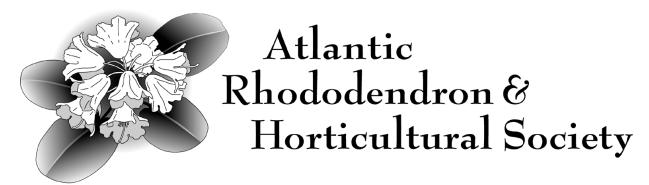
AtlanticRhodo

www.AtlanticRhodo.org

Volume 29: Number 2

May 2005





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Membership

Atlantic Rhododendron & Horticultural Society.

Fees are \$ 15.00 per year, due January 1, 2005. Make cheques payable to Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. ARHS is a chapter in District 12 of the American Rhododendron Society. For benefits see ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org

American Rhododendron Society

Fees are \$50.00 Canadian per year and include ARHS membership. Make cheques payable to American Rhododendron Society District 12. For benefits see <u>www.rhododendron.org</u>

Cheques should be sent to ARHS Membership Secretary, Betty MacDonald, 534 Prospect Road, Prospect Bay NS B3T1Z8

Please include name, address with postal code, e-mail address and telephone number (for organizational purposes).

 AtlanticRhodo
 is the Newsletter of the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society. We welcome your comments, suggestions, articles, photos and other material for publication. Send all material to the editor.

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 Cover Photo: R. 'Alborada' A Brueckner Hybrid. [Photo Dr. J. Brueckner]
 Cover Photo: R. 'Alborada' A Brueckner Hybrid. [Photo Dr. J. Brueckner]



Calendar of Events

All ARHS meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, from September to May, at 7:30 p.m. in the Nova Scotia Museum Auditorium, 1747 Summer St., Halifax, unless otherwise noted. Paid parking is available in the Museum lot. Friends, guests and anyone interested in rhododendrons, azaleas or companion plants are always welcome at meetings or events.

Tuesday May 3 Maria Galletti: How to be Successful Growing Alpines. Maria runs a nursery in Quebec featuring alpines. She will bring plants for sale. See her article on daphnes in this issue. Members' Plant Sale

- **Tuesday July 12*** Finn Haugli: Saxifrages and Meconopsis Finn Haugli is the Director of the most northerly botanic gardens in the world, at Tromso, Norway. This garden is a haven for some of the choicest alpines in the world. His previous talk to ARHS on this fascinating garden wowed everyone.
- Wednesday August 10* Jim Barlup: The Barlup Breeding Program. Jim Barlup of Bellevue, Washington is perhaps the most innovative of rhododendron hybridizers in the USA today. He uses unusual species and the best hybrids in his program and tries to inject more hardiness into tender western hybrids.

*These two summer programs will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Museum.

- **Tuesday September 6** Harry Jans: Harry's Garden, Plants and Growing Techniques. Harry Jans of Al Loenen, near Apeldoorn, Holland, is the undisputed best grower of alpines in the world today. He will show us his revolutionary alpine house and propagation techniques in this lecture, on his first eastern North American tour.
- **Tuesday October 4** Dick Jaynes: Kalmias and other Interesting Plants. Dick Jaynes has worked on improving kalmias for more than thirty years. He has written several books summing up his lifetime's work on this genus. He will discuss kalmias and other unusual trees and shrubs at his nursery in Hamden, Connecticut.

Please Note: Some members, who have environmental sensitivities, are asking their fellow members please to use no perfumes, scented soaps, etc., on the days or evenings of ARHS events, in order to minimize the risk of allergic reactions.



A very warm welcome to our new and returning ARHS members who have joined since the May 2005 Newsletter:

Cameron, P. **Carr**, Darwin Clarke, Rose Doyle, Joan & Kevin Drysdale, James & Ann Fyfe, Georgia Hedge, Lydia Jenkner, Ingrid Kowalski, Anna MacArtney, Kathryn MacDonald, Mary A.

Halifax Truro Dartmouth Bedford Herring Cove Annapolis Roval Head of Chezzetcook Lake Echo Halifax Val Caron. ON Dartmouth

MacKinnon, Robert Mason, Sandra Mattson, Stefan Miller, Emily & Dawson **Montreal Bot.Garden Library** Peterson. Holly **Rhodes. Ted & Rae Robinson**, Scott Schoen, Rolf H. Stening-Riding, Milo Veinotte, David

Riverview, NB Mineville Sweden Lower Sackville Montreal Waverlev Halifax Shelburne **Ridgeville**, ON Halifax **Mahone Bay**

Special Notices

2005 Advance May Sale Pickup

Plants pre-ordered from the 2005 Advance May Sale list are to be picked up at 5 Sime Court, Halifax, on **Saturday April 30 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.** Plants not picked up on that day will be sold at the public sale.

Sime Court is in the Kingswood subdivision off the Hammonds Plains Road. Take Kingswood Drive (between Kearney Lake Road and Farmer Clem's) to Brenda drive (the first street on the right) and follow it to the first left which is Sime Court. For more information contact Ken Shannik at 422-2413, <u>insigneGdn@aol.com</u> or Duff and Donna Evers at 835-2586 or <u>devers@eastlink.ca</u>.

Members' Plant Sale

During Regular Monthly Meeting - Tuesday May 3, 2005

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. Rhododendrons, either species or 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, the are apt not to sell.

2005 MAY PLANT SALE Le Marchant-St. Thomas School <u>6141Watt Street, Halifax</u> Saturday, May 7 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

This sale is one of our major fund-raisers and it relies heavily on donations from our members. In addition to the nursery stock we bring in, we hope to have a good selection of tree and shrub seedlings and rooted cuttings, perennials, annuals, etc., donated by you. 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 11:00 am and 12:00 noon.

Many varieties of rhodies that were not available in the advance sale will be offered. The list is available on the ARHS website www.atlanticrhodo.org.

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 1:00 p.m.opening time. While you are waiting, a handout with descriptions of the nursery stock will be available.

For more information contact, Duff & Donna Evers at (902) 835-2586 or devers@eastlink.ca

2005 National Convention, Azalea Society of America

To be held in Holland, Michigan, May 19-22. For information see www.azaleas-lake-michigan.org /Convention-intro.cfm

Annual Potluck Supper Saturday June 11, 2005, 6:00 p.m.

At the home of Sheila Stevenson and Stephen Archibald, 17 Stanbrae Road, 1 km. north of York Redoubt

Come as early as 5:00 p.m. and arrive by 6:00 p.m. We'll eat a little past 6:00 p.m.

Bring easy to eat food: salads, casseroles, desserts for buffet style and eating on the lap. Anyone with a folding chair or two should bring them along.

Head for Purcell's Cove Road from the Armdale Rotary, turn onto Purcell's Cove Rd. at Cutans at the top of the hill and keep on Purcell's Cove Rd. past Purcell's Cove. After climbing a hill and turning a curve with a large Mediterranean-style house on the right (about 10 minutes) there is a straight stretch, at last. Stanbrae Rd. is the second street on the left, after a stand of mail boxes on your left and a "York Redoubt – 1 km" sign on your right. (The first street on the left is Devil's Hill Rd.)

There is parking for about 10 or 12 cars total in our driveway and beyond, along the north side of the road beside the graveyard. Some people may have to park at the top of the road. It's about a 3 minute walk.

People can visit the neighbouring cemetery as well as our garden. They can bring secateurs if so inclined – there's lots to snip there!

Garden Tours June 11, 2005

Gardens to be announced at the May meeting, or contact Sandy Brown at 902-683-2615.

2005 Convention, North American Rock Garden Society

To be held in St. John's, Newfoundland, July 14 to 17. For information see <u>blarsen@mun.ca</u>.

Nova Scotia Rock Garden Club

The 3/4 acre rock garden on the campus of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro has been a catalyst for the formation of the Nova Scotia Rock Garden Club. Objectives include help with the rock garden, and sharing information on rock gardening with students, garden clubs and the general public. This group has recently become a chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS).

The NS Rock Garden Club meets on the third Saturday of the month March through November at the Agricultural College in Truro. For more information contact Roslyn Duffus <u>av623@chebucto.ns.ca</u>, 861-3831 or John Proctor, john.proctor@dal.ca, 461-1741.

Plant Portraits

Primula sieboldii



A "snowflake" form of *P. sieboldii*. [Photo Sterling Levy]

To primula enthusiasts, *Primula sieboldii* is one of the "Asian Woodlanders". This one is found in eastern Siberia, China and Japan. Japanese gardeners have been growing this plant for hundreds of years and they have clubs devoted to growing just this species. Over the years they have selected and named fancy forms that are unfortunately either unavailable here or very expensive to buy. Most of us grow our plants from seed.

This primula looks different from many of the types we grow in our gardens. The hairy leaves are small and rounded with long thin petioles. In bloom the plant may be only ten inches high. The flowers are flat and held in small clusters well above the foliage so they make a good show in the garden. The flowers range in colour from pale mauve through pink and white. Some have flowers that are bicoloured, the face is one colour and the back is another, often in a contrasting shade. There are also forms that look like snowflakes.

Like most primulas, *P. sieboldii* prefers to have a good supply of moisture during the growing season. Unlike some, it is able to cope with hot, dry conditions by going dormant in the summer. The leaves turn yellow and the plant disappears. Be sure to mark the spot so you don't dig it out by mistake. The rhizome is quite small and not very deep so it could easily be missed during weeding or cleanup.

When I first tried seed of this plant the only reference I had for it was written in England and suggested that it was not especially hardy. The seed germinated well and I had a plastic flat full of healthy looking seedlings that promptly turned yellow and apparently died in July. I had intended to dump the flat but accidentally left it on the edge of the lawn through the entire following winter. Imagine my surprise when they all promptly grew the following spring. Some of those plants are still around after 20 years. So much for a weak constitution! *P. sieboldii* grows readily from seed or may be propagated by dividing the rhizomes in the spring. It seems to grow in any good garden soil and will tolerate quite a bit of sun but prefers some shade in the hot afternoon.

This is a great plant that every garden should have.

- Sterling Levy

Geraniums psilostemon and 'Patricia'

The perennial geraniums are some of the workhorses of the garden, being very long-suffering of different conditions, cheerful in flowers and undemanding of attention. Inevitably one finds oneself looking for other members of this large family to try.

I can't quite remember when I planted my first Geranium psilostemon or why. It surely wasn't because the name ran trippingly off the tongue. I think the first year I got a good bunch of rounded hairy leaves as the plant settled in and grew some roots. The next year I was delighted when the flowering stems appeared with these brilliant flowers, a strong magenta pink with a pronounced black eye. I also found that it was a fairly tall perennial (36 inches) and a bit floppy. Serendipity was with me that time as I had planted it just behind three Lilium speciosum 'Rubrum' which were flourishing and which provided three very strong stems, and very late lily blossoms, so I was able to tie the geranium to the lily stems lightly. My geranium bloomed from mid summer right through to early fall and has continued to do well. It is a plant that looks better with some support and with other plants in front of it to hide the slightly leggy growth at the base, but it certainly never fails to provide weeks of these striking flowers. It also provides the odd self -seeded offspring, easily identified with its large leaf. These make good items for the garden club sale.

Enter hybrid 'Patricia'. I first saw this cultivar at Wisley planted in bold groups at the front of the famed herbaceous borders. It has the same striking flowers as its parent but on a much more compact plant (18 inches) and many more of them. At that time Perennial Gardens were still shipping from BC and listed 'Patricia' in their catalogue. I have grown this plant for four years now and really recommend it. It is also available these days from your discerning nursery or garden centre. 'Patricia' makes a great mound covered in strong magenta pink blossoms with the trademark black eye. It looks very well with *Salvia* 'Ostfriesland' (Wisley combo) or *Alchemilla mollis*. I have it planted in sun/part shade in clay loam, not too dry and I love it. I hope you will consider giving both these remarkable plants a try.

- Jenny Sandison

Kalmias

I first became aware of kalmias when we moved to Waverley in 1985 and built a house between a lake and a peat bog. The spring colours that graced the bog, ditches and wooded sand ridges were quite spectacular and after some time I got around to identifying what I was seeing. Along with the rhodora (*Rhododendron canadense*), Labrador tea (*R. groenlandicum*), blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) and pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*) were the laurels (*Kalmia angustifolia* and *polifolia*). This genus, of about seven evergreen, ericaceous shrubs, is found in woodland, swamps and meadows, in moist, humus-rich acidic soil in sun or part shade, in North America.

K. angustifolia (sheep laurel, lambkill) may not be the best candidate for the garden as it tends to sucker and spread into thickets. It can get three to five feet tall and its half inch flowers of dark pink appear on the stems in June/July. All parts are toxic to livestock, hence the common name.

K. polifolia (bog laurel, pale laurel) is smaller and, although mostly found in wet areas, may be adaptable to drier garden conditions in beds devoted to acid-loving plants. The half inch flowers are generally paler than angustifolia and are found at the ends of the stems.

I have not brought these into my garden as I can enjoy them close at hand. However, I do have a few *K. latifolia* (mountain laurel) hybrids that have come to me through the Rhododendron Society.

Kalmia latifolia 'Elf' and 'Minuet' arrived as tissue culture plants in 1994. I think that I failed to tease out the roots sufficiently at that time and did not get good growth. 'Elf'

was "done in" by a badly placed ladder a few years later but 'Minuet' is still with me in spite of some rough treatment. It is only about ten inches tall and has only flowered once in all this time. In 2000, I had an amazing show of blossom for such a tiny plant. Each flower was three quarters of an inch across and white with a dark red banding. It did not flower in 2001 and I moved it to a better location, damaging the best piece of root in the process. This is how I discovered the poor root growth and now I await forgiveness and recovery.

Kalmia 'Bullseye' arrived as tissue culture in 1996, flowered in 2000, and '02-'04. I was told that I should deadhead the blossoms in order to ensure annual flowering and I have done this with good results since 2002. The shrub is now about 36 inches high and the flowers are white to pale pink with a dark red banding, very much like 'Minuet'.

Kalmia 'Elf' returned as a nursery bought plant in 2003 and has performed well. This plant gives copious quantities of pure white flowers that are smaller than the previous two. I have placed 'Elf' in full sun while the others receive some dappled shade.

I was unsure how hardy these plants would be for me and I have not fed them as well as I should have but have been very impressed with them as they all survived the extremely cold temperatures of January 2004, with no protection and, with the exception of 'Minuet', no loss of flower. I lost a good portion of my lepidote rhododendron flowers last spring but the kalmias blew me away.

- Roslyn Duffus



Stock arriving for the Members Plant Sale 2004. [Photo Duff Evers}

Azalea Species For Atlantic Canada

By Don Craig

A long time ago (1968) the Kentville Research Station rhododendron program (initiated in 1952), listed 15 deciduous azalea species that we felt by their description might prove a valuable planting asset, but first they needed testing. Eight years later an article I prepared was published in the 1976 *R.S.C. Bulletin* Vol. 5. No. 1 extolling the virtues of some of the species on test. Years have slipped by and as I reviewed the article my ratings changed very little. The old "best" are still today's "best". In this note, I wish to write about four of the "best": *RR. calendulaceum, schlippenbachii, cumberlandense* and *luteum*. I also want to impress upon you that producing azalea species from seed permits you to enjoy the ABC's of the rhododendron world – total simplicity.

During my 52 year romance with rhododendrons. I visited many of the great gardens in America, Great Britain, Europe and New Zealand, but for all that, my most memorable experience happened in Georgia in June 1989. My wife and I were invited to visit with the Beasleys at their Transplant Nursery in Lavonia. From here, they took us to their mountain cottage in Helen where I was first introduced to George McLellan's magic on the mountain – an "Azalea Heaven" (see *Mid Atlantic Rhododendron News and Notes*, Vol. XXI, 1995). He expressed his reaction to "one of the world's greatest assemblies of deciduous azaleas. When in full bloom the sight is almost indescribable."

My first contact with the above was upon arriving at the cottage. I strolled around and almost immediately came upon a lovely stand of *R. maximum* growing along the bank of the mountain stream making its way down from its 300 m. elevation. This was only the beginning for the next morning we drove upwards for 12 kilometers into the National Forest. First to note were the beautiful swarms of flowering Kalmia latifolia (mountain laurel) covering the slopes. Next as we craned our necks to see down through the slopes of the deep gorges covered with deciduous trees were the bright floral torches of R. calendulaceum (flame azalea) scattered amongst the trees. A stop was made at Deerstand and another at the 1200 m. level having the lovely name Hog Pen Gap. While here, turning one way was to view *calendulaceum* trailing upward for 7 m. or more enjoying the support of tree trunks and branches; turning around brought into view stands of R. arborescens and the low growing viscosum. Finally we arrived at the top of Mt. Tray (elevation 1500 m) where we viewed cumberlandense. It is of interest to note that winters in the areas mentioned above are every bit as severe as here in Nova Scotia and it was of interest to have learnt from Jeff Beasley that we really were in rattlesnake country.

The 1968 record of azalea species on test at the Kentville Research Station numbered 15 including *calendulaceum*,

schlippenbachii, cumberlandense and *luteum*. These four species are now the choice ones in my opinion. A few words about each "choice":

First Choice: R. calendulaceum, Flame Azalea

Common in the Georgia Appalachians and elsewhere in the Blue Mountains. The flowers are from 4 to 6 cm in diameter and are typically orange but the range is yellow to scarlet. Plant form is excellent. In my garden mature plants are 1.5 to 1.8 m. tall. A superb brilliant shrub. Hardy in climate zone 5b.

Second Choice: R. schlippenbachii, Royal Azalea.

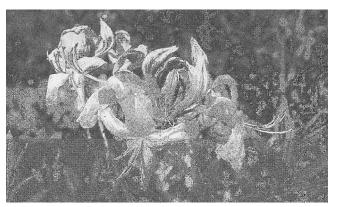
A native of Korea and Manchuria. Truly beautiful in plant form and flower quality. Three to six flowers in a truss. Flower colour can vary from white to pale pink to rose pink; red brown flecks in the throat. Flowers slightly fragrant and large, 5 to 10 cm. in diameter opening as the leaves expand. Leaves grow in layers of five. The fall leaf colour that varies in shades of yellow to crimson are a real bonus. Plant height 3.0 m. in 10 years and up to 5.0 m eventually; this species will not tolerate extremely acid soil: Hardy in Zone 6b.

Third Choice: *R. cumberlandense* (syn. *bakeri*) Cumberland Azalea

Native from Kentucky to the mountains of northern Georgia and Alabama. Mature plants usually 1 m. high but may reach 3 m. Flowers 3 to 4 cm in diameter. Flower colour may be yellow, gold, orange, reddish orange or shades of red. Elevation affects flower colour – darker when growing in the higher altitudes. Flowers bloom two weeks after *calendulaceum*. I have a very good gold flowering plant in my garden collected from the top of Mt. Tray in Georgia and named 'Top-of-the-Mountain' by the Beasleys. My golden beauty grows well in Zone 6b.

Fourth Choice: R. luteum Sweet Azalea

R. luteum is reported to be difficult to grow but I have not found that to be so. Nova Scotia's relatively cool and damp



R. luteum. [Photo Don Craig]

climate could be the favouring factors. Plants in my garden are 2 m tall and shoot growth is rather dense yet plant form is good. Flowers are sweetly scented and numerous in their truss. The stamens of the yellow flower extend out beyond the corolla. My seedlings were derived from seed received from Sweden in 1953. Hardiness zone 6b.

Average (five year) bloom date for each species is as follows: *calendulaceum* June 22, *schlippenbachii* May 22, *cumberlandense* July 6, *luteum* June 8. Planting all four species will provide a great flower show from May to July.

Deciduous Hybrid Azaleas

By Don Craig

Recently I wrote an article (above) in which I extolled the beauty and ease of growing deciduous azalea species. I also made known the fact that their propagation is simply done through the use of their seed as long as cross-pollination does not occur with a different species or a hybrid. If such did happen, hybrids would be the result. Hybrids occur when two or more genetically different plants are crossed,

e.g. species by species, species by hybrid, hybrid by hybrid. Unlike the species, hybrids do not come true from seed; therefore if you wish to multiply a hybrid to obtain an identical plant the most common way is through the use of softwood cuttings or by micropropagation.

Plant breeders depend and capitalize on the variation of the seedlings they secure by growing the hybrid seed. Sometimes, in a seedling population they will find one plant in a thousand that is superior to the hybrid as well as the hybrid's parents; often they will not find any.

In the world, more than 5000 azaleas have been named and in North America alone some 3000. However, in spite of these numbers the question frequently asked is why do we not grow more azaleas. In our garden we have three outstanding Ghent azaleas ('Coccinea Speciosa', 'Narcissiflora' and 'Norma'). Their derivation dates back to the early and late 1800's when Belgian plant breeders in Ghent secured and utilized species from North America (e.g. *calendulaceum, nudiflorum* etc.) as well as species from China and Eastern Europe. Ghent hybrids have been available to the public for at least 80 years.

Another worthy old group of deciduous hybrid azaleas is the Knap Hills from the Knap Hill nursery of Woking, England and from other sources such as Exbury, England, the U.S. west coast nurseries and New Zealand.

Although many private English gardens had access to these wonderful hybrids it was not until the end of World War II that they became available to the general public, more than 50 years ago. In the meantime, the world's plant breeders The species I have highlighted are easily grown from seed. How to do it is well documented on the AtlanticRhodo website and elsewhere – check your computer.

Species when self-pollinated will produce virtually identical offspring however if one species is crossed with a different species the result is hybrids that are not identical. If there is no other species in bloom except the one you are interested in then selfing is just a matter of hand pollinating. In comparison to growing rhododendrons growing azaleas is very simple. For the beginner interested in growing rhododendrons the route to go is the azalea route. For a start grow from seed the choice azalea species suggested in this article. ¤

yearly add large numbers of named clones to the nearly endless list but they are not readily available to most gardeners.

We have grown many Knap Hill deciduous azaleas as well as a number of newly named clones from sources other than the Knap Hills and Ghents but still find the Ghents and Knap Hills the cream of the crop. I must also admit that the newer hybrid deciduous azaleas such as 'Jane Abott' from the Weston Nursery, Weston, Massachusetts, and 'White Lights' from the University of Minnesota are excellent and no doubt equal to the Knap Hills and Ghents in quality but I do not think they are better. Time will tell.

There is still the question sometimes asked "Why are deciduous hybrid azaleas not very popular?" There is no doubt in my mind that both species and hybrids add much to our garden and to the landscape. It is difficult to argue that the Ghents and Knap Hills have not been around long enough to be well known. Is it that most people know very little about them? Some may believe they are too difficult to propagate, too difficult to grow. Others suggest they are too costly but it is well to realize that a nice bouquet of cut flowers and an azalea large enough to plant cost about the same. The bouquet is dead in a week but the azalea is for a lifetime and azaleas are not difficult to grow or propagate.



Azalea 'Knap Hill White'. [Photo Don Craig]

Characterizing Hybrid Deciduous Azaleas

They are very attractive shrubs that at 20 years of age are one and a half to three metres tall, winter hardy, require acid soil (pH 5.0 to 6.0), very floriferous, flowers very colourful – white to dark red plus shades of all colours, bloom through June and early July, require little pruning and little overall maintenance, love to be mulched, prefer to grow in light shade to full sunlight, require moist soil but not wet.

Some 50 hybrid deciduous azaleas have grown well in our garden since 1987. When viewing them in full bloom most people fall in love with the colourful flamboyant shrubs. Get to know them better and you too will fall in love with them.

(1) 'Chenille'* (cherry pink)

- (2) 'Coccinea Speciosa' (orange-red)
- (1) 'Gibraltar' (orange red)
- (1) 'Gold Flake' (gold)
- (1) 'Homebush'* (deep carmine)
- (1) 'Knapp Hill Red' (true red)
- (1) 'Linnet'* (mauve pink)
- (2) 'Norma' (reddish orange)
- (1) 'Sophi Hedges'* (deep pink)
- (2) 'Narcissiflora'* (lemon-yellow)

(1) Knap Hill (2) Ghent *double flowers

aaa

Our Best Deciduous Hybrid Azaleas:

My Love of Variegation

By Ann Li Huestis

Ann Huestis has an exquisite garden on a sloping site in Dartmouth. Everyone who saw it on last year's garden tour came away amazed at the sensitive arrangement of her plants.

For years, my passion for variegated and coloured foliage has led me in search of plants with leaves other than mid to dark green. My very first variegated plant was then the only one readily available, *Cornus alba* 'Elegantissima', now a handsome small tree. As I am writing this article, I'm at the same time counting my blessings from memory of these variegated and colorful gems that have somehow crept their way into our garden. I am forced to conclude that I now may have at least 30 (Oh, no!) such plants living in our typical small city lot! One might conjure up the image of a horticultural Disneyland, but as in most situations, we find ways to make things right.

Fortunately, there are tricks to conceal and yet reveal these plants without ever feeling overwhelmed by their numbers. For example, use them to give sparkle and shine to dim spaces since most of them love partial shade and will readily sulk in full sun.Take advantage of variegated and coloured foliage to add a splash of colour to a textured but predominantly green composition. And, don't forget to use these plants to extract other colours nearby that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Here are some ways I've dealt with my wealth of variegated and coloured foliage which I am sure some of you may have already tried.

- Mixing the cool dusty blues of hostas with Sambucus 'Sutherland Gold' or S. 'Madonna';
- Mingling Brunnera 'Hadspen Cream' with Dicentra 'Gold Heart' and adding a stiff green Polysticum acrostichoides;
- Planting Athyrium japonicum amongst magenta and pink Primula japonica;
- Scattering some clumps of Coreopsis 'Moonbeam' near a C. ' Elegantissima' and throwing in a pet rock.

The list can be exciting and endless. But my favourite is still that awesome mouthful-of-a-name grass, *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' cascading over a bed of glossy *Asarum europeaum* (European ginger) near a purplish-red leaved *Acer palmatum*.

When your perennials need deadheading and your annuals have stopped flowering because you dared leave your garden to go on vacation, your collection of beautiful variegated and coloured-leaved plants will still shine for you when you return home. ¤

Daphnes in my Garden

By Maria Galletti

Maria Galletti , our May speaker, is an avid gardener and collector of plants from alpines to woodlanders, primulas, saxifrages and dwarf shrubs. She produces these plants in her nursery, Alpines Mont Echo.

My recent trip to the eastern USA to search out and purchase plants of one of my favourite families of shrubs, daphnes, prompted me to write an article for the Daphne Society about the daphnes that I grow in my gardens and, in particular, how they have fared in the harshest last two winters here in Quebec. One of the aims of the Daphne Society is to establish hardiness tolerance of many of its species and hybrids to the North American climates and this is accomplished by the invaluable experiences of its many members.

For some of you who are not familiar with these plants, I would like to introduce them to you. Daphnes are shrubs of varying habit that belong to the *Thymelaeaceae* family. There are over 50 species in the genus, originating mostly from Asia and Europe. These beautiful shrubs, very little-known or under-utilized by gardeners, possess many great qualities that make them excellent additions to rock gardens, woodland, and/or shady areas in a garden.

Historically, the daphne is associated with the mythological Greek gods. According to legend, the beautiful wood nymph Daphne, trying to escape the persistent attention of the sun god Apollo, was rescued by Zeus by being transformed into a small tree, hence *Daphne laureola*.

Daphnes are either deciduous or evergreen, but in colder areas evergreen species can be semi-deciduous. Varying considerably in habit, they range from ground hugging dwarfs to upright forms that can reach up to 3 meters high in nature. They are spring or winter flowering depending on their habitat. In nature they are found in mountainous regions, in screes, alpine meadows, rock crevices or woodlands.

Their leaves are characterized by a tough, glossy, leathery texture and their flowers are mainly tubular in shape, varying in colours from greenish-white, pink, purple, yellow or orange. Daphnes are distinguished for their fragrance as well, again, varying in scent from strong to spicy-lemon to subtle and a few have no scent at all.

Another interesting feature is that many produce fruit in the form of fleshy berries in diverse colours of red, orange, yellow, and black. The fruits and plants are generally considered poisonous to animals and humans alike. They are spring or winter flowering and mostly come from mountainous regions or woodlands.

Daphnes are generally easy to cultivate, requiring a well drained compost. They are tolerant of alkaline or acid conditions, with the exception of some Asiatic species that would prefer more acidic soils. Feeding occasionally with bone meal or leaf mold, in cases where the plants are in scree conditions, is beneficial.

Hardiness of Daphnes is quite complex, taking into account many variables such as species, summer and winter climatic conditions, location in garden, etc. This prompts many enthusiasts to write about their experiences of growing Daphnes in their gardens.

The following is an account of the daphnes in my gardens with brief notes explaining garden conditions such as soils and exposure to the elements. A few of these plants are over five years old with the oldest, *Daphne cneorum* 'Ruby Glow', being ten years old. Many are as new in the gardens as a couple of months.

In the woodland garden:

Daphne girardii (D. feddei) planted in a sunny outcrop ledge (very little depth in soil) but gets afternoon shade, has morphed itself into a dwarf round-shape tree. Has not flowered yet! The flowers are a soft yellow and the fruit orange.

Daphne blagayana: Receives mostly shade with some afternoon sun. It has shown some new growth on the two shoots that are growing in opposite directions. I had mentioned on a previous article that I intended to move it to a slightly sunnier spot but have not yet done so. Cream and very fragrant blooms.

Crevice Garden:

Daphne arbuscula Siskiyou form: This is my best plant. It has become the source of numerous stock plants for the nursery. Because of the constant trimming it has because a very tight specimen with constant lush foliage. Its deep pink



Daphne domini. [Photo Maria Galletti]

flowers far surpass those of the new Czech 'Muran' clone. It should be mentioned that the crevice garden has only coarse gravelly sand as its substrate.

Daphne domini: The most floriferous of all my daphnes that provides me with an enormous amount of seedlings from seed that germinates around the plant. Though the pink flowers that do not open are not very exciting the orange fruit gives a beautiful display.

Shrub Berm:

Daphne oleiodes. The small rooted cutting made it through last year's very harsh winter and has shown excellent new growth. The berm consists mostly of gravel with about 25% content of peat and black soil.

Daphne cneorum v. variegatum: A very compact plant that puts on an incredible show of brilliant pink blooms in May. It comes through the winter with no problem and never has any dieback.

Daphne x burkwoodii 'Lavenerii': Growing close by to D. cneorum v. variegatum, it is another very hardy daphne for us. It loses some leaves over winter and the heavy snow has slightly pushed its trunk down towards the ground but I find it the most elegant and best bloom performer from all the burkwoodii clones. It is at the moment going through its second and better flush of colour than the spring one.

Raised Bed:

Daphne arbuscula Muran's clone #4: Going through its third season, it is still very small in stature, but it has developed a very thick trunk. Its dark buds open to pale pink flowers with a certain frostiness to them. It is at the moment going through a second flush of bloom.

Daphne mezereum f. alba: The original plant developed SDS (sudden death syndrome) at the end of last year after seven years of excellent performance to the point of almost becoming a weed. We have harvested many plants and a new generation is growing in its place now.

Daphne x eschmanii: I am not sure if that is what I have, but it came labelled that way. An aggressively robust upright shrub to the point of being coarse. It has to be trimmed back severely to contain it. A very carefree and easy upright shrub. Its pink flowers are very fragrant and quite conspicuous among its lush foliage. It receives heavy snow loads every winter from the roof of the garage, but it comes through unscathed.

Ericaceous Garden:

Daphne cneorum: This daphne does not like its location. I don't think it gets enough sun, the soil is too moist, it is often crowded out by the shade of an aggressive *Pulmonaria* 'Excaliber' and often gets grazed by deer that come into this garden from the neighbouring woods late in the season. Though healthy looking, it is fighting to survive.

Daphne 'Briggs' Moonlight': This poor little plant finally gave up. In all fairness to the plant I would have to say that

the conditions were far from ideal because newly rooted cuttings in a cold frame came through last winter without a problem.

Daphne cneorum pygmaea alba: It grows almost prostrate and receives more sun than *D. cneorum*, not a terrific bloomer, but often sends out a second flush later in the season. It is a healthy specimen, but would do much better in a more drained site.

Peat Bed- Section facing west:

Daphne cneorum 'Ruby Glow'? This plant has been in this bed since its inception. In the beginning it overwintered very well and bloomed profusely. In the last 3 to 4 years it has suffered plenty from winter kill. It faces west and often there is not enough snow cover to protect it from winter winds. This spring we cut it back drastically and it now has terrific new lush growth, is more compact, and I hope it will perform better next year. The reason there is a question mark on the name is that I am not sure whether it is as labelled or is *D. eximia*. I purchased *D. eximia* to compare the two plants.

Saxifrage Bed-North facing:

Daphne alpina & Daphne 'Lawrence Crocker': Both plants are two-year-old plantings of small rooted cuttings. In this location, again, there is very little organic material. It is quite protected and there is good snow accumulation. The site is bright, but there is no direct hot sun. It is where I grow many of my Encrusted saxifrages, many tufa plantings and trough plantings of *Porphyrion* saxifrages, *Ramondas* and *Jankaea heldreichii*.

They are slow growing little shrubs with good healthy new growth. *D*. 'Lawrence Crocker' actually bloomed this year.

Scree Garden:

Daphne 'Lela Haines': A very floriferous and long lived little daphne. Our form is totally prostrate. This year it even set seed.

The following daphnes were planted last fall in a desperate attempt to move some rooted stock out into the gardens before the cold weather arrived. They were all planted in scree conditions. They overwintered beautifully.

Daphne x hendersonii 'Ernst Hauser' (D. petraea x D. cneorum): one-year-old rooted cutting

Daphne laureola ssp. phillipii: two-year-old rooted cutting Daphne retusa: one-year-old rooted cutting

Daphne mezereum 'Bowles Variety': two-year-old seedling Daphne x burkwoodii' Carol Mackie'(D. caucasica x D. cneorum): two-year-old rooted cutting.

The ensuing ones did not fare as well:

Daphne x burkwoodii 'Somerset': A three year old plant seemed to have died but now new growth is showing from the bottom of its trunk.

Daphne x transatlantica 'Jim's Pride' (*D. caucasica x D.collina*): A two-gallon plant just did not make it. Maybe it

was too big and planted out too late in the season, therefore it had no time to establish itself well. White flowers with a sweet scent to them.

Daphne retusa: A small plant that also perished last winter.

Daphne sericea 'Compact Form': Three-year-old trough plant also died. Could very well have dried out before winter set in.

My trip to the US was very fruitful and I came back with mostly good size specimens of the following daphnes:

D. x whiteorum 'Kilmeston'(*D. petraea* 'Grandiflora' *x D. jasminea*)

D. x susannae 'Lawrence Crocker' (*D. arbuscula x D. collina*) *D. x napolitana*

D. cneorum 'Eximia'

D. kamtschatica

D. x susannae 'Tichmore' (D. collina x D. arbuscula)

D. x sussannae 'Cheriton' (D. arbuscula x D.collina)

D. 'Briggs Moonlight' (a good size with several branches)

D. x rossetii (D. laureola ssp. phillipii x D. cneorum)

D. retusa

D. caucasica (the species form)

D. genkwa

D. genkwa Hackenberry Group

D. genkwa Large Flowered Form

D x napolitana (D. collina x D. cneorum)

D. x rollsdorfii 'Arnold Cihlarz' (D. collina x D. petraea)

They were all planted upon arrival in various areas of the scree garden. The exceptions were *D. genkwa* and *D. kamtchatica* which were placed in a shadier protected site with richer soil.

Last but not least of my newest plantings in the garden this year has been *Daphne jasminea* Delphi Form. A small cutting that had a spattering of flowers was planted early in the season in the crevice garden. It likes where it is so much so that it is at the moment showing a full flush of new flowers. It will be interesting to see how it will cope in my winters. There are still several different forms waiting in the cold frames ready to be planted, but they will have to wait for next year.

I encourage all of you to grow these charming shrubs in your garden. I would start with some of the species in the *cneorum* group such as *D. cneorum* and its various forms, *D. striata*, *D. arbuscula*, and *D. juliae*. These are mountain species from Europe, are evergreen, low in stature, and fragrant with pink flowers. Ideal plants for the rock garden.

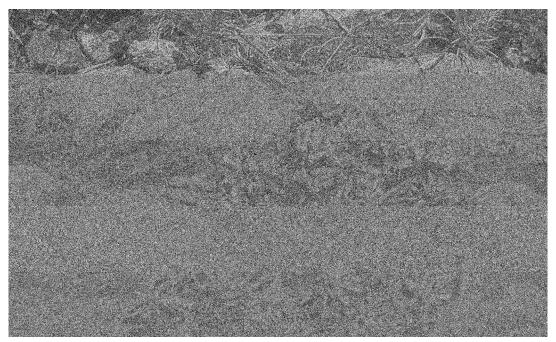
To learn more about daphnes I highly recommend becoming a member of the Daphne Society. Its newsletters are full of very informative articles on how to grow these mythical and enchanting plants.

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Maria Galletti's nursery's website may be found at www.alpinemontecho.com ¤



Daphne cneorum growing wild in Northern Italy . [Photo Chris Helleiner]

A City Garden

By Mary Helleiner



The Helleiner Garden . [Photos Chris Helleiner]

I realize that most of the AHRS members live outside Halifax and Dartmouth, and so, I suppose, have lots of space for their gardens, with few constraints about room to grow more plants and plenty of possibilities for landscape design.

This is not so in the city: whenever I order new plants, Chris's first comment is always a worried "Where are you going to put them?"

I have been trying to think of the advantages of having a city garden. NO DEER comes to mind first, and of course that is a tremendous advantage. But having said that, there is not much else. Maybe not as much grass to cut, *maybe* fewer weeds to pull, although I'm doubtful about the weeds. It should make one more selective in choosing plants, but however one picks and chooses, still there is always the problem of finding room.

I have a database of the plants in our garden. At present (and of course we don't yet know what has died over the winter) there are 456 presumably live plants; of these 86 are rhodos but some of the rhodos are tissue culture plants and still very small. About 30 are tiny trough plants. The rest are shrubs, perennials and bulbs. There are also 78 zz's in the list; zz's are the dead or discarded plants whose names are prefaced with zz to put them at the end of the alphabet in the database. It is embarrassing to contemplate the number of zz's.

The Structure of the Garden

I think the trees are the first thing to worry about in a small garden. We inherited some elms and red oaks and one or two red maples when we bought the house some 40 years ago. We removed a few trees early on, and should have taken out more. The oaks are now enormous, but we have limbed them up quite drastically, and now they are attractive and do not cast too much shade. The elms are a menace; they get a disease every spring and shed brown leaves through half the summer. If they had not provided a screen against a neighbouring house we would have removed them long ago. Elms look wonderful lining the streets of towns in the Annapolis Valley, but they are hopeless in a small garden.

In a city garden, the boundaries and background are very important since one wants to avoid the look of a rigid rectangle, or, in our case, a rigid L-shaped garden. Many years ago we gathered small hemlocks from the gravel roadside at Porter's Lake, and these make an excellent dark background along two of the boundaries. Now they are trying to become trees, and we are trying to keep them under control by pruning without damaging the graceful shape. W also had forsythias along some of the fences, but, although they certainly looked cheerful after a long winter, they grabbed a lot of space, rooting wherever the branches touched the ground, and we have been gradually trying to replace them with more interesting shrubs: strong growing rhodos like 'Bellefontaine', several kinds of corylopsis, *Cornus kousa*, clethras and witch hazels. These bulge out from the boundaries and make the outline somewhat irregular. It is a challenge to remove the old forsythias without leaving a huge gap while the new shrubs grow up.

We don't have many "hard" elements in this garden: a small brick patio where we sit and a teak bench and a simple bird bath that make a focal point in one corner. Since we have most of our meals on the patio from June to September (if we're

lucky with the weather), I try to have things in bloom at that time in that area. Spring is always easy, with bulbs, early rhodos, a star magnolia, pieris and so many others, but summer, especially late summer, is more difficult. Most of our garden is fairly shady, so that many annuals are unsuitable, and in any case they don't seem to fit in with the kind of plants we mainly grow; however we do have some *Nicotiana sylvestris* and *Verbena bonariensis* in late summer. White and pale coloured flowers look best against the dark background. I particularly like pastel foxgloves, including pale yellow *Digitalis grandiflora*. We have been roquing our seedling foxgloves for years, eliminating the deep coloured ones. And I have to admit that I am not fond of variegated plants, so they are not a solution. But astilbes, cimicifugas, croscosmias, campanulas, willow gentians, kirengeshomas, and toad lilies, among others, provide late summer and fall bloom. Lilies would be perfect except for the horrible lily beetle. Eternal vigilance seems to be the only possibility for dealing with it.

Trying New Plants

We do try some rather more exotic plants in our garden. Last summer for the first time we had some really strong blooming blue poppies and they were spectacular. I didn't grow them from seed, having had several non-successes with seed, but from plants (*Meconopsis grandis*) that I bought by mail order. I had dutifully pinched out the buds until there were several crowns, and this seemed to work. Some gifts of *Meconopsis betonicifolia* are coming along, and approaching blooming size. I have a *Cardiocrinum giganteum* that I have been babying for several years (my third try) and I hope it will bloom this summer, if I can keep the lily beetles off. Recently I have become interested in species peonies, and was very gratified when the yellow *P. mlokosewitschii* that I grew from seed bloomed. Various kinds of arisaemas (Jack in the Pulpit) are a new interest. In a shady spot under a tall witch hazel I have made a small area for shade lovers, mostly spring ephemerals: dodecatheons, cyclamens, disporums, uvularias, several kinds of trilliums, some with mottled leaves, dicentras, and some maiden hair and hart's tongue ferns. This area gets quite a bit of sun before the witch hazel leaves come out, and then is very shady for the rest of the summer.

Volunteers

One of the most satisfying things in a garden is to have plants seed themselves. This is when I feel a plant is really successful. So far we have Welsh poppies, peachleaved bellflowers, yellow corydalis, two kinds of cyclamen, winter aconites, scillas, forget-me-nots, Johnny jump ups, Labrador violets, primulas, hellebores, and – amazing!– witch hazels, all appearing from self sown seed. Some we cherish, some we give away, some we pull out.

This brings me to the witch hazels. I really think every garden in Nova Scotia should have one of the winter blooming varieties. It is heartening, not to say magical, when you see one blooming in February in the snow. The earliest we have found is 'Jelena', available from ARHS in the past, and it seems to be a good grower and very hardy. When there is a real January thaw the flowers open, then close again when the weather gets cold; otherwise they start in February. If we had a big garden I would have several of every witch hazel I could find; as it is we have three large old ones, and a newcomer, 'Pallida', that seems to be a winner.

Finding More Space

Like all other committed gardeners, we never have enough garden space, and so we have been making new beds and shrinking the areas of grass. Island beds seem to be the best way to increase the gardening area, although ours would more accurately be called peninsulas since they are anchored at one end. They also help to break up the shape of the garden. After years of skinning off turf and digging (mining?) in the rocky soil, we have found that piling a good depth of high quality soil on the grass, perhaps underlaid with newspaper, makes a very satisfactory garden bed after a few months. Chris has surrounded these with very low rock walls, leaving some earth between the rocks to make niches for rock plants. So far this has worked well, and the raised beds seem to increase the chances of bringing doubtful plants through the winter. Our current experiment is the use of limestone slabs to support the beds; we hope to grow some lime lovers in it.

The final display in the garden is fall colour. In some ways coloured leaves are more satisfactory than flowers, because the leaves usually last longer. Witch hazels provide excellent fall colours, from butter yellow to orange and red; so do fothergillas, stewartias, *Clethra barbinervis*, some azaleas, and, if frost doesn't come too soon, enkianthus. After that there is nothing to do but pile on the fir branches and wait for the witch hazels to start again. ¤

Pinching

By Jens Birck

In a small garden it is often very beneficial to try to get one's plants as compact as possible. For this pinching technique to work well it is crucial that the rhodo is in a location that gives the plant the most exposure it will take. Pinching to create the shape we want to achieve in the future should be done at an early stage. When the new cutting or graft is well established and starts its first flush of new growth wait until that growth has almost reached its full length. Only then cut the new growth back leaving a 1-1.5 cm stub to dry back. This stub is said to enhance the number of shoots produced if the plant gets maximum sunshine. A new flush will start growing within a few weeks. This new flush will often produce 3 shoots helping the plant to maintain a dense habit. You can repeat this pinching on successive new shoots for several seasons until you have the structure and shape you want. Old wellestablished plants about to outgrow the space they occupy could be given the same treatment every other year thus postponing the inevitable move.





Photos by the Author

ARHS Library Holdings

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Rhododendron Hybrids **Rhododendron Portraits** Rhododendron Species Vol. 1: Lepidotes Rhododendron Species Vol. 2: Elepidotes Part 1 Rhododendron Species Vol. 3: Elepidotes Part 2 Rhododendron Species Vol. 4: Azaleas Rhododendrons & Azaleas Rhododendrons in the Landscape Rhododendrons of the World Rhododendrons: A Care Manual Riddle of the Tsang-Po Gorges, The Rock Garden Plants: A Color Encyclopedia Rothschild Rhododendrons. The Scent in Your Garden Siberian Iris, The Sichuan Rhododendrons of China. The Smaller Rhododendrons, The Vireyas: A Practical Gardening Guide Well-Designed Mixed Garden, The Well-Tended Perenial Garden, The Wild Orchids Across North America Willows: The Genus Salix Woody Landscape Plant Cold-Hardiness Range World of Magnolias, The

Tapes

Adventures of Captain Steele On the Road Again: Rhodo King Mr. Rhododendron: Gzowski Interview The Rhododendron Leaf Salley, Homer & H. Greer Geldern, D. M. van et al. Davidian, H. H. Davidian, H. H. Davidian, H. H. Davidian, H. H. Kessel, Marvin Nelson, Sonja Leech, David E. Cox, Kenneth Cox, Kenneth Mineo, Baldassare Phillips, C. E. Lucas et al. Lacy, Stephen McEwan, Currier Wenpei, Fang Cox, Peter Kenyon, John & Jacqueline Walker Di Sabato-Aust, Tracy Di Sabato-Aust, Tracy Keenan, Philip E. Newsholme, Christopher Capiello, P. E. & L. E. Littlefield Calloway, Dorothy

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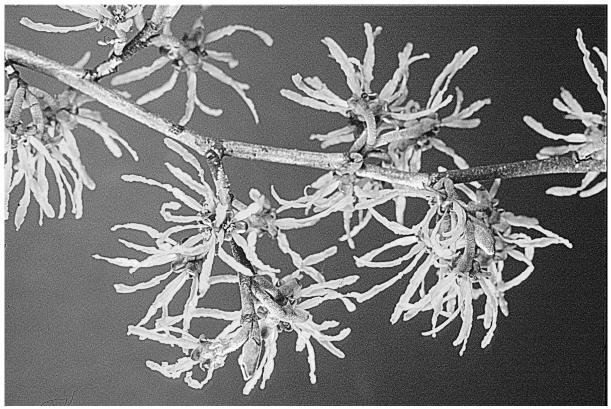
Plants for the Members Plant Sale 2004. [Photo Duff Evers]

Book Review

Witch Hazels, by Chris Lane Timber Press, 2005 (Royal Horticultural Society Plant Collector Guide) 227 pages, \$49.95

Witch hazels are probably the only shrubs which reliably flower in winter under our conditions. In light of the recent increased interest in and availability of these astonishing plants, this admirable new book is very welcome. The author is an enthusiastic grower of witch hazels, with a collection of 125 named cultivars and 132 unnamed clones and varieties in Kent, the sunniest part of England. He has personally observed, evaluated and photographed his own plants, as well as many others in various gardens and arboretums both in Europe and in North America. He presents his conclusions about them: growth habit, foliage (particularly autumn colour), and of course flowers (colour, size, scent and flowering time). Only four species of Hamamelis are recognized, two native to eastern North America, and one each from Japan and Korea, but each species is quite variable. They hybridize readily. The great majority of the hybrids currently growing are crosses of H. mollis (the Korean species) and japonica (the Japanese one). They are called Hamamelis x intermedia. Lane describes 71 of these, and provides pictures of the flowers of 62 of them, as well as of many other varieties, including hybrids of the so far little used H. vernalis, the rather less showy species from the south-eastern States. Some of this last group have novel flower colours. One of them is somewhat optimistically named 'Amethyst', although the description merely says "reddish purple with a hint of violet". The book also includes an account of the history of the discovery of these remarkable plants and advice on culture and propagation. Finally there are some speculations on future possibilities for developing superior forms. We may expect to see interesting new varieties becoming available over the next few years. But we should not expect quick results. Lane quotes Jelena de Belder of Hemelrijk Arboretum in Belgium. (The well known copper-coloured hybrid 'Jelena' was named for her). She writes, "To select Hamamelis takes time and uses a lot of space. It is best to start evaluating seedlings after twenty-five years, although they start to flower well after ten years. They reach their typical growth habit after twenty-five years and a final selection should be made after forty years." Altogether a splendid, comprehensive book about a fascinating group of plants.

- Chris Helleiner



Hamamelis 'Arnold Promise'. [Photo Chris Helleiner]

Photo Album - A few of the plants mentioned in this issue.



Kalmia 'BullsEye'. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]



Daphne cneorum. [Photo Roslyn Duffus]



R. calendulaceum, in The Blue Ridge Mountains. [Photo Don Craig]



R. calendulaceum. [Photo Don Craig]



R. luteum. [Photo Don Craig]



'Coccinea Speciosa'. [Photo Don Craig]



'Chenille'. [Photo Don Craig]



'Knap Hill Red'. [Photo Don Craig]