

## A modest tribute to Etienne Soulange-Bodin at this late date

by CARL R. AMASON

The original hybrid of *Magnolia denudata* and *M. liliflora* that we know as *M. X soulangiana* is reported in numerous horticultural literature sources as being made by Etienne Soulange-Bodin at his nursery near Paris in France about 1820. He was a former officer in Napoleon's army. He has endeared himself to horticulturists forever by his *Magnolia* hybrid. Personally, he has endeared himself to me by the philosophy of his remark which he is supposed to have written in 1819: "To gardens I cheerfully devote the remainder of my life. I shall not retrace the sad picture of the past. The Germans have encamped in my garden. I have encamped in the gardens of the Germans. It had doubtless been better for both parties to have stayed home and planted their cabbages." To me that is a great statement and I'm indebted for it to WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION GARDEN BOOK edited by John C. Wister, published by Doubleday & Company, Inc. in 1947. Yes, I think I would have liked the old gentleman.

\*\*\*

---

### TIPS ON MAGNOLIA PROPAGATION

by A.M.S. Member W. J. Curtis as reported in North Carolina Nursery Notes by Mr. Charles Bell

Production of magnolias by cuttings was the topic of W. J. Curtis, Wil-Chris Acres, Sherwood, Oregon. He takes cuttings of *M. grandiflora* 'Victoria' in November after the growing tip is fully mature and dormant. Lower side branches of a two-year-old plant are used; a heel is cut off with this shoot, as the heel contains nutrients and has no pith that might decay. Four or five leaves are left on the shoot, the cut end of which is dipped in a 1:20 solution of Clorox or Purex, treated with Hormodin No. 3 and put, two inches apart, in four-inch-deep flats of equal parts sand and perlite.

Flats are put over bottom heat (electric cables) which are kept at near 80 degrees. They need much water and must have good drainage, Mr. Curtis said. The cuttings should be rooted by May and are then potted in one-gallon cans with larger root systems in two-gallon cans. Potting must be done carefully so as not to damage roots. These are kept in an unheated house for a year, after which they are lined out in the field. After two years, a three to four-foot plant may be dug.

Mr. Curtis takes cuttings of deciduous magnolias in July with a heel. He feels wood from young plants' roots is better than from older plants. Rooting medium is peat and perlite in equal parts; intermittent mist of 30 seconds every six minutes is used. Rooting is complete, and potting is done the following spring. It is important, he says, not to overpot; use the smallest pot that contains the root system.

In his letter to the membership mailed April 28, 1976, Joe McDaniel informed us that Dr. Yu-Chen Ting of Boston College, planned to visit his birthplace in the Peoples Republic of China this summer, and had promised M.S. member Dr. August E. Kehr that he would make an attempt to locate native magnolias in Honan Province, and to lay the groundwork for future importations of seed and possibly even budwood to the United States.

While Dr. Ting was earning his ph.D. at Louisiana State, his professor of genetics and good friend was Dr. August Kehr, now staff scientist for vegetable and ornamental crops with the Agricultural Research Service at Beltsville, Maryland. Dr. Kehr is current president of the American Rhododendron Society and, I am delighted to say again, a member of our little organization.

To help Dr. Ting with the expense of modern-day plant hunting, donations of over nine hundred dollars have been sent to him by Society members.

In a recent Newsflash, Joe McDaniel informs us that Dr. Kehr received a postcard from Dr. Ting, saying that he had already been in Honan, and also visited the Peking botanical garden where he found *M. biondii* in cultivation! He expects to be able to bring back *Magnolia* propagating material when he returns to the United States.

— Editor

**Magnolia Newsletter**  
31823 Utica Road  
Fraser, Michigan 48026