

Robin Notes

From Frank Galyon, on M.

'Purple Prince': *M.* 'Purple Prince' is from the cross of *M. liliiflora* 'Darkest Purple' (seed parent) x *M. x soulangiana* 'Lennei' (pollen parent). I hadn't been out at the University of Tennessee Arboretum at Oak Ridge for some years to see the original tree, so I went this spring (1989). In spite of poor-to-no care the tree has grown up reasonably tall on a single bole and was covered with dark purple flowers.... The inside of the tepals is also purple, but lighter than the outside. In spite of the fact that each flower has 3 sepals and only six petals, they managed to make a show on the tree. The outer petals are 3" wide and 5 1/2" long, making a flower of 10" from tip to tip. Interestingly, the form of the flower reminds me of a huge iris with horizontal "falls" and semi-open "standards." The color of the flower closely approximates that of *M. liliiflora* 'Darkest Purple' both on the outside and inside of the tepals. Flower size approximates that of 'Lennei', but is not nearly so globular as it has only six petals.

From Frank Mossman, on grafting under lights: In my office basement, where I do my grafting, there is a constant temperature of 65°F and constant light as close to the plants as possible—fluorescent Duro bulbs. Like Augie Kehr, I am a firm believer in sterile technique. In December through February freshly

collected scions are dipped in 70% rubbing alcohol, allowed to dry, and grafted on actively growing understock which had been brought indoors 3 to 4 weeks previously. The stock is also painted with alcohol and allowed to dry, as is the razor and rubber grafting bands. I do a stick side graft, preferably with a tip bud and one or two lower buds, the scion being 2 to 4" long. Each scion is bagged for 2 to 3 weeks. When the scion starts to grow, the stock leaves are gradually removed over a period of 2 to 3 weeks. A preventive dusting with Captan for mold and fungus is useful after the bag is removed. I don't get 100% results, but much better since the attention to alcohol treatment. In springtime, the gallon size cans are ready for the shade-house. Understock may be *M. sprengeri* 'Diva' seedlings (hardy here in Vancouver, Washington), *stellata*, or *soulangiana* seedlings or rooted cuttings. Otto Eisenhut uses *M. acuminata* and *kobus* seedlings.

From Ken Durio, on M. grandiflora clones: The original *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Harold Poole' has become a beautiful specimen landscape plant. It is one of the most attractive of the grandifloras. It is really a thick rounded shrub of about 10 to 12 feet. The leaves are very shiny and dark green and are placed very close together. We become more impressed with it each year.

Magnolia grandiflora 'Workman' is another "dwarf" grandiflora that is special to us. It is more tree-like than 'Harold Poole' but is also very compact and slow growing. The leaves are about 6" long and very wavy. The blooms are about 4 1/2 to 5" across and well formed. It is really a delightful landscape plant.

'St Mary' and 'Samuel Sommer' are both fine tree type magnolias. 'St. Mary' is very compact and a very symmetrical grower with a precise form. The flowers are medium size but very attractive.

'Russet' has very attractive medium size blooms that are double (16 or more tepals). The medium size leaves are highly colored with red indumentum underneath. It is a compact upright grower that we are especially fond of. It is one of my personal favorites.

'Emory' is a fine fastigiate *Magnolia grandiflora* cultivar that is very fine. The original tree at the Hilltop Arboretum in Baton Rouge is about 9-10 feet across and about 75 feet tall. It is a magnificent sight. It has a compact upright habit and attractive leaves and blooms. It blooms well as a young plant also. A good one to plant when ground space is limited or where a distinctive specimen is needed.

Magnolia grandiflora 'H. D. Blackwell' is proving to be our most popular commercial grandiflora. It is a large round oval grower that blooms at an extremely early age. It has a nice medium size bloom and a glossy dark green leaf with lots of red indumentum underneath. Reports this year from the north claim that it comes through the winter better than 'Edith Bogue' and

five other cultivars planted nearby. The leaves retained their color and didn't show the winter damage that some of the others did.

From Frank Galyon, on four new magnolia cultivars he is registering: 'Sweet Summer' is from a cross of *M. virginiana* var. *australis* (seed) x *M. grandiflora* 'Samuel Sommer' (pollen). '24 Below' is a selected tree found growing in a garden in Knoxville. It is a *M. grandiflora* clone which was totally uninjured by the record cold of -24°F that occurred in January 1985.

'Scented Silver' is a selected *stellata* with absolutely pure white flowers. The real reason for registering it, however, is that it has the most incredibly fragrant flowers of all the magnolias on our place.

'Raspberry Swirl' is from *M. liliiflora* 'Darkest Purple' (seed) x *M. sprengeri* 'Diva' (pollen). It has flowers that are dark on inside as well as outside. It should either be grafted or budded, as it tends to send up multiple trunks if on its own roots.

From August Kehr, on two new Kehr hybrids: A hybrid of 'Woodsmen' (seed) x a large white flowered Gresham (unknown, pollen), it has flowers 8" in diameter, beautiful pink, and indescribably pleasant fragrance. The color inside was 56C Neyrar Rose and outside 55B (all RHS scale). It flowered in late May, though there is a tendency in later years for late flowering of seedlings. However, even mid-May would be late enough to escape most frosts. Thus it has 3 desirable attributes: beautiful color, delightful fragrance, and hopefully late flowering.

The second is a hybrid of *M.*

acuminata (seed) x *M. liliiflora* (pollen) that is entirely light yellow in color with just a tinge of purple on the outside. I did not make a color scale reading of this flower, unfortunately.

From August Kehr, on hybridization to achieve later flowering: I have been giving thought to a program of hybridization that could give us later flowering types. The heart of the program has to be *M. acuminata* which is not only late but is extremely hardy. This year I started by trying to develop later flowering *M. liliiflora* and *M. denudata*. Once this goal is reached the next step will be to repeat all the soulangiana work. It is realized that this could take 30-40 years. I am planning to write up the plan in detail for a paper in the Journal. I know we can expect magnolias in the Yulania class that will flower 2 1/2 to 3 weeks later—enough to escape frosts almost anywhere in the U. S.

Once later flowering hybrids start “rolling off the assembly line” the number of members in our Society will grow by leaps and bounds. This is exactly what happened in the Rhododendron Society (when hybrids

adapted to growing in the east were developed, mostly all using the hardy eastern species *R. catawbiense* as one of their progenitors). The Rhododendron Society grew from about 75 in 1945 to nearly 6500 in 1990, but most of this growth occurred only after the eastern hybrids were being developed in large numbers in the 1960-1970 period. Today there is hardly an area east of the Mississippi River where these plants are not grown, a stark contrast to earlier times. We can do likewise with magnolias!

From Ken Durio, on *M. dealbata* hardiness: *Magnolia dealbata* can take 5 degrees below zero [F] and probably a lot more. The tree at Gloster has taken about 0°F with no problem. We gave three nice *M. dealbata* trees to the National Arboretum and they have done well in Washington, D.C. It may prove to be almost as hardy as *M. macrophylla*.... Our grafted tree got about 18 to 20 feet tall before it made its first bloom this year.

These excerpts from “Robins” were made by the Robin Chairman, Harry Heineman. Give Harry your thanks for his work by joining a Robin and getting involved.

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