

and fruit. This area is in Randolph County, the state's largest.

In autumn the large auricled leaves of the Mountain magnolia turn rich tobacco brown, a shade not exactly matched by any other plant of my acquaintance. Travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway, near Blowing Rock, North Carolina, are likely to see this foliage at its best in mid-October. Here are trees larger and taller

than the dimensions given in botany manuals.

Like the Umbrella magnolia, the Mountain magnolia makes an excellent small lawn tree. On the grounds of the West Virginia 4-H Camp at Jackson's Mill in Lewis County the two have been planted together with pleasing results.

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Gloster Arboretum

by J. C. McDaniel

W. Frank Gladney, a successful lawyer at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, celebrated his 75th birthday several years ago by driving around Lake Geneva in Europe. He and his wife Sara often visited great gardens in Europe and she was formerly quite active in garden club work in Louisiana. They have no children of their own but will leave to all of us the bulk of their fortune in trust for what is becoming one of America's most interesting gardens, the Gloster Arboretum.

I've just returned from my sixth visit to the Gloster Arboretum in southwest Mississippi and am more impressed than ever with this unusual legacy of Frank and Sara Gladney. They recognized 20 years ago that the native flora in pine and mixed hardwoods on 370 acres included many plants of natural beauty. A private non-profit organization, the John James Audubon Foundation, was formed to take over operation of the Gloster tract and other properties in Louisiana, and direct their conservation and improvement. There is no connection with the National Audubon Society. Audubon the naturalist lived for two years at a plantation home, Oakwood at Gurley, between Gloster and Baton Rouge. It still stands in a fine live oak grove.

Although the foundation now has a membership of 150 its budget is limited. Work has been directed primarily at conservation of native plants, plus introduction of new ornamental species from this country and elsewhere that will flourish in the warm temperate climate (USDA Zone 8b). Many plants there thrive well northward too.

Magnolias justifiably received a big share of

the attention at the arboretum on which four native species had already established themselves: *M. acuminata*, *M. grandiflora*, *M. macrophylla* and, in moist sites near spring-fed streams, some *M. virginiana* var. *australis*. I would say that the magnolia collection at Gloster is now the most extensive of any garden in the southeastern states. *M. delavayi*, whose foliage is its chief ornamental asset, bore its first flowers this past fall and is growing lushly, though it appears not to be hardy farther north. My first grafts of the Mexican *M. dealbata* made in February 1976 have survived the 1976-77 Gloster winter and are looking good. Three *M. campbellii* cultivars and a *M. sargentiana robusta* imported from England are growing well but are still juvenile. Near them are two anise-scented *M. salicifolia* seedlings, both vigorous juveniles. One deciduous species that didn't survive is the Himalayan *M. rostrata*. There are young plants of both typical *M. fraseri* and its variant, *pyramidata*, a rare native near Gloster. *M. tripetala* is rare in native sites in southern Mississippi, but seedlings of Phil Savage's Bloomfield cultivar are making themselves at home. 'Little Gem' is outstanding among a small collection of *M. grandiflora* selections and hybrids that is to be enlarged.

Gresham hybrids of two parentages comprise the majority of magnolias planted at Gloster Arboretum in the 1960s, about 1600 altogether from the work of the American Magnolia Society's first secretary, D. Todd Gresham. The *M.* × *soulangiana* 'Lennei Alba' × *M.* × *veitchii* seedlings went mainly into an old field and generally have thrived better and bloomed more



Sara Gladney shows Mary Nell McDaniel a miniature-leaved *Ligustrum sinense* in the Gloster Arboretum. Visible in background are bare branches of *Magnolia macrophylla* and an evergreen *M. virginiana australis*.

profusely than the *M. quinquepeta (liliflora)* \times *M. \times veitchii* seedlings, which were in the shade of native trees. In the past two flowering seasons some preliminary selections have been made among seedlings primarily of the first group; seeds from this source have been offered by the AMS Seed Counter. The late Mr. Gresham wrote an account of the transfer of these hybrids from California in Vol. IV, No. 2, December 1967.

Another magnolia seedling that may become a cultivar has a richly plum colored flower; it was among open pollinated 'Lennei' seedlings set out for use as understocks.

The early Oriental magnolias bloom at Gloster usually in February to early March; the *macrophylla* in April-May. But there's something of interest throughout the year.

The economy of the area immediately surrounding Gloster is based on pine forest products and a Georgia-Pacific plant is a near neighbor at the arboretum entrance. One electric transmission line and two gas pipelines traverse part of the property. The Gloster Arboretum's native woods are the site of many

hollies, dogwoods and other woody plants including oaks, pines and hickories. Three worthy of mention are *Stewartia malachodendron*, *Halesia diptera* and the long pediceled, red-fruited, deciduous *Ilex longipes* (called a variety of *I. decidua* in Hortus Third).

The Gladneys have assembled a large collection of the American azaleas. There is a large planting of the Louisiana irises and another of *Hemerocallis*, based on the collection of the late Prof. Claude David at Baton Rouge.

There's much to see at Gloster. Plan to look in on it if your travels take you close to Natchez or between Mobile and New Orleans. It's open and admission is free the whole year, and the Gladneys are in residence at the old farm house on most weekends (Friday through Monday). For more information write the John James Audubon Foundation, P. O. Box 1106, Baton Rouge, La. 70821.

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