R.A. Fenicchia Hybrid

This hybrid of Magnolia × soulangiana 'Lennei' × M. liliflora var. nigra is superior in many respects and has great potential as an ornamental shrub. Unlike many Magnolia × soulangiana hybrids, it maintains its symmetry. The branches do not become hollowed and weakened and infested with carpenter ants as do other Magnolia × soulangiana hybrids, the hybridizer claims. The flowers appear later, which enables them to escape severe frosts that damage earlier blooming magnolias. It surpasses M. liliflora var. nigra in flower size and vigor, but most of its superior qualities have resulted from the backcross with that species, it is suggested.

This hybrid resulted from an artificial cross made in 1953 by Richard A. Fenicchia, superintendent of horticulture, County of Monroe Department of Parks, Rochester, New York.

It is a dense globose shrub to 3 meters high, leaves broad-ovate to 12 cm. long and 6 cm. wide, dark green and sparingly pubescent beneath. Branchlets are intermediate in stoutness between those of the parents. Flowers are numerous, appearing before and with the leaves, campanulate, opening before those of M. liliflora var. nigra; tepals ovate, naviculate, to 9 cm. long and 3.5 cm. wide, deep purple outside, light purple inside. Syncarps slightly twisted, usually large, to 11 cm. long and 2.5 cm. in diameter. Seeds with pericarp ovoid, to 1 cm. long, ripening in mid-October in Zone V. Epidermis red.

Back Issues

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