

blossom . . . I am sure we all know the importance of microclimates and that even on a city lot some plants can prosper or fail according to position . . ."

Joe McDaniel: "The Robin Notes in last Newsletter were a relief, perhaps, to too many bylines of J. C. McD. This round of Robin No. 2 would supply excerpts for a good two (more) pages. If any of you feel inspired to expand in some subject you've mentioned in the Robins, please draft it into an article that the whole membership could enjoy. . ." (Excerpted by J. C. McD. for this issue. Ginnie has her hands full with other duties, but will return.)

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## A Beauty from New Zealand by J.C. McDANIEL

Some of us know *Iolanthe* as the title of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, first produced in 1882. *M. × 'Iolanthe'*, a New Zealand introduction in 1974, is the most recent magnolia cultivar to have been raised from seed of the fertile old favorite *M. × soulangiana* 'Lennei' during the past century. The new hybrid 'Iolanthe' has as its staminate parent a recently introduced (1973) hybrid between two of the most showy but unfortunately, rather tender magnolias in the Yulania section, *M. campbellii* 'Lanarth' and a clone of *M. sargentiana robusta*. This cross, named *M. × 'Mark Jury'*, and 'Iolanthe' both were produced by Félix M. Jury, whose garden at 43 R.D., Waitara, is in southwest coastal North Island, New Zealand. The climate in that part of the island seems as favorable for all the big Yulania species (and their hybrids) as anywhere around San Francisco Bay or in Cornwall.

Hardiness testing has begun for 'Iolanthe' and 'Mark Jury'. A plant of each was given last year to the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley, where Director Chris Brickell says they are now around one foot high. We hope to bridge the seasons (New Zealand fall, American spring) and obtain buds of both this year for testing in the United States. 'Mark Jury' is expected to be at least no hardier than *sargentiana robusta*, so will be tried in favorable Pacific Coast areas, primarily. Its 'Lennei' parentage could make 'Iolanthe' considerably hardier.

Both cultivars have larger flowers (10-11" across) than 'Lennei', but lighter colored; 'Iolanthe' is lighter than 'Mark Jury'.

Mr. Jury, in his registration data, indicates that the original 'Mark Jury' first flowered 9 years after planting as a seedling from England, but 'Iolanthe' appears to have flowered first (in 1970) when only four years old. He says, "The virtue of this seedling is that it has flowered so much earlier from seed (than) the other large flowered varieties, and is floriferous." Oswald Blumhardt, nurseryman at Wangarei, N. Z., is propagating it now.

Mr. Jury did not say what sort of seed producer 'Iolanthe' is. Judging from its parentage (presumably 114-chromosome hexaploids on both sides) it should be fertile. If this proves true, and if 'Iolanthe' also inherits much of the hardiness and spring frost resistance of 'Lennei', then it should be a valuable parent for further magnolia breeding.

Will a magnolia from a little dairying town in New Zealand find happiness in England's lordly gardens, and in the harsher conditions of the American midwest? Tune in to this station for further reports. \*\*\*