

Rhododendron Society of Canada

ATLANTIC NEWSLETTER

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

Volume 25: Number 1

February 2001

25th Anniversary Year

CALENDAR

All R.S.C.A.R. regular monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, 7:30 p.m. at the Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium, Summer St., Halifax, unless otherwise noted. Parking provided in the Museum lot. Friends, guests and anyone interested in rhododendrons, azaleas or companion plants are always welcome at R.S.C.A.R. meetings or events.

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|------------------------|---|
| 6 February | Meeting: John Weagle - Pests and Diseases of Rhododendrons
Workshop: Ken Shannik - Basic Pruning of Rhododendrons |
| 6 March | Meeting: Rex Murfitt: Rock Gardening Without a Rock Garden/North American Alpines

Born in England, Rex Murfitt, trained as a nurseryman, and later specialized in alpine plants at the famous W.E.Th. Ingwersen's Nursery. He later moved to New York and helped Frank and Anne Cabot start Stonecrop Nurseries Inc.

Rex now grows alpines for pleasure in Victoria B.C. His particular interest is in North American alpines. |
| 3 April | Meeting: Joe Bidermann - Use of Natural Stone in the Landscape
Joe runs Joe Bidermann Landscaping Design in Sable River and specializes in natural stone paving
Workshop: Jenny Sandison - How to Photograph in the Garden |
| 1 May | Meeting: TBA
Members' Plant Sale (See Special Notice in this Newsletter) |
| 19 & 20 May | Annual Early Spring Mini-Show. Nova Scotia Museum
(See Special Notice in this Newsletter) |
| 20 May | Annual May Plant Sale. Nova Scotia Museum
(See Special Notice in this Newsletter) |
| 26 May | 2001 RSC Annual Meeting and Flower Show.
Niagara School of Horticulture, Niagara Falls, Ontario |

(The May Newsletter will be mailed in May)

ATLANTIC NOTES

ARS/RSC District 12 (National) Membership fees for 2001 were due on December 1 and 'Local' membership fees were due on January 1. If you have not renewed your membership please do so now. If you are not sure if you have renewed, please contact **Betty MacDonald** our **Membership Secretary, 902-852-2779**. The current dues structures are as follows:

1. R.S.C. - A.R.S. Membership (which includes Atlantic membership) \$42.00 Canadian for individual membership. Please make your cheque payable to - "Rhododendron Society of Canada" and send to **National Treasurer, Mr. Robert Dickhout, R.S.C. District 12 A.R.S., 5200 Timothy Crescent, Niagara Falls, Ontario L2E 5G3**. Be sure to specify Atlantic Region.

2. Atlantic Society only (which includes all privileges, mailings and activities of R.S.C. Atlantic only) \$15.00 for individual or family membership. Please make your cheque payable to "R.S.C. Atlantic Region" and send to **Atlantic Membership Secretary, Betty MacDonald, 534 Prospect Bay Road, Prospect Bay, Nova Scotia, B3T1Z8**.

When renewing your membership please include your telephone number. This will be used for RSCAR purposes only (co-ordination of potluck suppers and other events) and will be kept strictly confidential. Thanks!



Hamamelis virginiana

SPECIAL NOTICES

MEMBERS' PLANT SALE

**During Regular Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, May 1, 2001**

Members are encouraged to bring plant material to sell at the regular monthly meeting in May. Plants should be rare, unusual or hard to find varieties of perennials, annuals, shrubs, etc. that are not readily available commercially. Rhododendron, either species and hybrids (seed grown or rooted cuttings) are especially encouraged. Members are required to price and sell their plants themselves. This is a great way to find homes for those surplus plants while recouping some of your expenses for pots and soil. Please participate, especially as a vendor!

Vendors are encouraged, but not required, to provide information about their plants. You may have great plants but if the members don't know them and they don't look particularly spectacular at sale time, they are not apt to sell.



2001 MAY PLANT SALE

**Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History - Auditorium - Lower Level
1747 Summer Street, Halifax**

Sunday, May 20 - 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This Sale is one of our major fund-raisers and it relies heavily on donations from our members. We hope to have a good selection of tree and shrub seedlings, rooted cuttings, perennials and annuals, etc. Please keep the Sale in mind this spring when you are seed sowing, transplanting and dividing. Your donations are greatly appreciated. Members are requested to drop off any donations between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Donors and Sale volunteers will be able to select two plants prior to the Sale opening. This will not include nursery grown stock. Plants must be selected, paid for, and taken to your vehicle a minimum of one hour prior to the Sale opening. This rule will be strictly enforced! No exceptions!

Plan to attend and bring your friends. This event is always popular and the line-up to get in is usually long. For the best selection we recommend that you plan to arrive earlier than the 1:30 p.m. opening time.

Members whose dues are current can pre-order plants from the nursery grown rhododendrons, azaleas and companion plants we are bringing in for the sale. Please see the 2001 Advance May Sale article elsewhere in this Newsletter.

If you have not already volunteered to assist with either the Advance Sale or the public May Sale please contact **Ken Shannik** at (902) 422-2413. E-mail: **InsigneGdn@aol.com**. If you have already volunteered, you will be contacted very shortly.

SPECIAL NOTICES

2001 SPRING MINI-SHOW

**Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History - Main Level
1747 Summer Street, Halifax**

Saturday, May 19 - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 20 - 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The May Mini-Show is a non-competitive exhibition of rhododendrons, azaleas and any other early-spring blooming plants. It is held annually in conjunction with our May Sale. Thanks to the generosity of our members who bring in plant material, and especially the show chair, Jenny Sandison, the display is always spectacular. This show is an important opportunity to educate the general public and always draws many inquisitive visitors.

Volunteers are needed to help supervise the display. You need not be an expert. If you have not already volunteered and can assist either with your time or by lending plant material, please contact **Jenny Sandison at (902) 624-9013.**



RSCAR 2001 TISSUE CULTURE ADVANCE SALE

The plants will be available for pickup at St. Andrew's School on Bayer's Road, Halifax. Pickup time will be between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm on Saturday, 7 April 2001. Your order will be available when you arrive. You will be able to purchase any leftover plants at that time. Volunteers will be needed to help sort plants that day, noon - 2:00 pm. Contact **Audrey Fralic at 902-683-2711**, or at the March 2001 Meeting.



MEMBERSHIP DUES

2001 membership fees for both categories are now past due. **If you have not renewed your membership please do so now; this is your final notice.** Members whose dues are not current will find a renewal notice enclosed with this Newsletter.

RSCAR 2001 SEED EXCHANGE

INSTRUCTIONS

Send all orders to: Kathy Chute, Box 45, Milton, Nova Scotia B0T 1P0 CANADA

One packet per lot per person. More may be ordered but are subject to availability. **All orders must be on the form provided and should be received by March 15, 2001.** Save this seed list as seed will be identified by number only.

Enclose a self-addressed mailing label and add \$2.00 for postage & padded envelope.

Seed packets are \$2.00 each for hand-pollinated & collected wild seed and \$1.50 each for open-pollinated seed. Please make your cheque or money order payable to 'RSC Atlantic Region'

SEED LIST

DONORS: BOL - Todd Boland, St. John's, NF CLY - Bruce Clyburn, New Waterford, NS HAR - Joe Harvey, Victoria, BC MAC - Shelagh MacKenzie, Halifax, NS PET - Bob Pettipas, Dartmouth, NS SHA - Ken Shannik, Halifax, NS WEA - John Weagle, Halifax, NS WEI - Barbara Weinz, West Bath, Maine WIL - Bill Wilgenhof, Antigonish, NS.

Rhododendron Species - Collected Wild - \$2.00

001 SHA canadense cw York Redoubt, Halifax,
Nova Scotia

Rhododendron Species - Hand-Pollinated - \$2.00

002 WIL canadense
003 SHA camtschaticum
004 HAR degonianum ssp. heptamerum
'Enamoto' RSF#76/111
005 PET fortunei (pink, fragrant)
006 SHA mucronulatum v. chejuense
007 HAR schlippenbachii (Finnerty Gdns, U of V)
008 WEI schlippenbachii

Rhododendron Species - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50

009 HAR arboreum 'Sir Charles Lemon' (Finnerty
Gardens, University of Victoria) - tender
010 WEA brachycarpum 'Tony Law'
011 WEI calendulaceum - yellow
012 HAR calophytum (#1460, Finnerty Gardens)
013 WIL carolinianum
014 WEI degonianum ssp. heptamerum v.
kyomaruense
015 HAR insigne RSF#67/739
016 SHA keiskei 'Yaku Fairy'
017 WIL kiusianum - pink
018 WIL kiusianum - white
019 WEA makinoi
020 WEA maximum (Gable's red leaf form)
021 WEI minus (low, spreading)
022 WIL mucronulatum 'Alba'

023 WIL mucronulatum - pink
024 HAR pseudochrysanthum (Finnerty Gardens)
025 WEI yakushmanum (mixed clones)

Rhododendron Hybrids - Hand-Pollinated - \$2.00

026 HAR adenogynum RSF#75/248 x
pachysanthum RSF#78/064
027 HAR argyrophyllum v. nankingense 'Chinese
Silver' RSF#64/14 x
gymnocarpum or pachysanthum
028 HAR argyrophyllum v. nankingense 'Chinese
Silver' RSF#64/14 x pseudochrysanthum
029 WEA (aureum x 'Prelude')BPT#80-5 x
[(brachycarpum x aureum) x
caloxanthum]
030 WEA (aureum x 'Prelude')BPT#80-5 x
(yakushmanum x aureum)Berg
031 BOL 'Besse Howells' x
roxieanum v. oreonastes #59589
032 WEA brachycarpum(Number One in Row) x
fulvum(June Sinclair's best pink)
033 WEA brachycarpum(Number One in Row) x
thomsonii hybrid(Sinclair-Caperici)
034 WEA brachycarpum 'Tony Law' x
montroseanum(Sinclair's best pink)
035 CLY 'Calsap' x calophytum(Greig form)
036 WEI 'Chesterland' x
Walter Winkler fortunei hybrid
037 CLY 'Connecticut Yankee' x
calophytum(Greig form)

- 038 HAR degrobianum ssp. heptamerum
'Enamoto' RSF#76/260 x makinoi
- 039 HAR degrobianum ssp. heptamerum
'Enamoto' RSF#76/260 x
pseudochrysanthum
- 040 HAR degrobianum ssp. heptamerum
'Enamoto' RSF#76/260 x Lost Label
(one of several indumented species
including makinoi, pseudochrysanthum,
proteoides, etc.) FREE
- 041 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x argyrophyllum v.
nankingense 'Chinese Silver' RSF#64/14
- 042 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x degrobianum ssp.
heptamerum 'Enamoto' RSF#76/260
- 043 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x macabeum
- 044 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x pachysanthum RSF#78/064
- 045 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x pseudochrysanthum
- 046 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x tsariense RSF#73/288
- 047 HAR degrobianum ssp. yakushimanum
'Exbury' x wiltonii RSF#78/060
- 048 WEA 'Elviira' x
thomsonii hybrid(Sinclair-Caperci)
- 049 BOL 'Fantastica' x
roxieum v. oreonastes #59589
- 050 WEI 'Helen Everitt' x 'Cloud Nine'
- 051 WEI maximum x 'Lady Eleanor Cathcart'
- 052 WEA 'Minas Grand Pré' x 'Kimberley'
- 053 PET 'Minas Grand Pré' x 'Tantramar'
- 054 PET 'Minas Grand Pré' x
(williamsianum x caloxanthum)
- 055 WEA orbiculare x 'Minas Grand Pré'
- 056 HAR pachysanthum RSF#78/064 x
gymnocarpum RSF#68/212
- 057 HAR pachysanthum RSF#78/064 x makinoi
- 058 HAR pachysanthum RSF#78/064 x
pseudochrysanthum
- 059 WEI 'Red River' x
yakushimanum(dwarf from Kelleygreen)
- 060 WEA (smirnowii x yakushimanum)
Boulderwood x
fulvum (June Sinclair's best pink)
- 061 WEA 'Spellbinder' x
calophytum(Phetteplace pink)
- 062 SHA 'Vinecrest' x [(brachycarpum x
aureum) x caloxanthum]

- 063 SHA 'Vinecrest' x
(yakushimanum x aureum)Berg
- 064 WEA (yakushimanum x pachysanthum)ARS#
84-116 x alutaceum v. russotinctum
- 065 SHA 'Yellow Gate' x [(brachycarpum x
aureum) x caloxanthum]
- 066 SHA 'Yellow Gate' x
(yakushimanum x aureum)Berg

Azalea Hybrids - Hand-Pollinated - \$2.00

- 067 BOL (nakaharai 'Orange Form' x kiusianum
'Mt. Fuji') x 'Komo Kulshan'
- 068 WEI 'Narcissiflora' x 'Harvest Moon'
- 069 WEI orange hybrid (Exbury type) x
'Choptank River Hybrid'
- 070 BOL 'Snowbird' x 'Sweet Caroline'
- 071 WEI 'Viscosepala' x 'Jolie Madame'
- 072 WEI white hybrid (tall, lg. flwr) x 'Cecile'
- 073 WEI white hybrid(tall, lg flwr) x
'Jolie Madame'

Azalea Hybrids - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50

- 074 WEI (arborescens x bakeri)
- red & yellow Joe Parks hybrid
- 075 WIL ('Homebush' x Unnamed Pink)
RSCAR#95-048 - nice pink selection
- 076 WIL yellow deciduous hybrid
- 077 WIL mixed pink deciduous hybrids

Companion Plants - Open-Pollinated - \$1.50

- 078 SHA Actaea rubra (Baneberry) - white flowers,
red berries, poisonous - per.
- 079 SHA Actaea spicata v. alba (Baneberry) - white
flowers & berries, poisonous - per.
- 080 WIL Allium karataviense - 6", lilac,
handsome mottled foliage - bulb
- 081 WIL Allium karataviense 'Ivory Queen' - 6",
creamy white, handsome foliage - bulb
- 082 WIL Allium 'Purple Sensation' - 3' - bulb
- 083 WIL Aquilegia vulgaris? (Columbine) - tall
pink - perennial
- 084 HAR Arctostaphylos columbiana, cw Victoria,
BC - wonderful bark - tender shrub
- 085 WIL Campanula glomerata - white form
Clustered Bellflower) - perennial
- 086 WIL Campanula persicifolia 'Alba' (Peach-
leaf Bellflower) - white - perennial
- 087 SHA Cimicifuga racemosa 'Hillside Black
Beauty' - white flowers, very dark
foliage, 5'+ - perennial
- 088 SHA Clematis integrifolia - blue flowers,
herbaceous, non-climbing - perennial

- 089 MAC *Cornus kousa* v. *chinensis* 'Satomi' - red flowers - tree
- 90 SHA *Crocsmia paniculata* - 42", orange-red, hardy against foundations? tender bulb
- 091 WIL *Dianthus barbatus* (Sweet Wm.) - bien.
- 092 WIL *Digitalis* mixed (Foxglove) - biennial
- 093 WEA *Digitalis purpurea alba* (Foxglove) - white w/ gold markings, 8' - biennial
- 094 WEI *Enkianthus campanulatus* - red fall colour, white flwrs, super habit - shrub
- 095 WEA *Eucomis* hybrids (Pineapple flower) - white w/ burgundy centres - tender bulb
- 096 WEA *Fuschia boliviana* - long narrow red flowers, large red fruit - tender shrub
- 097 SHA *Gentiana asclepiadea* (Willow Gentian) - blue, 2' - perennial
- 098 SHA *Gentiana asclepiadea* 'Alba' (Willow Gentian) - white, 2' - perennial
- 099 SHA *Gentiana kurroo* - blue, 6" - perennial
- 100 SHA *Gentiana triflora* v. *japonica* - blue, 18", good cut flower - perennial
- 101 WIL *Geranium pratensis* - tall blue - per.
- 102 WIL *Heliopsis helianthoides* - yellow - per.
- 103 WIL *Iris ensata* (Japanese Iris) - white with purple stripes - perennial
- 104 WIL *Iris ensata* (Japanese Iris) - purple/blue
- 105 WIL *Iris sibirica* (Siberian Iris) - blue - per.
- 106 WIL *Lathyrus* species or hybrid (Sweet Pea) - mixed - perennial
- 107 WIL *Leucothoe fontanesiana* (Fetterbush) - white, evergreen, arching habit - shrub
- 108 WIL *Liatris spicata* (Gayfeather) - lavender - perennial
- 109 WIL *Lilium martagon* (Turk's Cap Lily) - mixed - pink & white - bulb
- 110 WIL *Lobelia siphilitica* - blue - perennial
- 111 WIL *Lobelia siphilitica* - white form - per.
- 112 WIL *Lychnis chalcidonica* (Maltese Cross) - red - perennial
- 113 WEA *Magnolia sieboldii* 'Halifax Hardy' - summer blooming, white w/ burgundy centre - tree
- 114 WEA *Magnolia sieboldii* ex cw seed from Korea, larger flower, paler centre - tree
- 115 WIL *Paeonia lactiflora* hybrids - mixed - from over 25 single & double cultivars - per.
- 116 WIL *Platycodon grandiflora* (Balloon Flower) - blue - perennial
- 117 WIL *Polemonium caeruleum* (Jacob's Ladder) - mixed, mostly blue - per.
- 118 WIL *Rudbeckia* - mixed colours, double and single - perennial
- 119 WIL *Salvia pratensis* (Meadow Sage) - blue - perennial.
- 120 WIL *Salvia sclarea* (Clary Sage) - violet, grey foliage - biennial
- 121 SHA *Serratula coronata* - dwarf form - white, 12" - perennial

NOTES

1. **Open-pollinated species may not come true from seed. Cultivars, with the exception of a few perennials do not come true. Plants from these seeds should not be labelled as being that species or cultivar. Be sure that you label the plants as being 'OP' in the case of species and 'ex' in the case of cultivars.**

2. *R. degronianum* ssp. *heptamerum* was formerly *R. metternichii*.

3. [(*R. brachycarpum* x *R. aureum*) x *R. caloxanthum*] is a smashing dwarf yellow with big open-faced caloxanthum flowers, very orange in bud. Good tough genes.

4. *R. maximum* (Gable's red leaf form) is from the original plant and is almost certainly selfed or sibbed.

5. *R. thomsonii* hybrid (Sinclair-Caperci) is a most spectacular *R. thomsonii* hybrid in the collection of June Sinclair. Very *thomsonii*-like. **R e l i a b l e b l o o m e r .**

6. *Magnolia* seed has been partially stratified. Store in plastic packet in fridge until ready to sow, then sow in warm soil.

7. See the RSCAR Members' Handbook for an article on growing rhododendrons from seed. The article can also be found on our website. Sow #094 & #107 as per rhododendrons.

8. We would like to thank the seed donors for their time and effort making crosses, collecting and cleaning seeds. ☒

MAY 2001 PLANT SALE

ADVANCE PLANT SALE FOR MEMBERS

Members may pre-order plants from the nursery grown stock to be brought in for the May Plant Sale. This year's selection features a few new rhododendron and azalea cultivars and some very exciting companion shrubs and trees. We are very pleased to offer several excellent magnolias hybrids in small sizes.

Quantities of some items are small and others we may not receive at all. You may list substitutes for specific plants on the order form. (i.e. You are ordering plant #1, and if it is not available, you would like to receive plant #3 - enter the number '3' in the 'sub' column beside plant #1.)

You may order more than one plant per variety. However, plants will be allocated on a basis of one plant per variety per membership based on the order in which they are received. Following this allocation, an adequate reserve will be held back for the public sale in May. Any surplus will be divided up amongst multiple orders. Some items listed have been offered to members in the past few years and will only be available at the public sale in May. These are indicated as 'May Sale Only.' Please complete the enclosed order form and return it no later than March 31, 2001.

Plants are to be picked up at 12 Central Street, Bedford, NS on Saturday, April 28, 2001 between 10:00 am and 2:00 p.m. (The driveway is around the corner on Gordon Street.) Plants are to be paid for when they are picked up. Do not send payment with your order form. Plants will not be shipped. Any plants not picked up will be offered for sale at the May Plant Sale.

Return your order form to: **Ken Shannik, 1421 Edward Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3H5**

LEPIDOTE RHODODENDRONS

R. 'April Mist' – [(*carolinianum* v. *album* x *mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink')F2 x (*dauricum* v. *album* x *dauricum*)F2] Beautiful soft pink double flowers edged with darker pink in early spring. Vigorous. Compact habit growing to 4'(1.2m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide in 10 years. A Mehlquist hybrid. Zone 5.

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Dora Amateis' – (*carolinianum* x *ciliatum*) An extremely floriferous white (with a touch of pink) hybrid. Every spring it covers itself in flowers, hiding its dark green foliage. Dense, mounded habit to 2.5' (.75m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Zone 6.

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Ivory Coast' – (*keiskei* x *dauricum* 'Arctic Pearl') Pale green flowers aging to ivory white. Very early flowering. To 4'(1.2m) high in 10 years. Hardy to -20°F(-29°C). A Leach hybrid.

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Olga Petite' – (*carolinianum* x *minus*) A sport of the popular R. 'Olga Mezitt.' It has the same clear pink flowers but on a slower growing more compact plant. Floriferous. Burgundy winter foliage. To 4'(1.2m) high. Zone 5.

(2 gal. - \$30.00)

R. 'Manitau' – A 'Conestoga' (*carolinianum* x *racemosum*) hybrid. Golden orange buds open to clear light pink and fade to creamy white. Covers itself in

bloom. Early. Bronzy foliage in winter. A semi-dwarf with a dense, compact habit. To 2'(.6m) high. One of my favourites. Zone 5.

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Milestone' – (*minus* v. *compacta* x *dauricum* v. *sempervirens*) A very floriferous and early blooming Mezitt hybrid. Vivid purplish-pink flowers appear almost red from a distance. Orange/red fall colour retaining a few bronze coloured leaves in winter. Upright, dense, twiggy habit to 3'(.9m) x 3'(.9m) in 10 years. Plant hardy to -20°F(-29°C). Bud hardy to at least -13°F(-25°C).

(1 gal. - \$15.00) **May Sale Only**

R. 'Weston's Pink Diamond' – ('P.J.M.' x *mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink') Frilled double pink flowers have silver-toned centres giving a 'sparkling effect.' Another very early blooming and floriferous Mezitt hybrid. Very showy red, orange & yellow fall colour and bronzy foliage in winter. Vigorous. Wide, upright habit to 6'(1.8m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Hardy to -18°F(-28°C).

(2 gal. - \$30.00)

ELEPIDOTE RHODODENDRONS

R. 'Calsap' – (*catalpa* x 'Sappho') Lavender buds open into large conical trusses of snowy white flowers with a large dramatic burgundy blotch. Dense emerald green foliage. Vigorous. Broad, upright habit to 5'(1.5m) high in 10 years. A real showstopper. Zone 5.

(1 gal. - \$15.00 / 2 gal. - \$30.00)

R. 'Golfer' – (*yakushmanum* x *pseudochrysanthum*) This Berg hybrid has perhaps the finest foliage of any hybrid. Fawn indumentum and persistent silvery tomentum. Flowers are clear pink fading to white in dome-shaped trusses. Broad, well-branched, dense habit to 2.5'(.75m) high x 3.5'(1.05m) wide in 15 years. Zone 6. (1 gal. - \$15.00) May Sale Only

R. 'Haaga' – (*brachycarpum* v. *tigerstedtii* x 'Dr. HC Dresselhuys') Pink flowers on a tall plant with attractive dark green foliage. Well-branched, upright-rounded habit to 6'(1.8m) high. Hardy to -33°F(-36°C). The Finnish hybrid are an invaluable alternative to the standard ironclads in the colder areas of our region. (1 gal. - \$15.00) May Sale Only

R. 'Helsinki University' – (*brachycarpum* v. *tigerstedtii* x *smirnowii*) Bright pink flowers flecked orange-red. Red tinged new foliage matures to glossy green. Upright in habit to 6'(1.8m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Hardy to -38°F(-39°C). Another very hardy Finnish hybrid. (1 gal. - \$15.00) May Sale Only

R. 'Henry's Red' – A very hardy Mezitt hybrid with dark blood-red flowers held in tight trusses against dark green foliage. Free-flowering. Broad, open habit to 5'(1.5m) high. Zone 5. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Hot Dawn' – ['Mars' x (*yakushmanum* 'Exbury' x 'Mars')] Vibrant pinkish-red flowers with frilled edges and heavy substance. Upright, open habit to 4'(1.2m) high x 2.5'(.75m) wide in 12 years. Plant hardy to -20°F(-29°C). Bud hardy to -14°F(-26°C). A Brueckner hybrid bred in N. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Janet Blair' – (Dexter hybrid) Large scented pale pink flowers with ruffled edges and a large gold-green flare. Fragrant. Dark glossy green foliage. Vigorous with a rounded, dense and well-branched habit. To 6'(1.8m) high, wider than tall. Zone 6. A Leach hybrid. (1 gal. - \$10.00) May Sale Only

R. 'Pohjohla's Daughter' – (*smirnowii* x *catalpa*) Large flowers open lavender-pink with a paler centre quickly ageing to almost pure white with a yellow-green flare. Very striking. Low compact mounding habit to 3.5'(1.05m) high and spreading wider. Hardy to -29°F(-34°C). Another extremely hardy Finnish hybrid. (1 gal. - \$15.00) May Sale Only

R. 'Spring Parade' – (red *catawbiense* hybrid x 'Cunningham's White') Large reddish-pink flowers in globe-shaped trusses. Free-flowering. Open habit, wider than tall. To 4'(1.2m) high. A Shamarello hybrid. Hardy to -20°F(-29°C). (1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. 'Vinecrest' – {[('Labar's White' x *fortunei*) x *wardii*] x *litiense*} Peach buds open to yellow flushed with peach and fade to yellow. A stunning colour combination. Olive green foliage. Upright, rounded habit to 4'(1.2m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide in 12 years. An Ontario hybrid from Vineland Station. Hardy to at least -16°F(-27°C). (1 gal. - \$15.00)

R. *yakushmanum* "Berg Form" - A superb species for our climate. Its long narrow leaves have a tan-white indumentum. New growth is covered in silver tomentum. Its dense foliage covers a plant which is symmetrical and broadly mounded in shape. Rosy-pink buds open to form large apple blossom pink trusses which fade to white. Best in a half day of sun. We have not offered this clone before and have not been able to determine its attributes. If it is the same as the one I have labelled yak "Berg" in my garden it will be a very slow-growing dwarf clone. Like all yaks, we are sure this will be a welcome addition to your collection. Zone 5b. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

EVERGREEN AZALEAS

A. 'Girard's Chiara' – ('Pink Dawn' x 'Boudoir') Deep purplish-pink 2.5" hose-in-hose ruffled flowers. Dense, compact habit and glossy green foliage. Slow-growing to 1'(.3m) high x 1'(.3m) in 4 years. Zone 6. A Girard Hybrid. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

A. 'Hino White Dwarf' – [('Hino Crimson' x *poukhanense*) x 'Desiree'] A smaller growing sport of the Shamarello hybrid. Pure white 2" flowers. Spreading habit to 2'(.6m) high x 3'(.9m) wide. Floriferous. Zone 6. (1 gal. - \$15.00 / 3 gal. - \$40.00)

R. *kiusianum* 'Murasaki Shikibu' - Perhaps the best suited evergreen azalea species for our coastal climate provided it is given good drainage and plenty of sun (as with all evergreen azaleas). Densely branched and twiggy with a spreading, somewhat tiered habit. This cultivar has reddish-purple hose-in-hose flowers. Floriferous. Excellent fall colour. Zone 6 but worth a try in Zone 5. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

DECIDUOUS AZALEAS

Azalea 'Lollipop' – Fragrant pink flowers with a light pink & yellow flare in early summer ageing to silvery-pink. A mildew resistant Mezitt hybrid. Excellent red to orange fall colour. Wide spreading habit to 5'(1.5m) high. Zone 5. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

Azalea 'Weston's Innocence' – Fragrant white flowers with narrow tubular throats appear in early summer. Burgundy-red fall colour. Compact, wide-upright habit plant. Another mildew resistant Mezitt hybrid. Zone 5.
(1 gal. - \$15.00)

OTHER ERICACEOUS SHRUBS & TREES

(Cultivate as per rhododendrons except as noted.)

***Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* 'Wood's Red'** – (Bearberry, Kinnikinnik) Bearberry, a Maritimes native, has small, leathery, dark green evergreen leaves on prostrate creeping stems. Small, white, tinged pink, urn-shaped flowers in spring. Does best in poor sandy soils in full sun or part-shade. 'Wood's Red' is a dense, compact form selected for its reddish winter colour & large red berries. A great rock garden or groundcover plant. Zone 5.
(3" pots - \$4.00)

Enkianthus perulatus – A deciduous shrub to 6'(1.8m) high x 6'(1.8m) wide. Bright green foliage turns scarlet in the fall. Interesting in winter for its pale grey bark and twiggy structure. Panicles of pure white urn-shaped flowers in early spring. More refined and compact than *E. campanulatus*. Plants will be very small but we are excited to be able to offer this rare plant. Zone 6.
(1 gal. - \$15.00)

Oxydendron arboreum – (Sourwood) A slow growing deciduous tree with large arching panicles of white lily-of-the-valley-like flowers in summer. Beautiful glossy deep green foliage with serrated margins. Incredible persistent maroon, scarlet or plum fall colour. Slow growing pyramidal habit to 25'(7.5m) high x 20'(6m) wide with a rounded top and drooping branches. Zone 6.
(1 gal. - \$20.00)

***Pieris japonica* 'Mousehole'** – *Pieris* is a genus of evergreen shrubs related to rhododendrons. Panicles of white, lily-of-the-valley-like flowers appear in spring from buds formed the previous year. 'Mousehole' is a dwarf cultivar growing to 3'(.9m) high x 3'(.9m) wide with reddish new growth. A beautiful foliage plant. Zone 6.
(1 gal. - \$15.00)

***Pieris japonica* v. *yakushimanum* 'Debutante'** – A compact selection with a mounded habit growing from 2-4'(.6-1.2m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Dense, dark green foliage. Bronzy new growth. Flowers are born in upright panicles in spring from pinkish-red buds formed the previous year. Zone 6, probably colder.
(1 gal. - \$15.00)

Zenobia pulverulenta – (Dusty Zenobia) Another rare deciduous rhododendron relative with lily-of-the-valley like flowers. It has an arching habit growing to about 4'(1.2m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Bluish-green leaves. The white anise-scented flowers, which are much larger than those of the *pieris*, are born in drooping clusters from the leaf axils in spring. Requires moist well-drained soil and is best in full sun. Zone 6.
(1 gal. - \$15.00)

CONIFERS

***Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Lutea'** – (Dwarf Golden Hinoki Cypress) A very slow growing golden cultivar which maintains its colour well year round. It has dense fan-like foliage and has been likened to golden coral. Upright mounded habit to 1.5'(45m) high in 10 years. Great for the rock garden in full sun or light shade. Zone 6.
(2 gal. - \$35.00)

***Pinus parviflora* v. *pentaphylla* 'Aizu'** – (Dwarf Japanese White Pine) A rare slow growing dwarf selection with ½" long needles. Upright habit. Grows 2" or less a year. For the rock garden or trough in full sun. Zone 6.
(1 gal. - \$35.00)

***Pinus peuce* 'Miss Cesarini'** – (Dwarf Balkan Pine) A very slowing dwarf selection with a upright conical habit & blue-green needles. Grows an inch or less per year. To 2'(.6m) high in ten years. Another one for the rock garden. Zone 6.
(1 gal. - \$45.00)

Sciadopitys verticillata – (Umbrella Pine) A slow growing conifer with a perfect dense pyramidal shape and beautiful, long shiny dark green needles. Can be treated as a dwarf conifer for many years but eventually will grow into a 30'(9m) tall tree. Attractive exfoliating bark. Zone 5.
(1 gal. - \$35.00)

***Sciadopitys verticillata* 'Joe Kozey'** – A very fastigate selection – almost like a telephone pole. Zone 5.
(1 gal. - \$45.00)

OTHER SHRUBS

Abeliophyllum distichum – (White Forsythia) A deciduous multi-stemmed shrub with arching branches and a rounded habit. Masses of small white fragrant flowers are born along the stems very early in spring. Best in full sun. As with Forsythias, prune out 1/3 of the old wood every year after flowering once established. To 5'(1.5m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Zone 5/6.
(1 gal. - \$15.00)

***Acer palmatum* 'Ukigumo'** – (Floating Cloud Japanese Maple) We are thrilled to offer this spectacular variegated Japanese maple. Its medium green leaves are so heavily variegated with white & dusted with pink that there is almost no green! It has performed beautifully for the past 6 years in the south end of Halifax. Upright in habit to 8'(2.4m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. It will probably need to be shaded from hot mid-day sun. Zone 6b, maybe colder. A real eye-catcher.

(1 gal. - \$20.00 / 2 gal. - \$40.00)

Clethra barbinervis – (Japanese Clethra) A large deciduous shrub growing 10-15'(3-4.5m) high x 10'(3m) wide with a rounded habit. Can be pruned into a small multi-trunked tree. Drooping racemes of small white fragrant flowers are born at the branch tips in late July & August. Foliage turns Bronzy-red in the fall. Peeling grey and orangish-brown bark adds winter interest. Needs a moist, well drained spot in full sun or part shade. Zone 6

(1 gal. - \$20.00)

***Daphne x burkwoodii* 'Carol Mackie'** – (*cneorum* X *caucasica*) This semi-evergreen daphne has striking green leaves edged with cream. The leaves often remain on the plant until January or February. Clusters of intensely fragrant, small pale pink flowers are born in spring and often a few again in the fall. It has a dense rounded habit growing to 4'(1.2m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Plant in full sun or part shade. Fruit is poisonous but I have never seen it set fruit. Zone 5. A must have.

(4" pot - \$10.00)

Daphne caucasica – A small deciduous shrub to 4' (1.2m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide with blue-green foliage and a rounded habit. Fragrant white flowers are born in clusters in spring & sporadically throughout the summer. Its black fruit is poisonous. Needs excellent drainage and light shade. Zone 6. For the collector. A few only.

(2 gal. - \$35.00)

Daphne x mantensiana – (*x burkwoodii* 'Somerset' X *retusa*) A small evergreen shrub with a dense rounded habit to 2'(.6m) high x 2'(.6m) wide with dark glossy green foliage. Fragrant, deep rose-pink flowers are born in clusters in early spring and sporadically through the summer and fall. Sterile. Needs excellent drainage. For the collector. A few only.

(Field potted - \$35.00)

***Fothergilla* 'Mount Airy'** – A deciduous shrub with great fall colour. Erect spikes of fragrant, bottlebrush-like creamy flowers in early spring. Dark blue-green foliage with red, orange and yellow fall colour. Upright, mounded habit. 'Mount Airy' is a larger cultivar to 5'(1.5m) high x 4'(1.2m) wide. Thought to be a hybrid between *F. gardenii* & *F. major*. Hardy to -25°F(-32°C).

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

Genista depressa – A choice mat forming prostrate shrub which covers itself in large bright yellow pea-type flowers in summer. Great for the rock garden or scree in full sun. Needs excellent drainage. Protect with bows in winter. Zone 5/6.

(3" pots - \$5.00)

***Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Pee Wee'**– (Dwarf Oakleaf Hydrangea) A dwarf selection of this deciduous shrub growing to 3'(.9m) high x 3'(.9m) wide with smaller, more refined foliage. Coarse, oak-like foliage is mid-green above and whitish below. Beautiful purple-red fall colour & peeling cinnamon bark. Creamy white flowers are born in summer in upright 4-5" high broadly conical panicles which age to purplish-pink and eventually brown. Best in part shade. Performs well in almost full shade but will have a more open habit. Can also take full sun with adequate moisture. Irregular, mounded, stoloniferous habit. Zone 6. Some die-back may occur below -10°F (-23°C) but quickly recovers.

(1 gal. - \$20.00)

***Phormium* 'Sundowner'** – (Flax) A tender New Zealand native which makes a superb tub plant either by itself or in combination with other plants. This cultivar has upright sword-shaped leaves to 5'(1.5m) high. Each leaf is bronzy-green with dark rose-pink striping & margins which fade to cream in the summer. Pot in a well drained mix and keep moist. Best in full sun. Store indoors in winter in a frost-free, cool bright location. A stunning addition to your patio in summer.

(1 gal. - \$25.00)

***Viburnum plicatum* v. *tomentosum* 'Mariesii'** – (Doublefile Viburnum) A deciduous shrub with a horizontal, arching, tiered habit and 4" dark green leaves. White flowers are produced in cymes (like lacecaps) along the branches in double rows. This cultivar features large creamy white flowers and dark maroon fall colour. Spring blooming. Flowers are followed by red fruit ripening to black although some sources state two clones are required for good berry set. To 10'(3m) tall. For sun to part shade but avoid very dry sites. Zone 6.

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

TREES

Cornus kousa* v. *chinensis – (Korean Dogwood) A small, multi-stemmed, shrubby tree, 18-25'(5.5-7.5m) tall, with a dense horizontal habit. White flowers appear in early August, lasts for weeks, and are followed by raspberry-shaped red fruit. Bronze or crimson fall colour. Beautiful bark with age. Best in light shade. Disease resistant but requires good drainage. Hardy to -25°F(-32°F).

(1 gal. - \$15.00)

Magnolia 'Butterflies' – (*acuminata* 'Fertile Myrtle' x *denudata*) A broad, upright tree to 25' (7.5m) or more high. Stunning, 3-4" buttery yellow flowers sit upright on its branches 'like butterflies.' Blooms before the foliage emerges. Floriferous at a young age. A Savage hybrid. Hardy to at least -22°F (-30°C), possibly colder. (1 gal. - \$15.00) May Sale Only

Magnolia 'Galaxy' – (*liliflora* 'Nigra' x *sprengeri* 'Diva') A very fast-growing upright-pyramidal, single stemmed tree to 30' (9m) high. Beautiful, slightly fragrant, 9" pale red-purple flowers. Floriferous, even at a young age. Lower branches can be pruned off as it grows to free up space beneath. Wow your neighbours. Zone 6. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

Magnolia 'Spectrum' – (*liliflora* 'Nigra' x *sprengeri* 'Diva') A sister seedling of M. 'Galaxy.' Flowers are larger and a richer reddish-purple although somewhat less profuse. It has a broader more open habit and a rounded crown. To 25' (7.5m) high x 25' (7.5m) wide. Possibly not as hardy as 'Galaxy'. Zone 6. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

Magnolia stellata 'Centennial' – (Star Magnolia) 4-5" flowers are white tinged with pink, with 30 or more tepals giving it a double effect. Vigorous with a more upright, conical habit than most. Dense and bushy, it will grow up to 10-15' (3-4.5m) high x 15' (4.5m) wide so be sure to give it some space. Dirr rates this as one of the best and hardiest of the *M. stellata* cultivars. Zone 5. (Ball & Burlap - \$65.00)

Magnolia x kewensis 'Wada's Memory' – (*kobus* x *salicifolia*) A broad, upright pyramidal tree to 40' (12m)

high. It's 6" scented flowers are white and born in great profusion. Leaves emerge bronzy in colour maturing to dark green. A stately tree but will need space to grow. Zone 6. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

Stewartia pseudocamelia – A very slow growing small tree, to 15' (4.5m) high in 25 years, with a pyramidal or oval shape. Dense foliage. Snow white, 2.5" flowers with yellow stamens, are born in August. Long-blooming. Purplish-red & yellow fall colour. Stunning multi-coloured bark is exposed in winter after the leaves fall. For part shade, protected from severe winds. Zone 5b/6a. (2 gal. - \$45.00)

PERENNIALS

Bergenia 'Bressingham Ruby' – The large waxy heart-shaped fleshy leaves of this evergreen perennial are dark green in summer and dark bronzy-red in fall & winter. 12-18" (3-4.5m) stalks of bright pink flowers appear above the dramatic foliage in spring. Full sun or light shade in moist well-drained soil. Zone 5, possibly colder. (1 gal. - \$15.00)

Gentiana acaulis – A clump forming gentian, forming a mat or low mound of dark green evergreen foliage with large, deep true-blue, trumpet-shaped flowers in spring. Requires moist well-drained lime-free soil and full sun. Zone 5. (3.5" pot - \$6.00)

Gentiana asclepiadea – (Willow Gentian) A clump forming herbaceous perennial with arching stems to 2' (.6m) high. Pale blue trumpet-shaped flowers appear from the leaf axils in late summer. Plant in part-shade in well-drained moist soil. Dislikes disturbance. Zone 5. (3.5" pot - \$6.00)



Kalmia polifolia

DEL AND RAY JAMES AND THE BARTO MYTH

By
Alleyne Cook

The First of Three Parts

Introduction

Most of the lists and information contained in these notes are due to the kindness of Harold Greer. He is now the keeper of all the James' slides and records. He reproduced them and sent them to me. It must, therefore, be realized that this article could not have been written without the help offered by Harold. If these notes contain errors it is because 1955 was a long time ago and my memory fades with age. Another telling of the story of Del and Ray James was published in the A.R.S. Bulletin, July 1963, but I have not seen the article. No matter, Del and Ray were a beautiful pair, and most of what follows are my personal memories.

Only the ancients can now remember those few souls who introduced rhododendrons to North American gardens so many years ago. In fact it was so long ago that none of the originals are still alive.

In the mild climate of southern Oregon lived three visionary seekers of the finest of garden flowers. Along with a scattering of growers on the east coast they lived in the world of the rhododendron, trying to introduce these new and gorgeous creatures to a stubborn and uncaring public.

There was James Barto, the mythical grower who lived outside Junction City, Oregon. In his isolated valley he pursued dreams the likes of which no one can fully comprehend! And on the ridge above Eugene, Oregon lived Del and Ray James. I believe their combined inspiration and imagination in the breeding of new rhododendron hybrids exceeded anything this continent has ever known.

In the Beginning

As a boy, Del James led a single sheep all the way from Eureka in Northern California to their new home in Oakland (wherever that was) Oregon. Following that one sheep came the flock, along with Father James and the supplies. James Senior had adopted two Indian boys years before Del was born, and these two taught Del a great deal about natural history.

For instance: did you know that deer get up to feed when the moon rises and lie down when the moon sets? The three boys also knew that deer are very curious about strange noises. They would sit down and tap their knives on their rifle barrels and wait, the deer would come to them. I once saw this happen. George Boving and I slept the night in the campground on Mt. Rainier. Early before the others were stirring the two of us were off to the alpine zone. I was working my way along a slope and below me were glades of scattered alpenines surrounded by dwarf firs and pines. George was digging plants and he would sit down, then get up and move on. The sound of his trowel in the stony ground was heard by a resting deer that came to investigate. It stood behind the trees watching his activities. George moved to the next glade and continued digging. The deer followed him, watched for a time, and then returned from whence it came to continue its sleep.

Del also told me how every year the Indians would set fire to the forest floor burning up all the fallen leaves and litter. Years later I met a rancher above the town of Covelo, California and he told me that his father had told him the same story. It is also mentioned in a book about Northern B.C. called *The Bears*

and I. The result of these small running fires simulating lightning-strike fires was the total absence of the great forest fires we have today. With no litter and brush to start a great blaze, the forest was also opened up for hunting.

Driving one day, Del stopped in the middle of nowhere. He got out, wandered down a fence line that ran across a field. Then he called for me and pointed to a gravestone laying in the ground. Jake was a central European who had homesteaded there. Unfortunately he built a fence across the trail the sheep men used to lead their flocks to the summer pastures. The first year the fence wires were cut. The second year, early one morning, someone whistled and when Jake came to his cabin door to investigate they shot him dead. Del and his father buried Jake and senior James paid for and erected the simple marker.

Their Garden

Del James and his wife Ray lived on a ridge across from Hendrick's Park. Further down the ridge there was a nursery from which I purchased a large plant of *R. augustinii* 'Tower Court'. The owner sold the nursery and moved to the valley, where he later sold his land to the Greer's. The James had a triangular piece of ground that faced south and east. Their property could really not be called a garden, more a collection of plants -- and what plants there were! They had planted two tiny seedlings of *Magnolia campbelli* which had arrived from England as a gift from Charles Raffil. These flowered in the open after 13 years. In New Zealand we expected blooms in 10 years, and in England, planted in shaded woodland, 30 years appears to be the norm. The other outstanding specimen in the garden was *Davidia involucrata*, the fabled Dove or Hankerchief tree which was collected by Ernest Wilson in China for the English Nursery of Veitch .

Companion plants in their garden were a strange mix. *Primula pulverulenta* Bartley Strain should, so the authorities tell us, be grown in cool, shaded woodland conditions. In that blazing heat and full sun of the James' Eugene garden, they threw 4 foot spikes of pink flowers, healthier than I've ever seen. Seedlings abounded around them. In Stanley Park (Vancouver, B.C.), I found the trick was moisture and the absence of overhead cover as *Primula* are chiefly plants of open situations.

The James' interest in rhododendrons went back to their association with Barto. Along one side of their property a large shade house had been constructed. This I remember as being full of rhodos from small seedlings to large plants. Outside, near the house, specimens of the Triflora Group - *R. davidsonianum*, *R. yunnanense*, *R. concinnum* Pseudoyanthinum Group, and *R. augustinii*. These small leafed, free-flowering species were very well suited to the summer heat of the Eugene area. Once we stopped to admire his bush of *R. augustinii* 'Barto Blue' which we both considered to be the best of the *augustiniis*. Next to it was another small plant of the same species but with pinkish-purple flowers. Del James explained that it was a layer from 'Barto Blue' and assured me that, as it grew older, the colour would improve.

I once made a collection of every possible obtainable variety of *R. augustinii*. From the Royston Nursery came 'Wilson', 'Berkley', 'Tower Court', 'Lavender Lady', 'Magor', 'Electra', 'Marine', and 'Royston', the later two being dark shades. To these were added 'Barto Blue', 'Blue Sky', 'Marion Mac' (another dark shade), 'Lackamas Blue' and 'Blue Cloud'. One Spring day I took a branch of each to the lunch room at the now Ted and Mary Greig Garden in Vancouver for the staff to observe the variations in shading. There were none - that spring every variety was an identical shade with the exceptions of the three dark varieties and 'Lavender Lady' which is very pale. Only one other variety was different, that was 'Barto Blue' and it is without doubt the best. The following year the named varieties exhibited their usual minor differences and we concluded that winter temperature must surely affect the flower colour. In 1979 we were to move 104 specimens of the *R. augustinii* from the Greig

Garden in Stanley Park to the new Sino-Himalayan Garden at Van Dusen in Vancouver. A token 10 were left behind at the Park.

To return to the James' garden, in the main area of the garden was a bank of the common mollis Azalea which must have gone back to pre-war days. All over the grounds were rhododendrons of every shape and size, these were mainly hybrids. By 1949 the James seemed to have stopped buying species altogether. By the time I'd arrived from Sunningdale in 1955 their interest in species had waned and their lives now revolved around their wonderful new hybrids.

Cook Meets The James

It was in the Spring of 1955, the year after I arrived in Vancouver, that I bussed down to the Portland Rhododendron Show. This was always held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Rhododendron Society. In those days there were few chapters and this meeting was more of a gathering of West Coast originals with a few Easterners thrown in, than anything to do with rhododendron business. In fact one year, the entertainment was someone playing the piano and a young lady singing. Not a mention of rhododendrons anywhere during this annual meeting.

After lunch I was invited to join the group going to visit the garden of Mrs. A.U.C. Berry. The James were part of this group. When Mrs. Berry discovered that the group was only interested in rhododendrons she waved her arm in the general direction of the rhodos and returned to her alpines. I then began to understand how little many of these individuals knew. They were guessing all the time without ever being certain they had the right answer. Not one of them had a copy of Stevenson's *The Species of Rhododendrons* or Clement Bowers' *Rhododendrons and Azaleas*. I remember the day, shortly after the creation of the Species Foundation, Del James pointed to a red dwarf with long leaves. "The species group have decided that that plant is *R. haematodes*; but actually it is one of my hybrids." However, at Mrs. Berry's that day, we all had serious fun and no one asked me anything. The way to be an expert is to keep ones mouth tightly shut and travel on reputation. Remember: "x" is the unknown quantity and "spurt" is a drip under pressure.



A rare photograph of Esther Rae Berry, on the left, shown in conversation with Ray James. Mrs. Berry, the eminent plantswoman, was the subject of a recent RSCAR article by Alleyne Cook. Ray James and husband Del produced many of the great rhododendron hybrids. [Photo A. Cook or Del James]

The U.K. Trip

It was at that very meeting that I was introduced to the James as someone who "knew English nurseries." If I remember correctly, their group in Eugene had paid for their 1950 trip to England. Consequently they had visited, photographed and made notes of everything they saw. I have a photo of

them with Roza Stevenson at Tower Court and another with Jim Russell at Sunningdale Nurseries. About 1945 they had found Charles Raffil's name in the R.H.S. Handbook and they wrote to the man who, as Assistant Curator of Kew for 50 years, had lived through the period of the great collectors and great gardens. From this liaison, advice, scions, seed and seedlings were to flow into Eugene.

The Chelsea Flower Show is one of Britain's great social events. And so it was a lucky break that Raffil arranged for them to attend the pre-Chelsea gathering attended by everyone who is anyone in the horticultural world. Ray James was seated next to Frank Kingdon-Ward, the greatest living plant collector of the time. Her gracious manner, her knowledge and interest in rhododendrons and the fact that she had grown the climbing *Gentiana* that KW had discovered in Burma, made for an easy, enjoyable and most memorable afternoon.

Raffil also had arranged for them to visit the large estates. The James had a letter of introduction to Charles Puddle, the head gardener at Bodnant. When they arrived, they presented the letter and were duly received by a gentleman who was not wearing the proper clothes; he looked like a tramp. The odd thing was, all the gardeners kept raising their caps and when addressed used the term "My Lord" in their reply. Finally they guessed who their guide was - it was Lord Aberconway, the owner of Bodnant and the President of the Royal Horticultural Society. When it came to parting with plants of his award winning hybrids he was an old so and so, but to gardeners he was a gruffy but gracious host.

He took them out back to where his estate car, an ancient topless Rolls Royce, awaited them. "You sit here, you sit there" said Aberconway and pulling a wire out of the dash he directed Ray James to hold it and as long as she did they would proceed. They drove to the far end of the estate where he left them to walk back through the *Rhododendron* woods.

To be continued.



Magnolia Accuminata

WITCH HAZELS

By Mary Helleiner

As I write this, on the 28th of January, 'Jelena', our earliest witch hazel, has just started to bloom. This is its second try this year; the same flowers began to open three weeks ago but stopped when a very cold spell came along. Now they are opening again. If the thaw lasts for a week or so, the whole bush will be in full bloom and will continue, the flowers shrinking or expanding according to the weather. They look particularly charming when the open blooms are shining through blobs of wet snow. By late February all the flowers will be out regardless of weather. It is surprising, and heartening, to come on such an unlikely sight in winter in Halifax.

'Jelena' is the earliest of the *Hamamelis* we grow, in some years starting to flower well before Christmas. When I cut some branches (the little tree is now big enough for large scale picking) and bring them into the house, they open within a day. At first the flowers are a brilliant orange scarlet as the four ribbon-like petals unfurl from their neat coiled pack. When they open fully they become bronzy orange and, before they fade, a pale amber. Our plant is about twenty five years old, fifteen feet high and as much across.

We now have only two other varieties of witch hazel in our



Hamamelis 'Jelena' by Barbara McLean

Halifax garden: 'Arnold Promise', a bright yellow, and 'Ruby Glow', a red that fades to a russet brown. Both of these flower later than 'Jelena', opening in February in most years, or early March if we have a very hard winter. All three witch hazels are forms of *Hamamelis* x *intermedia*, a cross between the Chinese witch hazel *Hamamelis mollis* and the Japanese witch hazel *Hamamelis japonica*. Nowadays there are several others on the

market which we have not tried for lack of room, but 'Diane', another red *intermedia*, is highly recommended.

H. mollis was the first witch hazel we grew, and my favourite. It has large soft yellow flowers and a very sweet scent. *H. m.* 'Pallida' is a particularly large flowered, free blooming form. Unfortunately our *H. mollis* died many years ago, either killed by a very hard winter or possibly by graft

disease. As far as I know, all witch hazels (except the native *H. virginiana*) are grafted. We also grew *H. mollis brevipetala* which has stubby wide petaled flowers of a bright orangey yellow. Our plant never grew well and I did not feel badly when we lost it. Probably *mollis* itself is somewhat more tender than its hybrids with *H. japonica*.

If one asks for a witch hazel at a nursery without specifying which variety one is very likely to be sold our native *H. virginiana*. It can be a very satisfactory garden shrub IF you get a good form. There is an enormous difference in floriferousness and in flower size among the various plants. The showiest types lose their leaves, which turn a brilliant yellow in the fall, before they flower, so that the flowers show up nicely. However, many of them have tiny flowers hidden in leaves and really are not worth the space they occupy. The one we have had for many years hardly counts as a flowering shrub at all. Early November is the time to look for wild witch hazels in Nova Scotia; they grow in Point Pleasant Park in Halifax and Shubie Park in Dartmouth, and even along the railway cutting in the south end of Halifax. The best one I know of in this area is near the Dingle tower but there is an even better specimen growing in the Arnold

Arboretum in Boston. It is a huge sprawling thicket of a bush, probably suckering, and is spectacular with a dense crop of large and bright yellow flowers. *H. vernalis* is another native North American, found in the southeastern United States. It also has very tiny flowers, and is a spring bloomer. I know nothing about its hardiness.

The culture of witch hazels seems very simple. They are supposed to need acid soil, although I have seen *virginiana* growing wild in a Toronto park where the soil is very unlikely to be acidic. We have mixed peat and compost into the planting holes and watered the plants while they were getting established, but nothing more. We don't even fertilize them, although perhaps we should. The more sun they get the better; our 'Jelena' in almost full sun has a nice compact, though large, shape, blooms heavily every year and sets lots of seed. The hard nutlike seed pods are attractive and last for more than a year. (*Hamamelis* means "with fruit"; the flowers and fruit are on the plants together.) 'Arnold Promise' grows in part shade and has become very tall, so much so that it really requires a ladder to cut the branches for the house; however, it blooms well every other year and lightly in the years in between. 'Ruby Glow' gets even less sun and is tall and never blooms heavily, though it always flowers. Of

course these differences may be due to variety as well as conditions. *H. virginiana* seems to manage in shadier places, but the best plants are always in fairly sunny spots. None of our plants have been bothered by insects or diseases.

All the witch hazels are best when they are planted where the western sun can shine through them, making the colours glow, and this particularly applies to the reds, which can be somewhat too dark to make a show although they are excellent for cutting. All look well against an evergreen background or blue sky, and the reds in particular show up well against snow. Bare ground underneath also makes a good background for all witch hazels. This can be seen at its best in the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, where a large collection of a dozen or more varieties of large mature witch hazels are planted in soil which is deliberately kept free of ground cover, to show them off at their best.

The other very attractive feature of these plants is their spectacular fall colour. Some, like our wild *virginiana*, turn a very impressive golden yellow. Others are a mixture of bright yellow and orange, and some are flushed with red. All of them make a wonderful end to the garden year. ❀

COMMERCIAL FLOWER SHOW FORCING

By
Christopher S. Rogers

Forcing is an important part of the horticultural industry, and by no means is it a new idea. The book of *Window Gardening* by Henry T. Williams, 1877, describes many ways to force greenhouse plants, perennials, and woody ornamentals for windows and elaborate flower arrangements.

The first exhibitors in the Boston flower show were from the estates that were so prevalent in the Boston area around the turn of the century. In the 1920's, if one were a member of the horticultural society, the flower show, theme lasted throughout the year. Not only were there annual flower shows, but there were theme shows during the year. The owners of the estates displayed the plants that they had forced in their greenhouses, and there was a real competition among them. The rest of the show was swayed by the florist industry around that time. Many of the flower shows included carnations and roses.

The themes began to change after the war, many of the large estates began to break apart mainly due to the depression. More commercial exhibitors became permanent fixtures of the show. The purpose of the show was to inspire and educate. People could become more aware of foliage and flower types that blend well together. Polly Wakefield remembers when the show was moved from Horticulture Hall to the Mechanics Building. "One could view the individual gardens from the balcony seats, which gave people a whole new perspective to the plants in the show."

Weston Nurseries, Inc. received their first award in 1930. It was the President's Cup for a perennial and rock garden display. I learned the techniques of forcing from the 'master,' the late Edmund V. Mezitt. I have been successfully forcing for trade shows as well as the Boston flower show for the past five years. The concept of forcing is really quite simple. Webster defines it as something produced or kept up by an unusual effort at a pace faster than usual.

How does one get started? There are many variables in forcing. Nature is constantly changing and therefore one has to be willing to experiment to be successful from year to year. The most important aspect of forcing is the quality of the plant material. On occasion I have received second quality plants and tried to force them instead of discarding them. If the plants forced at all, they just didn't seem to hold up as well as top quality material.

The time when the material is dug is also important. Our material is dug late enough so it doesn't decline, but early enough so we get some regrowth of the roots before we begin the force. Our stock is dug in October.

Water stress affects almost every stage of plant growth. Keeping the plants at an even degree of moisture, from when they were dug all the way through the force, is extremely important. Plants are constantly getting rid of moisture through their leaves, and at the same time roots need to take up an equal amount of that moisture. Even though plants appear to be dormant, their roots are actively growing. I have often seen root growth on potted material at temperatures in the forty degree Fahrenheit range.

The storage facilities can make or break a show. If the plant material has been forced too early, one needs an area that is between 35 to 45 degrees Fahrenheit to hold the material until the show. The temperature in which we hold our stock prior to forcing is 45 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit. If the

temperature is kept too warm, the early-to-bloom plants will force themselves in storage. This would be fine if the storage facility is not a dark barn or a garage. Light plays an important role in the forced plants' flower color. Plants that I have seen force themselves in storage are *Cornus mas*, *Hamamelis*, *Pieris*, and *Vaccinium*.

The timing of bringing the material into the greenhouse, the greenhouse temperature, and the outside weather have to be recorded to make the show succeed from year to year. The plant material is brought into the greenhouse directly opposite to the sequence of bloom in nature. In early April the outside temperature begins to warm up. I base the force on how many weeks after that time a plant blooms naturally. Nature has programmed each plant with specific heat and light requirements which must be met for blooming to take place. *Kalmia latifolia* blooms in June and, therefore, they are the first plants brought into the forcing house. They require the most heat and time to force. Plants such as *R. viscosum* have been forced, but they usually bloom in April a few weeks after the Boston show has ended. I think if one were to put them in cold storage in the beginning of September and remove them in mid-November they might force in time for the Boston show in the beginning of March. Lepidote rhododendrons such as 'Weston's Pink Diamond' or *R. mucronulatum* have a low heat requirement. They also tend to lose their petals if kept in warm temperatures too long. There is a correlation between the time the plant naturally blooms and the heat requirement needed to force that plant. Plants that bloom early in the spring are usually not naturally subject to high temperatures as those that bloom in mid-May to June are. Therefore, it is easier to force an earlier blooming plant than it is to force one that blooms later. The temperature of the force is important to the final outcome of the forced plants' flower color. The best colors can be achieved by forcing the plants slowly; try to duplicate what naturally occurs outdoors. Invariably, lepidote rhododendrons force a couple of shades lighter than they actually are in nature. Generally the thicker the petals on a flower the longer it will hold up in its forced condition. Elepidotes hold up much better than lepidotes. Forced *Cornus florida* can be kept for weeks in storage before they are displayed. *Hamamelis* with their thin, wispy petals only look good for a couple of days before their tips turn brown.

The position of the plant material in the greenhouse is based on the heat and light requirement needed to force that plant. Plants that have the greatest heat requirement are positioned on the south side of the greenhouse.

The outside weather has to be monitored during the force. One winter may have many sunny days and be above freezing for long periods. This could cause the plants to force earlier than a winter with many cloudy days. This year there were only four days in January, that were really sunny. I had to turn the temperature up inside the greenhouse to compensate for the clouds. On a normal sunny January day the heat can build up to 80 degrees in our forcing house. If there is no sun, the temperature is much cooler than normal in the greenhouse. The heaters must be turned up to compensate for the cooler day temperatures.

The forcing schedule that I have used is based on the Boston flower show, which is usually the first week of March. My beginning temperature in the greenhouse is around fifty degrees Fahrenheit. It remains that way until the first week of January when I turn it up to 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit depending upon the weather. The temperature is made lower or higher depending upon what the weather is like. Invariably, after the first month of force, I panic and turn the temperature up because there is nothing happening. By the end of the fifth week the buds begin to expand on the elepidote rhododendrons and maybe a few leaves emerge from the tips of the birch clumps. At this point one should be concerned about the amount of water the plants are getting. Balled and burlapped plants have a tendency to dry out rather rapidly, and should be sprayed with water twice a day. The expanding buds need to be misted regularly throughout the day so they won't dry out. As the flowers begin to open, the

plants should be misted so the flowers won't wilt. The material should be moved to a cooler greenhouse heated barn, or garage as the plants come into bloom. If the force is properly planned, plants will be in three-quarter bloom not more than a week before the setup of the show. Once all the material has been removed from the forcing greenhouse, material that is not yet ready can stay behind and be moved into the show at the last possible minute of the set-up period.

The chart below can be used as a guide for forcing. It is impossible to list all the rhododendrons that have been forced. To be certain, find out when the plant blooms naturally and count back to early April to determine the number of weeks needed to force that plant. For instance, rhododendron 'Big Deal' and 'Arctic Gold' bloom earlier than most of the elepidotes; they force in four to five weeks. Rhododendron 'Walter Hunnewell' takes seven to eight weeks to force. Rhododendron 'Scintillation' takes six weeks to force. So use this chart as a guide and use your experience to make it work. Don't be afraid to change from year to year. *Bonne chance!*

PLANT	BLOOM PERIOD	FORCE TIME
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	1-3 rd week June	10-12 weeks
Az. 'Frank Abbott'	1-2 nd week June	8 weeks
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>		8 weeks full leaf
Rh. Catawbiense hybrids	3-4 th week May	7-8 weeks
Az. 'Bixby'	3-4 th week May	6-8 weeks
Az. 'Exbury' hybrids	1-2 nd week June	6-8 weeks
<i>Enkianthus campanulatus</i>	1 st week June	5 weeks
Az. 'Deleware Valley White'	2-3 rd week May	5-6 weeks
Az. 'Hinocrimson'	2-3 rd week May	5-6 weeks
Az. <i>kaempferi</i>	4 th week May	4-5 weeks
Rh. 'Molly Fordham'	2-3 rd week May	5-6 weeks
Rh. 'Olga Mezzitt'	2-3 rd week May	5-6 weeks
<i>Rh. carolinianum</i>	2-4 th week May	4-5 weeks
Az. <i>vaseyi</i>	1-2 nd week May	4-5 weeks
<i>Cornus florida</i>	1-3 rd week May	4-5 weeks
Rh. 'PJM'	4 th week April	4 weeks
<i>Pieris floribunda</i>	4 th week April-May	3-4 weeks
Rh. 'Westons Pink Diamond'	3 rd week April	3 weeks
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	4 th week April	2-3 weeks

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'A' IS FOR ARBOREUM

By Norman Todd

One of the difficulties in writing about rhododendrons is that the facts that allow one to make useful encompassing generalizations need about a century of observation. One can be a writer on Canadian federal elections or US presidential elections and make some interesting, even predictive, comments by knowing what happened in the last ten or fifteen of them. Writing about contemporary art requires only the study of a static object or two and a stack of metaphors. Commenting on women's fashions involves no risk at all because the creations being analyzed will never be worn by anyone reading the article. Pontificating about life forms with a longevity greater than our own may be risked only because at the end of the day those reading this will not be around to criticize for significantly longer than the writer will.

These thoughts are prompted by a predilection to claim that one of the best species for a large garden in these parts is *R. arboreum*. Also, I think *arboreum* is currently underused in hybridizing. This hunch or bias is based on observation of a very small number of plants over a mere thirty years.

I have read about and even have slides of arbutus-sized *arboreums* in Nepal - sentinel columns of blazing red. I am aware of a grand one in Dunbartonshire, Scotland which measures over forty by forty-five feet. I am also aware of avenues of fifty footers in Ireland and of many other Methuselahs in Southern England which reputedly came from seed collected by Dr. Wallich, Superintendent of the Calcutta Botanic Garden. He was not the first to collect seed of *arboreum*, this distinction going to a Dr. Buchanan Hamilton. (What would we do without medical people?) It seems, however, that it was Waiich's seed that arrived at the Liverpool Botanic Garden in 1815 and at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh in 1821. *Arboreum* had been 'discovered' by a Captain Hardwicke in 1796 on the Sewalic Mountains of India. This species and *thomsonii* were the first large red rhododendrons to be seen by covetous, grasping Western horticulturists. Readers are referred to Davidian, 'Rhododendron Species', Vol.II for a fuller account of *arboreum*'s introduction.

Arboreum, with its several sub-species, has a very extensive, patchy (disjunct is, I think, the proper word) distribution throughout India, the Himalayas and neighbouring China. There are remarkable isolated populations in southern India and in Sri Lanka. Some of these forms, usually with red flowers are not hardy here and are only suitable for semi-tropical locales. On

the South Island of New Zealand we saw specimens that were centenarians. It has also become naturalized in Jamaica.



Local gardens have some notable, but still relatively young, examples of the species; the *arboreum* ssp. *cinnamomeum* in Dora Kreiss's garden comes prominently to mind. There are some good plants of perhaps the most famous of all *arboreum* hybrids - 'Sir Charles Lemon' - at the Finnerty Gardens. My premise that more use could be made of *arboreum* rests mainly on the few plants I know well - those in my own garden. In the deepest, darkest days of winter when only the odd hellebore and camellia and viburnum are in flower, 'Rosamundi' and 'Lee's scarlet' and 'Nobleanum' are glowing photon-emitters of warmth. Half of their genes come from *arboreum*. Many gardeners are disappointed when the 'Christmas Cheer' they have cherished and coddled for a few years, blooms in late March. It was baptized as 'Christmas Cheer' in the 1820s when those who could afford to buy rhododendrons had large conservatories and this plant could be forced to bloom for Yuletide decoration. My point is that we need more of these dark day dazzling denizens. There is a strong demand for bloom in the winter months.

This early season blooming can be obtained from *arboreum* and this characteristic along with colour selections that are clean and clear; indumented foliage, that is crisp and precise and resistant to weevils and mildew; and good plant habit, make *arboreum* an attractive parent. The Social Services Agency for Horticulture will approve.

The subspecies of *arboreum* - *nilagiricum*, I have never seen. It may not be hardy here but its hybrid, 'Noyo Chief', and that plant crossed with *yakushmanum*, to give 'Noyo Brave', are contemporary garden-sized plants with outstanding foliage and good flowers. Even better is the New Zealand hybrid 'Rubicon' which is 'Noyo Chief' x 'Kilimanjaro'. This has only 25% *arboreum* in its lineage but (proving the importance of grandparents) this is evident in the foliage. 'Rubicon' may well be the best compact red rhododendron yet developed for gardens in our area. It is an April bloomer. *Arboreum* ssp. *nilagiricum* has been reintroduced within the last ten years. Keen growers and hybridizers should be on the lookout for this plant. Some of the newer introductions could be hardier.

The red-flowered plant of *arboreum* that I have is now about 12 or 14 feet tall and 30 years old. The leaves are not as large as the two-toned pink form (yet unbloomed for me) and have silvery indumentum. The really outstanding feature is the reliability of blooming and the duration of the bloom. Last year it was in flower for a full two months. My second flowering plant is pink and it had a somewhat later but almost as prolonged bloom. The plant had its first flowers two years ago and these were miserable, small, recycled looking things. After such a dramatic improvement with the second blooming, I have hopes that the show may be even better this coming March. I had bloom on ssp. *delayvayi* for the first time last year and this was a clear primary red. The habit of the plant is tidily symmetrical and the foliage a notable dark matte green. This subspecies has had no winter damage during the last ten years, although it is recorded as being a tender plant. I have also bloomed a white form of *arboreum* ssp. *arboreum*.

Already referred to was 'Sir Charles Lemon'. This, Cox opines, is *arboreum* with *campanulatum*. It is famous for its cinnamon indumentum. It is a plant to look up at. Another hybrid of this parentage from the 1800s which I have recently acquired, also has good foliage and judging from photographs, probably better white flowers than 'Sir Charles', is 'George Cunningham'. This commemorates, I believe, the Cunningham who ran Comely Bank Nursery in Edinburgh. He is more notorious for 'Cunningham's White' which could well hold the record for the most propagated rhododendron ever and likely to remain so, as it is still the best rootstock for grafted plants and used all over the world

for that purpose. Still yet another hoary old hybrid from the mid 1800s which is seldom seen and seems worth the place in a large garden, is 'Boddaertianum'. This one originated in Ghent, Belgium at Van Houtte Nursery and commemorates their foreman. Other foremen have been commemorated such as **Faggetter** and **Wiseman**. **Tony James** of U Vic is a curator and has a form of *williamsianum* named for him. Would it be a good idea to have a Curators' and Foremans' bed at U Vic? I will mention one more early blooming hybrid that I think is overlooked and that is 'Bibiani'. This is a Rothschild plant that has blood red flowers in late February. There is a good specimen in the University Gardens.

I am not a hybridizer, so the following suggestions may have been tried without success or be otherwise unworkable, but in the attempt to get early blooming varieties with bigger pastel coloured flowers, how about using February blooming 'Heatherside Beauty', (the records show this as *caucasicum* crossed with an unknown but that unknown looks like *arboreum* to me), with the new hotshots like 'Lem's Cameo', 'Naselle' and 'Horizon Monarch'? Or put pollen from an early blooming white *arboreum* on these mothers. For bigger early reds, would a trial of the biggest flowered red *arboreum* with 'Markeeta's Prize' or 'Very Berry' not be worth a shot? Examination of the ARS Seed Exchange may show there are lots of growers who have had the same idea. In which case I encourage someone on our Chapter to get the seed and get some plants going.

The results may not get you to chair the Breeders' Round Table which is held at every ARS Convention, or get you royalties to match those of the Sultan of Brunei but it will be good for the ego. Even a rejection, if it gets enough publicity by a famous grower can boost the ego. I think of the case of the February blooming 'Praecox' and that famous plants man **A.K. Bulley**, (George Forrest's sponsor). Bulley refused to have 'Praecox' in his garden because of its mauve colour. 'Praecox' had received a commendation from the RHS in 1861 and went on to be crowned with the A.G.M. in 1926 and an F.C.C. in 1978. Even the Cox family damn it with faint praise. They write... 'Rather a harsh unfashionable colour ... but flowering too early in the season for the *ponticum* prejudice to be very influential.' 'A' stands for *arboreum* but it could also stand for Achievement. ☒

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