

The Introduction Game

by J.C. McDaniel

I've worked off and on since the 1930's in the field of woody plant selection, and had something to do with the introduction of nearly 50 plants, including 20 magnolia cultivars. All, in my opinion, and other horticulturists or growers agree, were plants that were, for their specific purposes, better than those generally available at the time and place of introduction.

Some have not yet got into commercial propagation, some have been propagated but not widely advertised, and a lucky few cultivars have risen to the top of their class in American and foreign catalogues.

For some cultivars the competition is seedling material. This is still largely the case for nurseries that graft or vegetatively propagate cultivars in *Magnolia acuminata*, *M. macrophylla*, and *M. grandiflora*.

Cultivars change slowly in listings of deciduous magnolias, and *M. kobus loebneri* 'Spring Snow' and later 'Ballerina' had a tough, well entrenched competitor in *M. kobus loebneri* 'Merrill' by the time they were put on the market in a small way. 'Merrill' was about the only Loebner magnolia that nurseries or the American gardener knew of, and, following the lead of Wayside Gardens, many nurseries had stocked it.

I preferred one of two Loebner magnolias first raised as seedlings in the President's Garden at the University of Illinois and named it 'Spring Snow.' It had more tepals and a better fragrance than 'Merrill,' and was enough later to escape spring frost damage better.

The problem that appeared after 'Spring Snow' reached a few nurseries was that it was not as easy to root from cuttings as 'Merrill' with the methods used in commercial propagation. It's still a fine cultivar but the few nurseries that propagate it have done so by grafting. The result is that it has not reached the general market.

The prospect now looks better, commercially, for 'Ballerina,' a seedling from an open pollinated flower of 'Spring Snow.' On a windswept site at the University of Illinois Horticulture Farm at Urbana it stood out among some 20 seedlings raised from the trees in the President's Garden. These *M. kobus loebneri* F₂ seedlings were a variable lot, but only two appeared good enough to consider for propagation, and one so far has been notable for its multiple tepals (to 30), as numerous as good cultivars of *M. stellata*.

'Ballerina' was chosen for its name in 1969

and propagating material was first offered to members of the Illinois State Nurserymen's Association and later to other propagators that year. (Newsletter, AMS, 7(1):3. 1970). Gossler Farms Nursery in Oregon was the first to list it, but two eastern U.S. wholesalers now carry it in their trade lists, and Ontario's largest nursery has it ready to offer in 1980. 'Ballerina' is propagated readily from softwood cuttings.

Altogether there are nine Loebner magnolia cultivars named in the 1975 *Check List of the Cultivated Magnolias*. The type cv. 'Loebneri' originated in West Germany and recently has been imported to Canada. There are six named clones from the U.S. and two English selections, one white ('Neil McEacharn') and one pink ('Leonard Messel').

'Leonard Messel' is in wide use in England and Europe and I have tried it since 1970 at Urbana. It has fewer tepals than 'Ballerina' or 'Spring Snow' but makes an interesting contrast to 'Ballerina' where the two are side by side. Its tepals are, in the words of the late Col. Messel, "outside ... cyclamen purple, inside nearly white." It has been offered by Gossler and recently by the W. Atlee Burpee Co.

Another American cultivar that has had



Magnolia × 'Paul Cook' is Dr. Frank Galyon's cross of *M. springeri* 'Diva' and a seedling of *M. × soulangiana* 'Lennet,' first flowered in 1969 and registered in 1975. Frank says the fertile flowers are 11 inches across with 6 to 9 tepals lavender-pink without, white within. It's more vigorous than either parent.

some wholesale distribution is 'Star Bright,' described as a vigorous grower with flowers resembling *M. stellata*. I haven't seen it in bloom.

'Ballerina' now will compete with 'Leonard Messel' as well as the older 'Merrill' in American and Canadian markets. There is room in some nurseries and some gardens for all three. 'Ballerina' so far has had the least exposure, but I think it's on its way to a solid career.

More 'Praecox Fastigiata'

New information on the origin of *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Praecox Fastigiata' is reported by Jack Fogg, who wrote an article on that diminutive cultivar in Vol. XIV No. 2, the previous issue.

Dr. Fogg, who also describes the magnolias at Barnes Arboretum elsewhere in this issue, said he has received a letter from Gerard Moudry of the Bureau of Parks in Baltimore, indicating it was grown from seed collected from old *M. grandiflora* trees growing in Clifton Park, an old park in Baltimore on ground that once belonged to Johns Hopkins, the Baltimore merchant for whom Johns Hopkins University was named.

Mr. Moudry said this information was given to him by the late Henry Hohman, who owned the Kingsville Nurseries, from which Barnes Arboretum received a specimen of the cultivar in 1957.

Arnold Magnolias

There are some 140 Magnolias planted on the grounds at Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, according to computer printout sheets supplied to Perry Narten by the arboretum listing species and cultivars and including accession numbers, locations on the grounds, dates of acquisition, contributors, and other information.

The records show accession dates for some trees dating back to 1880 when the arboretum was about 15 years old.

The listing includes 10 *M. acuminata* and 5 *M. acuminata* var. *subcordata*, 3 *M. ashei*, one each of the National Arboretum bred crosses of *M. quinquepeta* × *M. stellata* ('Ann,' 'Betty,' 'Jane,' 'Pinkie,' 'Randy,' 'Ricki,' 'Susan'), 1 *M.* × 'Charles Coates,' 1 *M.* × 'George Henry Kern,' 2 *M.* × 'Slavin's Snowy,' 3 *M. cylindrica*, 2 *M. denudata*, 3 *M. hypoleuca*, 3 *M. kobus*, 1 *M. kobus*, cv. 'Nana Compacta,' 2 *M.* × 'Wada's Memory,' 1 *M. kobus* variety, 1 *M. kobus* var. *borealis*, 1 *M. kobus* pink variety, 1 *M. kobus* var.

stellata, 1 *M. kobus* var. *stellata* cv. 'Rubra,' 3 *M. macrophylla*, 1 *M. quinquepeta nigra*, 6 *M. salicifolia*, 2 *M. salicifolia* var. *concolor*.

Also the following *M.* × *soulangiana* cultivars: 1 'Amabilis Alba,' 5 'Verbanica,' 6 'Alexandrina,' 2 'Amabilis,' 4 'Andre LeRoi,' 3 'Brozzoni,' 1 'Candolleana,' 1 cv. 'Cylindrica,' 1 'Dodd No. 4,' 1 'Highland Park,' 1 'Norbertiana,' 5 'Rubra,' and 3 'Speciosa.'

Also 2 magnolia species, 9 *M. stellata*, 2 *M. stellata* var. 'Centennial,' 1 *M. stellata* 'Royal Star,' 1 *M. stellata* 'Waterlily Pink,' 1 *M. stellata* 'White Star,' 1 *M. stellata rosea*, 3 *M. tripetala*, 1 *M.* × *veitchii*, 6 *M. virginiana*, 6 *M. virginiana australis*, 8 *M. virginiana* × cv. *M. loebneri* 'Merrill,' 3 magnolia hybrids, 2 *M.* × *loebneri* 'Leonard Messel,' 3 *M.* × *loebneri* 'Merrill,' 2 *M.* × *loebneri* 'Willowood,' 1 *M.* × *loebneri* variety, and 1 *M.* × *proctoriana*.

M. 'Queen Caroline'

A new cultivar, *Magnolia campbellii* subspecies *campbellii* 'Queen Caroline,' has been reported by the Royal Horticultural Society of London as receiving its Award of Merit (A.M.) on 29 March 1977 as a hardy flowering tree. The Society's proceedings describe it thus:

"The flowers, when fully opened, were about 23 cm (9 in.) in diameter, of a rich red-purple colour outside, paler inside. The largest of the perianth segments was 10 to 11 cm (4½ in.) long and 4 to 5 cm (1 4/5 in.) wide. The basic colour was whitish pink, more or less heavily suffused outside with red-purple 63A. The overall effect was near to 63B on the darker parts, 57C on the paler parts. Specimen in Herb. Hort. Wisley. Exhibited by the Director, The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew." (The numbers listed after colors above refer to identifying numbers for various gradations of colors in a book published by the RHS, a method of representing colors more accurately than can be done by mere adjectives; the numbers, however, are not very helpful if one has no access to one of the books, which are rather expensive.)

We're Now Incorporated

Our Society has been incorporated as a not for profit organization under the laws of the State of Illinois, thanks to the legal and organizational work of member Joe Hickman, President Joe McDaniel, and others. The meeting this coming spring in St. Louis will be our first full membership attendance since the incorporation in mid-1978 and your attendance is requested.