

Photo by the author

If this is the pure Himalayan *M. campbellii*, it is the first time (to our knowledge) that it has flowered in the northeastern United States. — Editor

Magnolias in Northern New Jersey

by RAYMOND E. HARTZ

Mrs. Hartz and I moved from Chicago to Bernardsville, New Jersey about 35 years ago. Prior to my marriage, I had lived in Minnesota and when we got to New Jersey, with a substantial amount of property available, both my wife and I wanted to grow trees and bushes that would not grow in Illinois or Minnesota. Bernardsville is in northern New Jersey, about 40 miles west of New York and 30 miles north of Princeton.

My own feeling was that if we were planting new trees, why not plant the kind that would give us more than beauty of shape and leaves? Why not grow trees that would also produce beautiful flowers? Magnolias seemed ideal. Some of them would also be fragrant, which would be an added attraction.

So with no knowledge of tree culture but an enthusiastic interest, we began to add a few each year. We never had in mind making a collection. We bought them from various American nurseries and an English nursery, and our good friend, Dr. Ben Blackburn of Willowood Arboretum, Gladstone, New Jersey, gave us several trees. Not all we ordered were successful, but the percentage that did well was sufficient to encourage us to keep trying. We now have over 40 varieties. This is perhaps of particular interest in view of our winters, which can get down to 15 degrees below zero. The snow fall varies greatly from year to year. Unfortunately, we have one or more ice storms every year and they can be devastating, especially to broad leaf evergreens.

We were, and still are, completely amateurish. Our interest and pleasure have been in seeing them succeed and enjoying the beauty they have added to our surroundings. Some of the trees, including *cordata*, *fraseri*, *kobus*, and even one *grandiflora*, have been particularly successful, attaining quite substantial sizes.

Perhaps the greatest triumph of all has been our *campbellii*. It flowered for the first time two years ago after waiting 15 years. Last year it was full of large flowers - a beautiful sight. The early buds are a bright, clear red, but as the flowers open, the petals turn from red to pink and finally fade to a creamy pink with an ivory center. We planted it in a secluded and protected spot, sheltered from the north and west by a high wall. It is open to the east and also a little to the north-east. It gets the sun for about half the day. I estimate that it is now about 35 feet tall.

As an example of our inexperience, several years ago I planted three magnolias in front of an excellent dark background of Norway spruces. They were set in a row with a *denudata* in the middle, a little in front of the others,



an 'Alexandrina' at one side of it and a 'Soulangiana' at the other side. I had visions of a spectacular display when the three were in flower. Alas, none of them bloomed at the same time!

Incidentally, many people who are not familiar with magnolias think that they flower only in the spring. Among the varieties we have, however, at least one of them is in flower from about April to September.

In our early years we bought quite a few magnolias from California and Maryland, with considerable misgiving that they would survive in our climate. To our pleasant surprise, many of them have done very well. I am not certain, but believe we got our *campbellii* from California. I remember seeing one on the grounds of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The season was late and there was only one flower left on the tree but it was huge and such a lovely sight that I couldn't wait to try one in New Jersey. We were always willing to experiment and *campbellii* was certainly an example of unexpected success, particularly after reading one nurseryman's description "A very handsome magnolia from the foothills of the Himalayas but too tender for cultivation in cold climates. Should be perfect from Virginia south."

If anyone should be interested, attached is a list of our present magnolias. Quite a few of them are, of course, color varieties of 'Soulangiana'.

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| <i>M. acuminata</i> var. <i>cordata</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Alexandrina' |
| <i>M. campbellii</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Burgundy' |
| <i>M. campbellii</i> sub. species <i>mollicomata</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Candolleana' |
| <i>M. delavayi</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Lennei' |
| <i>M. denudata</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Lennei Alba' |
| <i>M. fraseri</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Picture' |
| <i>M. × 'George Kern'</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Rustica Rubra' |
| <i>M. grandiflora</i> | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'San Jose' |
| <i>M. grandiflora</i> c.v. 'Fastigiata' | <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Verbanica' |
| <i>M. × highdownensis</i> (grex) | <i>M. × thompsoniana</i> (grex) |
| <i>M. hypoleuca</i> | <i>M. tripetala</i> |
| <i>M. kobus</i> | <i>M. × 'Peppermint Stick'</i> (Gresham hybrid) |
| <i>M. kobus</i> var. <i>borealis</i> | <i>M. × "Veitchii Rubra"</i> (so called) |
| <i>M. liliflora</i> c.v. 'Nigra' | <i>M. virginiana</i> |
| <i>M. × loebneri</i> 'Merrill' | <i>M. × kewensis</i> 'Wada's Memory' |
| <i>M. macrophylla</i> | <i>M. × watsonii</i> (grex and clone) |
| <i>M. salicifolia</i> | <i>M. wilsonii</i> |
| <i>M. sargentiana</i> var. <i>robusta</i> | |
| <i>M. × soulangiana</i> (grex and clone) | |
| <i>M. × soulangiana</i> 'Alba Superba' | |
