

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 conventioners 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 in 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. x 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 magnificent *Magnolia acuminata* on the grounds, of considerable age and of huge dimensions. A private town garden, the Krenitsky's, contained 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 opportunity 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.

**1991 CONVENTION
The Morris Arboretum
of the University of Pennsylvania**

**April 11-13, 1991
(Thursday - Saturday)**

Those wishing to present papers or slides
should contact Mr. Paul W. Meyer
at

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