

Notes from Chollipo

by C. Ferris Miller

Inspired by Sir Peter Smither's industriousness in keeping our Society's members informed of how his magnolias grow, and realizing how valuable so much of this information has been to us here at Chollipo Arboretum, we feel it appropriate to make a few comments on happenings here.

Issue 41 just came to hand a few days ago and, as usual, we dropped everything until we had carefully perused it from cover to cover. Sir Peter's comments about *M. × 'Star Wars'* were of special cogency to us and parallel our experience. Os Blumhardt (Koromiko Nurseries in New Zealand) sent us a small plant of this cultivar in the fall of 1982. Planted out in the spring of 1983 and replanted in its permanent position this past spring (1986), it hasn't looked back once. Already 2.5 meters tall and almost as wide, it has become a well-shaped tree and had its first flower in early September, 1986. This odd bloom in late summer reflects its one-fourth *M. liliflora* parentage. Unfortunately, we did not get a photograph, but ours was a little deeper pink than the color of the photo on the back cover of Issue 41, and, if anything, better. The purple of *M. liliflora* was absent, but the poise and the 'pointed' effect were the same. The film used or the lighting at the time probably accounts for the difference, as we surely are talking about the same clone.

Yesterday (21 November) I carefully observed our tree and noted that most of the leaves were still a bright green (as is the case with our *M. campbellii*, whilst our *M. lilifloras* have long since dropped all of theirs, so this trait is inherited from the three-fourths *M. campbellii* parentage.

I was delighted to discover at least 22 buds, small but powerful, for next spring. None is at the end of the larger branches but rather all are at the terminals of spur branches emanating mostly from the main trunk. This should create a rather strange effect when in bloom, and we'll try to capture it on film.

Unless some unexpected defects crop up, this cultivar will be an important addition in our arsenal of 'instant' *campbellii*'s. We affirm all of Sir Peter's comments about *M. × 'Star Wars'*.

Mentioning leaf drop reminds me to ask, has anyone ever done a study on the sequence of leaf drop among the deciduous magnolias? As mentioned above some of our magnolias are already completely denuded while others are just beginning to feel the effects of approaching winter. Although not earth-shattering in importance such knowledge might help in identifying hybrid parentage. But then just anything about magnolias is of interest to us magnoliamaniacs.

Magnolias are never going to win first prize for fall color but our largest *M. denudata* put on a good show this year—a warm burnt (?) yellow. Colors are hard to describe, but ours created a soothing, lambent effect in the late afternoon sun.

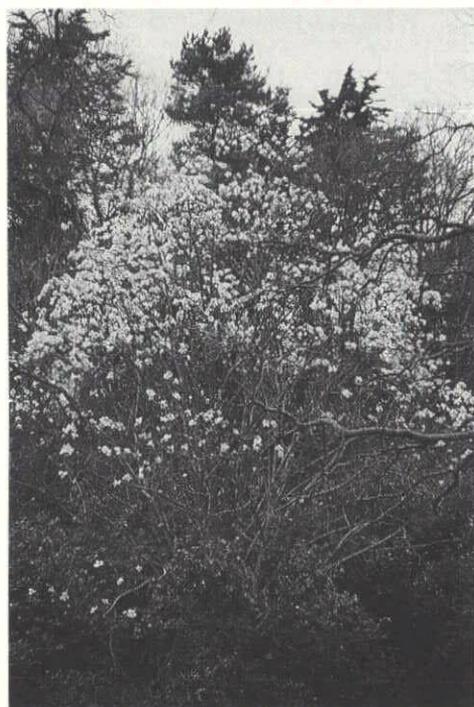
In 41 years in Korea we've never had a late frost to kill magnolia flowers, but after reading of Sir Peter's experience, I'm not going to be smug about it. I'll just keep my fingers crossed for the 42nd year, and the 43rd, and so on.

Several issues ago Sir Peter commented on his disappointment at finding some magnolias bought from reputable nurseries to be impostors. Unfortunately we have had the same experience. Of two *M. × loebneri* 'Ballerina' plants purchased from

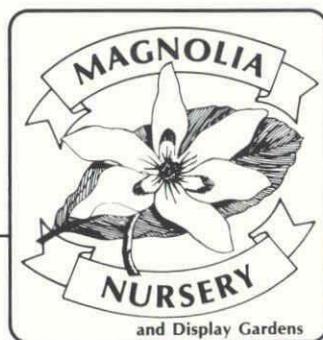
Gossler's in 1973, one is true, the other not. The latter has a much inferior flower, although it is a very floriferous and beautifully shaped tree. *Magnolia* × 'Maharanee' turns out to be *M. stellata*, but we're not complaining for it is the best *M. stellata* we have. It is a vigorous grower and completely smothered in flowers every year. Individual flowers have upward of 40 rather long tepals creating a chrysanthemum effect. The cultivar 'Chrysanthemumiflora' is said to have 20-30 tepals, but ours has considerably more. A letter to Gossler's asking for information brought no reply so we have tentatively named ours, 'Chollipo,' and will keep that name until we are certain that it hasn't been named earlier. *Magnolia* × *highdownensis* brought from Treseder's in 1975 turns out to be a *M. acuminata* seedling. Eight cultivars of *M. grandiflora* ('Exmouth', 'Goliath', etc., all popular in Europe) have

grown on all these years, but there is nothing unusual to distinguish one from another. Either they are *M. grandiflora* seedlings or, if they are true to name, they don't deserve cultivar status.

Magnolia × 'Sayonara' purchased from Hillier's in 1976 has pink flowers; the book says they should be white. What have we? If specialist nurseries can't send plants true to name what protection do we have? The sad part is to propagate the misnamed plant and sell or give it to others, spreading error that can never be corrected. As Sir Peter aptly noted, those of us over the hill can't plant a *M. campbellii*, wait 30 years to find out it isn't true and start over. Several of the initial plantings at Chollipo in 1973 still haven't bloomed—*M. sargentiana robusta*, *M. dawsoniana* and cultivars, *M. campbellii* and cultivars, etc. It will be keenly disappointing if they're not what we paid for. I don't have time to start over.



Magnolia campbellii at Antony House



Specializing in Unique Plants for Landscaping

Route 1, Box 87 • Chunchula, AL 36521
Telephone 205/675-4696

Gresham Hybrid Magnolias • American Native Selections & Seedlings • Other Miscellaneous Cultivars.

Native Plants • Native Azalea Species
300-plus varieties of Evergreen Azaleas & many other difficult-to-find plants.

You are welcome to visit our display gardens

Send for our free price list. Contact: David Ellis
Day: (205) 675-4696; Night: (205) 675-8471