Raleigh, 1990

The sixty-odd members and guests of the Magnolia Society that convened in Raleigh, North Carolina on April 5 were hard pressed to find a magnolia bloom to admire or even criticize. Due to the very early spring that came to most all of the southern United States this year, the precocious magnolias had long since bloomed and leafed out (there was one of the "Little Girls" in off-season — if such a thing exists for that group — bloom in front of the Mission Valley Hotel, our headquarters). Nevertheless, being the irrepressible plantspeople that they are, the conventioneers joined in their usual round of discussions, arguments, and voiced opinions of the many wonderful plants of many genera to which they were treated during the next three days.

Dr. J. C. Raulston of the North Carolina State University Arboretum planned and guided us through one of the most enjoyable and successful conventions is recent memory. By far the most important facet of this success was the personal time, attention, and vast knowledge and love of plants that Dr. Raulston shared with us. Certainly not the least of his efforts on our behalf was the opening night buffet at his home. Certainly one of the most successful adaptive restorations of an old warehouse that I have seen, the Raulston House intrigued and delighted and provided the perfect backdrop for socializing and getting (re)acquainted.

Getting acquainted was more than usually a pleasure as a large proportion of the members attending were first-timers.

As this was the first convention using the new three day format, the tours of local gardens/arboretums started early on Friday morning. The first stop of the day was the North Carolina State University Arboretum. A relatively new foundation, it has a quite extensive collection of plants, including many introduced by Dr. Raulston. While most of the magnolias are young and therefore small \( M. \times \) \( loebneri \) 'Merrill' at 18 feet is the largest), it is important to note that the current plant list numbers 143 (see the complete list following). This very large collection for this climate area should be an excellent source for performance data in future years.

Although too many to mention, even in passing, large specimens of \( Lagerstroemia \) \( fauriei \) and a single plant of \( Sinocalycanthus \) \( chinensis \) were given much attention.

The University of North Carolina Botanical Garden, with its collection of native plants, many in full bloom, the Coker Arboretum, and the Duke Gardens of Duke University closed out the first day's tour. The Coker, located in the midst of the University of North Carolina's campus at Chapel Hill is a beautiful park of mature native and exotic trees and shrubs. The Duke Garden, comprising a native area with a
large formal garden was in magnificent
color with azaleas and bulbs.

The plant auction was held on
Friday evening as well as various slide
presentations by members. The auction
was quite successful with a large
number of plants available for the
bidding. Many were "steals."

The Saturday
tours visited
Montrose Nursery
which specializes
in perennials—
there was a mag-
nificent Magnolia
acuminata on the
grounds, of consid-
erable age and of
huge dimensions.
A private town
garden, the
Krenitsky's, con-
tained a large
collection of
evergreens with a
generous planting of natives and shade
plants. The visit to the Keith
Arboretum, a private collection of trees
and shrubs, was like having a very
comprehensive plant catalog suddenly
come alive! Dr. Keith's collection of
over 2500 species/cultivars of woody
ornamentals was staggering. Starring, in
a solo role, was a blooming M.
acuminata var. subcordata. By default,
this was the magnolia of the year. This
collection also provided the oppor-
tunity to make acquaintance with at
least one more budding viburnum nut.

Saturday evening, Dr. Michael Dirr
was the principal speaker at the closing
formal session of the convention. Dr.
Dirr showed slides and spoke about an
unusual corporate collection of
Magnolia grandiflora cultivars of the
Milliken and Company of South
Carolina. This extensive planting will
eventually, if not already, be the largest
collection of this species and its
varieties. Hopefully, more will be
available for printing in the Journal on
this endeavor.

John Tobe presented a summary of
his work to date on magnolias as part
of his doctoral work at Clemson
University. John has promised an
article for a future issue if the
chloroplasts cooperate.

One of the
more exciting
presentations of
the evening was
given by Karl
Flinck when he
presented plans
for a potential
first convention
outside the United States. At the
request of the Board of Directors, Mr.
Flinck outlined a preliminary itinerary
for a garden tour/convention in the
Ticino region along the Swiss-Italian
border. His slides and comments were
enthusiastically received. More news, I
hope, to follow the October board
meeting.

As always at convention, the
personal contacts and conversation are
the high points, and the expanded
format allowed much more time for this
pursuit. The sheer amount of
knowledge of plants—not just of
magnolias—never ceases to amaze and
delight me. Come join us in
Philadelphia next year (the Morris
Arboretum) and experience your fellow
members and magnolia nuts first hand.
It's habit forming.