccini works are still available, 'La fanciulla del West' (The Girl of the Golden West), being one of these. Also, many of Richard Wagner's creations are lacking a counterpart in the genus: R. 'Götterdämmerung' perhaps?


R. 'Tosca' AM 1959


R. 'Tosca' AM 1959

R. 'Wisley Pearl'

R. 'Wisley Pearl'

R. 'Woodcock' AM 1986

R. 'Woodcock' AM 1986

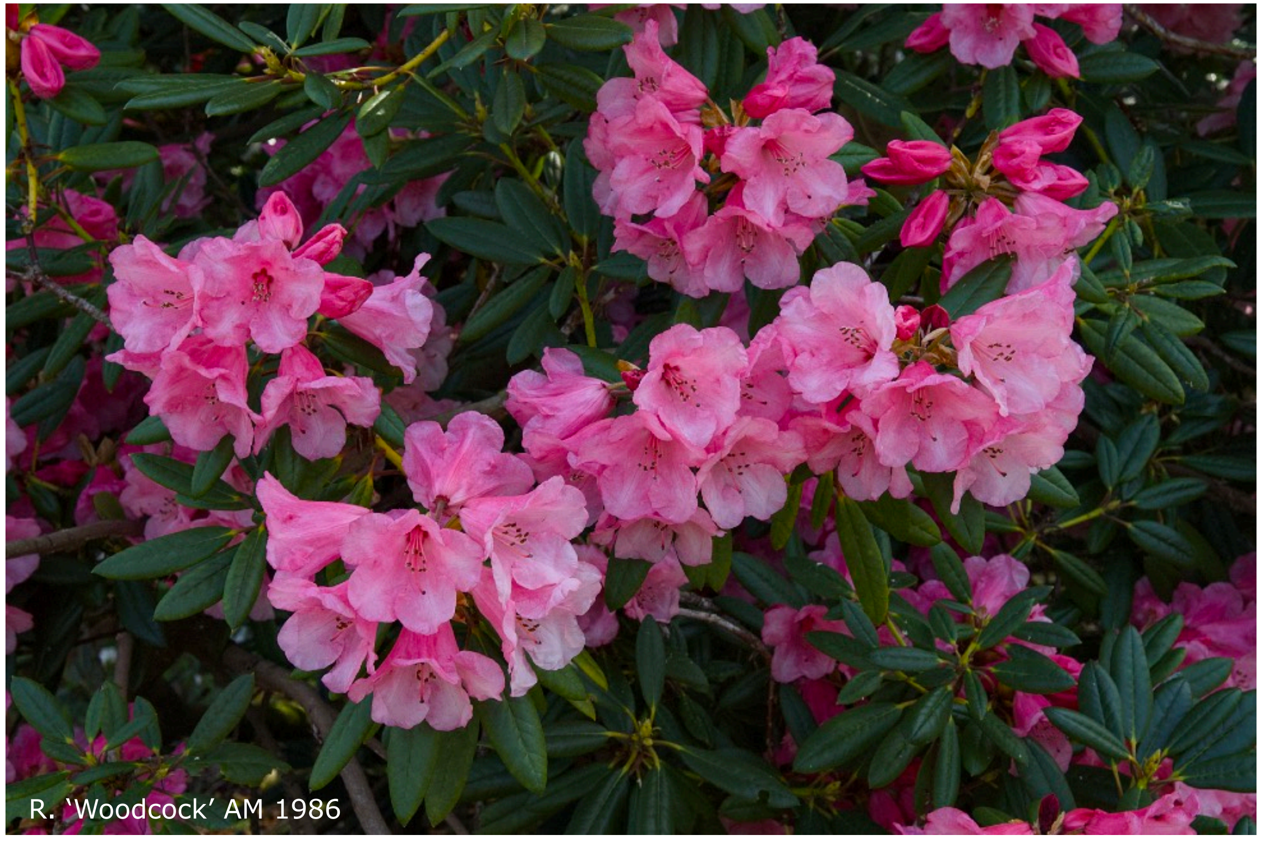
R. 'Woodcock'
'Elizabeth' x *hyperythrum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 April-May 2.5m x 4m

Borrowing a sobriquet from one of our feathered friends is not a practice restricted to just a particularly fine nursery located midway between Perth and Dundee on the A90, such being exemplified by this 'Elizabeth' x *hyperythrum* pairing named for *Scolopax rusticola,* the Eurasian woodcock. But had it been a member of that other bird family, namely the more populous tribe originating from said garden just north of the River Tay, it would by now likely have become a staple, if not an outright commercial standard, populating the racks at most garden centres and DIY chains. For 'Woodcock' is an unalloyed gem.

Francis Hanger made the cross at Wisley in 1952 and 'Woodcock' was introduced by the RHS in 1971 and gifted an Award of Merit in 1986. Eight widely funnel-shaped and wavy-lobed corollas, 5cm long by 6cm wide, populate each of its trusses, of which a mature shrub will sport an inordinate number, as the photographs evidence. Their hue is recorded as pale purplish-pink in the *IRRC,* but Peter and Kenneth Cox describe the pigmentation far more accurately in their 1988-published *Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids* as 'pale spiraea red, slightly flushed pale neyron-rose, with some red tinges in the throat'. If that wasn't enough to prompt a spur-of-the-moment purchase, 'Woodcock' comes with singularly striking foliage, the glossy dark green and recurved blades narrowly elliptic in shape, 7cm long by 3cm wide, tapering at both the apex and the base, and retained on the bush for two years. So the supporting branchwork is almost completely obscured.

Grown in full sun, in time 'Woodcock' will form a tight, compact dome around 2.5m high and 4m wide that is attractive all-year-round, but for three weeks during April and May that cupola will be a visual sensation.


R. 'Woodcock' AM 1986


R. 'Woodcock' AM 1986

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Eric Harrison:

Major-General E. G. W. W. Harrison CB, CBE, MC, (1893-1987).

by Walter Magor.

Eric Harrison, an Honorary Life Member of the RHS Rhododendron & Camellia Group, died at Amesbury Abbey Nursing Home on the 20 December 1987, aged 94; his funeral at Salisbury Crematorium ten days later was well attended by his gardening, army and Cornish friends.

General Harrison was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1914, and had a distinguished military career, culminating in command of the artillery for the allied invasion of North Africa under General Eisenhower. He managed to combine this with a wide range of sporting and other outdoor interests at all of which he came to excel. Returning to England after the First World War, he caught ten salmon of a total weight of 95lb in one day on the River Torridge in what is still known as 'Harrison's Pool'. Playing for an Army XV against Oxford University he scored 7 tries, and in 1924 he represented England in the 120-yards hurdles in the Olympic Games. During his Army service, he was Master of four different packs of hounds, and on his retirement he took over the North Cornwall Hounds. He shot tiger, ibex and bison in India, and lion, buffalo, rhino and elephant in Tanganyika [Tanzania].

On leave pending retirement in 1939, he bought Tremeer in North Cornwall, a beautiful old house, but not then noted for its garden, and he had started to plant rhododendrons there when he was recalled to duty on the outbreak of war. On his return after the war, he was offered further military appointments, but he preferred to retire to his garden and hounds, and over the next thirty years he created an outstandingly beautiful garden of trees and shrubs. He remained a very skilful fisherman, was a very good shot, as well as an expert at training and handling gundogs. He also painted in oils, and had had pictures accepted by the Royal Academy and hung in the Paris Salon.

He took an active part in the public life of Cornwall, was Chairman of the Bench in Bodmin, High Sherriff and a Deputy Lieutenant, as well as being President of the Cornwall Garden Society. He served on the RHS Rhododendron & Camellia Committee, and there he met his wife Roza, the widow of J. B. Stevenson of Tower Court, who had created the fine rhododendron species collection now in Windsor Great Park. They were married in 1961, and she brought some of the best of the Tower Court rhododendrons with her to Tremeer, including the collection of Kurume azaleas obtained from Wada in Japan and said to be better than the 'Wilson Fifty'. Sadly, she died six years later, but Eric stayed on at Tremeer for another ten years before he found the garden becoming too much for him. He retired to Swallowfield Park near Reading in 1977, taking with him a gundog, some of his big game trophies and a few of his best rhododendrons. There, he lived happily for another ten years, still fishing on the River Trent and visiting Cornwall from time to time for shoots or to judge at the Cornwall Spring Flower Show. On one of these visits he expressed his appreciation of the excellent way in which the Haslam-Hopwood family were maintaining the garden that he had created at Tremeer, with the help of his old gardener, John Stone.

During his time at Tremeer, he and his wife received four First Class Certificates for their rhododendron hybrids after trial at Wisley, nine Awards of Merit and three Certificates of Preliminary Commendation. Most notable perhaps were the cultivars of the 'Blue Tit' grex (*augustinii* x *impeditum*) originating at Caerhays, which he grew from cuttings at nearby Lamellen. From these, he produced the clones 'Saint Breward' and 'Saint Tudy', to obtain FCCs, and crossed these back with their parents, with *augustinii* to produce 'Saint Kew' (PC 1970), and with *impeditum* to produce 'Saint Merryn' (FCC 1986), as well as with *russatum* to give 'Saint Minver' (FCC 1986 after trial at Wisley.

Addendum:

Walter Magor's obituary was published within the RHS and RCMG Year Book *Rhododendrons 1988-9 with Magnolias and Camellias,* yet not unsurprisingly, Major-General Eric George William Warde Harrison also has a Wikipedia entry. This basically covers his military career through the two World Wars, from his commissioning as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in January 1914 to his retirement in May 1946 at the permanent rank of Major General. However, a more detailed account will be found in his fascinating autobiography, *Gunners, Game & Gardens,* which also includes reporting on his sporting and hunting activities in the twenty-year interregnum between hostilities, and on his life after leaving the Army. Regrettably, there is precious little throughout the 212 pages on his gardening activities at Tremeer, the house he bought in the village of St Tudy, Cornwall, in 1939, though several passages are reproduced below. Additional horticultural information comes from another Walter Magor article, this titled *A History of Rhododendrons,* which was originally written for the *Cornish Garden Journal,* and then reprinted in the *Journal American Rhododendron Society* (Volume 44, Number 4) at the end of 1990. That text includes the following two paragraphs on Harrison's rhododendron hybridising:

> 'Shortly before the Second World War, Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Eric Harrison bought Tremeer in north Cornwall and started to plant rhododendrons, mainly obtained from over the hill at Lamellen. J. C. Williams had made the dwarf hybrid 'Blue Tit' (*R. augustinii* x *R. impeditum*) in 1933. My father had liked it so much that he made the reverse cross and planted a hedge at Lamellen. When General Harrison returned to Tremeer after the war, the hedge was not thriving. With my mother's permission he took many cuttings from it, from which he raised 'Saint Breward' and 'Saint Tudy', both of which have since been awarded the F.C.C. after trial at Wisley'.

> 'Over the next twenty years, General Harrison did a lot of hybridising at Tremeer, concentrating on producing in particular blue dwarfs and yellows, mainly of the 'Comely' grex (*R. concatenans* x 'Lady Chamberlain'), but also using the Logan form of the hybrid 'Damaris' (*R. campylocarpum* x 'Doctor Stocker'). He made some good hybrids crossing *R. williamsianum* with 'Barclayi' from a layer obtained from Lamellen'.

From Eric Harrison's *Gunners, Game & Gardens* autobiography (published in 1978, with the extracts reproduced courtesy of Leo Cooper Ltd) we learn that when he purchased Tremeer it 'was without mains water or electric light' and that:

> 'It stands centrally in seven acres of grounds, sloping gradually towards a couple of ponds and a mill-leat, and the garden had been cultivated only near the house, where there were remnants of herbaceous borders and planting-out beds, from which most of the plants had been removed. It was well-sheltered by deciduous cherry trees, many of which were of great age. There was one magnolia tree and a few hardy hybrid rhododendrons, whose names I later learnt were 'Pink Pearl', 'Cynthia' and 'Sappho', smothered by their *ponticum* grafts, but there were no other flowering trees or shrubs'.

- opposite left -
Major General Harrison in September, 1945.

- opposite right -
The portrait photograph of Eric Harrison from the back cover of *Gunners, Game & Gardens*.


Harrison moved into the house in mid August 1939, but Hitler's shenanigans meant he had less than two weeks to get everything in order before he was ordered to report immediately as Commander of the 12th Territorial Division of the Royal Artillery, two hundred miles away at Sevenoaks in Kent.

After the war, he took stock:

'I had from the start contemplated that my garden at Tremeer would be largely based on the genus Rhododendron, which I believe offers the greatest variety of form, foliage, flower-colour, and length of flowering season of any shrub that can be grown in the British Isles. I realised that it would take twenty to thirty years for such a garden to reach maturity, and that its preparation and planting with the help of one gardener who, in addition, had a walled garden of three-quarters of an acre to care for, would entail some fifteen years of heavy work. However, rhododendrons, expensive to buy, can easily be grown from seed, and, for many varieties, by cuttings; the ease with which they can be mated to produce new hybrids can be an everlasting source of interest and pleasure'.

'Rhodos have the great disadvantage of being most susceptible to honey fungus, particularly virulent in mild, damp climates like Cornwall, and for a time the garden was losing 30 to 50 rhodos a year from this pest, for which there seems to be no cure so far as rhodos are concerned, except the elimination of roots of all dead trees, which may be well nigh impossible in some gardens. So in parts of the garden where elimination seemed hopeless I turned to camellias which I have every reason to believe are immune, or almost immune, to this parasite. No general layout was conceived at the start, but in general the planting progressed outwards from the house, and the garden was gradually developed. The hardest work was the clearing of brambles, nettles, docks and cow-parsley, the last named very prolific and deep-rooted'.

'My interest in rhododendrons was greatly encouraged by a neighbouring garden, Lamellen, the owner of which, Mr Magor, had spent forty years of his life in their cultivation. He died during the war, but his widow graciously gave me permission to wander in the garden and to take cuttings, seed and pollen, so an immediate start could be made in hybridisation'.

'Rhodos are easy to grow from seed which will germinate in about six weeks after being sown at the beginning of March. After eighteen months in a greenhouse the plants are ready to be moved to an outside nursery. The smaller leafed varieties may be expected to flower in five years from seed, the same period as for a daffodil; the large leafed series may take ten to fifteen years, or even longer. The *Rhododendron Handbook* gives a list of the hybrids with the names of the seed and pollen parents, and so from the awards they have attained the likely value of the parents can be deduced, and thus even a novice at the game may be reasonably successful. The plants from one batch of hybrid seed can vary considerably, particularly in flower colour, so several different varieties may accrue from one sowing'.

'One of my early lucky crosses, 'Barclayi' x *williamsianum,* gave me encouragement; of the three plants I kept to flowering age, one was pale pink, another a bright deep pink, and the third a red, deeper even than 'Barclayi'; all were quite good, and one received an RHS Award of Merit, although it may have been no better than its sisters, but there is luck in being able to present blooms in perfection to the judgement committee which sits once a fortnight'.

'From seed gathered at Lamellen in 1949 I was able to take blooms of *macabeanum* and *calophytum* to the RHS in 1960, a short period for these big-leafed species. The *macabeanum* won as the best species in the show, and, together with the *calophytum* and two others, won the prize for the four best species. That these plants turned out so well was, of course, pure luck. Both plants were dead within two years from honey fungus'.

'It was not until the 1950s that I met Roza Stevenson, who then owned Tower Court after the death of her husband. We foregathered at the RHS rhododendron shows, becoming engaged in 1960, marrying in January 1961'.

'The garden of Tower Court was some fifty acres, and, as I knew it, was devoted mainly to rhododendrons, and contained probably the widest collection of species rhodos in the world, of which genera Roza was as knowledgeable as anyone living, as she had propagated thousands from seed collected by the various expeditions, her late husband having been the Hon Secretary of the Rhododendron Society. Somehow or another by trimming trees and taking up unwanted shrubs we made room for about two hundred rhododendrons at Tremeer, and although some of the big-leafed ones, such as *sinogrande,* were eleven feet high and nearly as much across, not one of them suffered in the journey. In particularly there was a plant of 'Damaris' that we saw in bloom in April, which had to be removed at once because the place was being put up for sale. It stayed above ground at Ascot with sacking around its roots until October when we moved this nine-foot plant to Tremeer. It never showed any sign of ill-health and flowered normally the next spring. There is no doubt that rhododendrons can be moved in safety at any size they can be physically handled, provided weather and soil conditions are reasonably suitable. The species collection of rhododendrons in the Great Park, Windsor, came from Tower Court, and were moved as mature plants, the operation taking some three years'.

- *opposite* -
Tremeer House, Cornwall.

Rhododendrons and Camellias at Tremeer.

by Patrick M. Synge.

Tremeer is in North Cornwall, between Bodmin and the Atlantic coast, about 8 miles north of the former and about 6 miles inland from the sea and only 2 miles from Bodmin Moor; so it does not have quite the favoured warm climate of some of the Cornish gardens by the South Coast. The rainfall is comparatively high, about 1.15m in the year. Major-General Eric Harrison bought the estate in 1939 but was not able to begin his gardening till after the war in 1946. But in these twenty-three years he has made a garden of great beauty and interest based mainly on his love of rhododendrons and camellias, but containing also a number of other complementary trees and shrubs to make colour through the summer and autumn as well as contrasting form, height and foliage. The land slopes pleasantly away from the house to the south-east towards two ponds and a mill leat; there are about 6 acres of garden planted for relatively easy maintenance, most with threes and shrubs.

A broad terrace runs along the front of the grey-stone house which reputedly dates from the fourteenth century and steps flanked by two fine urns lead down to a large lawn running almost the length of the garden and parallel to the house giving a feeling of air and space. Beyond the lawn, broad winding grass paths lead towards the water, among plantings of rhododendrons and camellias through an area which was originally mostly orchard. Fortunately there are several very fine trees, including an old *Cupressus macrocarpa,* while a majestic oak, underplanted with cyclamen among the ivy for autumn flowering, lies immediately across the lawn from the house. There are more trees providing wind shelter around the boundary, but most of the rhododendrons and camellias are grown free of overhead cover and so have developed into solid masses covered with flowers rather than the gaunt tall trees sometimes seen in Cornwall. So it is a garden of great colour, especially since General Harrison is probably more interested in hybrids than in species and has himself raised many of his finest plants.

In 1961 he married Roza, the widow of J. B. Stevenson of Tower Court, Ascot, and a real enthusiast for rhododendrons, especially for the species. The main collection of these, however, from Tower Court, had been moved to Windsor Great Park, but when she left Tower Court, Mrs. Harrison was able to bring young plants and many layers of many of her finest hybrids and a few of the best forms of the species, such as the lovely 'Yum Yum', the award form of *Rhododendron tsariense,* now a fine plant 1.2 x 1.2m at the edge of the lawn.

As I write, in early May, the view is dominated by masses of the blue and mauve rhododendrons for which the garden is famous. Some flank the big lawn, while a large group opposite the house by the big oak contains a great variety of tones of violet-blue in strong colours. Here are 'St. Breward' and 'St. Tudy', as well as General Harrison's more recent crosses of *augustinii* with 'St. Breward' and 'Blue Diamond'. 'St. Breward' and 'St. Tudy' are both considered to be crosses of *augustinii* and *impeditum.* 'St. Tudy' received an A.M. in 1960 and 'St. Breward' an F.C.C. in 1962. This is the same cross as 'Blue Tit', another of the finest blues and also raised in Cornwall by Mr. J. C. Williams at Caerhays Castle.

Unfortunately the largest plant of 'St. Breward' died from honey fungus in 1965, a disease which has been a very great scourge in this garden, but fortunately it is easily propagated and there were numerous smaller plants growing on. The Colour Chart description of its flower was Sea Lavender Violet HCC 637/2 by the old R.H.S. Colour Chart and the compact truss bore up to twenty-six flowers each 5.7cm wide and 3.2cm long.

There is no doubt that these hybrids are rather larger in flower than 'Blue Diamond' and a bit brighter and stronger in colour, but it is difficult to pick out one from the other as being clearly the superior. 'St. Breward' was raised from cuttings of an old plant of hybrid origin at the old neighbouring garden of Lamellen where the late Mr. E. Magor made so many interesting crosses. They are all very free-flowering, and make nice compact plants up to 0.6 to 1.8m in height and nearly as much across. In addition to several forms of *augustinii* and 'Electra', the cross of *chasmanthum* x *augustinii,* one of the most beautiful blues is the much paler mist-blue 'Belle of Tremeer' raised from *augustinii* x *rigidum* (*caeruleum album*). A beautiful tree of it grows in semi-shade by the pond and is now 4.5m high and General Harrison recommends some shelter from the sun for the paler blues. 'St. Breward' and 'St. Tudy', however, seem to be particularly free from sun-scorch and fading.

- opposite left -
Tremeer House and the Kurume evergreen azalea plantings along the length of the front terrace.

- opposite right -
Looking back at Tremeer House from within the garden.

General Harrison has raised a number of hybrids from *R. williamsianum,* rather dwarf, compact and free flowering plants. They would seem to have a great future for the smaller or medium-sized garden; all have maintained the beautiful form of bell of *williamsianum* while increasing the size. They also have the fine red colour of the young foliage which gives a second feature of interest after the flowering. 'Pink Pebble' from *callimorphum* x *williamsianum* is certainly one of the best and seems to be an outstanding plant. It has been selected from Trial at Wisley. The bells are a good pink, clearer and larger than in *williamsianum,* slightly drooping, while the best bushes are rounded, 1.2m x 1.2m, and covered with flowers. As the flowers age they fade slightly to a paler pink, but they still complement well the blues of the garden. Another very promising *williamsianum* hybrid is 'Pipaluk', with white bells raised from 'Dr. Stocker' as the seed parent. Pipaluk was the polar bear cub of Brumas - [see https://zsl-archive.maxarchiveservices.co.uk/index.php/pipaluk-the-polar-bear-2] - after which another white Tremeer hybrid had been raised from 'Sincerity' x 'Detonsum'. Other *williamsianum* crosses raised here are 'Mystic', a larger plant with 'Barclayi' as the other parent, 'Maestro' from the same cross which received a P.C. in 1969, 'Pensive' with *irroratum* as the other parent. 'Piquante' is derived from *valentinianum* x *leucaspis* and is a pale yellow with deeper centre which is very promising.

Yellow-flowered rhododendrons are also well represented and there are some beautiful seedlings of 'Hawk' x *griffithianum,* as well as others from 'Logan Damaris'. The parent plant of 'Logan Damaris' is one of the most beautiful in the garden, graceful and dripping with its deep lemon-yellow flowers, now a big bush of 2.4m tall and across, although moved from Tower Court, and now nestling under a tall *Magnolia x veitchii* which is only twenty years old, but is up to as many feet [6m], and this year was flowering at the same time.

Strong reds have also been raised here most successfully and several featured in General Harrison's very fine group of eight hybrids which won the second prize at the Rhododendron Show this year, a class which General Harrison won in 1963. 'Zyxya' (A.M. 1966), which is likely for many years to retain the last place in the Rhododendron Stud list is by no means the least. The bells are a very strong scarlet-crimson, large, and making a fairly full truss. It was raised from 'Barclayi' x 'Elizabeth'. There are several very fine plants of both parents in the garden, and 'Elizabeth' in particular made very strong mounds of scarlet, placed at the junction of two of the walks and clearly visible from the house. Another is 'Tara', rather later flowering and raised from 'Tally-ho' x 'Rapture'. It received an A.M. in 1964. A very promising batch of scarlet-red seedlings have been raised from 'Matador' x 'Gaul' and among these 'Foxhunter' is the first to be named. 'Tremeer' came from 'Arthur Osborn' x *facetum* and is later flowering, but excellent as befits its name. another good batch came from 'Matador' x 'Barclayi'.

Some very pleasing, larger growing pinks have also been raised here, notably 'Bombardier' from 'Fusilier' x *griffithianum,* while 'Vibrant' (*diaprepes* x *wardii*) is a good pale yellow, but many more could be named. A notable but slightly more tender hybrid is 'Actress' raised from 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' x *edgeworthii* (*bullatum*) and this promises to be a lovely plant for gardens which have some shelter and not too cold conditions. But there are over 1,500 rhododendrons and over 500 camellias listed and described in General Harrison's careful records of the plants in his garden. Over half the rhododendrons are from the owners own raising, a very rewarding and notable achievement, especially as his standards are high. From Tower Court came some particularly fine *lacteum* hybrids and there is also a young plant of the parent species. 'John Barr Stevenson' is a cross with 'Damaris' and *lacteum* and has large compact trusses of pale yellow flowers with large bells. Rather similar is 'Robert Keir' (*lacteum* x 'Luscombei'), named after the head gardener at Tower Court, which seemed to me a very promising plant. I was glad to hear that both of these were being propagated and would be available in the future. The latter has yellow flowers slightly flushed with pink. From Exbury via Tower Court has come 'Fortune', a layer of the F.C.C. form, and two other layers of the same cross. This has already flowered and young seedlings are being raised from it.

Some of the most lovely plants in the garden, however, were *concatenans* hybrids, and these have been used freely. The pale apricot-pink 'Alison Johnstone' from Trewithen in Cornwall, was one of the most floriferous bushes in the garden, literally covered with flowers so that no foliage could be seen. There were several large bushes and it seemed a plant which should be grown much more widely. The flowers are individually not very large, but their abundance makes up. 'Peace', a very beautiful hybrid raised at Bodnant from *concatenans* x *rigidum* (*caeruleum album*) [the correct parentage is actually *rigidum* x *concatenans*], was close to one of the largest plants of 'Alison Johnstone' and its white flowers as well as its freedom of flowering made it outstanding. Behind was General Harrison's cross of *concatenans* x *oreotrephes* with pinkish-purple flowers. Another lovely hybrid with *concatenans* blood was Comely [Group/Pride member] 'Golden Orfe', raised at Tower Court from a cross with 'Lady Chamberlain'. From Tremeer raising also had come a fine batch of seedlings with rather larger and more substantial ochreous yellow flowers derived from (*cinnabarinum* x *maddenii*) x *concatenans.* These also had good foliage and waxy bells following the style of *concatenans,* but bigger. The largest trusses had eight flowers each, and the cross seemed a very promising one.

The larger-leaved rhododendrons are not represented here so freely as in some Cornish gardens, but apart from 'Fortune' there are promising young plants of *macabeanum, falconeri, montroseanum* and *arizelum,* while *sinogrande, rex* and *semnoides* have made good-size flowering plants, the latter, a magnificent bush 4.6m tall and nearly as much across, with large trusses of creamy-white bells, was a gift from Borde Hill.

When Mrs. Harrison came to Tremeer the problem arose of finding space for a number of old plants of Kurume evergreen azaleas from Japan. These were unique plants of historic interest. At Tower Court these had remained fairly compact plants, even growing in semi-shade. At Tremeer it was decided to put them in full sun and exposure and they have retained their character, the only trouble being the growth of grey lichen on the branches. It was found, however, that this could be arrested if not cured by a spray of weak solution of permanganate of potash in the winter and the plants were not otherwise damaged. General Harrison and his very small staff went to work on the lawn and dug out two large straight-edged beds about 3m wide, one on each side of the steps, and these were later followed by two more nearer the ends of the lawn. They realised that the rather harder, strong colours of the Kurumes would look best on their own, separated from the beds of rhododendrons, and how right they were. The beds are most successful and when in flower their contrasting masses of strong patchwork colour look very well against the grey of the stone of the supporting walls and against the dark green of an old group of yews near one corner of the house. In the two main beds were planted Kurumes from a group of plants originally obtained from Yokohama, which Mrs. Harrisons regarded for the most part as superior to the better known Wilson 50. One large plant of each was moved and all survived. Among the finest I noted were:

'Shinim-agagino', deep pink, slightly deeper than 'Hinomayo' and very floriferous.
'Senjo', apple-blossom pink, very lovely.
'Fudetsukasi', pretty pale pink, late flowering.
'Hinotsukasa', deep scarlet red.
'Gyokuko', apricot-red with small flowers.

'Harumji', white.
'Yozakura', deep pink.
'Shintzumi', a good white.
'Haru-no-Akebono', pink, later flowering.
'Wato-kagami', pale pink.

These are comparatively little known but all good plants, capable of spectacular effect.

Also on the lawn is a vast mound of 'Cynthia' and 'Sappho' (the only survivors planted before 1939), two old hardy hybrids, the former of strong colouring. Growing over them is a good white form of *Clematis montana.* A plant of the very free-flowering 'Mrs. G. W. Leak' also attracts attention from visitors, albeit not being its owner's favourite.

Tender rhododendrons of Subsection *Maddenii* have been kept together in a dampish dell near one end of the drive and include forms of *lindleyi, dendricola* and *chrysodoron,* as well as 'Actress', the hybrid mentioned above. General Harrison told me that it had a more open flower than 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' and it certainly had good foliage. Along the drive itself, which was planted with old flowering Japanese cherries and daffodils, a single plant of *maddenii* was the largest I had seen of this species, 3.7m by 2.4m. With it were smaller plants of *manipurense* and in front a big Embothrium. another interesting plant on the drive was the Tower Court 'Daffodilly', a form of *xanthocodon* with unusual yellow flowers and a beautiful plant which deserves wider propagation; planted beside it was the purple form of the same species; both are exceptionally hardy. By the drive a vast *Parrotia persica* was also notable, and it had been suggested to General Harrison that it might be the largest in England; the boughs had grown together and joined up in places. A very old standard *Garrya elliptical* also attracted attention.

By the house the drive continued to the stable yard, passing a steep bank which had been cleverly planted with heathers among which had been cut large holes for the planting of dwarf rhododendrons and the result was very effective as well as being a very labour-saving treatment of a rather difficult site. Behind was a useful windbreak of old 'Cornish Red' rhododendron, a very old hybrid of unknown origin. Here, the first rhododendron to flower every year was the beautiful 'Snow Fairy', raised at Tower Court and probably an upright form of *R. moupinense,* but without the *mucronulatum* in its parentage with which it was registered. It was planted close to Camellia 'Donation' and in some years the two have flowered together.

Another very exceptional plant here was the big *impeditum* from Tower Court, absolutely compact, about 45cm in height but 2m x 1.8m across and estimated to be probably about fifty years old. Even without much flower the beautiful blue tints of the young foliage made it outstanding. Near it was a specially good deep purple form of *saluenense,* very rich in colour. In the bays among the heathers were *russatum, scintillans,* 'Prostigiatum, *fastigiatum, imperator,* 'Intrifast' and *russatum* x 'St. Breward', a very promising cross. In the bed near the top we noted a good pink-budded *yakushimanum* and a very lovely form of *wardii* under a Forrest number, a present from Mr. J. P. C. Russell when he was at Sunningdale Nurseries.

The rhododendron riches of the garden are great and we have only mentioned a small proportion, but the camellias are nearly as numerous and form General Harrison's other main interest. Even in early May the bushes of 'Donation' (cuttings in 1947), 2.4 to 3m tall, were still covered with flower. Its phlox-pink, semi-double flowers have great lasting capacity and few plants flower as freely. In this garden General Harrison has found that camellias do not suffer from honey fungus to the same extent as do the rhododendrons and this is a great advantage. There is a very big collection, over two hundred forms of *Camellia japonica* and twenty of *C. x williamsii* as many who have seen General Harrison's exhibits at the spring Camellia competitions must have noticed. Practically all are grown in full exposure and have made compact, free-flowering bushes, although here camellias are more tolerant of heavy shade and poorer conditions than are rhododendrons. Among the best japonicas General Harrison ranks very highly 'Haku-Rakuten', whose semi-double white flowers seem to stand up to bad weather and his bush is now 1.8m high. 'Silva' and 'Alexander Hunter' are two of the best of the single and semi-double reds in this garden. 'Alexander Hunter' is one of the latest to flower. Among the *williamsii* 'J. C. Williams' with its beautiful clear blush, pink single flowers is still one of the favourites. 'Elizabeth Rothschild' is another very lovely single, just a little deeper and warmer in colour, while 'Elsie Jury' from New Zealand is regarded here as very promising and has large pink anemone-formed flowers. There are only small plants of the semi-double forms of *C. reticulata,* but there are two outstanding plants, 3.4 and 2.1m high, of the single form with wavy petals and of a rather darker pink than is usual. Of the Reticulata hybrids that have as yet flowered freely 'Leonard Messel' is outstanding, being almost as floriferous as 'Donation' and of a rather clearer pink.

A planting of eight varieties of *rusticana* camellias is of interest, showing generally as compared with *japonica* that they are very floriferous, smaller in flower and leaf, and less upright in growth. It would be interesting to know by trial, in a colder part of the country, whether this variety is hardier than *japonica.* General Harrison himself described a number of his favourite camellias in the 1966 issue of this Year Book and so it is unnecessary to duplicate his remarks here.

This very rich garden is open at various dates in the spring and early summer for The National Gardens Scheme and also, from time to time, for other charities. It is well worth a visit. I would like especially to acknowledge with thanks General Harrison's most generous help with this article as well as his kind hospitality, and also to pay tribute to the excellent state of upkeep of the garden and the way in which the plants are grown so compactly and well shaped.

Patrick Synge's portrait of Tremeer was published in *The Rhododendron and Camellia Year Book 1970.* The botanic nomenclature of the original text has been updated to reflect the current classification and the feet and inches measurements replaced with metres and centimetres.

The Lepidote Registrations:

Actress
‘Lady Alice Fitzwilliam’ X *edgeworthii*
Flower Colour: White
Height: Low

Belle of Tremeer
rigidum (White Form) X *augustinii*
Flower Colour: Mauve

Blue Star
‘Saint Tudy’ X *impeditum*
Flower Colour: Mauve-blue

Dresden China
‘Sesterianum’ X *ciliatum*
Flower Colour: White

Furore
oreotrephes X *concatenans*
Flower Colour: Mauve-pink

Golden Gift
cinnabarinum x *maddenii* X *concatenans*
AM 1970
Flower Colour: Yellow

Greeneye
augustinii X ‘Saint Tudy’
Flower Colour: Mauve-blue

Hunter's Moon
chasmanthum X *concatenans*
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

John Stone
xanthocodon ‘Daffodilly’ X ‘Hunter's Moon’
Flower Colour: Yellow-white
Flowering Time: Late April
Height: Tall

Kit Corynton
cinnabarinum X *maddenii*
Flower Colour: Yellow

Moonrise
chasmanthum X ‘Lady Chamberlain’
Flower Colour: Lilac-pink

Piquante
valentinianum X *leucaspis*
Flower Colour: Yellow

Plaineye
augustinii X ‘Saint Tudy’
Flower Colour: Lavender-blue

Portrait
chasmanthum X ‘Lady Chamberlain’
Flower Colour: Oyster Pink

Purple Eye
augustinii X ‘Saint Tudy’
Flower Colour: Mauve-blue

Saint Kew
augustinii X ‘Saint Breward’
Flower Colour: Violet

Saint Merryn
‘Saint Tudy’ X *impeditum*
AM 1983 FCC 1986
Flower Colour: Violet
Flowering Time: April
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Saint Minver
russatum X ‘Saint Breward’
FCC 1986
Flower Colour: Purple
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Saint Wenn
‘Blue Diamond’ X *scintillans*
Flower Colour: Mauve

Virtue
oreotrephes X ‘Lady Chamberlain’
Flower Colour: Mauve

R. 'Blue Star'

R. 'Blue Star'


R. 'Blue Star'


R. 'Blue Star'

R. 'Blue Star' & R. 'Saint Merryn'

'Saint Tudy' x *impeditum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H6 April 0.7m x 1.5m

The soil at Tremeer, the house in North Cornwall where Major-General Eric Harrison lived and gardened, must have contained some unknown element or roborant, for his Subsection *Lapponica* crosses bloomed in bluer tones there than literally anywhere else they have been planted. Perhaps it was the quality of the light? The particular climate? Or even the degree of exposure? But if a rhododendron's pigmentation can ever be said to be truly blue, this was the place where that colour was most closely duplicated.

Harrison's 'Blue Star' is from the same mating as the far more widely grown 'Saint Merryn', but its star-shaped flowers are larger, the selection's habit a touch less compact, and the foliage nowhere near as tightly packed. Yet the plant is still a semi-dwarf, barely topping half a metre in height unless planted in shade, with stiff, short branches and dark green oval leaves, scaly above and below. The flowers are funnel-shaped, the lobes deeply divided and carried in trusses of 3 to 5, and their violet-blue or mauve-blue hue is complimented by stamen filaments of the same tone and accentuated by a reddish-purple style. They are produced with abandon in April and often hold their colour into early May.


R. 'Saint Merryn' AM 1983 & FCC 1986

R. ‘Saint Merryn’ AM 1983 & FCC 1986

The Elepidote Registrations:

Achilles
'Barclayi' X 'Werei'
Flower Colour: Cherry Red

Adamant
'Barclayi' X 'Werei'
Flower Colour: Red

Aglare
'Arthur Osborn' X 'Rapture'
Flower Colour: Red

Agleam
'Arthur Osborn' X 'Isabella'
Flower Colour: Red

Aglow
diaprepes X 'Arthur Osborn'
Flower Colour: Pink

Anthony
'Arthur Osborn' X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Red

Artist
'Lacs' seedling X *irroratum*
Flower Colour: White

Avania
'Tally Ho' X 'Rapture'
Flower Colour: Geranium Red

Bombardier
'Fusilier' X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Brumas
'Sincerity' X 'Detonsum'
Flower Colour: White

Catherine Hopwood
rex X 'Sincerity'
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Charlotte Currie
'Barclayi Robert Fox' X *williamsianum*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Medium

Chivalry
apodectum X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Orange-salmon

Coral Pink
'Barclayi' X 'Lacs'
Flower Colour: Coral Pink

Cornish Cracker
'Doctor Stocker' X *campylocarpum*

Cream Cracker
'Doctor Stocker' X *campylocarpum*

Daylight
fortunei X 'Mrs W. C. Slocock'
Flower Colour: Pink

Destiny
'Sincerity' X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Coral Pink

Dolphin
apodectum X *crinigerum*
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink

Dusky Dawn
'Vibrant' X 'Jalisco'
Flower Colour: Apricot-white

Fairy Tale
'Detonsum' hybrid
Flower Colour: Pink

Firebrand
beanianum X *neriiflorum* Euchaites
Flower Colour: Red

Fox Hunter
'Matador' X 'Gaul'
Flower Colour: Red

Fred Harris
'Corona' X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Pink

George Haslam
'Polar Bear' X 'Romarez'
Flower Colour: Pink-purplish-pink
Flowering Time: June-July
Height: Tall

Joan Scobie
'Matador' X 'Gaul'
AM 1972
Flower Colour: Red

King Arthur
'Arthur Osborn' X *griffithianum*

Lavender Time
diaprepes X 'Purple Splendour'

Lilac Time
diaprepes X 'Purple Splendour'

Lunar Queen
'Hawk' X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: April-May

Maestro
williamsianum X 'Barclayi Robert Fox'
AM 1975
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink

Mandate
thomsonii X *lacteum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April

Mystic
'Barclayi' X *williamsianum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Page Boy
wardii X 'Mrs W. C. Slocock'
Flower Colour: Cream-pink
Height: Medium

Pensive
williamsianum X *irroratum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Philippa
rex X 'Sincerity'
Flower Colour: White-purplish-pink
Flowering Time: April

Pink Pebble
callimorphum X *williamsianum*
AM 1975
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Pipaluk
'Doctor Stocker' X *williamsianum*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Medium

Rajah
neriiflorum Euchaites X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Red

Rascal
'Apache' X *neriiflorum* Euchaites
Flower Colour: Red

Romany Rye
griersonianum X 'Souldis'
Flower Colour: Pink

Saint Mabyn
'Souldis' seedling
Flower Colour: White

Santa Claus
griersonianum hybrid
Flower Colour: Red

Sincerity
griffithianum seedling
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Sunshine
beanianum X *neriiflorum* Euchaites
Flower Colour: Red

Tara
'Tally Ho' X *griersonianum* x *zeylanicum* Kingianum
AM 1964
Flower Colour: Turkey Red

Tremeer
'Arthur Osborn' X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Red

Truth
'Mrs W. C. Slocock' X *decorum* x *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: White

Tudor Minstrel
arboreum X 'Carex'
Flower Colour: Pink

Vibrant
diaprepes X *wardii*
Flower Colour: Greenish-white

Vigil
wardii X *diaprepes*
Flower Colour: Cream

Zyxya
'Barclayi Robert Fox' X 'Elizabeth'
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Flowering Time: April

R. 'George Haslam'

R. 'George Haslam'
'Polar Bear' x 'Romarez'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H4-5 Late June-July 7m x 5m

Extending the rhododendron flowering season well into July has been a prime goal of many hybridisers and inevitably, their crosses incorporated *R. auriculatum* into the parental mix because the species opens its blooms as late as early August. Most of these combinations will therefore have large, funnel-shaped corollas, pure white or flushed a wishy-washy tone of pink, in a loose and open truss, plus large, oblong-lanceolate leaves. 'George Haslam' is no exception, but in opting for an F2 pairing using two of the best late-flowering hybrids then available - 'Polar Bear' and 'Romarez' - Eric Harrison produced a stunner with much deeper pigmentation than is usually found. But they have one major handicap - the susceptibility of the blooms to spoil if hit by anything more than the gentlest shower of rain. A fallacy common to many *R. auriculatum* hybrids, it is nonetheless infuriating, yet even in gardens prone to Atlantic storm systems, mature plants can still put on a spectacular end of season display.

The habit of 'George Haslam' is basically upright and the plant well-branched, which in consequence, despite the long internodal growth and single-year leaf retention, produces a bushy framework thanks to each blade in the whorl attaining a length of up to 25cm and an 8cm width. Oblanceolate in shape with a pointed tip and rounded or cordate base - the latter having two lobes that form a sinus, though these never approach being auriculate (where the projections are ear-like and often overlap) - the foliage is matt green in colour and glabrous, the brown abaxial indumentum of the pollen parent unfortunately lost in the pairing. As always with *R. auriculatum* hybrids, once the flowers begin to open, the leaves often begin to appear somewhat chlorotic: a falsehood; merely the first hint that they will shortly be discarded as the new foliage extends; but nevertheless a visual detriment.

The blooms themselves are pinkish-red in the bud, opening deep pink through deep purplish-pink, the depth of their hue long-lasting. Each corolla is around 6cm long and wide, tubular-funnel-campanulate in shape and held in a two-tiered, flat-topped and open truss of between 12 and 14 trumpets. As indicated above, heavy rain or a stream of drips falling from a leaf above will lead to discoloured patches on the tube or the lobes, or the complete collapse of the corolla, the yellowy-brown pulpy remains appearing almost as if the victim of frost. Obviously this can mar the display, but the problem should be regarded fatalistically and shrugged-off if it occurs.

Far more than cosmetic damage however, will be inflicted if the shrub is subject to an early autumn frost before the new growth has fully hardened. As the H4-5 winter hardiness rating already rules out prospective locales where the temperature might drop below -12ºC from December onwards, the requirement to be frost-free until at least late October restricts appropriate planting sites still further - to the mildest of venues in the south and those gardens along the west coast that benefit from the North Atlantic Drift.

Both of the 'George Haslam' parent plants are crosses made by the Stevensons of Tower Court, Ascot. 'Polar Bear' should need no further introduction, but the pollen provider is little-known, even amongst rhodophiles. It is however a fine *kyawii* x *griersonianum* cross made by John Barr and Roza in 1932; one that received an Award of Merit from the RHS in 1953. A decade or so after her husband's sudden death in 1950, Roza remarried, tying the knot with another devotee of the genus, a certain Major-General; Eric Harrison of Tremeer; bringing 'Romarez' from its Berkshire home to Cornwall, and her new husband's attention in 1961.


R. 'George Haslam'

R. 'George Haslam'

R. 'George Haslam'

R. 'Maestro' AM 1975

R. ‘Mystic’


R. 'Pink Pebble' AM 1975

R. 'Pink Pebble'
callimorphum x *williamsianum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 April-May 1.4m x 2.5m

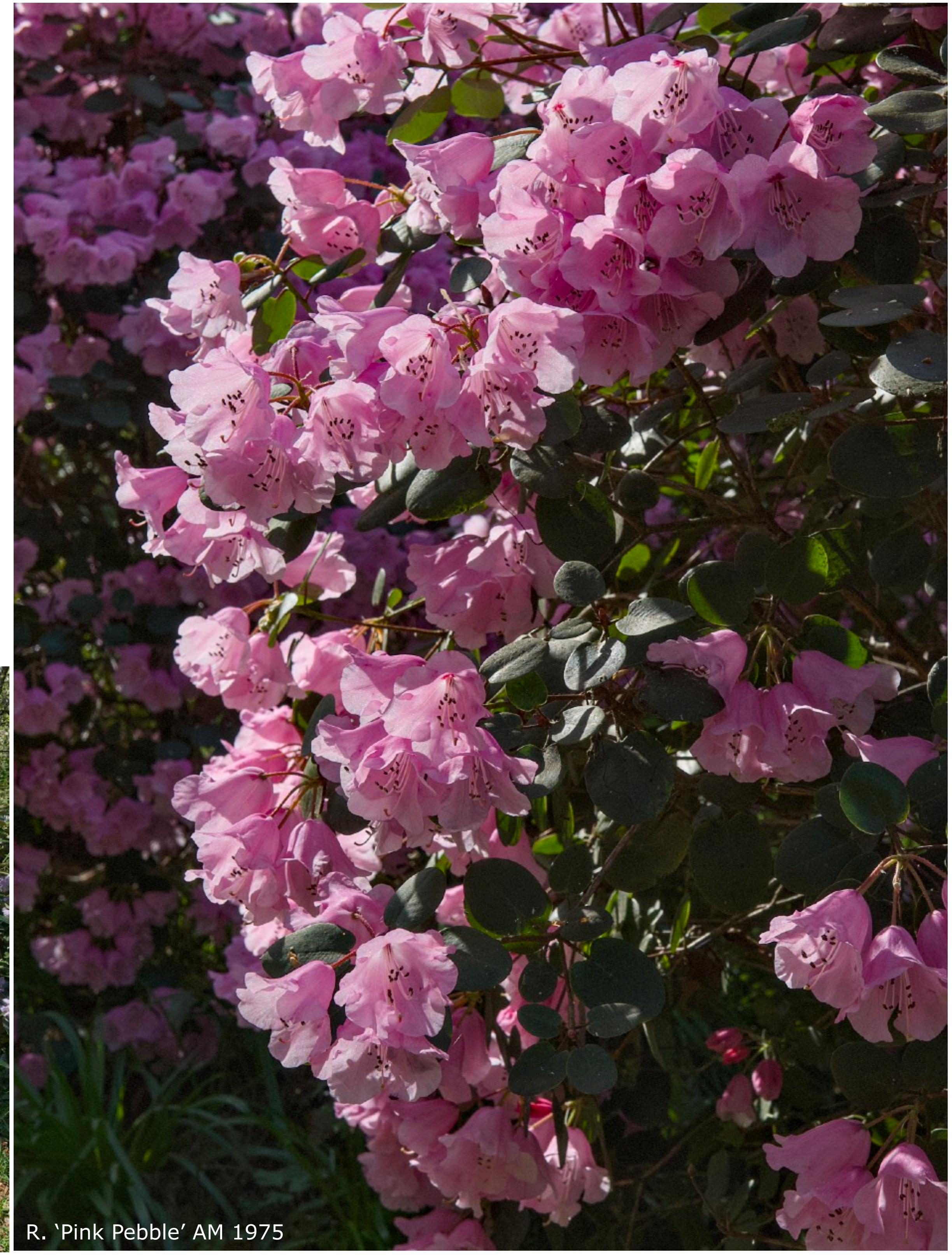
R. 'Pink Pebble' is one of Major-General Eric Harrison's best crosses and it should be far better known and much more widely planted than currently. For it is simply a knockout. And possibly the best medium-sized *R. williamsianum* hybrid available for small gardens.

The cross is a *callimorphum* x *williamsianum* combination, and the selected result, a compact, densely-furnished shrub rarely topping 1.4m in height that in time will form a wider-spreading dome some 2.5m across. Placement in light dappled shade gives the best results, though if this is allowed to become too dense, the framework of branches will be drawn up towards the 2m-mark and a more open shrub will result. The foliage shape is elliptic through near orbicular, the individual leaves around 7cm long by 5cm wide, mid green in hue and auriculate at the base, though the 'ears' do not overlap. They are retained for two years on crimson-stained petioles.

The flower stalks too are flushed red, as well as being glandular and around 4cm long. Four or five bell-shaped corollas emerge from within each inflorescence in a loose, open truss and these are bright crimson in the bud, opening pale pink within, and a deeper rosy-pink without. Each is 4.5cm long by up to 6cm across, and graced with a small, dark red flare at the base of the dorsal lobe. And they are produced with abandon from a very young age.

'Pink Pebble' is sufficiently hardy to thrive in all but the coldest of UK gardens, this aided by its new growth beginning to extend quite late in the season, usually well after any danger from spring frosts has passed. Expert opinion also rates it highly, with the shrub keeping its 1993 Award of Garden Merit following the latest review.


R. 'Pink Pebble' AM 1975


R. 'Pink Pebble' AM 1975


R. 'Pink Pebble' AM 1975


R. 'Pink Pebble' AM 1975


R. 'Pipaluk'

R. 'Pipaluk'
'Doctor Stocker' x *williamsianum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 Late April-May 1.8m x 3m

'Pipaluk', a 'Doctor Stocker' x *williamsianum* hybrid from Tremeer, mirrors many of Eric Harrison's other equally fine crosses in that it has never achieved the popularity it rightly deserves. The flowers open with a pink flush, but this is quickly lost as the blooms fully expand leaving them pure white and unadorned with neither blotch, flare, speckles or spots. Eight broadly funnel-shaped corollas are carried in each truss, individually 5cm long by 7.5cm wide.

The leaves are a dull mid green in tone, oblong-lanceolate through elliptic in outline, around 8cm long by half as much across and held for two years, with the habit upright and spreading, giving the shrub a fairly open mien, with the plants free-flowering from quite a young age.

The 'Pipaluk' epithet comes from the Inuits of Greenland, where it means "sweet little thing", so it is unlikely to be applied to a certain loud-mouthed US President, his equally obnoxious Vice President, and the finger puppet members of his White House team, unless sarcastically. Borrowed most notably by the Zoological Society of London for a male polar bear cub born at Regent's Park in December 1967, Eric Harrison, though a Major General in the Royal Artillery during the Second World War, who saw fighting in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, and whose autobiography indicates a clear preference to be out hunting bear rather than immortalising them - however cuddly they might be - had, in 1968, a new, white-flowering rhododendron, to register with the appropriate authorities…

Synchronicity therefore, rather than a 12-bore, sealed the match.


R. 'Pipaluk'


R. `Pipaluk'

R. `Pipaluk'

R. 'Pipaluk'

R. 'Tara' AM 1964

R. 'Tara' AM 1964

James Horlick:

Sir James Nockells Horlick (1886-1972), OBE., MC., VMH., 4th Baronet.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir James Nockells Horlick, the fourth baronet in the Horlick Baronetcy (of Cowley Manor in the County of Gloucester), was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 22nd, 1886. The second son of Sir James Horlick, the first baronet, and Margaret Adelaide Burford, he was educated at Eton College and then Christ Church, Oxford, graduating from the university in 1908 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. During his time at Oxford, James played one first-class match for the University's Cricket Club against Yorkshire in 1906, and then two first-class matches for Gloucestershire, the primary one in the 1907 County Championship, the second in the 1910 County Championship. He was apparently a right-handed batsman and slow left-arm orthodox bowler, with his numbers for those three matches reading: 1 innings, 24 runs with a highest score of 9, average of 6, bowling figures of 10-0-48-0, and 2 catches.

He married Flora Macdonald Martin, on 22 March 1911.

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, he joined the Coldstream Guards and served in Thessaloniki (Salonika) in northern Greece, gaining the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and being mentioned in dispatches four times. During his service he was award the the Military Cross in 1917 and also received the Greek Military Cross, the Order of the White Eagle with Swords (4th class), and the Chevalier Legion d'Honneur. In 1918 he was appointed Officer, Order of the British Empire, attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and was later appointed Officer, Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. He became Chairman and President of the UK arm of Horlicks Ltd in 1921.

Horlicks is a sweet malted milk hot drink powder that was developed by James and William Horlick, the company's founders, after they had emigrated to Wisconsin in the USA during the 1870s. First marketed as 'Horlick's Infant and Invalids Food', from the early 20th century it was sold as a powdered meal replacement drink mix. The British branch of the company was established in the 1890s and the American company was bought out by its British subsidiary at the end of World War II. Currently, the UK company is owned by Aimia Foods, while Unilever bought Horlicks' other world-wide subsidiary business operations - in Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Nepal, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Thailand,- for US$3.8 billion in December 2018.

James Horlick was elected the Conservative MP for Gloucester in the 1923 General Election, and served in Parliament until 1929. He held the office of High Sheriff of Berkshire in 1938. His interest in growing and hybridising rhododendrons began in the 1920s when he lived at 'Little Paddocks', Sunninghill, Ascot, and he was a founder member of the Rhododendron Association.

In 1944 he purchased Achamore House and the island of Gigha, part of the Inner Hebrides archipelago off the west coast of Kintyre in Scotland, and here, began planting a 50-acre rhododendron garden, taking advantage of the mild climate, higher than average sunshine hours and fertile soils. He married Joan Isabel MacGill, on January 19th, 1956, shortly after the death of his first wife in October 1955, and succeeded to the Baronetcy on January 29th, 1958. For his rhododendron hybridising work, the RHS awarded him their Victoria Medal of Honour in 1963, and he is remembered as a generous owner by the local community, most especially for using his experience of running the family business to support the island's dairy industry.

Sir James died at his home on Gigha at the age of 86, on December 31st, 1972, and he is buried in the local cemetery.

- opposite -
Sir James Nockells Horlick, photographed in 1924.

Achamore House and Gardens in 2015

The Gardens on the Isle of Gigha.

by Patrick M. Synge.

Gardening on one of the smaller islands off the west coast of Scotland carries with it special problems. Probably the greatest of these is shelter from the wind and sea spray. This is the first essential there for growing all rhododendrons except the smaller leaved ones and the deciduous azaleas. The island of Gigha, about ten kilometres in length and two point four kilometres in width, lies off the west side of the Mull of Kintyre in Argyllshire and is partly sheltered from the north-west by Isla and Jura, but on the west and south-west is open to the Atlantic.

When Lieutenant-Colonel J. N. Horlick came to Gigha in 1944 he found around his house, particularly to the east and south, a mixed woodland about sixty years old with oak, ash, beech, larch, horse-chestnut, sycamore, Corsican and Scots pine. None of these trees were very large and little or no thinning had been done. There were also great thickets of *Escallonia macrantha* some 20 metres or more across and 3 metres high, as well as thick banks of *Rhododendron ponticum,* probably over fifty years old, which lined the whole drive and surrounded the house. Many of these had of necessity to be cut back and pulled out with winches, while tree roots have been blown up. Probably two hundred or more trees have also been blown down in gales and had to be cleared. However, what remains helps very considerably in the shelter problem while in the spring the mixed woodlands give a delightful symphony of greens when seen from the house.

The main gales come from the south-west and the north-west but they may be expected from any quarter and, in January 1957, a particularly severe one from the south-east blew down a number of trees and, carrying salt spray with it, browned and defoliated a great number of plants including many of the junipers and heathers on the rocks as well as the *ponticum* rhododendrons in exposed places.

In early May the island was particularly lovely with primroses and bluebells everywhere, pink thrift on the rocks by the sea and masses of golden gorse, some of an unusually fine form with large heads of a deep orange colour. The woodland garden is a pleasing contrast to the more severe hills and rocks outside.

Colonel Horlick has wisely planted a number of shelter belts, the outermost being Sitka spruce with *Pinus contorta* and *P. radiata,* which have so far proved most wind-resistant. It is important, however, to provide shelter from draughts low down as well as from top winds and for this hedges and thickets of escallonias, olearias, griselinias and other shrubs have been used. *Senecio rotundifolius,* originally derived from Mr Arnold Forster at Eagle's Nest in Cornwall and easily propagated by cuttings, has proved one of the toughest and with its thick, leathery, evergreen foliage is a decorative plant. Another good wind-resister is the silvery leaved *Elaeagnus ebbingei,* a hybrid between *E. glabra* and *E. pungens* and very fast growing. *Olearia albida* also stands wind well, better than the commoner *O. haastii,* while *O. semi-dentata* has formed great bushes 1.5 metres high and as much through, flowering freely with great mauve daisies all the latter half of the summer. It is well described by the R.H.S. Dictionary as "perhaps the most beautiful Olearia in cultivation". *Cupressocyparis leylandii* the fast growing, bigeneric hybrid cypress is also much used and so far appears very successful. Throughout the woods these are used to make small protected glades in which the rhododendrons are planted. No great vistas are possible owing to the wind and everywhere a planter needs to be careful not to form a wind tunnel when opening out the wood for his plants.

As in many other gardens on the west coast of Scotland, the rhododendrons are best planted slightly raised above the surrounding soil rather than in hollows. Much drainage has been done in the wood but even so there are still rather surprising differences in only a few metres of ground between a dry patch and a water-logged patch due to old, pre-woodland "lazybeds" and broken stone drains from the time when the land was farmed. Sometimes a move of only a metre or two will resuscitate a sick plant. This kind of information can only be gained by experience of the particular garden. Young plants need to be planted particularly firmly and Colonel Horlick has found it well worth while to protect young plants of the large-leaved rhododendrons with cages of branches and bracken. Coir fibre netting on 2-metre screens or even fine-mesh rabbit netting or barricades of roots and branches are also used for wind protection in winter in very exposed places. It is interesting to note that neither larch nor holly will stand the gales in such places. The woodland is carpeted with mosses and ferns while in the damper places and around a small pond *Primula japonica* and *P. pulverulenta* make a lovely picture of naturalistic planting. *P. denticulata* also does well.

While by no means frost free, temperatures below -3°C. are not often recorded and only occasionally are there 7°C. of frost. This means that a number of the more tender rhododendrons of Subsection *Maddenia* can be grown well while the wind and the sun have combined to keep them as compact free-flowering plants in a way which I had not seen anywhere before. During my visit in early May plants of both *R. lindleyi* var. *taggianum* and *R. lindleyi* var. *lindleyi* were in full flower in the walled garden. About 1.2 to 1.5 metres in height, with short stems covered in flower, they were a very lovely sight. These were not growing against a wall. These species are very close to each other, that labelled *taggianum* having large waxy-white trumpet flowers, while that labelled *lindleyi* had a slight pinkish flush on the outside of the flowers. These plants were, however, surpassed by two bushes (recently identified at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, as a variety of *R. lindleyi*) growing on a steep rocky bank facing east and without any tree shelter.

The largest of these was about 1.5 metres high and quite as much through and literally covered with flower, the most lovely spectacle that I have seen among rhododendrons for a long time. The flowers were beautifully shaped, pure white with a slight pale yellowish flush at the throat. When the light was seen through them they gave the appearance of being lit by a small light inside. The individual flowers were perhaps not quite as large as may be seen in some other forms of this species but their profusion and the compact habit of growth were most unusual and made it a wonderful garden plant. Colonel Horlick told us that it had flowered thus each year for the past four or five years. These plants had been brought up from Colonel Horlick's former garden near Ascot. Young plants of *R. maddenii* and others of this subsection were also growing near by, while 'Blue Tit' and pale blush-pink Kurume azaleas higher up the bank complemented it very well. Above was a small plant of the very tender *Furcraea longaeva.* Two plants of *Puya alpestris* facing south against a wall usually flower every year with metallic greenish-blue flowers on great spikes of sinister appearance some 1.5 metres or more in height.

In the walled garden were young plants of an interesting cross between *R. sinonuttallii* and *R. lindleyi* but these had not yet flowered though they had survived two bad winters in the open. In a sheltered border close by, plants of R. 'Countess of Haddington' with rather tubular waxy, pale-pink flowers were particularly fine and floriferous. These had also retained a compact habit. A healthy *R. manipurense* in the same border had reached 1.5 metres as had also plants of *R. crassum* and *R. polyandrum,* while throughout the garden were large numbers of *R. edgeworthii,* both the pink and white forms and many intermediaries. R. 'Fragrantissimum', R. 'Princess Alice' and R. 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' were flowering very freely.

- opposite -
The Walled Garden in 1958 - *R. lindleyi* var. *lindleyi* (left), *R. lindleyi* var. *taggianum* (right).


The *R. edgeworthii,* though small at present, all looked well and flowered as young plants. In a few years' time the small grove of them should be particularly lovely. They were seedlings said to have been derived from a cross between *R. edgeworthii* and *R. johnstoneanum,* but there was no evidence of the latter in the flowers or foliage. Another unusual hybrid of this subsection was the yellow R. 'Parisienne' (*burmanicum* x *valentinianum*) which has flowered freely against the shelter of a wall.

The sloping rocky bank, perhaps 6 metres or more in height, on which the fine *R. lindleyi* was growing was a particularly successful and naturalistic planting. In one bay near the base bluebells made a beautiful picture with a large group of the Kurume azalea 'Hinomayo', while further along the magenta-red 'Hatsugiri' and 'Hinodegiri' and various pink malvatica hybrids contrasted well with large groups of white Kurume azaleas. Large groups have also been planted of R. 'Cilpinense' and *R. leucaspis* perhaps 6 metres or more across and they must have been a lovely sight earlier in the year, the former looking particularly flourishing. Through them were growing healthy spikes of lilies, *L. regale* and *L. bulbiferum croceum* seeming to do well in the deep pockets of soil between the rocks and the good drainage of the slope. Blue mounds of *R. scintillans, R. impeditum* and 'Blue Tit' had also been used freely and were flowering abundantly as nice compact plants. As one climbed the bank and emerged at the top among the gorse one gained the most magnificent view over much of the island and over the sea towards Jura and Isley, Ireland and the Mull of Kintyre.

A new rhododendron garden had recently been constructed in a clearing in the upper part of the wood and grass paths had been made between the beds. Here were masses of pink and red Kurumes, particularly 'Hinomayo', the dwarf blood-red 'Carmen' (*didymum* x *forrestii* Repens), *R. scintillans, R. impeditum* and *R. calostrotum.* The slivery-grey leaved *Sorbus cuspidata* at one corner made an interesting combination with the brilliant colourings of the rhododendrons. When these have increased in size and grown more together it should make a very colourful part of the garden. A dwarf species that was particularly good throughout the garden was *R. calostrotum* and Colonel Horlick had forms as near pink as I have seen anywhere.

The Subsection *Cinnabarina* species and hybrids seemed to flourish and had been planted widely. Among the varying forms of 'Lady Chamberlain', 'Lady Rosebery' and 'Lady Berry', the clone 'Salmon Trout' was particularly lovely, 2.4 metres high and nearly as much through and weighed down with flower. Its colour is well described by its name. The massed plants of 'Blue Tit' formed a pleasant contrast to plants of this group. The outstanding plant, however, was a form of *R. cinnabarinum* Roylei Group which had come from the Crarae garden. A large plant, 1.5 metres high by 1.2 metres through, it was covered with bell-shaped flowers of an unusually deep plum-crimson with a slight blue-grey bloom on the outside. The inside of the bell, however, was a brilliant scarlet and this was the dominant colour when the flowers were seen with the sun behind them. It was certainly a very fine plant and I had not seen a similar form before.

Species and hybrids have been mixed freely in the wood and among the former I particularly noted a very free-flowering *R. aberconwayi* not more than 0.9 metres high, but as much across and covered with its beautiful white saucer-shaped flowers. *R. johnstoneanum* was also flowering in the same way. *R. lanatum* was doing well, the small leaves being covered below with a woolly rusty indumentum. *R. thomsonii* was still flowering in early May.

Among the hybrids probably the scarlet ones had been used most freely and 'May Day' was literally covered with flowers wherever it had been used. I particularly noted one plant of 1.5 metres across and about 1.2 metres high, so brilliant in its fiery vermillion red that no plant near by could stand up to it. 'Leo' also had grown very well and flowered freely each year, only slightly later. A number of rhododendrons have come to the gardens from such famous rhododendron gardens as Exbury, Tower Court, Bodnant and the Great Park at Windsor.

Colonel Horlick's own hybrids, many of them raised at his former house in Berkshire, Little Paddocks, were very fine. 'Glory of Athlone', raised from 'Earl of Athlone' x 'Glory of Leonardslee' had a truss of good, almost waxy, substance and was obviously a strong grower. The flowers were a bright crimson and this is a hybrid which is worth propagating more widely since it should be a good garden plant in all except the coldest gardens. 'Elfin' was another beautiful one of Colonel Horlick's raising and a complete contrast to 'Glory of Athlone', having pale blush-pink and well-shaped bells in a loose truss and very decorative rounded leaves. It is derived from *R. orbiculare* x 'Dr. Stocker'. 'Sarita Loder' derived from *R. griersonianum* x 'Loderi' was freely used and the plants, raising from Colonel Horlick's own cross, were rather variable but it is generally an effective garden plant. Another interesting and distinctive, but still unnamed hybrid from Exbury seed was *R. campanulatum* x *R. floribundum,* which has delicate mauve flowers with a deeper blotch and good foliage. 'Fringe' ('Ascot Brilliant' x *campylocarpum*), a 3-metre bush flowering freely, had loose trusses of creamy flowers frilled at the edge and tipped with pale pink, an unusual colour which was undoubtedly attractive when seen on its own. 'Betty King' and 'Betty Royal', both derived from 'Luscombei' x *thomsonii,* were good red hybrids. 'Titness Triumph' (*basilicum* x *montroseanum* KW 6261) is also probably one of Colonel Horlick's most interesting and successful hybrids and has magnificent foliage deep green above and silvery below. From Exbury had come 'Barbara', an unusually lovely cross not unlike 'Penjerrick', with creamy bell-shaped flowers but raised from *campylocarpum* Elatum x 'Loderi'. *R. campylocarpum* Elatum itself was also doing well. Undoubtedly it is among the most lovely of the species and one which should be planted much more widely.

The larger-leaved species have been planted extensively, particularly *R. macabeanum,* perhaps the hardiest and finest of them all. They are still mostly comparatively young plants but in the future this will undoubtedly be one of the most interesting and spectacular parts of the garden, both in foliage and in flower, provided they can be sheltered from the gales. Here were also *R. protistum,* a young plant in good condition and with very large leaves, *R. sinogrande, R. falconeri, R. grande, R. hodgsonii, R. arizelum* and *R. praestans.*

Other genera had not been neglected. In the walled garden a very large plant of *Clianthus puniceus,* perhaps 2.4 metres across, was flowering freely and *Azara microphylla* was also doing well. From the south side of the house a wide straight glade through the woods has been made and planted with embothriums, leptospermums and camellias. The embothriums were doing well and just beginning to flower. *Leptospermum pubescens* with its silvery-grey foliage and white flowers had been found the hardiest of the genus. Along the north drive deciduous azaleas have been planted with red-hot pokers for later colour and this combination promises to be successful. Of the camellias, *C. x williamsii* in its various forms and also *C. saluenensis* seemed to be establishing themselves well but nearly all the plants of *C. japonica* were yellow in foliage and did not flower well. Colonel Horlick thought that this was a reaction to the wind and I have heard from other Scottish gardeners that they were not successful with them either. To flower at all here *C. japonica* must be grown in full sun and that to a greater or lesser extent means exposure to wind. The latitude would also appear to be too northerly for them and the sun not of sufficient strength.

- *opposite* -
The sloping rocky bank, with R. 'Hinomayo' and an underplanting of spring Bluebells.

In thirteen years, and in a place to which it is difficult to bring really large plants, Colonel Horlick has created a rhododendron collection which should increase in interest and beauty from year to year so long as protection can be given from the spray and gales. He has asked me to acknowledge here the help he received in the lay-out of the gardens and the woodland plantings from Mss Lloyd Jones and also from Mr. J. P. C. Russell.

During the summer the garden is open daily to visitors on behalf of the Garden Scheme of the Queen's Institute and the National Trust.

Patrick Synge's portrait of Achamore House Garden was published in the *Rhododendron and Camellia Year Book 1958.*

Achamore Gardens (1944-1972).

by Helen Haugh.

Introduction.
This chapter synthesises the influences on the designed landscape of the Gardens when owned by Colonel Sir James Horlick (the Colonel). The chapter considers first Kitty Lloyd-Jones, to whom the designed landscape has been attributed, and presents new evidence about James Russell's (Russell) contribution to the designed landscape and planting of the Gardens.

The Colonel was the second son of Lord Horlick and had previously lived at Titness House and Little Paddocks (Berkshire). He married twice, had three children, and inherited the Horlick baronetcy from his nephew in 1958.

The Colonel and Gigha.
Gigha was purchased by the Colonel to provide a place to indulge in his interest in plants and gardening, particularly rhododendrons. His wish to find a suitable location to create a garden is attested to in a letter to Russell (1960) in which he sympathises with Russell's comparatively poor growing conditions in Surrey and shares his pleasure with his success in creating the Gardens:

> 'Sorry to hear you had such a late winter and early spring. I cannot think why you live in such a God-forsaken country. It nearly cured me of gardening. One disappointment after another. Here the garden is the finest I have ever seen it. The nursery garden is ablaze and so are the Lindleyi, Taggianum and the bluebells'.

The Colonel lived on Gigha for the major part of the year and planted much of the content of the Gardens. His official title was Sir James Horlick, laird of Gigha and the islets of Claro and Gigalum. The development of the Gardens was managed by the Colonel with the assistance of Malcolm Allan (head gardener from 1918 to 1970). As a benevolent landlord he also used his experience of the family business to support the island's dairy industry. In the 1950s the Colonel also purchased and created a garden at The Timbers, Ascot, for his use when he travelled south to England.

On purchasing Gigha, the Colonel reported that "in 1944 there was only a rather derelict two-acre walled garden divided into two by a low wall – and some of the plants they contain", and "a wood that had never been thinned and hardly had a decent tree in it". When describing the making of the garden he explains:

> 'In the making of the garden I was first of all very much helped by a professional lady gardener, Miss Lloyd-Jones who had worked with me at Sunninghill during the war, and then by Mr Jim Russell of Sunningdale Nurseries, who helped me both with advice, layout of plants, and I found his knowledge invaluable'.

In a second presentation, subsequently published, the Colonel recounts how he brought plants from Little Paddocks to the Gardens. "When I came up here from the South I had high hopes and brought some 150 small plants from the large collection I had down there. I still have round about 20 to 30 out in the garden". In the presentation the Colonel also states:

> 'In the early days here I had a very highly skilled professional gardener who was an excellent partner and she did clear masses of stuff out of this very big plant, rather as an apple tree pruned (three farm cart loads of branches I remember) and it certainly did flower for several years later, much to the astonishment of my gardener who had never previously seen it bloom'.

Kitty Lloyd-Jones and the Gardens.
The professional lady gardener referred to above is Kitty Leticia Lloyd-Jones. From the late 1920s up to World War II Lloyd-Jones provided advisory services to clients in Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Entries in the Little Paddocks estate books record four payments to Lloyd-Jones (1938-1940). In 1942 the Colonel refers to Lloyd-Jones in a letter to Lily Hill Nursery and in 1943 he names her as "my partner" in a letter to the Colonel the Hon. Campbell. Further, in December 1942 Colonel Horlick nominates and pays Lloyd-Jones's subscription to the Rhododendron Association.

In 1947 the Colonel commissioned architects Walker and Harwood to remodel Achamore House and the plans show a suite of rooms designated for Lloyd-Jones. Thus the modus operandi described in the historiography is borne out in the architectural drawings for remodelling of Achamore House. Lloyd-Jones presence on Gigha and her active involvement in the garden is further supported by a delivery note (10.12.48) from Wm Bates Nursery, Wokingham, on which her name has been hand written.

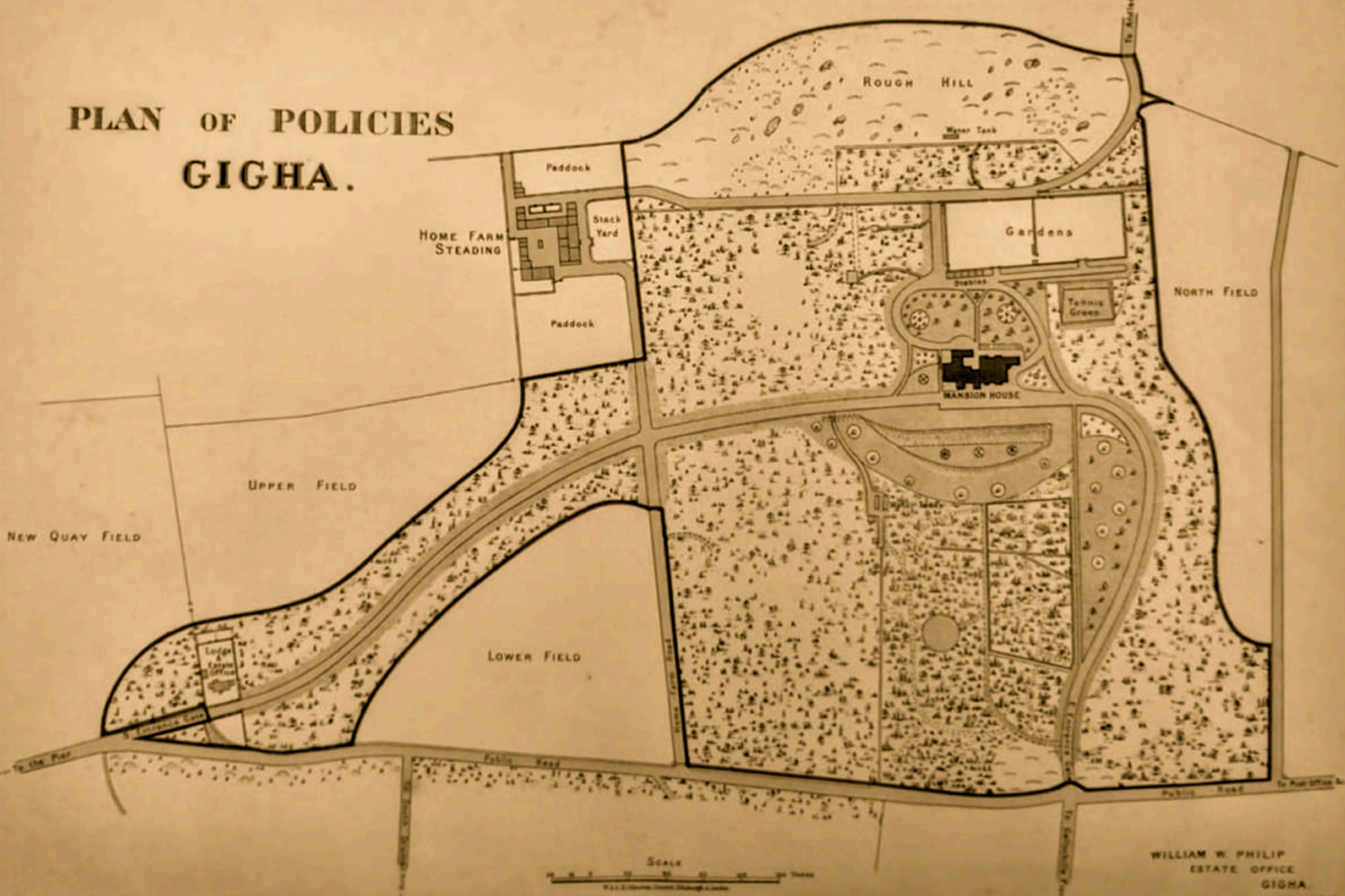
Creating the Gardens.
The first few tasks to create the Gardens described by the Colonel were to clear the rhododendron Ponticum, the woods and bramble, purchase and raise new shrubs and plants for the Gardens.

The northern drive was flanked on both sides by three rows of 12 foot high ponticum rhododendrons, and the southern drive by enormous escallonias. Ponticum invaded everywhere, and where it was not ponticum, it was occasionally very tall privet.

> 'Directly I bought the property I proceeded to raise cuttings from my garden at Sunninghill, and layers of rhodos and azaleas, and to hunt round for holly and tree seedlings from the little wood I possessed; and when they were ready these little plants were sent up in linen baskets, passenger train, insured, and took five days to arrive'.

James Russell and the Gardens.
Prior to buying Gigha in 1944, the Colonel had purchased plants from Sunningdale Nurseries for Little Paddocks. The earliest dated correspondence between the Colonel and Sunningdale Nurseries is an enquiry for a catalogue in 1937. This is followed by an order for 8 rhododendrons and a request to keep them until after his return from Scotland in "the middle of October". Further orders for Rhododendron, Acer, Pieris, were placed in October 1939. In 1940, rhododendrons and azaleas were ordered from Sunningdale Nurseries to be delivered to Little Paddocks in May, September and October. The October letters from Sunningdale Nurseries are conversational and refer to "your telephone call" and "mention a few other items, which may be of interest". The letters from Sunningdale Nurseries are signed by Louis Gray. The informal style of the letters suggests the start of a relationship between Sunningdale Nurseries and the Colonel. The next document from Sunningdale Nurseries to the Colonel is a quarterly account for £3.5 that lists Pieris (one) and Rhododendron (ten). In April 1944 the quarterly account for rhododendrons from Sunningdale Nurseries to the Colonel is £9.6.6.

- opposite and overleaf, pages 149, 150 & 151 -
A map and six photographs from the Knight Frank and Rutley 1911 sales brochure for Achamore House and Gigha, which had been put on the market for the first time in over a century by the then owners, the Scarlett family; plus a plan of the estate from 1955.


PLAN OF POLICIES
GIGHA.
Rough Hill
Water Tank
Paddock
Stack Yard
Home Farm Steading
Gardens
Stables
Tennis Green
North Field
Paddock
Mansion House
Upper Field
New Quay Field
Lower Field
Lodge & Estate Office
Entrance Gate
To the Pier
Public Road
Public Road
Scale
William W. Philip
Estate Office
Gigha.

The North Drive Entrance

The South Drive

Grass Path and Herbaceous Borders

Grass Path and Herbaceous Borders


Rear Border


South Drive to Achamore House


Achamore Gardens in 1955

The Colonel purchased Gigha in 1944 and no correspondence with Sunningdale Nurseries between 1944 and 1949 is kept in the archive. However, a letter from Russell (5 August 1949) addressed to the Colonel on Gigha describes in detail plants taken from Titness, plants to be purchased by the Colonel (£144.8.6), and plants to be given by the Colonel to "Miss Sealey". This letter corresponds to a hand written note by the Colonel for plants. At the end of the letter Russell comments "things have improved slightly here since the rain, but the weather now seems to be as hot as ever". The letter suggests discussion between the Colonel and Russell about Titness House and the Gardens. On August 17 (1949) Russell writes (in his own hand) to the Colonel and describes the plants he will send – he also comments on the weather.

In 1951 two letters from the Colonel (24 September, 2 November) and Russell (8 November) discuss plants and the Colonel's health. Referring to "Exbury strain Knaphill Azaleas for sale at 12/6d each" the Colonel writes:

> 'I should like to have 2 dozen about 15" to 18". I take it there will be a small reduction on that number. I should be very grateful if you would pick out specially good plants as I wish to make a big bed of them up here. I want only the red, orange and yellow shades, no pink. If possible I would like equal numbers of each. Can you arrange for these plants to be despatched by Passenger Train so as to arrive about 1st December'.

The correspondence between the Colonel and Sunningdale Nurseries up to 1952 suggests that between a loyal and price-conscious customer and an obliging supplier of shrubs and plants. The subsequent correspondence however, portrays an ever-closer relationship between the two parties. Although a letter commissioning a formal plan for Gardens is not kept, the first letter of 1952 (31 May) from Russell to the Colonel promises that "the plans to follow".

> 'I am very sorry that this letter has been such a long time and that you still have not got the plan for the wall garden. This, however, will be sent off next week. I am afraid that Chelsea is such a disorganising time with the number of people who come to see the garden that it is extremely hard to get on with any solid work. I am enclosing with this letter a list of Azaleas which you liked here the other day and also a note of Rhododendrons which you asked me to keep for you'.

Accompanying the letter are three lists of plants, prices and a description of the garden (the lists extend to 4 pages). The description proposes specific plants, where to plant them, and plant groups. Below are two short excerpts that refer explicitly to features in the Gardens and Gigha.

> 'For the rocks just inside the drive I would suggest on the sunny side a grouping of Rosa Richardi a particularly charming small rose from Abyssinia with single shell pink flowers with a bunch of golden stamens at the centre'.

> 'The question of background plants in the woodland is a somewhat large one and I think would really be best considered on the ground. Perhaps with a view to spring planting… If the royal fern Osmunda Regalia does not grow on Gigha then I think should be introduced in fairly considerable quantity. There is nothing quite so fine as its tall upstanding fronds in their vivid bronzy green'.

In July 1952 Russell writes to thank the Colonel for his cheque and notes "I had worked out a rough scheme for the wall garden so enclose it as a matter of interest". Russell also repeats his offer to "discuss the underplanting in the wood with you on the ground as I think it is nearly impossible to do on paper". The exchange confirms that the plans must have been hand drawn as Russell comments in a post script "I am afraid I am a very poor drawer of plans, as you can see". Although no copy of the formal plan is in the archive, it is clear from the five typed pages of a planting plan for "The Wall Garden at Gigha" attached to the letter that Russell had used specific features in the walled garden as reference points for the formal plan, e.g., "the seat marked A", "the centre of this bed, D," and the "centre E a large ornamental pot".

On July 17th Russell writes (in his own hand) from his personal address at Nursery Court that he sends a list of azaleas to the Colonel and that "I should love to come up and discuss things in August, preferably fairly near the end of that month", and that "I can certainly quote you for a quantity of 'filling up' azaleas at a reasonable price". In this letter he also mentions that "I have to go and deal with some gardens in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire". These are references to Russell's visits to and commissions from many other clients, or as he later refers to them in personal correspondence to the Colonel - "my victims".

The much-talked about visit by Russell to Gigha however, does not come to fruition because Russell writes in August that "I am most terribly sorry to have let you down over coming to Gigha", because of a medical problem and that "Just at the moment I am in Ayrshire hills shooting". The letter then describes several visits to clients and ends "I am going to do some planting in the Montroses' at Auchamn, finishing October 22nd so if I could come on to you from there it would suit very well". A further hand written letter from Russell, on this occasion sent from an address in Angus, seeks to set up a visit to Gigha in early October and notes that "I shall be c/o Duke of Montrose, Brodick castle, Arran from Sept 27th – Oct. 1st and at the Buchanan Arms, Dunvegen, Glasgow from Oct 1st – 3rd".

Writing from Inverness on October 11th I conclude that Russell has finally visited Gigha. He explains in his letter:

> 'It was extremely kind of you to have me to stay at Gigha and I enjoyed myself enormously. As soon as I get home (about 15th) I will write at length about the garden. I really think you have got the most wonderful possibilities'.

In October (1952) Russell sends a letter to the Colonel in which he proposes a planting scheme for the Gardens. The letter commences:

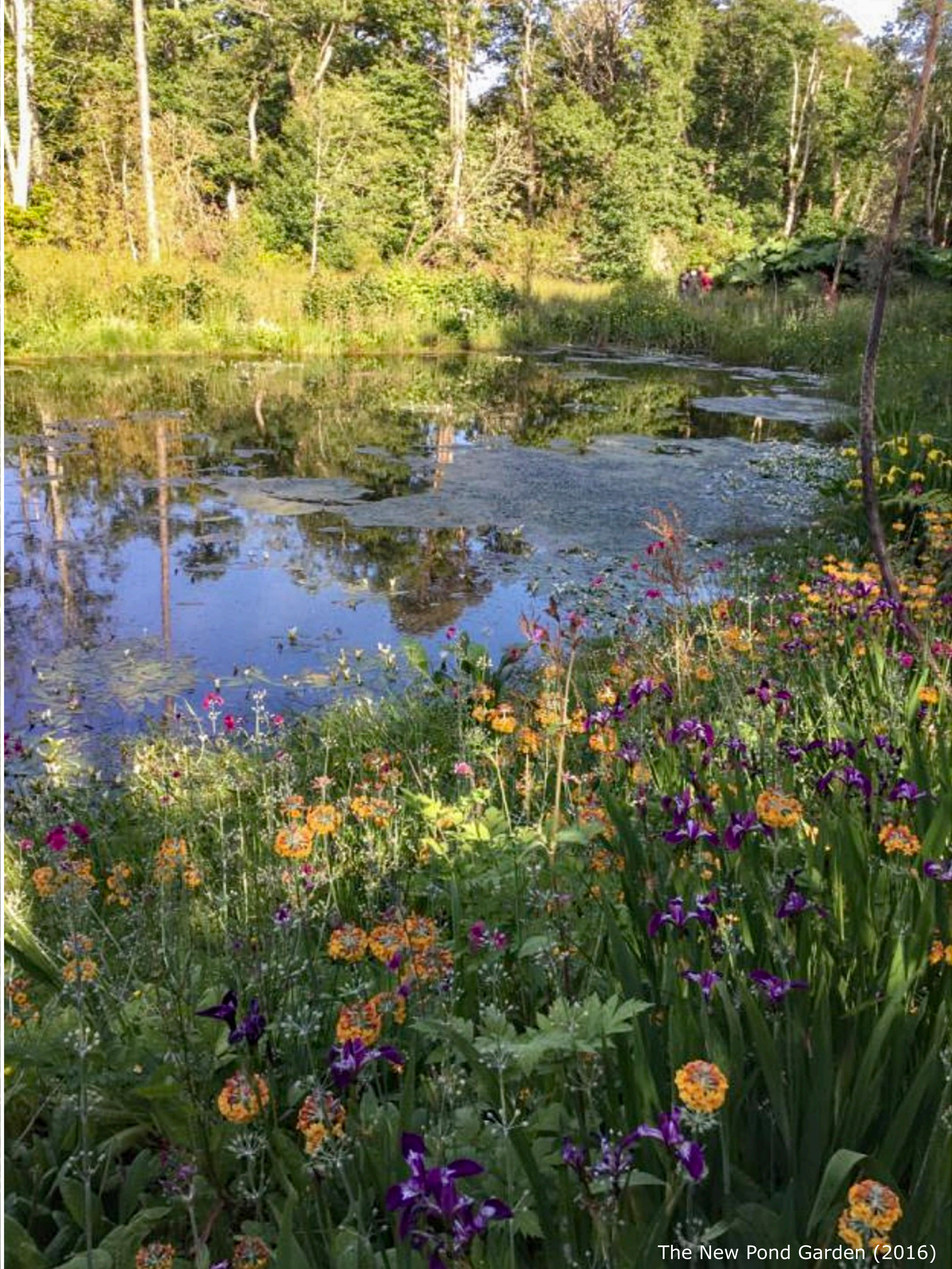
> 'I think it is easiest to consider the garden as looking from the house across the lawn. I am not going at the moment to suggest any plants for which a considerable area needs to be dug except in the case of the rocks which we looked at. The hydrangeas and other plants can quite easily be planted in holes in the woodland and should thrive under these conditions'.

It is evident from the letter that the Colonel and Russell have walked together in the Gardens, paused at several strategic spots and discussed suitable plants. In addition, Russell makes suggestions for plants in other locations.

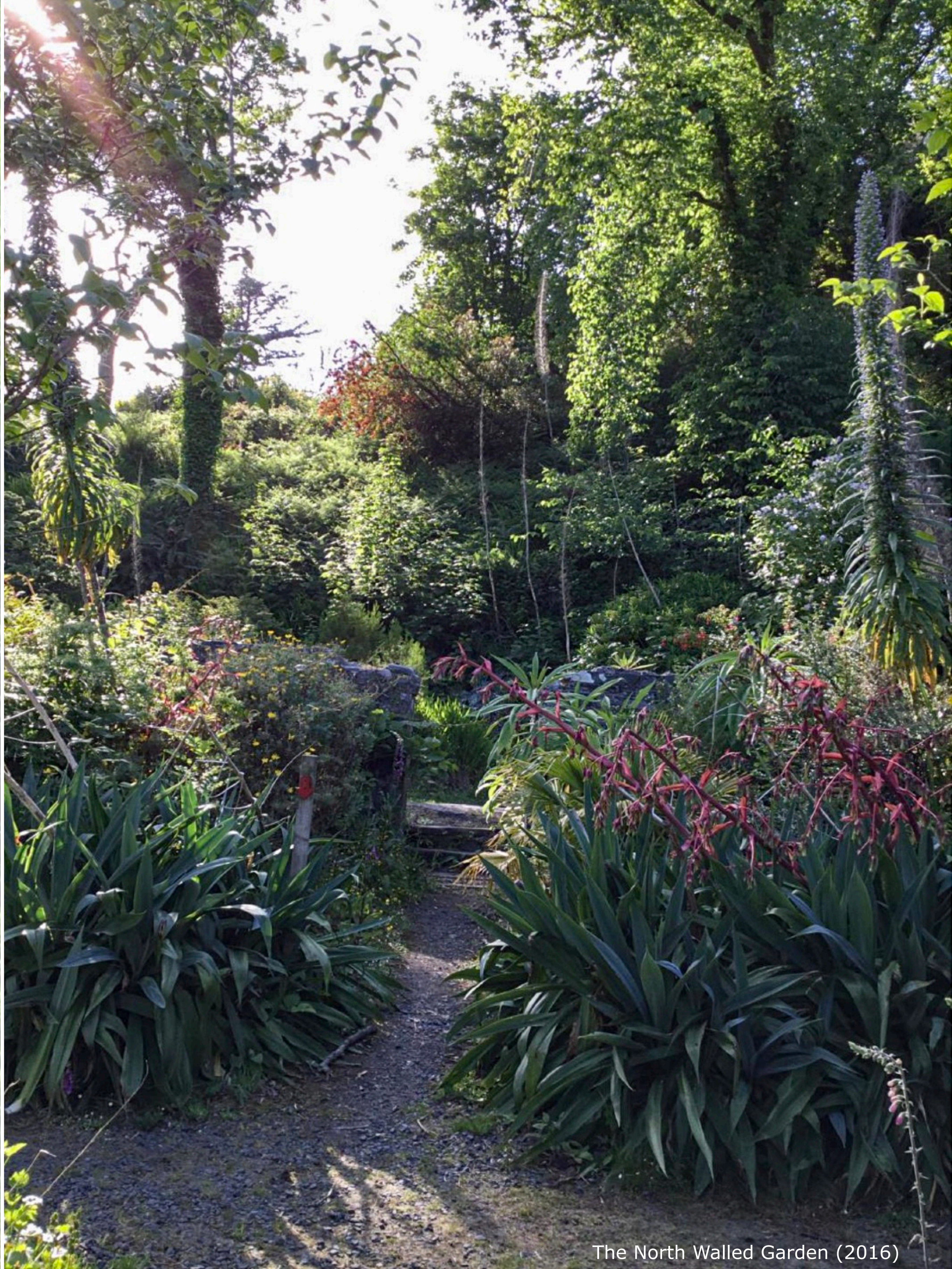
> 'Facing the garden from the top terrace, there is an area to the left in front of the boiler house for which we marked the places for a number of roses. These I enclose a list of and the plants have been despatched … I feel the whole of this area needs to be linked to continuous planting along the front of the wood. I would suggest a group on either side of the main path of leptospermum'.

> 'Crossing the central walk we enter the glade containing Rh. May Day. We agreed here that the plants should be removed from the centre which is boggy with rock near


Approach to the Gardens (2016)


The New Pond Garden (2016)


The Azalea Woods (2016)


The North Walled Garden (2016)

the surface and this area should be planted with Primulas. At the foot of the glade where Rh. May Day is doing so well, I would like to introduce 7 plants of Rh. Hawk v. Jarvis Bay'.

The Colonel responds by letter to thank Russell for the suggestions and plants "I cannot answer the whole of it offhand, but in the main I think your suggestions excellent".

However, the Colonel also asserts his own views about the Gardens:

'As regards the glade containing May Day, I don't think there is the least chance of putting in Rh. Hawk v. Jarvis Bay, the whole place is 'bung' full of May Day and am proposing to put a block here of Stranvesia for protection'.

The exchange of letters endorses the active interest of the Colonel in his garden and expertise in discussing suitable plants and planting with Russell. Amusingly, this letter from Horlick also suggests a growing friendship with Russell when he shares his frustrations about the rabbits on Gigha, "A something, something rabbit has chewed up a number of my Euonymus Japonicus and I am a little bit nervous about the heaths and especially the brooms".

In 1953 Russell appears to be actively involved in planting the Gardens. In January he explains in a letter to the Colonel, accompanied by a plant list (to Mr Malcolm Allan, less £50 plants supplied to us, approx. total £120):

'If I can do a certain amount of the planting which we sketched out, the rocks by the gate, the rock in the wood and the area just by the edge of the drive, it would be much less expensive as I shall have two men up there at that period, whereas if I bring them up with me after the Camellia Show, I should have to charge the expenses of their journey, which would be a considerable amount. I think that if this is done, we can decide any alterations quite simply when I come up in April'.

Correspondence from Russell (on his personal Nursery Court notepaper) prior to the visit sends information to the Colonel about the transportation of the plants to Gigha and also the arrival of the two workmen. Russell's contact address prior to visiting Gigha is Castle Howard, the estate of another of his elite clients and to where he first retires.

After the spring visit to Gigha Russell suggests to the Colonel that:

'If it is any help I will come and move the rhodos and azaleas in the drive in the autumn and I also feel that it would be a good thing to try and get out a detailed plan for the bank behind the wall garden'.

In May and June the Colonel and Russell correspond about the plants introduced in the spring by Russell. Several plants have not fared well "I am sorry that so many small heaths have died", and "The Rhododendron Taronense should be true as it is from the plant which received the award". In a further letter Russell comments "I will check up on the Rhododendron Taronense, as you say, Exbury do make mistakes".

In September Russell writes to the Colonel about his visit "I do apologise for not writing long before this to say how much I enjoyed my visit". This letter includes a list of roses and mentions another visit scheduled for the end of October:

'Would it suit you if I were to come back on the evening of Monday October 12th to do the moving on the Tuesday and Wednesday, leaving on the morning of the 15th. I could leave a good man with you until Tuesday 20th or for a little longer is you want him'.

After his visit, Russell writes to thank the Colonel for hosting him and offers to introduce him to other garden owners (Alfred Beit) and sends news about plants and his journey back home to England.

In 1954 the Colonel travels to Rhodesia and whilst he is away Russell and assistant(s) (number not specified) return to Gigha with more plants for the Gardens. The letter refers to a pond: "The pond appears to be a great success in any case everybody is quite delighted with it, and enormous grins spread across their faces whenever it was mentioned". Further letters from Russell propose a detailed planting plan for the pond feature (plants to the value of £74.7.3) and a return visit to Gigha whilst the Colonel remains in Rhodesia.

Formal Plan for Achamore Gardens 1955.

The correspondence between the Colonel and Russell presented above suggest a growing friendship between the two men. Although the correspondence is predominantly about the purchase and placement of plants at the Gardens, the letters increasingly comment on Russell's travel commitments, weather and growing conditions, and the Colonel's deteriorating health. In 1955 plants for the Spring Bank and Bog Garden to the value of £192.18.6 are recommended by Russell to the Colonel. A visit by Russell to Gigha is proposed:

'As far as planting is concerned I would suggest that I come up myself hoping to arrive about March 16th and will bring two men with me. I would suggest that we mark out the areas for the azaleas and I could probably leave the men with you for a week and possibly longer. I will then return when I finish the planting in Ireland which should be immediately after Easter'.

A letter after the March visit proposes a visit in May and refers to a formal plan for the Gardens: "If you would like Walter Brugger to make the plan for you I could bring him and leave him with you. He is very quick and capable and knows his plants very well". Further correspondence notes that "Walter Brugger costs around £20 per week as he is a highly skilled draughtsman and surveyor but he is such a quick worker that I don't think the plan will be very costly". Russell writes after his visit to Gigha and refers to a rough drawing of plans for the Gardens. The request in the letter for names of areas of the garden suggests that is the first map to employ names for areas. If a previous garden plan had been prepared the named areas would already be available to Brugger.

'I am enclosing a "rough" of Walters Brugger's plan for you because he is anxious to know what you call the various parts of the garden. He will then colour it and send you the completed design on linen paper. He also suggests that for your plan for visitors he has a photograph taken and printed at the size you want'.

Russell and the Colonel agree that Brugger will prepare the plan "I am delighted you are pleased with the plan. I will write to Walter Brugger tonight and send the plan back to him and tell him to get in touch with you direct about coming up to finish it". Brugger then writes to the Colonel to confirm the plans will be ready by the end of September and arrange a visit to Gigha. The sequence of letters relates to three plans of the Gardens: a large coloured, unsigned linen backed plan of the Gardens (1955) and unsigned visitors plan for the Gardens (1955) and the Walled Garden (1955).

'It will take me probably 4-5 days to complete the plan, and the plants left behind and the difficult areas are the hill, and in the woods, will be much better accessible in the big plan. I will write the names you indicated on the original and bring everything with me'.

On 29 December Russell writes to the Colonel "I am glad you are pleased with Walter Brugger's plan. I think he does them remarkably well". Russell ends the letter "I have a copy of the Gigha plan up here and will write and send list of shrubs that might look pretty in the wall garden borders, particularly sweet -scented plants such as Philadelphus".

By 1956 Russell sends detailed plans for planting at Gigha (and The Timbers). Although Russell explains in a second letter "I have sent you a fairly hefty quotation but there is about £300 to set against plants removed from Gigha". Russell and Horlick continue to correspond about the gardens at Achamore and Timbers and on his next visit Russell asks Horlick if he may "bring my sister with me? We shall both be staying with Hewey Black just before and it would make a very pleasant little jaunt for her". The visit is arranged for March and a lorry is sent ahead to take plants to and from Gigha. More plants follow in May (to the value of £322.19). Between 1957 and 1961 Horlick and Russell continue corresponding about the gardens at Achamore, Timbers and at the Horlicks factory, Ascot.

Further evidence to endorse Russell's professional involvement in creating the designed landscape at the Gardens can be found in the invoices from Sunningdale Nurseries to the Colonel. Although Russell is said to have developed friendships with his clients rather than business relationships, his manager Thomas took a firmer stance on invoicing clients for services and chasing non-payment. However, it is "quite rare to find any reference to fees paid by clients for Russell's services". In the correspondence between Sunningdale Nurseries and Horlick there is evidence that the Colonel paid for services provided by Russell and Sunningdale Nurseries. In 1953 Russell writes "Thank you so much for your letter of May 19th and for the cheque on account". In May 1955 the invoice for plants also specifies costs for delivery, labour and professional fees.

A letter from Russell shows his discomfort that the financial aspects of the Sunningdale Nurseries business impact on his relationship with Horlick. Russell explains:

> 'First of all I must apologise for the absurd bill which was sent to you (one of the reasons of the troubles, I have had to sack my manager). I can't I'm afraid keep the costs of the lorry down to £25 these days but it certainly won't be £67.10 and also the amount for fees and expenses is absurd. In any case I enjoy coming to Gigha far too much to charge you any fees and the expenses are nothing like the figure shown. They will send you a proper account shortly'.

In 1956 the Colonel receives a letter from Russell informing him that the accounts and counter accounts for the garden will be sent. Although the account is not available, the letter is interesting in that it refers to the fee for Brugger's services.

> 'I am afraid that Walter Brugger's bill has come out at much more than I expected. When I first wrote and said that I reckoned he cost something like £22 per week. I had allowed him spending a fortnight on the plan. He did however go back a second time and put in a great many more plants and draw a smaller plan for the gate, and it totals up in fact from his own vouchers to five weeks work'.

In August 1956 Russell proposes to visit Gigha in October to deliver and take away plants. The visit takes place in October and Russell writes to thank the Colonel in November and continue their discussions about plants and planting in the Gardens. In 1957 Russell, now looking after the Colonel's gardens on Gigha and the Timbers, writes to "try and sort out the various quotations which I have sent you from time to time". Between 1958 and 1960 six invoices are sent from Russell to the Colonel for professional services.

The Designed Landscape at the Gardens.

The primary data presented in this chapter offers robust evidence that although the design and planting of the Gardens have traditionally been attributed to Lloyd-Jones, the designed landscape is more accurately attributed to James Russell, with input from the Colonel. The letters and invoices attest to the involvement of Russell in arranging for the plans to be prepared, as well as his visits to Gigha to oversee the planting. A letter from the Colonel to Russell (excerpts of which are presented below) further endorses the friendship between them and the attribution of the Gardens to Russell:

> 'First of all, many congratulations on your new Rhododendron Catalogue which I think is an excellent compilation and a very complete one … I feel that I must write and tell you what a tremendous success the garden here had this year. In spite of being very much knocked about by almost two months of severe easterly winds, and one south westerly gale at Easter time which destroyed much of the young growth of Prunus' etc it really has put up a most magnificent show. Everyone on the cruise was enchanted with it and it was nouse telling them that it was very much better the week before. … Several people told me that it was the best laid out and kept garden in the whole of Scotland, and I do wish you had seen it this year … I thought you would like to know all this. The garden owes so much to you. I should like you to see it again so do come up if you possibly can for a day or so … Bring Jane with you when you come up. Best love from us both. Yours ever'.

Conclusion.

In 1960 the Colonel, aged 74 and concerned about the future of the Gardens, began a correspondence about the future of the Gardens with the NTS for Scotland. In 1961 the Colonel was awarded the RHS Loder Rhododendron Cup, and a final letter from Russell to the Colonel in the same year promises another visit to Gigha laden with plants for the Gardens. The Colonel died at his home in Gigha in 1972 and is buried in the island's cemetery.

Helen Haugh's impeccably researched and referenced dissertation *A Chronological and Analytical Account of Achamore Gardens, Isle of Gigha, Inner Hebrides,* was submitted as part of her Master of Arts, Garden and Landscape History degree course, at the Institute of Historical Research, in August 2017. Chapter 4, detailing the period when James Horlick owned the house and gardens, is reproduced above, with many of the photographs and two of the maps featured within Helen's full presentation also included.

The entire, unabridged dissertation, can be read online at:

https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/6877/1/
MA%20Dissertation_Helen%20Haugh_154581700_Merit.pdf

The Malcolm Allan Garden
(2016)

Songbird
russatum X 'Blue Tit'
AM 1957
Flower Colour: Violet-blue
Flowering Time: April
Height: Low

Songster
russatum X 'Blue Tit'
Flower Colour: Violet-blue
Flowering Time: April
Height: Low


R. 'Songbird' AM 1957

R. 'Songbird' & R. 'Songster'
russatum x 'Blue Tit'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6-7 April 0.7m x 2m

'Songbird' is the result of Sir James Horlick's only lepidote pairing, all his other registered crosses being elepidote rhododendrons, and it is undoubtedly one of the finest low-growing 'blue' flowering hybrids ever introduced, indeed, many rhodophiles would say it was the best of them all.

Pollen from 'Blue Tit' - presumably the J. C. Williams plant, rather than Edward Magor's superior clone? - was placed on the style of what must have been a very good form of *R. russatum* sometime around 1954. The selection supposition is made because the genetic heritage gifted by the seed parent corrected all the faults of its male consort: the pale, chlorotic foliage susceptible to leaf spot; the lanky shoots and yellowish new growth; the poor flower bud set if grown anywhere other than in full sun; grievances enumerated in the Peter and Kenneth Cox co-authored *Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids* 'Blue Tit' entry (Batsford, 1988). In the process, those same genes also upped the corolla count and significantly deepened the flower colour, though singly the blooms are smaller.

They open from terminal and axillary buds and form compound inflorescences with as many as twenty funnel-shaped or rotate-campanulate corollas in each truss, the blooms deep violet-blue in colour and individually 2 to 2.5cm across at the mouth. Tonally flushed to match, the stamen filaments are also densely grey-white hairy at the base and topped by golden-brown anthers, these often appearing to glow within the surround of the corolla lobes. The long style may also be tinted to complement the flowers, but equally may be shot with white to produce a perfect contrast, both states concurrent on the same plant, indeed on adjacent corollas.

Foliage-wise, the leaf blades are dark green, glossy and scaly above, paler, with scattered brown scales below. Elliptic through obovate in shape, obtuse at the apex, but with a distinct mucro, each is around 2cm in length. The hybrid's habit is compact and dense, the semi-dwarf shrub usually no more than 0.6m high, easy to grow and free flowering from a very young age. If it has a fault, its tendency to flower in the autumn, so denuding the spring display, is the only criticism that has been levelled to date.

Labelled specimens of 'Songbird' that can be seen in some gardens open to the public have a habit far from the tightly clad semi-dwarf norm, exhibiting an open deportment and branch framework well over 2m in height, and bearing much paler flowers that are also larger; plus near oval foliage. Whether these are mislabelled, or plants that were incorrectly or nefariously supplied as substitutes is unknown. That they are not the real McCoy is patently obvious to anyone who has seen Sir James' true hybrid in bloom.

'Songster' is a second selection from the pairing, with paler flowers mirroring those of 'Blue Diamond'. Peter and Kenneth Cox report that at Glendoick these are more susceptible to frost than those of 'Songbird' and that the habit of the sister seedling is poorer (*ibid*).


R. ‘Songbird’ AM 1957

R. 'Songbird' AM 1957


R. 'Songbird' AM 1957


R. 'Songster'

R. 'Songster'

The Elepidote Registrations:

Argyll
'J. G. Millais' X *thomsonii*

Auriel
griersonianum X 'Polar Bear'

Barbarossa
barbatum hybrid
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: March

Betty King
'Luscombei' X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Red-pink

Betty Royal
'Luscombei' X *thomsonii*

Brocade Plus
unknown X unknown
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Buxom
'Loderi' X 'Sophia Gray'
Flower Colour: Pink

Cyclamen
'Earl of Athlone' X *lacteum*
Flower Colour: Cyclamen Violet

Donnie
'Unique' X 'Wightii'
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: Early April

East Knoyle
griersonianum X 'Loderi'
Flower Colour: Rose

Elfin
'Doctor Stocker' X *orbiculare*
Flower Colour: Cream-pink

Elisabeth Inglis-Jones
griersonianum X 'May Day'
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Medium

Flamingo
'Loder's White' X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Fringe
'Ascot Brilliant' X *campylocarpum*

Gigha Gem
neriiflorum Euchaites X 'Pleasant'

Glory of Athlone
'Earl of Athlone' X 'Glory of Leonardslee'
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Golden Drop
'Doctor Stocker' X *campylocarpum*

Lady Horlick
campylocarpum X 'Loderi'
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Little Paddocks
thomsonii X *campylocarpum*

Lovely William
neriiflorum Euchaites X *williamsianum*
Flower Colour: Rose
Flowering Time: April
Height: Low

Malcolm Allan
'J. G. Millais' X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Red

Margaret Findlay
wardii X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Medium

Mary McQuilkan
griersonianum X 'Souvenir of W. C. Slocock'
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Late May

Monk
thomsonii X *delavayi*
Flower Colour: Red

Mrs James Horlick
thomsonii X 'Doctor Stocker'
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Mrs John Crawford
griersonianum X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Rose Madder

Nasturtium
griersonianum X 'Loderi'
Flower Colour: Nasturtium Red

Pleasant
campylocarpum X *thomsonii*

Right Royal
'Luscombei' X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Red

Rona Martin
'Cornubia' X 'Shilsonii'
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: March
Height: Tall

Rosy Fido
griersonianum X 'Loderi'
Flower Colour: Rose

Scarlett O'Hara
thomsonii X 'Langley Park'
Flower Colour: Red
Height: Tall

Seemly
griersonianum X *discolor* hybrid
Flower Colour: Rose
Flowering Time: Mid June
Height: Medium

Taffy
griersonianum hybrid
Flower Colour: Geranium Lake
Flowering Time: Mid June
Height: Tall

Titness Aladdin
auriculatum X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Rose
Flowering Time: Late June
Height: Tall

Titness Beauty
griersonianum X ‘Loderi’

Titness Belle
‘Countess of Derby’ X ‘Loderi’

Titness Crimson
‘J. G. Millais’ X ‘Loderi’
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: Early April
Height: Tall

Titness Delight
‘Loderi’ hybrid
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: Mid May

Titness Park
barbatum X *calophytum*
AM 1954 & FCC 1974
Flower Colour: Phlox Pink
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Titness Perfection
‘Shilsonii’ X *praevernum*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Titness Pink
‘Shilsonii’ X *sutchuenense*
Flower Colour: Rosy-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Titness Rose
griersonianum X ‘Loderi’

Titness Saucy
‘Loderi’ hybrid
Flower Colour: Apple Blossom Pink-white
Flowering Time: Mid May

Titness Scarlet
‘Fabia’ X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Red-orange-scarlet
Flowering Time: Early May

Titness Triumph
basilicum X *montroseanum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Titness Victory
basilicum X *montroseanum*
Flower Colour: Off white-mauve
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

R. 'Barbarossa'

R. 'Barbarossa'
barbatum hybrid
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H4 March. 4m x 3m

'Barbarossa', translated from Italian, means 'red beard' and is the most likely descriptor for this *R. barbatum* hybrid crossed by Sir James Horlick of Achamore Gardens, Gigha, and previously of Little Paddocks, Sunninghill (part of the exclusive Titness Park estate that is now the haunt of Russian ex-oligarchs and equally wealthy Saudi businessmen). Of course the shrub could also be named for a 12th Century Holy Roman Emperor, one of two historic Ottoman Turkish privateers, the fictional pirate from the 1953 movie *Raiders of the Seven Seas* or even a variety of Italian wine grape. Of one thing we can be certain however, it wasn't named for the 1941 blitzkrieg invasion of Soviet Russia by Nazi Germany.

The corollas are similar in shape and colour to its sole registered parent, as is the flower truss; the foliage is generally longer and narrower, often slightly crinkled and rugose; petioles and leaves are devoid of bristles, while the habit is open and tree-like.

Regrettably, but as often occurs, the epithet is shared with another red-flowering rhododendron, this a ('May Day' x 'Goldsworth Orange') x 'Kluis Triumph' pairing registered in 1961 by Johann and Wilhelm Bruns of Oldenburg, Lower Saxony; who must either have been amazingly thick-skinned or aiming for a niche market.


R. 'Barbarossa'


R. 'Barbarossa'

R. 'Brocade Plus'

R. 'Brocade Plus'

R. 'Brocade Plus'
unknown x unknown
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 May 5m x 4m

The 'Brocade Plus' epithet suggests the cross is an enhancement on Lionel de Rothschild's peach-pink *williamsianum* hybrid 'Brocade' and this is certainly the case with regard to its size and the quality of the blooms. The parental constituents are not known however, so it remains unclear if 'Brocade' was a part of the mix or 'Brocade Plus' the result of a duplicate or similar pairing to the original, whose constituent details are regrettably equally 'obscure'. Regardless, the plant is a stunner.

The Horlick hybrid is taller growing and wider spreading, with a specimen in the gardens at Achamore House now a small tree, while the Brodick plant featured in the photographs herein, a huge dome 4 or 5m in diameter, but currently only around 3m in height. Leaf and corolla shape is duplicated - oblong-ovate blades and frilly campanulate bells - but both are larger. Flowering is just as profuse, with the trusses a touch laxer, each holding seven corollas rather than six, and the characteristic of the corollas displaying 5 or 6 lobes is also mirrored.


R. 'Brocade Plus'


R. 'Brocade Plus'


R. `Brocade Plus'

R. 'East Knoyle'

R. 'East Knoyle'

R. 'East Knoyle' & R. 'Titness Rose'
griersonianum x 'Loderi'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5. Late May-June 5m x 3m

East Knoyle, a small village and parish in Wiltshire, is best known as the birth place of both Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) and Joan Wyndham (1921-2007), the former, the fabled architect of St. Paul's Cathedral and half-a-hundred other London churches, the latter, author of *Love Lessons* and *Love is Blue,* selections from diaries detailing the capital's Bohemian set that were written during the Second World War. The village name was borrowed by Sir James Horlick to use as the epithet for the first exhibited seedling from his *griersonianum* x 'Loderi' cross, made in the early 1920s and introduced in 1930. Subsequent registrations from the same pairing would include 'Titness Beauty' and 'Titness Rose', these appellations reflecting the location where pollen was applied to stigma (the Titness Park estate located near Sunninghill, Ascot, where Sir James resided at Little Paddocks (now the Royal Berkshire Hotel) prior to his purchase of Achamore House and the Isle of Gigha in 1944), though whatever the original linkage was with East Knoyle remains obscure.

The rhododendron itself is also now little known, but no less beautiful when in bloom, the 7-lobed rose-coloured widely-trumpet-shaped corollas held in a loose truss of eight. Their hue pales to a mottled white towards the centre of the petals, but darkens again as the narrow mouth of the tube is approached, the constricted inner surface of which is where the tone is deepest. Individually, the corollas are huge, the truss enormous, and when unspoilt by wind or rain, devastatingly beautiful.

Unfortunately, 'East Knoyle' is let down by its deportment: tall and leggy, the long mid-green and pointed leaves held for little more than one year, so doing little to mask the open framework of branches. Equally, the cultural requirement of a sheltered location in dappled shade exacerbates the problem. But a mature plant in full flower remains a spectacular sight.

A darker pink pigmentation infuses the corollas of 'Titness Rose', which are held in a far more open truss on a plant with an even worse habit.

The Horlick parental equation was later duplicated by Lieutenant-Colonel Giles Harold Loder (1884-1966), of High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex, with his award winning 'Sarita Loder' selection introduced in 1934.

R. 'East Knoyle'

R. 'East Knoyle'

R. 'Titness Rose'

R. 'Titness Rose'

R. 'Elfin'


R. 'Elfin'

R. 'Flamingo'


R. 'Flamingo'

R. 'Flamingo'
'Loder's White' x *griersonianum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 May-June 4m x 4m

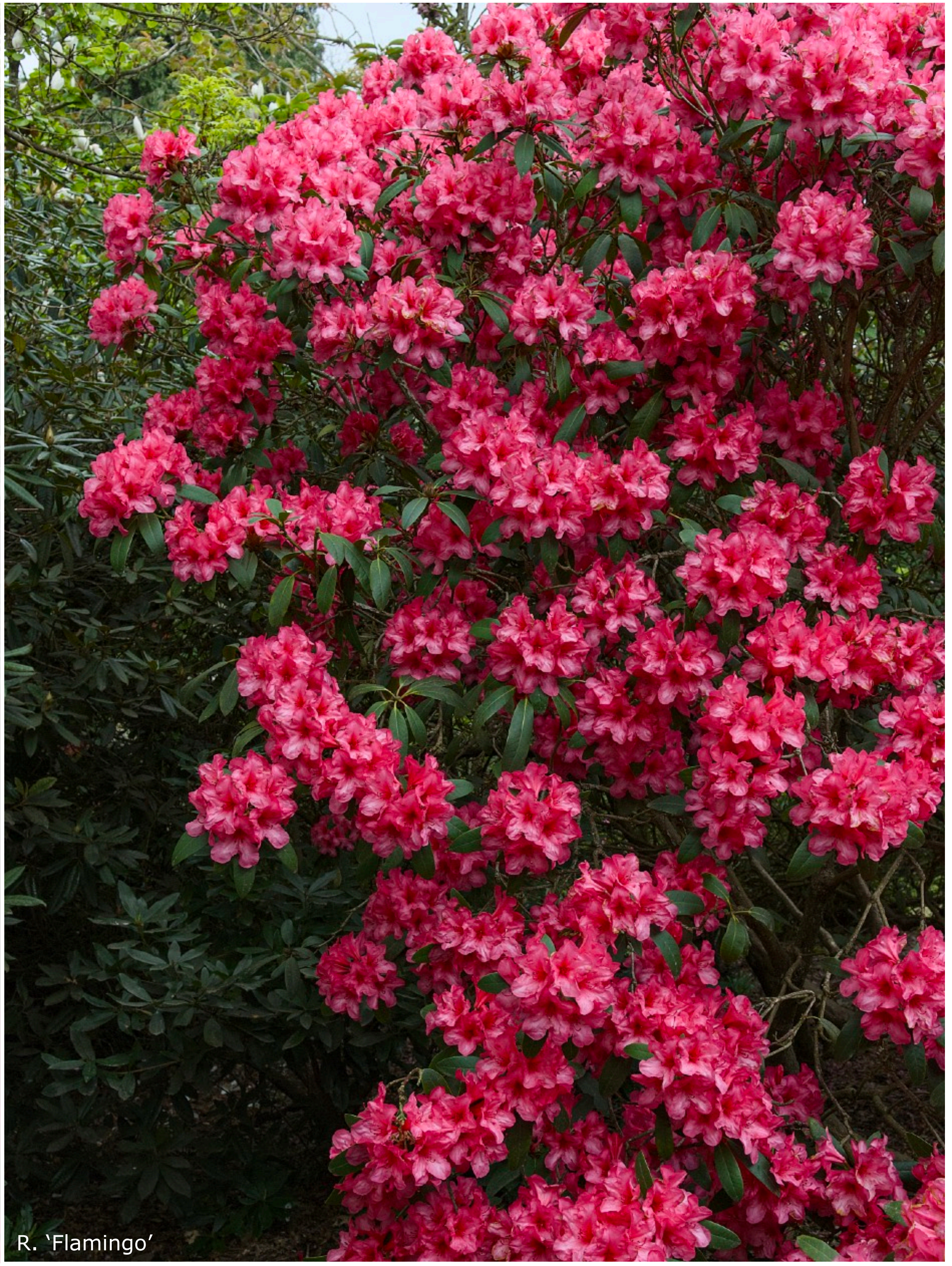
'Flamingo' is the result of a 'Loder's White' x *griersonianum* combination made by Sir James in the early 1930s or shortly before, which was introduced in 1941, with the chosen epithet absolutely perfect for the named selection, as the wavy-edged crimson-rose flowers are an exact colour match with the feathers of those exuberantly plumaged long-legged waders. Flat-topped to rounded trusses of between 8 and 10 broadly funnel-shaped corollas open from mid-May onward, a touch later in northern gardens, with the 4m-high dome of a mature specimen usually festooned in bloom.

The foliage follows the pollen parent in shape and size, the dark green elliptical leaves held for just one year and so giving the shrub an open, but not unattractive air, with the hardiness rating requiring a sheltered position to be provided in gardens along the east coast, though too much overhead shade will reduce flower bud production. Dappled shade in the southern counties will prolong the corolla hue and keep the leaves from scorching without allowing the vigorous growth to become overly leggy.

Bafflingly, 'Flamingo' is rarely found in any of the major rhododendron collections, this despite its obvious visual appeal.

A second elepidote hybrid shares the same epithet, this a creamy-yellow concoction from Dietrich Hobbie of 1948 vintage. There is also a Knap Hill deciduous azalea, plus four evergreen azalea crosses, while three other registrations have 'Flamingo' as a synonym and additionally, according to the *IRRC,* the name appears as an entry in the 1931 catalogue of the Clibrans Nursery, Hale, Altrincham, which might indicate an even earlier than supposed hybridisation date for the Horlick cross if that listing is accurate and not merely a transposed azalea.

R. 'Flamingo'



R. 'Flamingo'

R. 'Flamingo'


R. ‘Gigha Gem’


R. ‘Gigha Gem’


R. ‘Gigha Gem’

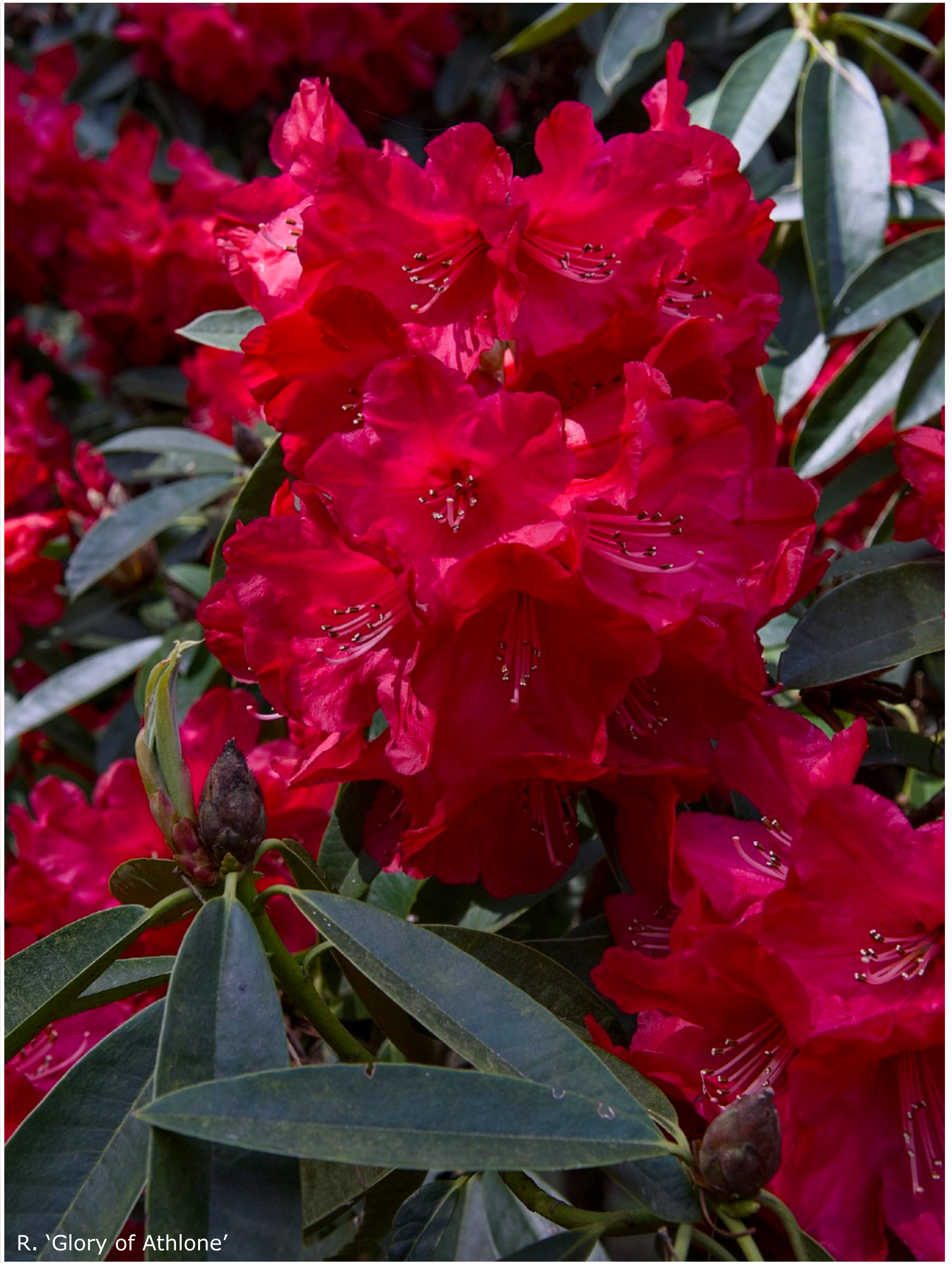
R. 'Gigha Gem'

R. 'Glory of Athlone'
'Earl of Athlone' x 'Glory of Leonardslee'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 April-early May 4m x 4m

Little known, but much admired in the woodland gardens that have mature specimens, the scarlet-red flowers of 'Glory of Athlone' have a luminosity that lights up the woodland even on overcast days. Introduced in 1954, so likely crossed shortly after Sir James moved from Little Paddocks to Gigha in 1944, this 'Earl of Athlone' x 'Glory of Leonardslee' combination pairs one of the C. B. van Nes & Sons FCC-awarded hybrids with a named seedling distributed from Richard Gill's *arboreum* x *griffithianum* cross whose offspring also included 'Beauty of Tremough' and 'Gill's Triumph' (in amongst the fourteen clones named to date). And the resulting hybrid surpasses both parents in foliage and flower.

Glowing scarlet corollas open during early April, these widely funnel-shaped, 5-lobed, with a ring of small nectar pouches at the base of the tube that gather the stamens and style into a tight central cluster. The blooms are carried in flat-topped to rounded trusses of 9 to 20 bells and set against a perfect foil: the foliage. Medium-sized, deep green elliptic blades with a V-shaped profile that are held for two years, they form a dense dark cloak against which the globes can shine.


R. 'Glory of Athlone'


R. 'Glory of Athlone'

R. 'Glory of Athlone'

R. 'Glory of Athlone'

R. 'Glory of Athlone'

R. 'Lady Horlick'

R. 'Lady Horlick'

R. 'Lady Horlick'

campylocarpum x 'Loderi'

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6. Early May 3m x 3m

Sir James Horlick's use of R. 'Loderi' to pollinate a clone of *R. campylocarpum* in 1931 mirrors the earlier Henry McLaren 1925 pairing that resulted in 'Phryne', which Lionel de Rothschild also duplicated in 1934 to produce 'Barbara' and 'Pinafore'. However, once his seedlings began to flower, Sir James ditched the deep cream or white flushed pink corollas of his competitors and instead opted for a pure white clone. And in 1961, he named this sublime creation 'Lady Horlick' for his second wife, Joan Isabel MacGill, who he had married after his first consort, Flora Macdonald Martin, passed away in 1955. Yet like so many of the Horlick rhododendron introductions, this hybrid too is virtually unknown away from a few Scottish west coast gardens such as Brodick and Inverewe. That propagated plants exist in these locales is only because Sir James placed his entire rhododendron collection at Achamore House into the care of the National Trust for Scotland before his death in 1972.

R. 'Lady Horlick' is similar in habit to 'Loderi', though not as tall-growing, with the foliage often more rounded than oblong. The funnel-shaped corollas are carried in a loose and open truss of up to seven blooms, each near 15cm across at the mouth when fully expanded, and slightly scented. A milky-cream colour in the bud with just the faintest hint of pink at their apex, this brushstroke blemish on an otherwise pristine snowfield is quickly lost as the lobes unfurl, to become one of the most outstanding and scintillating white-bloomed large hybrid rhododendrons ever introduced.

R. 'Lady Horlick'

R. 'Lady Horlick'

R. 'Lady Horlick'


R. 'Lovely William'


R. 'Lovely William'


R. 'Lovely William'


R. 'Lovely William'


R. 'Margaret Findlay'

R. ‘Margaret Findlay’

R. 'Margaret Findlay'

wardii x *griersonianum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5. Late May-June 4m x 6m

From the early 1930s until January 1st 1943, when he began working at Windsor Great Park, Thomas Hope Findlay (1910-1994) had been head gardener at Little Paddocks, Sir James Horlick's home on the Titness Park Estate, Sunninghill, Ascot. He likely had a hand therefore in raising the seedlings of his employer's *wardii* x *griersonianum* pairing made in 1933 and a decade later, the only selection ever introduced from that cross would be named for Hope's wife, Margaret Grace née Howse. They had married in May 1935, and in 2013, Margaret celebrated her centenary, which included a party at the gardens her husband had helped design along with the man who had headhunted him, Sir Eric Savill.

The rhododendron named for this illustrious lady sports open-topped trusses of white flowers, these heavily flushed reddish-pink at first. A dollop of wine-red pigmentation will be found at the base of the throat, along with a similar toned blotch of streaks and spots extending halfway up the dorsal lobe. That hue also colours the upper portion of the style. Around seven tubular-funnel-shaped corollas emerge from each inflorescence, flesh-pink or pinkish-red in the bud and loosely held on quite long pedicels.

Medium-sized olive green elliptic leaf blades are retained for between two and three years, the dense habit therefore well-cloaked in foliage. Over time, the shrub will build-up into a large dome, between 3 and 4m tall, spreading wider, and annually, cover itself in ever-increasing quantities of mouthwatering blooms year after year after year.


R. 'Margaret Findlay'


R. 'Margaret Findlay'

R. 'Margaret Findlay'

R. 'Margaret Findlay'

R. ‘Margaret Findlay’

R. 'Mrs James Horlick'

R. ‘Mrs James Horlick’

R. 'Mrs James Horlick'
thomsonii x 'Doctor Stocker'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 April-early May 4m x 6m

R. 'Mrs James Horlick' is a pairing made in 1931 with the ever-reliable 'Doctor Stocker' pollinating *R. thomsonii,* and it was an inspired conception - 'Cornish Cross' with the added oomph of *R. caucasicum;* and beautiful leaves in perfect proportion to the even more beguiling flowers. So on the day this exquisite hybrid flowered for the first time, Sir James Horlick would have known instantly what its epithet should be: an honorific for his wife, Flora McDonald Martin, whom he had married in 1909.

The flowers are large, funnel-campanulate in shape and salmon-pink in colour, their hue deeper around the margins and on the outer surface, fading to cream along the centre of the lobes. At the base of the throat within, five small circular nectaries, pools of dark crimson-red, girdle the ovary, while outside, the corolla is gripped by a large, yellowish-green cup-shaped calyx, which is supported on a flushed-red pedicel. Two levels of bloom are alternatively arranged around the rhachis in a flat-topped truss when eight or more bells form the inflorescence, a single layer when that number drops to five or six.

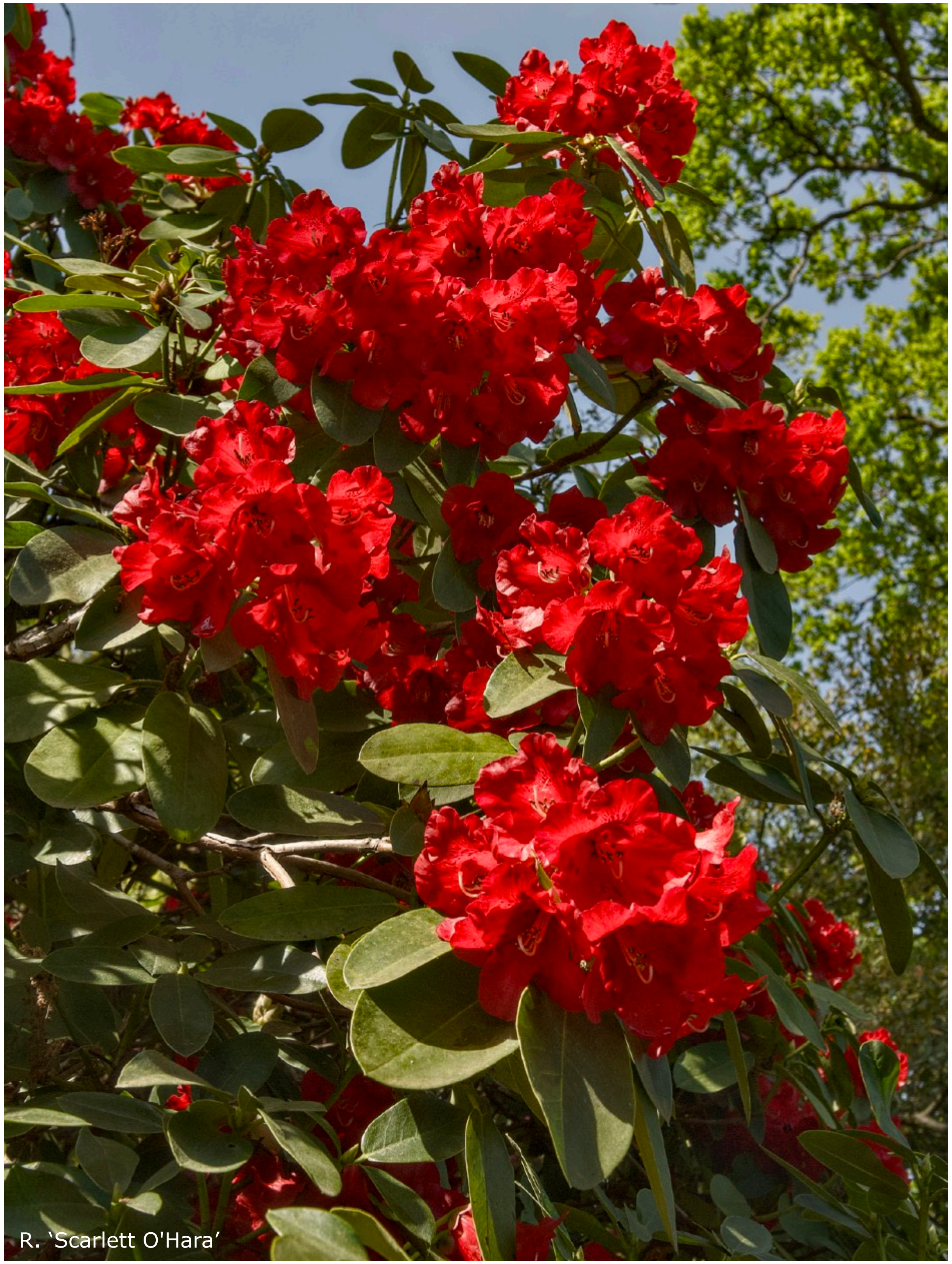
Dark green elliptic-shaped leaves provide the blooms with the perfect foil and though most are only held for one year, if the shrub is grown in sufficient light, they cloak the branch structure from head to foot. To achieve this, a near full sun placement is required in northern gardens, where shelter from biting winds is also a prerequisite. A locale in dappled shade would be the perfect siting in the south.

Wander past a mature specimen of 'Mrs James Horlick' in full bloom and it will command your full attention, stop you in your tracks and leave you entranced. For it is simply one of the loveliest rhododendrons ever bred.


R. 'Mrs James Horlick'


R. 'Mrs James Horlick'

R. 'Mrs James Horlick'


R. 'Scarlett O'Hara'

R. 'Scarlett O'Hara'
thomsonii x 'Langley Park'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5. Late April-May 4m x 6m

It was only ever going to be a matter of time before an enterprising rhododendron hybridiser plucked the name of Margaret Mitchell's leading female character from her 1936 potboiler to christen one of their creations, especially once Hollywood got its mitts on the text and a dark horse casting choice thrust the future Lady Olivier into those southern-belle skirts. Thankfully, in 1942, Sir James Horlick had the perfect ingénue to hand, waiting to be introduced, and no one else had yet grabbed the epithet, because otherwise, the 'Scarlett O'Hara' epithet could have gone to a real turkey.

The Horlick hybrid is a cross between *R. thomsonii* and 'Langley Park', made in 1932, with the species taking on the role of seed parent. If the name of the pollen provider is unfamiliar, its genetic pedigree is first class, as it is one of the selections from the 1898 'Queen Wilhelmina' x 'Stanley Davies' pairing conceived by the Boskoop-based nursery firm of C. B. van Nes & Sons. And if the bells are still not ringing, the FCC-awarded 'Britannia' and 'Earl of Athlone' are two of its nine sisters. So the corollas of Sir James' seedlings were always going to be some shade of red, yet like virtually all the other crosses he made, only one selection was ever introduced and registered: the best.

'Scarlett O'Hara' has a big open truss of up ten, gleaming funnels, their hue slightly paler than *R. thomsonii,* still waxy red, but without the undertone. The corollas are five-lobed, spotted darker on the dorsal and have a quintet of black nectar pouches encircling the ovary at the base of the throat. A large calyx holds each bloom, coloured to match, while it is itself supported on a long yellow-green pedicel.

Those flowers are set against quite big, glossy-green, elliptic-shaped leaves that often have a convex profile, the blades held for up to two years. Habit is tree-like but the shrub is also bushy, especially if grown in light dappled shade, while a darker environment will see it mature into a 6m high, but slightly less wide dome, a sunnier locale reversing those dimensions.

R. 'Scarlett O'Hara'

R. 'Scarlett O'Hara'

R. 'Scarlett O'Hara'

R. 'Titness Park' AM 1954 & FCC 1974

R. ‘Titness Park’ AM 1954 & FCC 1974

R. 'Titness Victory'

R. 'Titness Victory'

R. 'Titness Victory'


George Hyde:

George Hyde and the Solent Strain Azaleas.

Although their conception and raising is still more often credited to Edmund de Rothschild, the Solent Strain of deciduous azalea hybrids were born not at an estate in the New Forest bordering the tidal reach of the Beaulieu River, but at Woodlands Nursery in Ferndown, Dorset. George Hyde was the man responsible for their existence and only he knew what parental combinations created the eighty-seven named and registered members of that tribe, information that was only partially recorded and can now only be guessed at.

And that is a cause of regret.

For the Solent Strain azaleas are far superior to those bred by the Waterer family at Knaphill or by Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury.

Simply put - they are in a class by themselves.

A profile of their originator, written by George Hyde's daughter Rosemary Legrand, was published in *Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias 2014,* extracts from which are reproduced below:

> My father, William George Thomas Hyde - always known as George - was an unassuming and perceptive man who came from a long line of Dorset growers, seedsmen and farmers. He maintained that, as a child, he first fell under the spell of rhododendrons from those that he saw in Meyrick Park whilst visiting his maternal grandmother in Bournemouth; obviously where the first seeds of a lifetime's passion were sown.
>
> The third child of my grandparents' four children, he was born in 1916 in Weymouth, Dorset, but when he was a schoolboy the family moved to West Moors, a small village near Wimborne, where he studied at the Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School. He joined the Royal Air Force, and during part of his wartime service was stationed at Oban on the west coast of Scotland for which he held fond memories.
>
> In 1945 he married my mother, Evelyn (née Naftel), a Channel Islander who came from a family of Guernsey growers. They planned a joint future where they would both achieve their individual ambitions: my mother, a State Registered Nurse, to have her own private nursing home and my father to open his nursery, having already acquired five acres for stock ground.
>
> Six years later they purchased 'Langshott' in Ferndown, a property set in five acres of land already established as a nursing home, and which they renamed 'Woodlands'. A large proportion of the land was covered in pine trees but it enjoyed an ericaceous sandy soil, which father always claimed was a continuation of the Bagshot Sands. The project was not for the faint-hearted as the property itself needed much updating and attention. The pine trees had to be removed by hard physical endeavour, achieved with the aid of a monkey winch and the enthusiastic support of my grandfather.
>
> Once the land was cleared, my father grew lupins to oxygenate the soil and then began to establish his collection of named evergreen azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons, along with some of the Exbury deciduous azaleas, as well as the occasional species. 'Woodlands Nursery Gardens' were now established.
>
> Despite the demands of propagating and growing his normal stock varieties, my father's desire to improve the range and quality of plants meant that he spent as much time as possible hybridising. He worked on creating a significant collection of crosses to give him the opportunity to select only the best or most improved.

- left -
George Hyde, photographed in 1942.

By 1961 the improved Exbury strain of azaleas he had raised were maturing and at the Chelsea Flower Show that year he put up eleven to be judged. All were accepted for trials at Wisley. Before Chelsea week had finished, Fred Wynniatt, Head Gardener at Exbury, brought Edmund de Rothschild to visit the Nursery to see these azaleas flowering en masse. Edmund purchased the entire collection, which later became known as the 'Solent Series' and were named by Exbury. Today, these azaleas are very mature and create an annual blaze of vivid colour in the garden.

Thereafter, father concentrated more on his evergreen azaleas and rhododendrons, seeing the potential in using *Rhododendron yakushimanum* in the rhododendron crosses. If he had been more commercial he would have been seen as one of the groundbreakers in introducing his exciting new hybrids, but the artist is seldom the salesman.

One of the double length Dutch light glasshouses at the nursery was devoted to the growing of rhododendron and azalea seedlings, in banked peat beds covered with glass frames. The peat was always drenched with warm water prior to sowing the seed, and even from germination, my father could predict the eventual colour of the blooms and the characteristics of each batch of seedlings. During the many years of trialling at the nursery, the promising plants were assessed and those found worthy were selected for formal trials by the RHS.

The first group of Hyde evergreen azaleas that father named were: 'Beattie', in 1967, which received an Award of Merit in 1972; 'Evelyn Hyde' in 1970; 'Rosemary Hyde' in 1972, gifted an AM in 1974; and 'Autumn Glow' in 1980, which received an AM in 1987.

On May 17th 1980 my father was delighted to receive a most kind and encouraging letter from Mr de Rothschild regarding the latter azalea. It was a truly beautiful May morning and he was at his happiest. Later that day, whilst watering his beloved rhododendrons, he passed peacefully away in the New Forest garden he was planting for his retirement, the hose still in his hand.

Edmund de Rothschild had also written:

'Your azaleas are thriving and give beautiful colours, so you have really added to the loveliness of the gardens at Exbury. This is something that will always be remembered with gratitude. Your work therefore, as a hybridiser, is recognised for its worth'.

Many visitors to the Rothschild garden will have noted the names of crosses such as 'Citroen', 'Corot', 'Drury Lane', 'Lobster Pot', 'Sword of State' and 'Tender Heart' and made enquiries as to their availability, only to find that none were being offered for sale, anywhere. That was down to the fact that they are some of the most difficult deciduous azaleas to vegetatively propagate.

It was the late Alan Clark, nurseryman and plant hunter, who related this to me in a conversation that took place almost thirty years ago at Muncaster Castle. Regarded as one of the foremost green-fingered grafting wizards working within the genus and renowned for getting even the most recalcitrant scion to take, the Solents had stumped him. So it is only in last fifteen or so years, thanks in part to micropropagation, that a very small selection of the named clones have been listed by one or two specialist UK nurseries. But as anyone who has seen the plants in flower will confirm, of all the deciduous azalea hybrid strains created by the hand of man, the Solents are pre-eminent.


George and Evelyn Hyde on Battleston Hill, RHS Wisley, with evergreen azalea 'Rosemary Hyde' behind them.

The Deciduous Azalea Registrations:

Arctic Regent
Flower Colour: Yellowish-white
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Arromanches
AM 2003
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink-red
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Medium

Banquet
Flower Colour: Pink-orange

Barbecue
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Beaulieu Manor
Flower Colour: Red-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Bloomsbury
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May

Bon Bouche
Flower Colour: Orange-salmon

Bulls Run
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Butter
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Canaris
Flower Colour: Yellow

Cézanne
Flower Colour: Yellow

Chariots of Fire

Charlotte Megan
'Homebush' hybrid
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Chelsea Manor
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Citroen
Flower Colour: Yellow-reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May

Corot
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May

Creme Caramel

Croesus
Flower Colour: Yellow

Crown Supreme
Flower Colour: Orange-yellowish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Dalliance
Flower Colour: Apricot

Dame Janet Baker

Dawn's Glory
AM 1989
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Delectable
Flower Colour: Peach

Delightful
Flower Colour: Apricot

Diabolo
Flower Colour: Yellow

Don Quixote
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May

Double Eagle
Flower Colour: Old Gold

Dreadnought

Drouais
Flower Colour: Pink

Drury Lane
AM 1989
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Duchess of Kent

Eternal Flame

Ethel le Frak

Evenglow
Flower Colour: Orange

Fiesta

Firecracker

Flamenco

Fragrant Memories
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Low

Gauche
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Gauguin

Glittering Prize
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Low

Glow

Helena Evelyn
Homebush hybrid
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Hyde & Seek

Hyde Park
Flower Colour: Yellow-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Invincible

Jessica Rose
Homebush hybrid
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Krugerrand
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Kwai
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May

Le Havre
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Lobster Pot
Flower Colour: Orange-yellowish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Madame Bovary
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Manet

Matisse
Flower Colour: Orange-reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May

Miami

Monet
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May

Mrs Anthony Seys

Norman's Choice
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Oregon Trail
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink-reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Otterwood

Panache

Perfectly Pauline
Flower Colour: White flushed pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Phil Legrand
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Pimlico

Pissarro
Flower Colour: Pink

Poussin

Princess Margaret of Windsor

Queen of Sheba

Rachel Dacre

Renowned

Rousseau
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Royal Herald
Flower Colour: Orange-yellowish-pink
Flowering Time: May

Sceptered Orb
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May

Sherbet

Silver Light

Sisley
Flower Colour: Pink-red
Flowering Time: May

Snow Storm

Starfire

Sword of State
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Symphony

Tender Heart
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange-yellowish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Thomas David
Homebush hybrid
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Tinsmith
Flower Colour: Yellowish-white-reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Vasony
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Zeneta

R. 'Arctic Regent'

R. 'Arctic Regent'

R. `Beaulieu Manor’

R. 'Beaulieu Manor'


R. 'Cézanne'

R. 'Cézanne'

R. 'Citroen'


R. 'Corot'


R. 'Crown Supreme'

R. 'Crown Supreme'

R. 'Dame Janet Baker'

R. 'Dame Janet Baker'


R. 'Dawn's Glory' AM 1989

R. ‘Dawn's Glory’ AM 1989


R. 'Delectable'

R. 'Don Quixote'

R. ‘Drury Lane’ AM 1989

R. 'Drury Lane' AM 1989

R. 'Drury Lane'
Unknown x Unknown
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6- 7 May-early June 2.5m x 2.5m

'Drury Lane' - previously known as 'Delicious' - is a Solent Strain azalea crossed by George Hyde at his Woodlands Nursery in Ferndown, East Dorset, during the early 1950s, which was later named and registered by Edmund de Rothschild of Exbury Gardens. The flowers of the cross are semi-double, held in a dense balled truss of thirteen tubular-funnel-shaped corollas, each around 6.5cm long and with five or sometimes six lobes. Their hue is denoted as light orange-yellow, but like so many azalea flower descriptions in the pages of the *IRRC,* it is only a snapshot of the truth.

For in reality, 'Drury Lane' is a changeling, and the colour progression across a bush in bloom is kaleidoscopic:

From a distance when first open, the flowers are indeed a muted orange, not in the least strident, but still eye-catching. So approach closer. And a mix of tones will become apparent within the whole: orange, in various shades, peach-pink, even hints of rose-red. Return a week or so later and much of the orange will have transformed to orange-yellow, peach become more prevalent, with a few areas now suffused a creamy yellowish-pink. Other corollas will have turned almost completely pale yellow, while their neighbour will still display lobes margined pinkish-rose. And dotted throughout will be the nascent rose-pink punctuation of buds yet to open.

Clustered together, a group of inflorescences can only be described as a fantasy ice-cream dish created for a pampered prince: 'Delicious' indeed. And an Award of Merit was scooped from the RHS when 'Drury Lane' was shown in 1989, though what prompted the epithet switch to such a mundane association - surely not the leper hospital; or the London street's poverty of architectural opulence; even Hogarth's descriptions from *A Harlot's Progress* - can only be hypothesised (if the Theatre Royal and The Muffin Man are excluded from consideration).

George Hyde's driving vision was to improve the range and quality of bloom of the Exbury azaleas that had been developed by Lionel de Rothschild from the Knap Hill strain of hybrids raised by the two Anthony Waterers (father and son). And in this he succeeded admirably. Eleven plants from his maturing stock of plants were displayed in 1961 at the Chelsea Flower Show and these immediately caught the eye of two discerning attendees who before the week was out had visited Woodlands to see the azaleas flowering en masse: Edmund de Rothschild, and his head gardener at the time, Fred Wynniatt. So impressed were they by the collection of plants that a deal was reached and Exbury purchased every single seedling there and then, later christening them the Solent Strain, reflecting the Rothschild garden's closeness to that body of water, and registering some seventy individual selections in subsequent years.

Today, the largest group of Solent Strain azaleas to be found in the UK reside along either side of 'Lover's Lane' at Exbury, where they replaced most of the 'Lady Chamberlain' and 'Lady Rosebery' *cinnabarinum* hybrids post their powdery mildew decline, and visitors graced a sunny day in mid May and June will find the entire length of the avenue a stop-you-in-your-tracks fantastic blaze of colour.

And yes - to answer the sceptics - the five photographs presented herein are all shots of the same labelled bush, taken over a period roughly spanning three weeks, though admittedly, across two flowering seasons.


R. 'Drury Lane' AM 1989


R. 'Drury Lane' AM 1989

R. 'Drury Lane' AM 1989


R. ‘Firecracker’


R. ‘Gauche’

R. 'Invincible'


R. ‘Le Havre’

R. 'Madame Bovary'

R. ‘Madame Bovary’

R. 'Oregon Trail'

R. 'Oregon Trail'

R. 'Rousseau'


R. 'Rousseau'

R. 'Sword Of State'


R. 'Tinsmith'

The Evergreen Azalea Registrations:

Artistic Meg
Flower Colour: Purplish-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Autumn Glow
'Vuyk's Scarlet' x 'Tanager' X 'John Cairns'
AM 1987
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Beattie
'Mucronatum' X 'Betty'
AM 1972
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Dwarf

Chariots of Fire
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Christopher
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Dear Grandad
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Dear Grandma
Flower Colour: Purplish-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Dearest
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Dorset Sandy
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Evelyn Hyde
'Mucronatum' X 'Purple Splendor'
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Low

Flower Arranger
Flower Colour: Purple
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Fred Nutbeam
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

George Hyde
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Hydie
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Louise Alice
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Magic Flute
Flower Colour: Purplish-red
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Martha Ann Lucy
Flower Colour: Reddish-purple
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Naomi Legrand
Flower Colour: Purplish-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Olympic Flame
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Medium

Rosemary Hyde
'Maxwellii' X 'Sir William Lawrence'
AM 1974
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Shelley
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Silver Fountain
'Palestrina' X 'Mucronatum'
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May
Height: Dwarf

Tom Hyde
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Valentine Surprise
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange, then apricot-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

R. 'Autumn Glow' AM 1987

R. 'Beattie' AM 1972

R. 'Beattie' AM 1972


R. ‘Dear Grandad’

R. 'Evelyn Hyde'

R. 'Evelyn Hyde'

'Mucronatum' x 'Purple Splendor'

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 May 1.2m x 1.66m

With the entire stock of his Solent Strain deciduous azalea breeding programme sold off to Edmund de Rothschild and despatched to Exbury just weeks after their triumphant introduction at the 1961 Chelsea Flower Show, George Hyde switched his attention to other areas of the genus and one of the double-length Dutch light greenhouses at his Woodlands Nursery, near Ferndown in Dorset, was soon home to a swarm of rhododendron and evergreen azalea seedlings. One group of the latter originated from Joseph Gable's orchid-purple hybrid 'Purple Splendor', which George Hyde used to pollinate the centuries-old white-flowering Japanese hybrid 'Mucronatum'.

The pairing had been made in 1964 and when the seedlings started flowering, the best one was selected and named 'Evelyn Hyde' for his wife. It was introduced in 1970.

Boasting a 5-flowered domed and compact truss, the individual purplish-pink corollas are campanulate in shape, 3.5cm long by 2.5cm wide, darker toned around the lobe margins and display a fan of purplish-red speckles and spots on the dorsal petals. The shrub's habit is upright and spreading, somewhat open, but still well cloaked with mid green matt leaves, elliptic in shape and each around 4cm long.

R. 'Evelyn Hyde'

R. 'Evelyn Hyde'

R. ‘Evelyn Hyde’

R. 'George Hyde'

R. 'George Hyde'

R. 'George Hyde'


R. 'George Hyde'

R. 'Hydie'


R. ‘Hydie’

R. 'Magic Flute'

R. 'Magic Flute'

R. 'Rosemary Hyde' AM 1974


R. 'Rosemary Hyde' AM 1974

R. 'Silver Fountain'

R. 'Silver Fountain'

R. 'Silver Fountain'

R. 'Silver Fountain'

R. ‘Valentine Surprise’

R. 'Valentine Surprise'

The Lepidote & Elepidote Registrations:

Cymbeline
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Evelyn's Joy
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Medium

Falstaff
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Little Foxy
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Loving Spirit
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Midsummer Night's Dream
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Moonfleet
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Olivia
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Prospero
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Remember Rosemary
Flower Colour: Pale purplish-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Medium-tall

Verona
Flower Colour: Purple
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Wax Lyrical
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Winter's Tale
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Photographic Acknowledgements:

Mirroring the earlier volumes in this series, details of where each of the plant portraits was photographed is set out below, along with the website details of those collections visited. Thanks is again extended to each establishment for allowing images taken in a private-use capacity, to be reproduced herein. Gratitude is also due the institutions, organisations and individuals who allowed the portrait photographs of historical and noted figures associated with the genus to appear alongside the text.

Key: AL - above left; AC - above centre; AR - above right; BL - below left; BC - below centre; BR - below right; L - left; R - right.

Arduaine Garden, Oban, Argyll:
https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/arduaine-garden
p. 159; p. 160; p. 176; p. 177.

Brodick Castle Garden, Isle of Arran:
https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/brodick-castle-garden-country-park
p. 1; p. 168; p. 169; p. 170 - BL, R; p. 171; p. 192; p. 202; p. 203; p. 204 - BL, R; p. 205; p. 212; p. 213 - L, R.

Leo Cooper Ltd:
https://collections.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/leo-cooper-collection-publisher/
p. 109 R - a portrait photograph of Eric Harrison from the back cover of *Gunners, Game & Gardens,* with the photo taken before 1978; p. 111 - Tremeer House, Cornwall, photograph included within *Gunners, Game & Gardens*.

Crarae Woodland Glen, Inveraray, Argyll:
https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/crarae-garden
p. 166; p. 167 - BL, R.

Exbury Gardens, Hampshire:
https://www.exbury.co.uk/
p. 56; p. 57; p. 82 - AR, BR; p. 84 - L, AR, BR; p. 85; p. 215; p. 220; p. 221; p. 226; p. 227; p. 228; p. 229; p. 230; p. 231; p. 232; p. 233; p. 234; p. 235; p. 236; p. 237; p. 238 - AR, BR; p. 239; p. 240; p. 241; p. 242; p. 243; p. 244; p. 245; p. 248; p. 249; p. 250; p. 251; p. 282 - BR.

Glendoick Gardens Ltd, Perth:
https://glendoick.com/
p. 130.

Helen Haugh:
https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/6877/1/MA%20Dissertation_Helen%20Haugh_154581700_Merit.pdf
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Muncaster Castle Gardens, Ravenglass, Cumbria:
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Royal Botanic Garden, Wakehurst Place:
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About the Author.

Julian Taylor-Whall was born in Lowestoft at the end of November, 1957. He received a grammar school education before embarking on a three-decades-long career with the BBC at Television Centre. During that time he worked on many of the now classic shows made in the production facilities there, the studios at Lime Grove and Elstree, and at the Television Theatre.

He retired early in 2008, moving to a small village in West Cumbria, just outside the Lake District National Park.

His interests include landscape and plant photography, music, film, writing, and of course, the cultivation of rhododendrons. His previous multivolume treatise on that genus can be freely downloaded at:

https://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/publications/books/temperate-rhododendrons.

- above -
Atop Great Gable, a self portrait against cloud.

- back cover images -

R. ‘Pipaluk’	R. ‘Perfect Lady’
R. ‘Glory of Athlone’	R. ‘Drury Lane’