



# Robin Notes

by Robin Editor, VIRGINIA MELNICK  
(Address on inside cover)

Round Robins are groups of ten or more members who share magnolia experiences in regular rounds. Each "Robin" group member contributes a letter, in each complete round. Such organized experience sharing can add enormously to the fund of magnolia knowledge. Naturally space allows only excerpts from a few letters to be printed in the Newsletter each round. Phil Savage will fit in as many as possible, but remember, the greatest value of our Round Robins will be in the correspondence and resulting friendship among "birds of a feather." We'll dispense with quotation marks in the letters.

Carl R. Amason, Calion, Ark. - - This has been an extremely wet year here, contrary to most of the nation. Summer flowering of many clones of *M. stellata* and *M. X soulangiana* were very common. Funny thing - the *M. stellata* flowers, in summer, appear much better to me than the early spring ones, and in contrast, the *M. X soulangiana* forms do not appear to be as large nor so brightly colored. Most seem to me a washed-out pale version of the spring flowers. The only native *magnolia* on my place is the sweetbay, *M. virginiana australis* which in this part of the world is a large tree, many times cut for timber. It grows about the constantly moist areas of flowing springs and is quite difficult to adapt to ordinary garden conditions.

Of course, *M. grandiflora* is one of the most commonly planted trees here, in fact is usually called plain "Magnolia" and all the others in the genus are not readily accepted by the general public as being "true magnolias" because of generally lacking evergreen leaves and having colored flowers.

Does *Michelia figo* in California smell like bananas or pears? *Figo* is common down here; sets seeds, and the small flowers smell to a great distance like amyl acetate or banana oil.

Mrs. Virginia Melnick (Ginnie) - - I've been in touch with Mr. Treseder and, at his suggestion, with the publishers of his forthcoming magnolia book. We're hoping to negotiate a discounted price for A.M.S. members. Looks promising if we can be assured of enough prepaid orders. It's supposed to be a publication of tremendous scope so will not be cheap, but should be beautiful!

Mrs. Julian W. Hill (Polly) - - During a September trip to Ireland and England, I saw some wonderful magnolias. I observed a considerable variation in degree of indumentum on the underside of leaves of different clones of the

species *M. wilsonii* in different gardens, as well as on different trees in the same garden. Is this to be expected? This year I sent my full crop of *M. macrophylla* seeds to the American Horticultural Society's seed exchange. I'll save them for the Robin next year if they are wanted. My tree is on Martha's Vineyard and a seedling selection for hardiness (Zone 6). A pretty good northern source for seed. It has a beautiful white flower in late June.

Eugene German (Gene) - - I understand that both Iufer Landscape Co. in Salem, Oregon and Bill Dodd Nurseries in Semmes, Alabama have gone out of business so they are no longer sources. I think a new source is developing. The Hetzers, in Willits, California now have about fifty varieties. They had only intended to sell wholesale, but few nurserymen want to try anything new. This being the case, the Hetzers are considering a mail order business. I'm sure they don't have enough of all these varieties to sell as yet.

The Hetzers and Stu Barber are both attempting to root cuttings of the Gresham hybrids that Barbers have. I don't know what success they have had so far. There are at least four of these that should be named, I think.

I am sorry to see the Newsletters drop to two issues a year and hope there is something that members can do to build it up. Without a good publication, I'm afraid that A.M.S. might fall apart. I am no writer but I hope to be able to gather information for two and possibly three articles.

Howard Oliver in Menlo Park, California has a thrifty *Michelia doltsopa* about ten feet high grafted on a *Magnolia grandiflora* 'St. Mary'. There are a number of *Michelias* around. In fort Bragg there are *M. figo*, *doltsopa* and *compressa*. One wholesale nursery in Watsonville grows *figo* but doesn't keep up with the demand. The Hetzers have *figo* and *doltsopa* in small numbers. They tried *compressa* cuttings without luck so far. They are also trying *champaca* (had some seed that didn't germinate) and think they have a line on *alba*. They will keep trying. J. L. Hudson, P. O. Box 1058, Redwood City, Ca. 94064 lists seed of *compressa* and *champaca*. Also there are a few *Manglietia* around.

William J. Secunda (Bill) - - A few years ago, I lost a fair sized *M. grandiflora* during a mild winter. It was, however, very dry and windy. Could it be that the fleshy roots of a swaying tree in frozen ground are easily broken off; with the consequent result that the leaves are unable to get enough moisture to sustain them?

Harry Heineman - - You might like to know that Scituate, Mass. is on the coast, about 25 miles south of Boston. We have plenty of rain for growing magnolias, and usually moisture in the air (what I mean is, the relative humidity is moderate). The ocean, of course, tends to keep our summers cooler and winters warmer than they are even 10 miles inland, and we are less apt to have sudden changes of temperature in the spring, so that the early blooming magnolias are not so often spoiled in bud or flower. We are in U. S. D. A. zone 6.

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