

Magnolia Dawsoniana Rehder & Wilson

This is a rare tree belonging to the Yulan group of Magnolias and readily distinguished by its shining green coriaceous leaves and stout fruit. It is only known from one bit of forest situated on the mountains south-east of Tachien-lu at elevations of from 6,000 to 7,000 feet above sea level. I saw only a few individual trees, the tallest of which was forty feet high and had a trunk six feet in girth.

I discovered it in ripe fruit in October 1908 and sent seeds (#1241 A) some packed in soil and others wrapped in oil paper, to the Arnold Arboretum, where a number of plants were raised. These, with other Chinese Magnolias, were sent to M. Leon Chenault, it being realized that the climate of Orleans, France, was better suited to the growth of these plants than that of Massachusetts.¹ M. Chenault was successful in propagating it and due to his skill a number of plants are now established in European gardens. As yet, however, none of them has flowered.² It is growing in Kew and in several Cornish gardens where it has proved perfectly hardy but grows slowly.

In 1910, I sent further seeds (#4116 A) from the same locality which resulted in more plants being raised. Although the species is based on material I collected, there is good reason to believe that this Magnolia was first discovered by Abbe A. David in Mupin in 1869, his specimens being referred to the related genus *Michelia*. It is named in appreciation of Jackson T. Dawson, for 46 years superintendent of the Arnold Arboretum, and in

recognition of his consummate skill as a propagator of woody plants.

1. In the summer of 1913, Sargent suggested that all of Wilson's Magnolias be sent to the Chenault nursery at Orleans, France, as the seedlings were not hardy at the Arnold Arboretum. He observed that too much labor was involved in keeping the plants alive by moving the pots to the protection of a cold hut during the winter. The plants were to be propagated by the Chenault firm and distributed as they wished in Europe. A couple of plants were to be returned for continued trial in Boston.

2. A Moore (Gard. Chron. 3rd ser. 121: 232, 1947) claimed that the earliest flowering of *Magnolia dawsoniana* occurred at Rowallane, County Down, Northern Ireland, about 1932 or 1933, and later at Lanarth, St. Keverne, Cornwall, in 1936.



Magnolia dawsoniana at the University of Washington Arboretum, Seattle.