

# 'Chyverton Red' and other new Magnolias from Cornwall

by J.C. McDANIEL

Photo of *M. dawsoniana* in a good pink form,  
grown and photographed by James Gossler.



Mr. Nigel Holman's fine article on the various magnolias at "Chyverton", his estate in Cornwall, England, would be reason enough to buy the book "Rhododendrons 1973", published by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Chyverton, in recent years, seems to rival its Cornish neighbor, Caerhays, as a source of new Asiatic magnolia cultivars and species hybrids. Treseders' latest nursery price list, for instance, offers a clone of *M. dawsoniana* from each of these great gardens, but under *M. sargentiana robusta*, the five offered are all from Chyverton. 'Buzzard' (not a carrion bird, but a hawk of the genus *Buteo*) and 'Hawk', are both apparently hybrids with *M. campbellii*, according to Holman. In addition, there is a dark clone, a white clone, and seedlings of the latter.

Holman thinks that *M. sargentiana robusta* (but not typical *sargentiana*) has a great future, with flowers more beautiful than those of *M. campbellii*, and a hardiness at least equal to *M. campbellii* subspecies *mollicomata*. That hardiness still is probably not enough to enable these selections to be grown north of Zone 7, in the United States, but they certainly should be tried in Zones 7, 8, and 9, and used in hybridization.

For Zone 6, though, 'Chyverton Red' and other forms of *M. dawsoniana* look very promising. Treseder calls 'Chyverton Red' "an outstanding red form

of this later flowering Asian species with crimson, narrow tepalled flowers fading to carmine pink as they mature. This is quite the reddest magnolia we have come across." According to Holman, the red color will vary in intensity from year to year, and the flowers seem to be redder after a colder winter.

In 1969, when the original 'Chyverton Red' tree was in its second year of flowering, the other Asian early flowering magnolias on the estate had their buds reduced to brown pulp by a March freeze down to 14 degrees F. air temperature. 'Chyverton Red' expanded its buds and bloomed normally.

'Chyverton Red' is probably much hardier than any test in Cornwall would prove. Here is my experience with it at Urbana, Illinois (Zone 6A) where I received a scion from Treseder in early 1970, after finding that an older clone of *M. dawsoniana* would survive central Illinois and Indiana (North Manchester) winters.

A bud set on a side branch of an old *M. acuminata* tree survived, but did not leaf out until 1971. In the summer of that year, I repropagated it about eleven feet up on the central stem of a vigorous young *M. acuminata* seedling. The growth there in 1972 was like two super broomsticks (it forked near its base) and has continued quite vigorous, despite spring freezes in both 1973 and '74 that killed flowers and young shoots on *M. × soulangiana* in Urbana. The 'Chyverton Red' was dormant enough to be uninjured in both years.

I have not yet seen the flowers of this clone, but I expect to by 1976 or '77. Meanwhile, scions have been sent for propagation elsewhere in America. I cut most of one fork in the two year graft in January 1974, and obtained scion wood small enough to graft or bud on large stocks. Even so, much of the pruned wood was too coarse for grafting on potted understocks. Jim Gossler, to whom I mailed a few scions, wanted to know what exotic fertilizer I had used on the tree (Unicorn manure, perhaps?) No, nothing beyond the usual lawn fertilizer augmented by some large dogs of the neighborhood and perhaps a spot of nitrogen from the root nodules of an adjacent redbud.

Mr. Holman ends his article with a note on the new 'Treve Holman' Magnolia first flowered in 1973, which he named for his late father who planted most of the magnolias at Chyverton. This is the most rapid growing magnolia tree he has, thirty feet tall in 1973, from a one foot hybrid seedling planted in 1964 and supposed to be *mollicomata* × *soulangiana*. He thinks one parent could well be *M. campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata*, but the other is a large question mark. Anyhow, the first flower was of great size and substance, its purple color comparable to that of the tender *M. campbellii* subspecies *mollicomata* convar. *williamsiana* 'Lanarth' whose name he would like to see shortened.

Holman believes, as I do, that those who grow exceptional magnolias from seed should make them available for vegetative propagation. He is setting a good example with the Chyverton originations. ★★★