

of white *M. stellata*, *M. X soulangiana* and perhaps *M. 'Merrill'* are perhaps less so.

#### Why Grow Seedlings?

Most magnolias available in the nursery trade are vegetatively propagated. Depending on the reliability of your nursery source, you can get cultivars true to name. Only the roots on individual grafted specimens will differ.

Seedlings give variation, and variation gives progress. Whether the seed you plant was crossed or not, it is totally yours. There is no other exactly like it. If it comes from an interspecific cross, it will differ from both parents and perhaps, if you are lucky, combine desirable features of both. The best seedling clones, whether hybrid or not, may be the beginning of a superior new cultivar.

Seedlings give the plant lover something to watch with delight as they go through their life from infancy to maturity! Flowering may occur in three years with *M. ashei* and forms of *M. macrophylla* and *M. virginiana*. Well cultivated seedlings of *M. acuminata* and *M. acuminata* var. *subcordata* usually bloom in four or five years, as does *M. sieboldii*.

Some of the large growing Asiatic species take twenty years or more, unless chip-budded on an established flowering-age tree of less aristocratic blood, preferably several feet off the ground.

Look over your seedlings with a critical eye. Unless they are a real improvement over existing clones in flower, foliage, habit and ease of propagation, go slow in naming them. On the other hand, don't be such a perfectionist that the greatest cultivar so far produced thrills only the birds in the back row of your nursery!

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## Robin Notes

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

Our Secretary, and head Robin, Ginnie Melnick, is presently engaged in moving from Asheville, N.C. to Jackson, Tenn. with the attendant heartaches of leaving behind many plant treasures far too big to even think of moving. Mail will be forwarded from her Asheville address until her new location is listed in the next issue.

### A Healthy Report from the Iufers!

Apparently Ernie and Louise Iufer of Iufer Landscape Co. have mentioned to a few people that they would like to retire from business *someday*. Unfortunately some members understood this to mean immediately! Fortunately for all of us, this is not the case, and rumors of the demise of their business were "greatly exaggerated", as the cliché goes. Louise Iufer was kind enough to call this to our attention and enclose a recent snapshot of their nursery at a fever pitch of activity! Our apologies to Ernie and Louise.

### Small Plants Avoid Transplanting Shock

Mrs. Mary Louise Hill, Barnard's Inn Farm, Vinyard Haven, Mass., Moving bare root plants in early spring about a foot tall is successful. With me, there is almost no delay. May I put in a word for handling all transplanted trees and shrubs in small sizes than is customary in the trade. They make a better adjustment and outstrip the big ones in many cases. Gallon size cans for magnolias would be my suggestion.

### Oh to be in England now that April (eleventh) is here!

Two English members, A. W. Massen in London and Brian Savage near Worcester, both report a 1975 problem that often plagues growers in much of America: frost in the flowering season of early magnolias.

Massen: "After a wonderfully mild winter with Camellias, Daffs and Primulas, etc. in bloom in January and Magnolias *denudata*, 'Picture', 'Burgandy' and ordinary *soulangiana* in late February, March came in with the wettest, freezing cold weather that I can remember - snow and frost most days and very frosty at night for six weeks until April 11th when it actually turned mild! . . . Every bloom browned and ruined. . ." (But this is the first time this has happened in the 12 years he has grown magnolias.) He thinks after this, he will concentrate on the early summer blooming magnolias. "I consider for the best for flower and fragrance is *M. × watsonii* . . . two bushes bloom very well every year from mid May to nearly the end of June . . . the scent when the flower is just opening is really superb! . . . Then there is *M. × thompsoniana* which seems very close to *watsonii* for scent but . . . is more "lemony" than *watsonii*. Some people prefer it, but *thompsoniana* has only a white flower whereas *watsonii* has a cream flower with a marvelous scarlet center. . ." Both he and Brian Savage have had difficulty establishing *M. sieboldii*. After seven tries, one is coming along now.

Brian Savage, among the Oyama Magnolias, has failed with *globosa*, but now has *sinensis*, *sieboldii* and *wilsonii*. "Only the *wilsonii* has flowered so far, rather plum colored stamens (should be bright scarlet, I believe) but lovely flower and perfume." These and *hypoleuca* (not yet flowered) came from Bodnant garden in Wales. He has just acquired a 'Charles Coates' from Treseder's, "about 4" tall and two leaf buds!" Noteworthy among his *soulangiana* trees is Wada's 'Picture'. . . "with enormous flowers like Cos lettuce. . ."

"*Soulangiana* is what most people here understand by magnolia, and it is extremely popular in small gardens. *Grandiflora* grows quite frequently on walls of large houses. After that the other kinds are very rare in my experience, and

usually only seen in the large scale famous woodland gardens . . . nurserymen only stock *stellata*, *soulangiana* and *grandiflora*. One has to go to specialist firms for the others. . ."

American members have been discussing natural layering in *M. grandiflora*. Polly Hill writes: ". . . around the geographical middle of Delaware is an old estate with ancient *M. grandiflora* most definitely layered and producing fountains of vast hedges. . ." Carl Amason writes: "In most of the lower South in olden days the first trees planted were *M. grandiflora*, and they were given plenty of space, and limbs were maintained close to the ground . . . all leaves were swept back under the trees, and children usually played most of the summertime under the tree closest to the back door . . . In fact, in late 1800's and early this century, the ideal *Magnolia grandiflora* was to peg the ground, and give it space and a view and let it grow . . . Surprisingly, the the layered limbs are best dug and transplanted not in early spring or fall when most tree planting is done, but in the hottest season, usually July and August, and it is necessary to remove half the leaves, and almost all will continue growing. Here on my place (southern Arkansas) I frequently peg lower branches of *M. X soulangiana* . . . that I want more specimens of. It is slow, but easy, and oh, so cheap . . ." Walter Flory tells of a large self-layering *M. grandiflora* in Reynoldia gardens at Winston-Salem, N.C. With a student, he is experimenting on pegging down *soulangiana* branches, to see if they will root. "Most have been cut through the cambium, and then had Rootone applied at the point where these touch the ground . . . I will attempt to have a good picture of a layered *M. grandiflora* for the next letter."

Alice Foster has increased some deciduous species by natural layers under mulch in Wisconsin (USDA Zone 5a).

Mrs. Foster: "I wish the Magnolia Society could eventually establish hardiness ratings for all magnolia shrubs and trees, such as are available in catalogs for Rhododendrons. When someone says 'hardy', I never know if they mean zero, below zero, or just what constitutes hardiness in their language. In mine it's -15 or -20 degrees F. With care, I can raise shrubs and trees which are hardy in the next zone, but I like to be prepared so they are not planted on a wind-swept hill. . ."

Gene German (Ft. Bragg, California): "We may be afflicted with 'Magnoliaitis', but . . . we also have two major problems - space and time. I don't think many of us will really worry about either. We will plant too closely (but some look good intertwined) and if it will take twenty-five years to bloom, we aren't going to let that stop us, either . . . Another serious problem that most of you have that isn't so bad here is hardiness. We do suffer frost damage on some species, however . . . I don't know that the Hetzers are necessarily trying to grow warm zone magnolias. Willits does get some colder than Fort Bragg, but I don't know how much. Perhaps in a cold year down to 10 degrees

Perry Narten: "Magnoliaphiles are no different than the member of any other plant variety or avid horticulturists in general, in that they are always trying to grow those plants that would seemingly not be hardy in their area . . . I hope we continue to explore these outer limits for the magnolia family with clones and seedlings to find the special niches where they will survive and