

## A Note on *M. pyramidata*

by J. C. McDANIEL

*Magnolia pyramidata* is probably the second rarest of U.S. magnolia species in the wild. It has a wider native distribution (South Carolina to Texas) than *M. ashei* (now wild only in northwestern Florida) but it is scattered. I'd guess that *ashei* has more trees in cultivation now.

Most of the recent distribution of *M. pyramidata* traces back to seeds collected by a lady near Saucier, Mississippi, and germinated by the late B. Y. Morrison at Pass Christian, Mississippi, in the early 1960's. Some of these plants have flowered on the West Coast, and have been repropagated by Jim Gossler at Springfield, Oregon. One also flowered at Harrisburg, Illinois, but when last seen was in a declining condition.

Phil Seitner has a seedling growing at North Manchester, Indiana, that looks more promising than the one at Harrisburg. It is more robust, and has shown no winter injury. It also came from a different source: the S. B. Coleman Nursery, Fort Gaines, Georgia. Coleman Nursery, notable as a propagator of many native azalea species, has *pyramidata* native in its woods not far from the Chattahoochie River. Morrison had examined material from there, and said that the trees there had larger leaves, somewhat coarser twigs, and larger flowers than those he had observed in southern Mississippi.

Coleman thought for awhile that his native trees might be *M. fraseri*, with which *pyramidata* has in the past been confused. He brought in a *fraseri* from North Carolina, and it was not the same. I now have seen leaves from Seitner's tree, as well as examining both species at Coleman's, and we are in agreement that by their leaf shape the Fort Gaines natives are really *pyramidata*. I am encouraging Mr. S. B. Coleman, Jr., now in charge of the nursery, to propagate more of his strain, both by seed and by layers, and it should again be available to collectors of rare magnolias.

*M. pyramidata*, according to observations on a lone tree of it planted many years ago by Tom Dodd, Sr. at Semmes, Alabama, may be like *M. virginiana* var. *australis* and much of *M. acuminata*, in requiring cross-fertilization for good seed production. The tree at Semmes ripens colorful red fruits, but the Dodds in recent years have found that they contain very few seeds.

Another propagation method is grafting. I intend to try grafts of at least two *pyramidata* clones on *M. tripetala* and other understocks, and hope to report on them in another year or two.

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Charter member Mr. Bernard Harkness in his "Magnolia Garden" at Highland Park Arboretum, Rochester, N.Y. Tree in background is *Magnolia* × *proctoriana* 'Slavins Snowy'. The dense foliage of this pretty hybrid carries the anise scent of its seed parent, *M. salicifolia* when crushed between the fingers.

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A jolly letter from Dr. Frank Santamour, of the U.S. National Arboretum, suggests a palindrome as our Society's motto:

*"Sail on, game Magnolias"*

Never having passed the "Madam, I'm Adam" stage in palindromes, we appreciated this one.

Do you have a favorite magnolia, or an unusual one? Other members might like to read about it. Now and then we hear rumors of *Magnolia campbellii* blooming in New Jersey, on Long Island, or in Delaware. If you know of such trees by all means, write an article about it, or them, and mail it to me. If possible, determine the origin of the tree or trees, whether they are seedlings or grafts, when and how regularly they flower. Good sharp photo prints are very welcome.

If you travel abroad, keep an eye out for members of the Magnoliaceae. We read tantalizing notes from travelers, such as; "*Michelia champaca* is widely used as an avenue tree in Cape Town", but we never see a photo. *Aromadendron elegans*, (can you think of a more intriguing name), is said to be used as a street tree in Java, and to be "one of the most beautiful trees in the world." All I can find is that it is cut for plywood peeler logs, and general utility lumber in Sumatra!

- P. J. S.

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