THE RHODODENDRON HYBRIDISERS: LIONEL de ROTHSCHILD

Julian Taylor-Whall

The Rhododendron Hybridisers:

When the grand tally of his contributions to Genus *Rhododendron* is added up, there is just one hybridiser in the entire world - if the professional nurserymen are excluded - who can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the likes of George Forrest, Frank Kingdon-Ward, Joseph Rock or Ernest Wilson: Lionel de Rothschild.

For as with the introductions made by those four great plant hunters, the assortment of first-class plants from his legion of original crosses that can be found growing in the UK's public or private rhododendron gardens is substantial.

Eighty-eight named deciduous azaleas.

Fifteen evergreen azalea registrations.

Thirty-four lepidote hybrids.

Three-hundred-and-forty-nine elepidote crosses.

And even two Azaleodendron pairings.

That are resident in countless gardens from Land's End to John o'Groats, long-established mature specimens or newly planted juveniles, with each one confirming the popularity of their creator's introductions almost a century on from their inception.

So an array of photographs portraying those plants, cultivated in the horticultural emporia of England, Scotland and Wales open to the general public, is presented within these pages, along with a set of historical articles and a listing of all the registered combinations Lionel de Rothschild made, crosses that to this day, still outshine the oftentimes tepid offerings of his contemporaries and successors.

THE RHODODENDRON HYBRIDISERS

Julian Taylor-Whall

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The Rothschild Rhododendrons:
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Historical Texts:

Lionel de Rothschild - An Appreciation.

by Lord Aberconway, C.B.E., V.M.H..

The death of Lionel de Rothschild, who founded the Rhododendron Association and its *Year Book,* deprived the gardening world of an outstanding figure.

In creating a garden like that at Exbury in little over twenty years, his inexhaustible energy, great power of concentration and admirable taste had full scope. There was hardly a shrub or tree that could be grown in that mild New Forest climate that was not to be found in his great woodland garden – but pre-eminent among them all were Rhododendrons.

Nor was he only content to collect and arrange plants – he loved to create them. His hybrids of Rhododendrons and Azaleas and indoors of Cymbidiums and other Orchids and of Amaryllis and Nerine were numbered by the hundred, and were the outcome of careful thought, experiment and knowledge. The plants so raised proved to be of the highest standard and of the greatest beauty, as those know who have seen the fine groups he showed at Westminster and Chelsea.

No garden is ever finished, but in twenty years no garden is even matured. It is sad that Lionel de Rothschild could not have spent further years in developing to maturity and to even greater beauty the work that he had carried on through all its earlier stages.

In gardening as in other matters, his kindness and generosity were markedly displayed. He was always ready to support any project where help was wanted. None of his good plants did he ever wish to keep to himself, indeed the more widely these were shared the better he was pleased. Nor were his country interests confined to gardening – he loved the sea and yachting; the robins in the wood which he trained to feed from his hand were a great delight to him. Indeed he was many-sided in his hobbies. He knew much of pictures and works of art. He played a good hand at cards. Cooking he considered a fine art and studied accordingly; and though most abstemious himself he saw to it that his guests had dishes prepared with the most consummate skill.

It was always his endeavour to share with his many friends and guests the good things that lay in his path. Throughout, whether host or colleague, whatever his company, whatever the task in which he was engaged, his was the dominating personality.

His loss has been keenly felt by a very large number of gardening friends; and it is felt deeply in the numerous activities in which he was engaged.

Among those activities there were few to which he devoted more time and thought than to the affairs of the Rhododendron Association. He was not only its founder, but its inspiration. His articles in the Year Book and his close attention to the accuracy of its contents can never be replaced.

Written by his friend and horticultural rival Henry McLaren, 2nd Baron Aberconway, the short appreciation above was originally published as the lead article in *The Rhododendron Year Book 1946,* the very first edition of that publication, which succeeded the annual journal of The Rhododendron Association, which had been curtailed due to the exigencies of the Second World War. It honours the man who founded the Association and was its first and only President, Editor of its periodicals, creator of the finest rhododendron garden in Great Britain, and who today is internationally recognised as the greatest hybridiser to ever have worked within Genus *Rhododendron*.

- *opposite* -
Merchant banker at N.M. Rothschild & Sons Limited.

- *page 11* -
Gardener at Exbury - feeding his tamed robins in the woods.





Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, 1882-1942 - A Biography.

written and published by the Rothschild Archive, and available to read online at:
https://family.rothschildarchive.org/people/105-lionel-nathan-de-rothschild-1882-1942

Lionel Nathan de Rothschild was the eldest of the three sons of Leopold and Marie. He was born on 25 January 1882. Lionel was educated at Harrow and Trinity College Cambridge. In 1912 he married Marie-Louise Beer the sister of Nelly de Rothschild (née Beer) who had married Robert de Rothschild in 1907. Lionel and Marie had four children; Rosemary, Edmund, Naomi and Leopold. Along with Robert, Nelly and their children, Lionel and his family enjoyed long summer holidays touring Europe on his yachts.

Business at New Court

On 1 April 1915, along with his cousin Charles (1877-1923) Lionel became a Partner at New Court. Nathaniel Mayer, 1st Lord Rothschild (1840-1915) who had been Senior Partner at New Court since 1879 had died on 31 March 1915, to be succeeded by his brother Alfred (1842-1918), who himself was in poor health. The official insistence (from no less than the King himself) that Lionel should remain at New Court to direct the affairs of the London House did not prevent him from serving his country with distinction during the First World War. He served in the reserves as a major in the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry and managed the City of London's recruiting office, earning an OBE and a 'valuable services' mention. Lionel became Senior Partner in 1923 on the death of his cousin Charles. Under Lionel, the bank began a steady transition towards advisory work and finance raising for commercial concerns, including successful bond issues for the London Underground, and issuing shares in the UK business of F.W. Woolworth.

Private passions

Lionel was closely attached to the Vale of Aylesbury, and served as the Conservative MP for the Aylesbury constituency from 1910 to 1923. When not conducting business at New Court, Lionel could be found indulging his passion for horticulture. Indeed, he once described himself as 'a banker by hobby but a gardener by profession'. Selling Halton House which he inherited from his uncle Alfred (1842-1918), Lionel purchased the Exbury estate in 1919. It was Lionel's gardening passion which led him to choose Exbury with its 2600 acres, and it was here that Lionel realised his horticultural vision. The climate was gentle here and the soil was acid, ideal for the flowers which were to become his passion – rhododendrons. The estate included some 250 acres of overgrown woodland. Labour was recruited in huge force to create the gardens: a team of 150 men and 60 trained gardeners were employed to clear the land, lay paths and manage the planting, and 22 miles of irrigation pipes were laid. Two acres of greenhouses were put up and a million plants were introduced. Here Lionel grew orchids and developed hundreds of new hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas (many being named after family and friends) for which the estate has become famous. The Gardens first opened to the public in the 1930s, the entrance fees raising funds for local charities. Lionel's interests extended beyond the boundaries of his estate; he corresponded regularly with leading botanists, plant-hunters and garden owners and designers of the day, and was a founder member of the Roads Beautifying Association.

Motoring was another passion. An automotive pioneer, Lionel was a founder member of the Royal Automobile Club. He and his brother Anthony Gustav (1887-1961) were members of the Cambridge University Automobile Club, founded in 1902, and whilst at Trinity College, Lionel was summoned for "driving a motor car at a greater speed than 12 mph", and fined the sum of £1. Lionel favoured an early make of car called the Orleans. He had a faithful mechanic, a young man called Martin Harper who was working in his brother's garage in Cambridge when he first met Lionel. Before the First World War Lionel and Harper drove Mercedes, Napiers, Wolseleys and Siddeleys across France, Italy, Spain, Germany and North Africa. Harper writes about these days in his book *Mr Lionel: an Edwardian Episode* (London: Cassell, 1970). Combining his business skills with his great interest in things mechanical, Lionel served on the board of The Wolseley Tool & Motor Car Company Ltd between 1905 and 1909. Lionel was a keen advocate for Wolseley, and he and Harper often filed test reports back to them from their excursions.

A third diversion, was yachting, which Lionel combined with horticulture, collecting seeds and plants on longer journeys. Lionel's interest in all things racing began while he



A youthful auto enthusiast at the wheel of one of his early cars.

was at Cambridge. In 1903, Sir Alfred Harmsworth, proprietor of *The Daily Mail,* began funding the world's first powerboat racing prize, The Harmsworth Trophy. In a new Napier motor-boat, equipped with the largest six cylinder engine yet built by the manufacturer S.F. Edge, and sharing the crewing with his friend, the Hon. John Scott-Montagu and Lionel entered the 1905 challenge, a race over 35 miles in the Bay of Arcachon in France. They crossed the finishing-line in a winning time of 2 hours, 2 minutes, 26 seconds. During these two years they won several gold medals in the boats *Napier II* and *Yarrow Napier.* The following year the pair won the world water-speed record at 28.8 knots, and in 1907 went on to win the prestigious Perla del Mediterraneo in Lionel's boat the 'Flying Fish'.

Lionel also had two large yachts built to his specification by Camper & Nicholson of Gosport; the *TSY Rhodora I,* followed in 1929 by the *TSY Rhodora II*. Lionel's son Edmund recalled "Rhodora II had a hold which was large enough to carry a motor car – latterly an immensely powerful 50.7-hp Rolls-Royce touring saloon which my father bought in 1936. She was manned by a crew of twelve, and could comfortably accommodate my parents and us four children, our first cousins Alain, Diane, Cecile and Elie, who would sometimes join us."

Lionel was a keen photographer and early experimenter with film, and the short-lived but exquisite autochrome, the first colour widely available photographic process, launched in Britain in September 1907. After a full and varied life, Lionel de Rothschild died at his London address, 18 Kensington Palace Gardens, on 28 January 1942, three days after his 60th birthday.

- opposite -
Major de Rothschild of the Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry in 1918.



Exbury Rhododendrons.

by Francis Hanger,
Curator, R.H.S. Gardens, Wisley, and former Head Gardener at Exbury.

The mere mention of Exbury Rhododendrons naturally brings to mind their creator, the late Lionel de Rothschild, the founder of the Rhododendron Association - its first President and Editor of its intricate *Year Book*. With the help of others Mr de Rothschild soon made the *Year Book* an authority on Rhododendrons generally, and it was not long before it became known as the "Rhododendron Bible" amongst horticulturalists and gardeners who studied and cultivated Rhododendrons. These offices he retained until his lamented death on January 28, 1942.

Gardening was the great work of his life, and his love of it started, I am told, when as a child he preferred attending to his little garden at his father's home at Ascott, Bucks, rather than visiting the stables with their many hunters and racing horses.

Years later when this love and work had created and matured Exbury, he was escorting some friends through his woodland paths, flanked with blazes of glorious colours, when one of his friends exclaimed to him, "We know now that your work is here and therefore your 'New Court' business must be your hobby."

Amongst his youthful recreations was yachting. This brought him to the Solent - the strip of water lying between the Isle of Wight and the county of Hampshire. It was on those visits that he first became acquainted with Exbury, a warm, favourably-situated gardening spot on the south coast of Hampshire overlooking the Isle of Wight. The mild climate is due to the maritime influences of the surrounding sea, the Southampton Water, the Solent and the Beaulieu River lying to the east, south and west respectively, forming a peninsula with the beautiful New Forest to the north. With these advantages, Exbury is not quite as warm as Cornwall, yet compares favourably with it.

Having graduated in horticulture with the growing of Rhododendrons at Gunnersbury Park, in Middlesex, and during 1914-1918 by making a garden at Inchmery on the Exbury estates, he purchased Exbury in 1918 from the late Lord Forster of Lepe, with the object of still furthering his development of Rhododendrons by hybridisation. He at once commenced planning the development of the lovely well-timbered woods, studded with oak and pine and sloping westward and southward to the tidal water called the Beaulieu River.

Although he was a collector of all kinds of trees, shrubs and plants, I believe I am correct in writing that his favourite genus was the Rhododendron, and at Exbury he had ample room to exploit his ideas with enthusiasm. This he did and, with his creative mind and unbounded zest, set about the hybridisation and cultivation of the genus Rhododendron on a scale perhaps larger than ever before attempted.

Everything he set himself to do he did extremely well, therefore it is not strange that all his hybrid Rhododendron crosses were the subject of much thought; nothing was ever done haphazardly or in a makeshift manner.

No trouble seemed too great for him in the creation of some new Rhododendron hybrid to get the best possible form of the species obtainable. For example, in creating Rhododendron 'Burning Bush' (*R. haematodes* x *R. dichroanthum*) Mr Lionel motored from London to Exbury (93 miles), instead of travelling by train, with the set purpose of calling at Sunningdale Nurseries to obtain from the late Harry White pollen from his better form of *R. dichroanthum* to put on the Exbury best form of *R. haematodes* rather than use the Exbury *R. dichroanthum,* which was an inferior form.

It is not surprising, therefore, that such abundant enthusiasm, coupled with an energy which was dynamic, should be justly rewarded, and his garden at Exbury became filled with Rhododendron hybrids of the highest order, many of which are yet to flower. Amongst these are many *lacteum, wardii,* orange *caloxanthum* and *dichroanthum* crosses, which I feel sure will enrich our gardens with glorious true yellow and orange Rhododendrons, the longed-for luxury of the Rhododendron enthusiast.

Perhaps before we journey off to the garden and woodlands to see and admire the thousands of plants, trees, and shrubs, it is only fair to mention that in Mr de Rothschild's early gardening days he, like all of us, made many mistakes; but his good Cornish friends, together with Kew and Edinburgh botanical authorities, found a willing pupil, only too eager to learn all and spend money in exploiting their theories.

Amongst the many early gardening letters sent to Mr Lionel which I have been privileged to read are many from the late Mr J. C. Williams, the late Mr John Millais, Mr W. J. Bean, and Dr J. Hutchinson of Kew, Professor W. Wright Smith, and Dr Cowan of Edinburgh, and also the late Mr Gomer Waterer.

The late Mr J. C. Williams writes thus: "I see no harm in your getting a few grafted Rhododendrons, they are an abomination to me and only produce bad language if you live long enough with them." Referring of course to the perpetual sucker nuisance of grafted plants. There are numerous references of pollen sent from Caerhays and Lanarth, together with advice as to "mating" the different species. Again from the late Mr J. C. Williams: "I have sent you a plant of *maddenii* x *cinnabarinum* Roylei which has lovely flowers. The old man who looks after my Daffodil hybrids had never seen one before, he is as hard to please as G. Holford, but for once he had to give vent to his feelings." All Rhododendron enthusiasts know the outcome of this present. Mr de Rothschild hybridised *R. maddenii* x *R. cinnabarinum* Roylei ('Royal Flush') with *R. cinnabarinum* and produced that unique Rhododendron 'Lady Chamberlain', with hanging terracotta to orange Lapageria-like flowers. Perhaps it is safe to say that this cross and its sister cross 'Lady Rosebery' (the pink form), both of which have received the Royal Horticultural Society's First Class Certificate, are the most noted of all the Exbury hybrids, and I believe the one which gave the owner the most personal satisfaction.

It is interesting to note that, when the late Mr J. C. Williams sent the first *R. griersonianum* to Exbury, he thought it on the very tender side as he recommended planting it in the large Rhododendron house.

Mr Lionel de Rothschild's hybrid Rhododendron crosses reached one thousand two hundred and ten in number, the last thirty or so being gathered by myself during my late employer's illness in London. The very last one in the stud book reads L.R.1210 *wardii* x *fortunei* and the first L.R.1 *lacteum* x *sutchuenense* which, after approximately fifteen years of waiting, proved very disappointing and were all discarded as being no improvement on the parents.

The Rhododendron House.

This large house, 100 feet long by 50 feet wide, was built to shelter those species Rhododendron and their hybrids which were not quite hardy in the open, and during early spring when Jack Frost had been busy much pleasure was derived from seeing the various plants in bloom. During later years the house was used intensively for hybridising. Plants of various sizes were lifted from the open in autumn, planted in baskets or tubs to be forced into flower at given times.

When *R. griersonianum* was all the craze as a parent plant, I received an order to have a *R. griersonianum* plant in bloom from early March onwards. Thus we read L.R. 1183 *barbatum* x *griersonianum* which has yet to flower. *R. discolor* was also used in a like manner, while others species had to be retarded as much as possible to enable them to be used on the latest varieties. A telephone message would be received from London telling us

to gather perhaps a dozen different Rhododendron blooms with pollen to be ready for Mr Lionel's first morning at Exbury, and before the day's tour a plant of *R. discolor* in a basket would be married to all these flowers. At the time the Rhododendron House was being planted, Forrest, Capt. Kingdon-Ward, Rock and Farrer were, or had been, busy on plant expeditions, therefore there was ample material to raise for planting.

Most of the plants grew well, and many received recognition from the Royal Horticultural Society. The following received the highest award (First Class Certificate):

Forrest 26618, *R. edgeworthii* [shown as *R. bullatum*]. A very fine tender form with a much puckered leaf and an almost golden-brown indumentum, pure white flowers with chocolate-coloured anthers.

Kingdon-Ward 3776, *R. ciliicalyx* [shown as *R. pachypodum*], a Maddenia with large, rather starry, white flowers.

Forrest 27687, *R. dendricola* [shown as *R. taronense*], a beautiful flattish round flower, yellow blotched at the base of the lobes.

Rock 11222, *R. megacalyx,* an enormous flower, almost identical with the huge trumpet-shaped blossoms of *R. nuttallii* itself, yet having a variation of leaf. This Rhododendron was never named as far as my memory serves me.

The other Rhododendron to receive a First Class Certificate from the Exbury Rhododendron House was *R. dalhousiae* var. *rhabdotum* [shown as *R. rhabdotum*]. This plant was first shown, I believe, from Bodnant, when it received an Award of Merit. However, it fully deserved the higher award with its peculiar red markings on the outside of the cream and white lobes.

Rhododendrons grown in this house given the Award of Merit were many, chief among them were:

Kingdon-Ward 6333, *R. nuttallii* [shown as var. *stellulatum*], with smaller blooms than the type and having an apple-green starry calyx.

R. boothii [shown as *R. mishmiense*], sent home by Kingdon-Ward, a deep yellow.

R. moulmainense [shown as *R. pectinatum*], with a large truss of small white flowers and a yellow blotch and very fragrant.

The pink form of *R. lindleyi,* whose lovely trumpet-shaped flowers make it one of the best Rhododendrons of Subsection Maddenia.

R. moulmainense [shown as *R. stenaulum*], with purplish-rose flowers.

R. auritum, a very good 4 to 5 foot plant inside, just missing being hardy, with pale yellow flowers, a colour very constantly occurring in Subsection *Boothia*.

Large plants of such lovely species of Rhododendron as Blood Red *arboreum, delavayi, facetum* [*eriogynum*], *griffithianum, kyawii, hookeri, megacalyx, dalhousiae,* and the true *nuttallii* all helped to make a brave show, producing material for hybridisation and incidentally helping to beautify the many miles of woodland paths, with their various offsprings.

Home Wood.

We leave the Rhododendron House, now spoilt and ruined by Hitler's bombing, and travel back to the mansion overlooking the Solent with the Isle of Wight in the distance, almost due south. Standing here the 'Home Wood' runs south-west on a gradual decline to the Beaulieu River, and with its little St. Mary's Streamlet, ponds, oaks and Scotch pines it forms an ideal home for Rhododendrons, choice trees and shrubs. This wood was the first of the Exbury woods to be tackled by Mr de Rothschild, and this being the early days of his gardening career, few of his own hybrids were then large enough for woodland display. Here we shall find numerous species together with many hardy nurserymen's hybrids intermixed with fine specimen plants purchased from Leonardslee, and also many which were gifts from friends.

Due west from the terrace steps at the south of Exbury House, are some magnificent Cedar trees which add dignity to the grass glade immediately behind. At the far end the original plant of 'J. G. Millais', now nearly 20 feet high, has a majestic setting against its background of confers, and its scarlet and red flowers always give a grand display. The glade is flanked on each side with bold plantings of 'Christmas Cheer', 'Ascot Brilliant', 'Earl of Athlone', 'Mrs G. W. Leak', 'Britannia', 'Doncaster', 'Mother of Pearl', 'Helen Schiffner', 'Mrs P. D. Williams', and such like hardy Rhododendrons.

R. arboreum, pyramidal in its habit, together with R. 'Boddaertianum', mingled with the various Magnolias, Prunus and Pyrus, make a good background, and give a brave show for approximately the first six months of the year.

We now pass through into the wood and the huge plants of R. 'Loderi' in various varieties cannot fail to impress, as does one of the original specimens of *R. auriculatum,* at its best about the end of July, when it flowers profusely. After which it has the bad habit of becoming almost deciduous only to redress immediately with its new fresh foliage. I do not think this failing is general with *R. auriculatum*.

The "Augustinii Walk", with its scores of plants some 15 feet in height, makes a wonderful sight when in bloom. Of various shades of lavender to what we like to call blue in colour, perhaps the 'bluest' is a plant grown from a layer sent to Exbury by the late Mr J. C. Williams. Alas! The bluer the type the more tender seems the plant. Mr de Rothschild chose the green-eyed forms and crossed them together to produce a batch of *R. augustinii* which did seem hardier. R. 'Electra' (*augustinii* x *chasmanthum*) is definitely a better blue than either parent and R. 'Electra' crossed again with *R. augustinii* flowered for the first time this year and will need much seeding and more profuse blooming before judgement is passed.

Fine specimens of *R. calophytum* are very cunningly planted beneath the Scotch Pines, which often save the blooms from destruction during the spring frosts. One word of warning - planted thus they are gluttons for water during dry summer spells, as are *R. sutchuenense* and *R. praevernum,* planted in a like position.

The large colony of *R. mucronulatum* with its purplish flowers, interplanted with the *Hamamelis mollis,* are always admired when in bloom, during mild seasons. The New Year's shooting party usually had the unexpected pleasure of its full beauty. *Hamamelis mollis* always outlasted *R. mucronulatum,* but a few R. 'Praecox' carried on the combination of yellow and purplish colouring.

A large planting of the beautiful Exbury hybrid R. 'Day Dream' ('Lady Bessborough' x *griersonianum*) commencing with the pale pink buds and becoming a real biscuit colour when fully expanded, has a background of noble 20-foot plants of *R. barbatum* and R. 'Shilsonii' (*thomsonii* x *barbatum*). These give a glorious display about the end of March, quite six weeks before the delicate 'Day Dream', to be followed later by that beautiful medium growing Bodnant cross R. 'Fabia' (*dichroanthum* x *griersonianum*).

Close by we find a background of *R. discolor* and its companion below R. 'Mohamet' (*dichroanthum* x 'Tally Ho'), approximately of the same habit as R. 'Fabia', but later flowering and more orange in colour.

As we journey downwards towards the Nymphaeas, in the ponds, we begin to notice that more of the Exbury hybrid Rhododendrons have subsidised the original plantings and a bank covered with R. 'Romany Chai' ('Moser's Maroon' x *griersonianum*), deep red, looks extremely effective towards the middle of June, while during the late April and early May the planting of R. 'May Day' (Exbury var.) towards the front with its edging of white 'Palestrina' is gay with blooms for some little time.



The wood now becomes more open and azaleas predominate, mostly of Exbury hybrids, but of these more later. We pass along by the R. 'Cornish Cross' and R. 'A. Gilbert', with its edging of that most conspicuous Rhododendron 'Bengal Fire' (*kaempferi* x *oldhamii*), so rightly named with its flame red flowers smothering every leaf of the plant. This, together with the pale cream R. 'A. Gilbert', forms another happy combination.

We are now further down towards the tidal river, and the maritime influences enable *R. falconeri, R. sinogrande, R. basilicum, R. eximium* and *R. macabeanum* to flourish. The ample shelter provides these large-leaf Rhododendrons with just the correct conditions, and when fully grown they should be "a joy to behold". Leaving these aristocrats of Rhododendrons to flourish, we pass by the large collection of Camellias and approach the Winter Garden.

Winter Garden.

This part of the garden was developed more recently, being established about 1936. The formation of the Winter Garden enabled the owner to collect together all those plants, trees and shrubs which normally bloom during the first three months of the year. There being many Rhododendrons with this weakness of precocity, we shall find in our stroll many species and hybrids to interest us.

The garden is situated in the warmest part of Exbury, i.e. right on the edge of the tidal Beaulieu River. Although in some seasons disappointments are experienced, there are periods during February and March when the sight of this garden in bloom (with its various genera of plants) becomes a surprise and revelation to most visitors.

The wisdom of establishing this garden in such a sheltered spot has been amply rewarded, as many plants have received recognition from the Royal Horticultural Society from this winter garden alone. Two species and three Exbury hybrids have been honoured with a First Class Certificate, while eight hybrids and three species have won the Award of Merit. Of the species to receive the F.C.C. are that lovely dwarf *R. leucaspis,* which, being bud tender, needs the best sheltered positions, and *R. lutescens* Exbury var., an Exbury production, being the result of crossing a selection of the best two *R. lutescens* available.

Of the three hybrids to be so honoured, R. 'Fortune' (*falconeri* x *sinogrande*) must take pride of place and surely it would rank as one of the best achievements of the late Mr Lionel de Rothschild. The flowers of the F.C.C. variety are rich yellow and with such noble foliage it almost qualifies for an award for foliage also. Not easy to propagate with no low branches for layering, it is hoped that extra special steps will be taken for its perpetuation. Several other plants of the cross are good, but nothing compares with the F.C.C. form, while many plants of the cross are pink in flower.

The other two hybrids to receive the F.C.C. were R. 'Aries' (*thomsonii* x *neriiflorum*), a beautiful crimson Rhododendron of medium growth, and R. 'Avalanche', a superb hybrid created by crossing R. 'Loderi' with *R. calophytum*. The huge perfect trusses of flower are pure white with a dark blotch at the base of the bloom. R. 'Avalanche' var. 'Alpine Glow' also received an Award of Merit. This variety makes the same handsome tree or shrub with long leaves, but differs from 'Avalanche' F.C.C. by having a distinct mauvish colouring in the white lobes, with a less pronounced blotch at the base.

As this part of the garden is devoted to the early-flowering Rhododendrons, it is natural to expect a large percentage of the early red species, including *R. thomsonii, R. hookeri, R. arboreum* (blood red), *R. barbatum* and *R. delavayi,* together with their many hybrids. Of this host of intense colours, pride of place goes to R. 'Alix' A.M. var. This hybrid of *R. barbatum* x *R. hookeri* has them all beaten for colour. I have personally gathered together one flower from each of the species, together with their hybrids, and R. 'Alix' easily wins. Alas! Having *R. hookeri* blood it gains in colour but loses in hardiness. This fine hybrid is only just hardy at Exbury.

Another good red of Exbury origin is R. 'Adelaide' A.M. var. ('Aurora' x *thomsonii*), being much hardier, which cannot be said of R. 'Abbot' (*thomsonii* x *delavayi*).

The hybrid produced by crossing R. 'Cornubia' with *R. calophytum* is a glowing pink named R. 'Amalfi', with a fine large truss, to which an Award of Merit has been given.

The same honour has been bestowed on the two hybrids of *R. moupinense* which, when crossed with *R. lutescens,* gives R. 'Bo-Peep', the award form being a deep cream in colour and very free flowering, and hybridised with *R. leucaspis* produced R. 'Bric-a-brac' a really neat, front row or edging type of plant, with white flattish flowers and chocolate-coloured anthers.

Before we leave the Winter Garden perhaps mention should be made of R. 'Eleanore' (*rubiginosum* Desquamatum x *augustinii*) A.M. This free-flowering Subsection *Triflora* hybrid commences to flower at an early age and its mauve and blue flowers are equally as large as those of *R. augustinii,* but it is quite a month earlier than the latter to bloom.

We now retrace our steps over the little stone bridge back through a part of the "Home Wood" by "View Point" where we catch a glorious glimpse of the Beaulieu River winding its way through the woody countryside, and so to "Witchers Wood".

Witchers Wood.

We are now amongst legions of Rhododendron hybrids, and in this brief account of Exbury Rhododendrons mention can only be made of the most important ones with the writer conscious of his limitations to do justice to so vast a subject. As we enter "Witchers" we pass *R. chasmanthum* F.C.C. and so to 'Lady Chamberlain' walk with the many varieties of 'Lady Chamberlain' and 'Lady Rosebery'. I have already mentioned and given details of this unique hybrid, but suffice it to say that, wherever these beautiful hybrid Rhododendrons are grown or exhibited, the name of the creator, Mr Lionel de Rothschild will be ever prominent.

A lovely bed of R. 'Fusilier' F.C.C. (*elliottii* x *griersonianum*), so rightly named, at its very best about the middle of May, has no peers in its own colour, while close at hand, and flowering nearly a month later, is R 'Grenadier' F.C.C. This hybrid of R. 'Moser's Maroon' x *elliottii* is a dark crimson in colour without being too dark, and has a full truss of flowers, of the finest proportions. R. 'Bibiani' ('Moser's Maroon' x *arboreum*) also received an Award of Merit, and makes a good woodland shrub, but somehow lacks quality as a cut flower, being, I think, a little too dark a crimson. This criticism could also be levelled at R. 'Impi' A.M. (*didymum* x 'Moser's Maroon') with loose, hanging clusters of almost black, bell-shaped flowers which need the sun to liven them up.

Perhaps the very finest scarlet crimson Rhododendron raised by Mr L. de Rothschild is 'Romany Chal' F.C.C. ('Moser's Maroon x *facetum*). This plant has the fullest of trusses carried erect on the shrub and has the added advantage of not blooming until the middle of June.

In "Witchers Wood" most of the larger specimen plants are Lowinsky hybrids, purchased by Mr Rothschild some twenty years ago. The three large *R. lacteum* from Werrington Park have dwindled to one. What a shame it is that this Rhododendron (perhaps the finest of the species), is so hard to cultivate. I am given to understand that even at Werrington Park, the home of British *lacteums*, this species is giving cause for anxiety.

- opposite -
Exbury House in 1946.



In most cases, the same must be said of *R. lacteum* progeny and I wonder if we are wise in using it as a parent of new hybrids? I have handled many hundreds of seedling hybrids of this fine species and in most cases they are "sticky" or bad doers. There are exceptions of course, and the best of all the *R. lacteum* hybrids at Exbury is R. 'Mariloo' (*lacteum* x 'Doctor Stocker'). This plant does grow well and Mr Rothschild, a very good judge of a good Rhododendron, named it 'Mariloo' after his wife, Mrs L. de Rothschild. This is first rate, but flowers of the better forms have not to date been exhibited. The var. 'Gilbury' received an Award of Merit when shown in April 1943, but this plant received an E. label when classified, which means it was rated about fifth. The A. plant, which is R. 'Mariloo', has a huge branch of funnel-shaped blooms which form a complete truss of pure yellow flowers.

Personally the B. plant of the cross holds my admiration; true it is not so unique a yellow as R. 'Mariloo', but the extra large perfect trusses outshine most Rhododendrons I know for quality and size, rivalling R. 'Loderi'. This plant has not been given a varietal name, but as it is so distinct, having a large blotch at the base of the lobes, it will undoubtedly receive one in due course.

R. lacteum x *R. cinnamomeum* makes 'Endeavour', a good woodland plant with typical *arboreum* habit. The better forms have cream and white flowers, but the majority poor pink shades which need weeding out.

R. 'Jocelyne' (*lacteum* x *calophytum*) flowers during April, has dense white blooms of good substance borne in an erect truss prominently displayed, and will make a good plant for favoured gardens.

R. lacteum x orange *caloxanthum* is R. 'Joanita', and the orange flowers, fading to a rich yellow, are nearly perfect, but need another generation to add those extra two or three blooms to "top up" the truss and give us perfection.

R. 'Penjerrick' x *lacteum* gives us R. 'Jason', another yellow with flowers of more tubular form, but to date the plants seem woefully slow, and fastidious.

While we are on the subject of *R. lacteum,* I should like to mention that a fine young batch of this species about 4 to 5 feet high, with a perfect *lacteum* leaf, flowered for the first time last season, and I am sorry to record that none proved yellow, not even a creamy white, but a miserable dirty pink.

Before I pass along to R. 'Lady Bessborough', we must mention *R. microgynum* Gymnocarpum, a beautiful species which received an Award of Merit when shown, and also received first prize at the recent Rhododendron Show in the class for a vase of "Any other species". This plant has deep crimson flowers which hang in abundance and is a great favourite of the writer.

R. 'Lady Bessborough' (*discolor* x *campylocarpum* Elatum) is a well known, excellent Rhododendron, and must rate very high in the list of Exbury hybrid Rhododendrons. The First Class Certificate form has rich stone cream flowers with a reddish marking at the base. The var. 'Roberta' also received the highest award from the Royal Horticultural Society, but this has pinkish flowers.

R. 'Lady Bessborough' was used by Mr de Rothschild extensively for hybridising with happy results, perhaps the most successful being the 'Hawk' cross, R. 'Lady Bessborough' x *R. wardii*. Many forms of this cross have been shown at Vincent Square, but the flowers from the best plant have yet to be exhibited. This has rich, yellow, saucer-shaped flowers, grown on a medium ideally-formed plant which carried the trusses most prominently. Many plants of this cross have flowers less flat in shape with a chocolate-coloured blotch; this

- *opposite* -
The Home Wood.

type is known as var. 'Jervis Bay'. R. 'Lady Bessborough' x *griersonianum* is R. 'Day Dream'. This Rhododendron we met earlier on in the "Home Wood". However, R. 'Lady Bessborough' x *dichroanthum* gives us R. 'Jasper', a later-flowering Rhododendron with good yellow, rather tubular flowers, and again with *R. souliei* we have R. 'Halcyone', another fine medium-growing woodland plant which does not cut to the best advantage, and is one of those trusses of flowers which need the whole colony on the plant for its value to be appreciated. The cream-coloured varieties are mostly admired, but some of the soft pink shades are rather exquisite, and are worthy of varietal names. There are many more hybrids of R. 'Lady Bessborough', but we must pass on and come to R. 'Naomi', a fine hardy plant named after Mr de Rothschild's youngest daughter. This R. 'Aurora' x *fortunei* hybrid always makes a fine show in the woodland during the whole of May. Several varieties of this cross have been honoured by the R.H.S., var. 'Stella Maris', a good pink, was awarded the F.C.C., but there are two other forms I prefer. First and foremost 'Exbury' var. A.M. This cream to biscuit colour Rhododendron has a fine full truss, is most free flowering, with good foliage, and everything which makes a first-rate Rhododendron. Next in order I would place var. 'Nautilus' A.M., this has the same qualities regarding habit, but the colouring of the flower is totally different, being a soft shade of pink with some luminous pale mauve running through it.

R. 'Naomi' 'Exbury' var. has also helped to fill the Exbury stud-book of Rhododendrons. Crossed with *R. lacteum* it has imparted some "blood" which has really made a good healthy batch of plants nearly 6 feet high with true lacteum-like leaves, but to date no flowers; however this pleasure is shortly to come, I hope.

Hybridised with *R. wardii* it gives us R. 'Idealist' A.M., another plant of ideal habit, it appears that all the *R. wardii* crosses more or less give us a nice compact type of shrub. This Rhododendron has pale cream flattish flowers of good size forming a very pleasing truss.

R. 'Naomi' 'Exbury' var. x *campylocarpum* makes R. 'Carita' A.M. The best forms of the hybrid are pale lemon in colour, while other varieties of the cross vary considerably into pinks.

Near by the R. 'Carita' we have R. 'Ibex' (*pocophorum* x *griersonianum*), a good red, but one which somehow "just misses the bus"; this is not the case with the extra fine blood red R. 'Gaul' ('Shilsonii' x *elliottii*), for in substance and trueness of colour this Rhododendron is hard to beat.

R. 'Ivanhoe' ('Chanticleer' x *griersonianum*) has received the Award of Merit, an honour bestowed on R. 'Gaul' also, but R. 'Ivanhoe' is more scarlet and later in blooming. We pass the huge plants of *R. chasmanthum* F.C.C. interplanted with *R. bauhiniiflorum,* both blooming together, mauve and yellow, and so out of "Witchers Wood" leaving hundreds of Rhododendrons not mentioned, but time and space is limited and we travel over the large stone bridge into "Yard Wood", so called as in ancient times the Monks came to this wood where the Yew trees grow so well to get a Yard (rod) to make their bows with. One very old Yew tree still survives which is reputed to be mentioned in the Domesday book.

Yard Wood.

Shortly after crossing the bridge we come upon a large planting of R. 'Eddy' A.M. (*kaempferi* x 'Apollo'), named after the present owner; this fine brick-red dwarf plant needs a shady spot to prevent the sun from scorching its flowers.

Away on our right are many young hybrid crosses planted out awaiting the time to bloom:

R. 'Major' (*thomsonii* x *haematodes*) flowered last year and is most promising;

R. 'Hermes' (*apodectum* x 'Lady Bessborough') a good yellow;

R. 'Moonglow' ('Loderi Venus' x 'Lady Bessborough') a lovely well-named Rhododendron;

and R. 'Memory' ('King George' x *haematodes*).

Another good red medium-growing plant is R. 'Mandalay' (*haematodes* x *venator*): this free-blooming shrub is not more than 2½ to 3 feet in height, and makes a wonderfully good edging plant for the woodland paths.

We journey along the main road by the large batch of R. 'Cornish Cross' 'Exbury' var. into the dell beyond, with banks of Azalea hybrids on either side and with a background of *Acer palmatum* and its varieties *atropurpureum, septemlobum, sanguineum,* etc. These Azaleas are mostly, if not all, Exbury hybrids of fine quality, size and colour. Outstanding varieties are 'Balzac', 'Basilisk', and 'Brazil', all more or less bright orange; 'Berryrose', a good large pink, 'Hotspur' and 'Knighthood' of rich crimson. All the aforementioned Azaleas have received the Award of Merit. Other varieties of note are 'Fawley' and 'Klondyke', yellow, 'Gilbury' and 'Kathleen', pink, 'Royal Lodge' and 'Kipps', orange red, and 'Scarlet Pimpernel' the best dark crimson. I believe it would be wise here to give a little history of the origin of these hybrids as records of their early ancestry seem very vague. Mr Anthony Waterer, of Knaphill, a great pioneer in the early days of Rhododendron hybridisation, was very fond of azaleas, and got together a fine batch of azalea hybrids. There is little doubt that he purchased a consignment of azalea hybrids from Holland [the Netherlands]. They were then known as 'sinensis' and 'mollis' hybrids. We all know that 'sinensis' and 'mollis' should now read *molle* and *japonicum* respectively. Then he commenced to hybridise to improve their quality, and during this operation he probably added a touch of the American Azaleas *calendulaceum* and *occidentale*, as he was partial to these plants.

Mr de Rothschild was fortunate enough to persuade Mr Anthony Waterer to sell him a few choice ones. Amongst them was a very good yellow of fine substance named 'George Reynolds'. This was used very intensively together with the species *molle* (true) to further improve the Knaphill strain. Since then, by carefully selecting the best pinks to cross together, and likewise the other colours, and by keeping the colours together and not mixing them when hybridising, the Exbury strain of Azaleas has become very famous and the plants are well worth a visit when in flower.

Passing the large rock garden on our right (which we will visit later) we admire a large group of R. 'Albatross' F.C.C. ('Loderi' x *discolor*) which is at its best in late May and the early part of June. This Rhododendron, with its huge trusses of white, pink-flushed flowers, is one of the best Exbury crosses.

R. 'Albatross' is a strong grower and needs plenty of room; this also applies to R. 'Angelo' A.M. (*griffithianum* x *discolor*). Its varieties 'Solent Swan' and 'Solent Queen' A.M. differ only in the colour markings at the base of the flowers. This part of the garden contains many *discolor* hybrids, all of which make a grand show during early June. One of the most showy is R. 'Antonio' A.M. ('Gill's Triumph' x *discolor*), rather late to open its real rich pink flowers. R. 'Avocet' (*discolor* x *fortunei*) has a bad flower for cutting, but is a first-rate hardy Rhododendron, with sweet-scented white blooms.

Before we leave the *discolor* hybrids, mention should be made of R. 'Bonito' A.M. (*discolor* x 'Luscombei'). This very stately, large-growing plant carries well built-up trusses of white flowers heavily marked with pink.

Last of this group, R. 'Sir Frederick Moore' F.C.C. (*discolor* x 'St. Keverne') is placed last but is in no way least of this fine group of hybrids. Both the F.C.C. form and its variety 'Coronation', with deeper pink flowers, make handsome shrubs for gardens with abundant space.

Turning left from the main drive, the large group of *R. cinnabarinum* catches the eye, and as we pass the little neat-growing R. 'Abalone' (*campylocarpum* x *callimorphum*) with their many shades of white to cream and all kinds of dainty pinks, we come face to face with the "Blue and Yellow" corner, with its many large plants of *R. augustinii* interplanted with fine specimens of *R. campylocarpum,* and towering above them the stately 100 feet Silver Firs, *Abies pectinata*.

Near by are quite a group of recent hybrids, with R. 'Golden Horn' (so badly named) outstanding. This *dichroanthum* x *elliottii* hybrid is a general favourite, and surprisingly hardy. A garden in north Shropshire with many of the Exbury creations suffered severely a winter or two ago, but R. 'Golden Horn' came through unscathed. Its waxy orange-red, bell-shaped flowers last on the plant over a considerable time. When shown in London last year it was given an Award of Merit together with R. 'Grosclaude', a really fine red hybrid of *R. haematodes* x *R. facetum*.

We are now approaching the summer garden with many *auriculatum* crosses, many of which are very disappointing. Perhaps the best two descendants from this very late flowering Rhododendron are R. 'Polar Bear' and R. 'Isabella', creations of Tower Court and Leonardslee respectively. These are both well represented, and form the background for many smaller plants. However, two of Mr Lionel de Rothschild's crosses from this Rhododendron should be mentioned. Crossed with *R. facetum* we get R. 'Dragonfly', a handsome foliage plant with fine many-flowered trusses of deep rose bloom. Hybridised with R. 'Penjerrick' it has produced R. 'Bustard', which Mr de Rothschild thought so highly of that he used it with *R. dichroanthum* and in turn he had R. 'Kingcup' A.M., a beautiful late yellow Rhododendron.

The Summer Garden.

This summer garden was established to help its owner realize an ambition with Rhododendron culture, which was to have Rhododendrons of some sort in flower the whole year round.

R. 'Europa' (*ungernii* x *kyawii*) brought the achievement one step nearer, and R. 'Exburiense' (*didymum* x *kyawii*), flowering right into August, helped yet again. The last mentioned Rhododendron is certainly a fine colour, and marvellously late, but to me it always seems unworthy of the name it owned.

Numerous late Rhododendrons, especially *R. kyawii* crosses have yet to flower; many are excellent foliage plants, especially *R. auriculatum* x *R. kyawii,* a beautiful pink-flowered plant as yet unnamed. We will leave these late Rhododendrons to grow and mature, and travel back to the rock garden.

The Rock Garden.

Here we look down into what was once a huge long gravel pit. Much work in the laying of stones, the irrigation of the whole place, even to underground pipes to moisten the roots of *R. forrestii* Repens, was carried out, yet, somehow, it was not the success hoped for. Fine masses of Subsection *Triflora,* mostly *R. yunnanense,* fringe the edge of the pit and look extremely well, as did generous batches of *R. scintillans* ['Policy'] F.C.C., Rock No. 29583 [no such field number exists and the only *R. scintillans* Joseph Rock collected was placed under his field number R 11319, which is USDA code 59598]. *R. edgeworthii* grew well against the rocks as did *R. forrestii* Repens, but I should have appreciated a little

- *opposite* -

The Augustinii Walk.



more bloom from this plant. This was not the case with R. 'Carmen' (*forrestii* Repens x *didymum*), for this compact little grower flowers profusely. Far too many mauves and blues were first planted, but recently an attempt was made to relieve the monotony with plants of R. 'Yellow Hammer', white *R. flavidum,* the white *R. lapponicum, R. x microleucum, R. leucaspis* (needing shelter), *R. pemakoense, R. chryseum,* etc. Exbury cannot claim to have worked much on the hybridisation of these dwarf or alpine Rhododendrons, and as this article is entitled "Exbury Rhododendrons", meaning more or less Exbury Hybrid Rhododendrons, we will not tarry longer amongst the sandstone and dwarf shrublets.

In Conclusion.

Before I finish this note it is only fitting to report that the Royal Horticultural Society have fully appreciated the amount of work done by awarding about thirty First Class Certificates, and well over one hundred Awards of Merit to Rhododendrons shown from the Exbury Gardens. In addition, groups of Rhododendrons and Azaleas have won many R.H.S. Gold Medals, together with the Jubilee Cup, Coronation Cup, Cain Cup several times, and the Rhododendron Cup many times.

I am afraid my space in the first Rhododendron Year Book of the Royal Horticultural Society is now more or less exhausted, and I feel deeply that I have only rendered a very poor account of the great work my late esteemed employer endeavoured to carry out.

The praise of hundreds of his hybrids remains unsung, but one would need to write a whole book to approach in any way perfection in this account of Exbury Rhododendrons.

As already recorded, the late Mr Lionel de Rothschild's greatest ambition was to create Rhododendrons which would bloom during every month of the year, but failing this, to prolong substantially their flowering period well into the autumn season.

Great is the pity that an untimely death robbed him of the pleasure of retiring from his London business, to enjoy in leisure the fruits of his untiring efforts; and that, alas, he was not spared the evening of his life to enjoy the culmination of his work and to witness in his beloved woodlands the flowering of some of his most beautiful later hybrids.

- opposite left -
The Rock Garden.

- right -
Major de Rothschild in ceremonial uniform, *c.* 1905.



As indicated by the author, Francis Hanger's article was originally included in the first edition of *The Rhododendron Year Book,* published in 1946 by the Royal Horticultural Society after the restrictions imposed during the Second World War were lifted. The text has been updated to reflect the current Section-Subsection taxonomy and Edinburgh Revision synonymy rather than maintain the now long redundant Balfourian Series-Subseries concepts and the epithets of yesteryear. However, the parentage equations have been left as first reported, despite the fact that some of these reverse the now accepted combinations that appear in the 2004 Second Edition of the *International Rhododendron Register And Checklist*.

Some Notes On Rhododendrons.

by Lionel N. de Rothschild, V.M.H.

Published in *The Rhododendron Year Book 1953* and continued in *The Rhododendron and Camellia Year Book 1954,* the placing-planting and species notes were written between 1940 and 1941, the hybrid diary in 1938, but both were only found in the archives of the Rothschild Bank at New Court, London - by Lionel's eldest son, Edmund - over a decade later. Recombined here, the text has not been updated, so it reflects the nomenclature and classification of the genus in use at the time. It also employs the pre-decimalisation unitary standards as defined in the British Weights and Measures Act of 1824.

To supplement the 1953-1954 coverage of Genus *Rhododendron,* a number of Series and Sub-series that were missing from the rediscovered accounts were sourced from earlier editions of the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* and this practice has been extended herein to provide a complete picture of the genus as it was understood by Lionel de Rothschild at the time of writing. All eleven Association Year Books and their four supplements are now freely available to download from the RCMG website at

https://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/publications/books/rhodo-assoc-year-book

and those sourced inserts are credited where they appear in this text.

THE PLACING AND PLANTING OF RHODODENDRONS

Rhododendrons, in which are included Azaleas, can be found in flower in suitable gardens in Great Britain and Ireland between the months of January and August. There is no section of hardwoods which has such an extensive range and though, of course, the early flowering species and hybrids are frequently cut by frost in many of our gardens when in full beauty, yet it is only the flowers which vanish, and the gamble of being able to enjoy their beauty often gives a real thrill to the happy owner.

After 1918 the fashion of our gardens changed considerably, hardwoods taking the place of herbaceous borders or bedding out plants in many of them; as the cost of their upkeep is infinitely less, it looks as if this trend will continue should there be any gardening in the future.

Luckily Rhododendrons and Azaleas are easily grown plants in the right situation. Their essential requirement is an acid soil; it is no good trying to grow them on chalk or on any soil which is even slightly alkaline. Even a neutral soil is not good for them, though the addition of acid leaf mould or peat to a neutral soil will enable them to be grown in a few specially prepared beds. But on an acid soil, whether it be sandy, gravelly, or even clay, they will flourish.

An ideal situation is open woodland, as a little shade from the hot summer sun will enable the flowers to last much longer and there will also be protection from wind and frost, which is so necessary for the big leaved Rhododendrons. There are some soils which only require trenching, such as the greensands in many of the gardens in Cornwall, Wales and the west coast of Scotland. The Bagshot sands also require little addition, though oak leaf mould or spent hops will help the plants to get a start. Hot dry gravelly soil requires the addition of leaf mould and a few spent hops as well if they can be obtained. Providing that sufficient leaf mould is added to an acid dry soil, contrary to general belief, Rhododendrons will flourish and require less watering than in many a light gravelly soil.

Now having discussed soil, what is the climate required? Along the sea coast from Cornwall to Oban sheltered valleys and woodlands form the ideal situation for a Rhododendron garden. But there are many situations in Sussex and Surrey, in Hampshire and Dorset, in Berkshire and Cheshire, where, in gardens which do not suffer from excessive spring frosts, all but the most tender Rhododendrons will flourish, though the early flowering plants may not be so satisfactory. Low-lying districts, like the Knap Hill Nursery or the Royal Horticulture Society's gardens at Wisley, where frosts occur right up to June, are only suitable for the very hardiest.

Rainfall is also very important. Here again the west coast of this country enjoys a much bigger rainfall than, say, Kew, and perhaps the worst place of all for summer rain is either the east coast of England or that little strip of land along the Solent in which Exbury occurs, where the rainfall is so scanty that a great deal of watering has to be done to keep alive and in good health the Chinese and Himalayan Rhododendrons, which are used to the annual monsoon in their native habitat. Their hybrids also require more water than the hardy Rhododendrons emanating from the nursery trade. But fortunately not all gardens are as dry as Exbury and even in the New Forest (though the garden, not being so close to the sea, may be colder) the rainfall is adequate without a great deal of attention. It is, of course, the newly planted Rhododendrons and Azaleas which require special attention; well established plants can look after themselves and only in an exceptional period of draught do they require attention. Wind, sun, drought and spring frosts are the greatest enemies of Rhododendrons. Shelter from wind is essential for healthy plants; a certain amount of shade is also essential. Oak trees give the best shade and their roots do the least harm. But I have seen Rhododendrons grow very well in open woodland where Scotch Fir predominate though their roots are apt to be a nuisance. Cherry trees - the wild Gean, or any other species or even the stronger growing hybrids; Magnolias, especially the tall growing ones; Beech trees or Spanish Chestnuts, although less good, will do, but the ordinary Horse Chestnut is poison as their leaves turn alkaline very quickly after falling. Roots of Elm or Ash take all the nourishment out of the soil for many yards around, so they are not much good, nor do I like Sycamores, though many Maples are suitable and nothing is prettier than a combination of Japanese Maples and Azaleas. In districts where honey fungus exists, the roots of the Birch tree are apt to suffer from this, though they are also pleasant trees in the woodland and the hardier hybrids flourish near them: not, however, the species.

Now if you own a piece of woodland and wish to make a Rhododendron garden there, what are the steps to take? First of all go through it carefully and cut down all inferior trees, grubbing out their roots or pulling them out with a monkey-wrench. Then make up your mind where the path is going to be and where your main planting of Rhododendrons and Azaleas will be: and it is always better to keep Rhododendrons and deciduous Azaleas apart as it is very difficult to get the colour scheme right. When you have done this, if necessary take down some of the better trees here and there so as to give sufficient room overhead for the summer rain to get in and thoroughly wet your plants. Then in the winter bastard trench the open ground, keeping right away from the roots of the trees so as not to spoil them and being careful not to trench right under the shade of the branches. It is well known that a few Oak trees will even keep a certain amount of frost away when they are bare of leaves, and Scotch Fir will do the same: but if you do wish to plant one or two early flowering Rhododendrons with shelter of this kind you will have to look after them by watering them continually in dry weather and by seeing that the roots of the trees do not get right through the balls of their roots. Fortunately Rhododendrons as a rule are easily moved plants, and so are Azaleas, though when they come from nursery gardens their root ball is sometimes on the small side, and a few spent hops mixed with the soil which is put around the ball will help the roots get into it. When you have the ground ready, then comes the arrangement of the colour scheme and the planting.

Rhododendrons and Azaleas will fit into a garden of any size and even if the ground available is very small, dwarf Rhododendrons can be obtained and a great deal of pleasure gained from them. But their real home is, of course, the woodland where the ground can be explored in advance and the Rhododendrons need only be planted as the ground is ready or the plants can be acquired; indeed, in suitable localities they grow quickly and move easily, and so for some years after planting they can be thinned out and spread farther and father apart. This especially applies to Azaleas which, to give a mass effect of colour, have to be planted fairly close: with care, and a little leaf mould or spent hops around them, they can safely be moved even if they have been some years in the same locality.

I have already stated that Rhododendrons and Azaleas do not as a rule mix well, though the big-leaved Rhododendrons, such as *Falconeri,* and the later flowering ones, such as *discolor* and *auriculatum,* would form a good evergreen background if required. Some of the evergreen Azaleas, however, form a good foreground to either species or some the better coloured hybrids. For example, a few 'Hinomayo' in front of a plant or two of *Augustinii* and *campylocarpum* would make a pretty picture. As they can all be moved if a colour scheme is disliked, a mistake in planting is easily rectified.

It is a great mistake to imagine that a better effect can be secured from hardy hybrids than from species; but it is equally a mistake to despise the hardy hybrids and only plant species: there is plenty of room for both and a mixture will give a longer time of flowering and the variety of the flowers will add interest.

In the succeeding sections will be found lists of hardy Rhododendrons with their colours, their hardiness and their approximate date of flowering - their degree of hardiness I have taken from the *Year Book* of the Rhododendron Association. Lists of species will follow and also of azaleas, but I do not propose to give comprehensive lists of all of these, only those which, from experience at Exbury, I consider of sufficient value for the ordinary amateur who is fond of colour and effects in his garden to get benefit in planting. Those with more ambition can obtain fuller knowledge by getting the *Rhododendron Year Books and Handbook,* or from *The Species of Rhododendron* published by the Rhododendron Society, which includes lists of all Rhododendron species so far described.

But no garden will give the same amount of pleasure unless it contains some hybrids raised by the owner. I think I have obtained more pleasure in the last twenty years from seeing my own hybrids grow and flower - in spite of the fact that many have been failures - than from any other form of gardening. But bad failures need not occur if simple rules are followed. Here again, a separate section is required, and at the end of this will be found a list, not only of some of the most successful crosses made at Exbury, but also some of the failures, in order that others may not fall into the same pitfall into which I stumbled.

RHODODENDRON SPECIES

Anyone who has read Kingdon-Ward's descriptions of his journeys in the Himalayas and Chinese Alps will have gathered what a magnificent splash of colour the wild Rhododendrons make in their native habitat, from the large-leaved denizens of the forest, with their yellow and pink flowers, through the many coloured dwellers of the open woodland to the shades of mauve and purple, and even yellow, of the dwarf denizens of the higher alps, which they cover like heather on the Scotch hills. It is an extraordinary fact that so many of these flourish in our climate, and although there are some stubborn and recalcitrant members of this great family, in the milder parts of our country a large proportion are prepared to display their beauty annually for our benefit. It would be useless to re-enumerate in these pages species which are not in cultivation, others which do not take kindly to our climate, or a large number which are of no value to the garden, for these notes are written for the garden lover, who wants every plant he posses to give some return for the space it occupies. Tastes differ and change, and first it is blood-red that attracts a Rhododendron collector, but it is not long before he finds that whites and pinks, yellows and even purples have as great, if not greater, charm. I know that at first too many reds were planted at Exbury and these have long ago given to others of softer hues, though of course reds are still there in large quantities.

The following description of species of Rhododendron that I have flowered or seen in flower may be a help to those about to start in this most fascinating branch of horticulture. They are arranged in their series.

ARBOREUM

I suppose *Rhododendron arboreum* is better known to most travellers to the Himalayas than any other species. First sent home by Captain Hardwicke and Dr. Wallich, and then by Joseph Hooker, who distributed seeds to many Cornish and Scotch gardens, it has acclimatised itself well along the south and west coasts, and anybody who has seen it in flower at Lochinch is fully aware of the magnificent display it makes. At Heligan also, in Cornwall, it is magnificent in flower, but in both these places varieties *roseum* and *album* predominate, though in one of the woods at Caerhays large specimens of the blood-red variety - the type - give a fine display when they are in flower, and at Tregothnan there is even an avenue of these. A tree of 30-40 ft. in height, it requires twenty years at least before it displays its beauty to full advantage, but from then on the lucky owner will have a gorgeous display in early spring. It is, however, only hardy along the coast, though in warm inland gardens the white and pink varieties will flourish. Its variety *cinnamomeum* is also perhaps hardier, characterised by the deep brown indumentum on the undersurface of the leaf; it is slower growing and less tall than the type: its flowers are usually white or pink and I think the colours are cleaner and purer than *arboreum* itself. At Lochinch there are many minor varieties differing in indumentum and shape of leaf, but certainly they are not better garden plants and need not concern us here. *R. zeylanicum* (to which *Kingianum* has been reduced) also has flowers of pink, white or red, and is only mentioned here because there is a deep red form which flowers in June and which has raised valuable hybrids; it is a tender plant though and only fit for very warm gardens. The same remark applies to *Delavayi,* the Chinese form of *arboreum,* which is too tender for most gardens. Its blood-red form is as fine, if not finer, than *arboreum* itself, but even in Cornwall the frost of 1939-40 damaged it severely.

Others in the Arboreum Series and Subseries Arboreum, which will find their way into gardens, are *niveum,* a silvery-leaved plant with dull purple flowers in tight little trusses, which have to be kept away from all reds and pinks; it is of no great garden value, though amongst the large-leaved pale yellows it will give a change of colour at the end of April or early May; *silvaticum,* sent home by Kingdon-Ward, has so far been a disappointment as its reddish flowers have a distinct trace of blue in them and it is only mentioned here as a warning.

Subseries Argyrophyllum of the Arboreum Series contains no showy plants, yet many are very pretty in their modest way, and to anybody with plenty of room an odd plant will give great pleasure. This subseries also consists of hardier plants which will grow in all except cold Rhododendron gardens or in exposed places; *argyrophyllum,* a shrub of 20 ft. in height, with small pink bells in a loose truss, is quite pretty when it has reached flowering size: but here again patience has to be exercised as it is only free-flowering when



R. arboreum ssp. *arboreum* ‘Rubaiyat’ AM 1968 at Exbury



R. arboreum ssp. *arboreum* at Exbury

it has reached maturity. The same can be said of *hypoglaucum,* with its narrower leaves, beautifully white underneath, and its small trusses of white flowers, as clean as chintz. *R. floribundum,* with its purple flowers in early April, a shrub of 15 ft. or so in height, will make its displays at an earlier age, but many forms are rather an unpleasant purple; the best is undoubtedly that grown by Colonel Stephenson Clarke at Borde Hill and this, like *niveum,* wants to be kept away from any reds. *Hunnewellianum* also must be kept to itself: flowering in March and April, it is very free, with pale pinky-lilac flowers, spotted within, which again will not mix with any reds.

Nor will *Ririei,* a shrub eventually 18 ft. in height, with dull purple flowers, almost scarlet in bud, and flowering in February or early March; quite hardy, its early flowering makes it only suitable for sheltered gardens and it takes years before it flowers freely. Two other Rhododendrons in this subseries must be mentioned - *insigne,* with its pointed leaves, plastered with yellowish shiny indumentum underneath, and its trusses of pinky-white flowers with crimson spots inside, flowering in May and June: it is slow growing. At Bodnant it makes a magnificent display every year, but I think it must be fairly old to show its real beauty. *Thayerianum,* has little white or pinkish flowers in small trusses of nodding bells, which it never opens till the end of June: it is exceedingly useful for prolonging the flowering season - with its slender dark green, leathery leaves it is very pretty in the woodland at that time of year. Unfortunately, however, it is not easy to obtain.

AURICULATUM

The Auriculatum Series contains two species, both of which are worthy of cultivation in our gardens. The first, *auriculatum* itself, is one of the last of the species to flower, being usually in full beauty at Exbury the first week in August. It forms a large shrub, 15 ft. or more in height and as much through, and its sweet-scented white flowers are attractive: if the weather is not too hot it sheds its leaves annually after flowering, just after the new growth has been made and, unless there are rains, requires watering to help these to develop properly. It does not flower freely until it is about fifteen years in age, but after that time it never misses provided it is not allowed to set seed the previous year.

The other member of the series - *Griersonianum* - a rather sprawling shrub of 5 ft. or more in height, with soft geranium-scarlet flowers in June, is perhaps the most striking of Forrest's introductions. Its hybrids have produced new forms of colour in hardy or semi-hardy Rhododendrons and in itself it make a beautiful picture. Quite hardy along the sea coast and in warm inland gardens, it has been killed to the ground in cold damp places inland, not only in the winter of 1939-40 but also 1926-7. It is well worth experimenting with. The last sending of seed of this species from the wild, by Forrest, has produced forms with deeper red flowers, one at Exbury being almost blood-red but with no blue in it whatsoever.

AZALEA *

Easy as it is to write about the Auriculatum Series, a very much more difficult task is afforded by the Azalea Series, a series which is so large and important that they form the subject of a large book written by Rehder and Wilson, to which book I would refer all members of this Association who desire fuller information than they may find in these notes.

When the word "azalea" is mentioned one's mind either turns to the indica or greenhouse variety which decorates the florists' shops in the early part of the year, and which anybody who has been to Ghent probably never wishes to see again, or to the many showy garden hybrids which have emanated from nursery gardeners and which, easily grown, make such a display in our gardens at the end of May or early June. But although many rhododendrons of the Azalea Series are not so gaudy, yet many others are most attractive and a large number are worth a little extra trouble to place properly and help to form "the garden beautiful".

The Azalea Series is divided up into six subseries and consists of both evergreen and deciduous shrubs, usually medium size but sometimes small trees.

The Subseries Canadense consists of but four species and they are all worth growing. *R. Albrechtii,* a deciduous shrub about 3 feet high so far as I have seen it in this country, a native of Japan, is perhaps one of the most distinct azaleas in the whole series. In its best forms the colour of its flowers is a rich glowing rose of the purest tint: its small flat flowers, which are only 2 inches across, can be seen a long way off against the bright fresh green of the new leaves at the end of April or early May, and a group of this kept away from any clashing colours is a most beautiful sight. It is, however, fastidious and rare in this country. I think it likes a cool bed with semi-shade and plenty of leaf mould and does not like much summer drought. At one nursery garden where it is grown there is a long waiting list for it, though of course it can be procured from Japan and I have seedlings growing at Exbury. *R. canadense,* which used to be called Rhododendron Rhodora or Rhodora canadensis, is the northernmost species of the Azalea Series. It has long been known in our gardens and is quite pretty with its deciduous bluish-green leaves and its little purple flowers in early May - while attractive it is not so showy as many of its near relations. *R. pentaphyllum*, on the other hand, is another delightful azalea, most handsome and admired by all who see it in flower. It is a deciduous many-branched shrub, or even a small tree up to 25 feet in height, with attractive green foliage colouring brilliantly in the autumn. It also has flowers of a lovely rose-pink hue but, like so many species, it is shy flowering when young, and a plant I have grown at Exbury for seven years had its first flower last spring. It is easily distinct from *R. quinquefolium,* to which I shall refer later, the latter having white flowers, and the rhododendron which is sometimes sold as *R. quinquefolium roseum* is in reality *R. pentaphyllum*. It also likes semi-shade in the woodland with cool soil and plenty of leaf mould and is impatient of summer drought. The last of this subseries, *R. Vaseyi,* another deciduous shrub from eastern North America, is perfectly hardy anywhere in this country and most attractive in flower, covered with its pale pink blossoms before any foliage comes out. It is less fastidious than any other member of the series and easily grown in the garden, but I rather fancy a little shade from the mid-day sun is a great help to it, though it likes an open situation.

The Subseries Luteum is responsible for the large azalea hybrids that decorate our gardens in the summer months. Most of them are from America, though one is from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and two from China and Japan. All are deciduous upright shrubs, rarely nearly tree-like, and this description applies to any of the Subseries Luteum which are described hereafter. *R. arborescens,* the first of the series to require mention, comes from eastern North America. It is an attractive shrub or small tree, with rather small trusses of white or pink flowers coming after the leaves are fully developed and somewhat later than the average flowering period of azaleas. Although nothing like so showy as the garden hybrids it is yet attractive enough to be worthy of a place in the woodland, both in flower and foliage. Its variety *Richardsonii,* from the higher mountains, is more dwarf. *R. calendulaceum,* with its orange or scarlet flowers, is a parent of some of our finest hybrids and is itself well worth a place in the garden, if only because both this and the species I have just described, have different shaped flowers from the majority of the garden azaleas,

* The Azalea, Boothii, Campylogynum, Camelliaeflorum and Camtschaticum Series paragraphs are sourced from the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* 1934, pp. 93-111.

also, being species, they are more refined. *R. japonicum,* the wild Japanese deciduous azalea, has large orange to red flowers in many-flowered clusters, and large leaves glabrescent beneath. It has been called "mollis" and "sinensis" and is a parent of what are known as the Mollis-sinensis hybrids. By itself, though not so showy, it is worth growing. The next on the list, *R. luteum,* formerly known as Azalea pontica, from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, is perhaps one of the least showy of this section with its pale yellow flowers, but they are intensely fragrant, while it has the additional advantage of brilliant autumn colouring. It is the easiest grown of all the azalea species and is well worth a place in the wild garden. *R. molle,* from the mountains of eastern or central China, has large yellow flowers with large leaves greyish beneath. It also was known as "sinense" at one time and is the second of the species to be used in hybridisation in the mollis-sinensis hybrids. It has lately been re-introduced both by Forrest and Rock and, as growing at Exbury, is every bit as showy as many of the hybrids, while the colours are a truer yellow. *R. nudiflorum* is one of the earliest to flower, with white or light pink blossoms before the leaves have developed. *R. occidentale,* with its white or pinky-white flowers, sweetly scented, is, on the other hand, one of the latest to flower. Its hybrids are many and gloriously beautiful, but the species itself is also most attractive and no garden should be without it. *R. prunifolium,* I believe, has magnificent light crimson flowers, but I know of only three plants in English gardens which have flowered, and with which the owner is immensely taken. It is one of the lesser known of the North American azaleas and is not too hardy. *R. roseum,* closely allied to *nudiflorum,* has bright pink flowers, rarely whitish, while last of all *R. viscosum,* which is also the last to flower, is an azalea which I would not be without as, following on the long succession of bloom, it fills the garden with sweetness even in July, and when it has reached a certain size its free-flowering white or pinkish blooms may not be showy but are yet a very pleasant reminder of what has gone before.

The Subseries Nipponicum, which only contains one species, is of little general interest.

It is a very different matter, however, when one comes to the Subseries Obtusum, which is the largest subseries of this section containing about 29 species, from east and south-east Asia, and includes the species which are responsible for our greenhouse azaleas and the little Kurumes which make our gardens so gay in the spring. A great many of them, however, are of little garden value and I will pass these without mentioning them, confining myself to those which are of general interest, and I will commence with *R. indicum,* which is not, as is usually thought, the parent of the Azalea indica of the trade but really has nothing to do with it. It is, however, to be found in our gardens, usually under the name of Azalea rosaeflora, which is a pretty, double salmon-red flowered shrub of dwarf spreading habit, quite hardy in the south but rather fastidious as to situation as it likes a good soil and semi-shade. *R. linearifolium* is amusing, as the garden form, with very fine leaves and equally finely tinted flowers, was known before the plant and the variety is therefore recognised as a species. It is worth having one in the garden as a curiosity but it is of no floral beauty. *R. mucronatum* should, however, be in every garden and in quantity - Azalea ledifolium of the trade, it is a dwarf spreading shrub, in height usually 3-4 or sometimes 6-10 feet, with large single white flowers - it forms a most excellent front row shrub and its colour enables it to be placed anywhere as a foil to any rhododendron or shrub, while even out of flower its green foliage is always pleasant. In some forms it seems to be rather more deciduous than others and there are forms with pale lilac or pink flowers. So far as I know it is hardy everywhere in the south and altogether is one of the most desirable of these evergreen azaleas. When we come to *R. obtusum* we come to a very puzzling species, which really has been so split up into various forms in our gardens that it is difficult to imagine they all belong to the same plant. In *The Species of Rhododendron* the colour of the flowers is given as ranging from salmon or salmon-red, pink, rosy mauve, magenta to scarlet and crimson, also white, and then it says the "typical form of this species is known only in cultivation". The reader must make his own choice of the numerous Japanese azaleas which he can see exhibited at the various shows and which may or may not be hardy in his garden, according to where he lives and which he buys. This also refers to many varieties that now exist as the Kurume Azaleas, which have really all come from the wild form which grows in southern and central Japan, namely, R. *obtusum* forma *japonicum,* seed of which was sent home by Wilson from Mt. Kirishima. The best forms of this seedling are now procurable from various nursery gardeners, and while not perhaps quite as good colours as some of the Japanese selected forms, are yet extremely floriferous and pleasing, and perfectly hardy in every part of this country. Some of them seem to approach very near to forma *amoenum,* which is also a hardy evergreen azalea with pretty magenta-coloured flowers, very floriferous, and also well worth a place in our gardens as long as it is kept right away from any of the truer coloured rhododendrons. Equally difficult to place in the garden is the variety Kaempferi, with its orange-salmon flowers, which, wild in central and northern Japan, grows some 10 feet high and is a perfectly hardy plant, growing and flowering vigorously even in the Arnold Arboretum, at Boston, Mass., which is so unlike the other forms of this rhododendron as almost to deserve specific rank, but when closely examined, however, the botanical differences are such as to make this impossible. It also should be kept to a position in the garden where certainly no garden hybrid rhododendron or azalea is anywhere near it, unless it be a white one. Its colour, which is most attractive, clashes easily with any other plant. Mikado and Daimio seem to be Japanese forms of this plant, rather later in flower, while *semperflorens,* which also emanates from Japan, is never without flower from April till July, but in consequence misses all the beauty of the glowing mass of colour from the wild plant. *R. Oldhamii,* a large branched shrub up to 10 feet high with light yellowish evergreen leaves and bright brick red flowers with a carmine blotch, comes from Formosa and is unfortunately not hardy except in the most favoured gardens. It has lived outside at Exbury for the last seven or eight years and flowered in the open with a very few scattered blooms for the first time this year. In the rhododendron house, however, it has always been smothered with bloom and is most attractive. It crosses easily with *R. Kaempferi* and makes an attractive hybrid. *R. pulchrum,* a loosely branched shrub up to 6 feet in height, is closely related to *R. scabrum* or possibly a hybrid between *R. scabrum* and *R. mucronatum*. It is best known in our gardens under some of its varietal names, as var. *Maxwellii* with its bright crimson flowers, or var. *tebotan* with fine large purple semi-double flowers. *R. ledifolium* var. *purpureum* also definitely belongs to this species. *R. rubropilosum* is merely mentioned as being one of those azaleas which is occasionally found in our gardens and which is not worth growing except for the rhododendron maniac who wants to have one of every species - I have it at Exbury, but one plant is enough with its tiny pink flowers, which hardly make any show. *R. Simsii,* which has been much confused with *R. indicum,* is the true parent of all the various garden forms known as Indian Azaleas. Mr. Gerald Loder received an award of merit at Chelsea last year for a form of the true plant and he informs me it has been growing at Wakehurst for many years. Another form of it seems to be sent out by Rogers of Southampton as their Bassett Wood seedling, which apparently grows vigorously in the New Forest area and was very good at Exbury this year, where in sheltered corners some of the garden forms, such as 'Deutsche Perle', have also lived in the open. *R. Tschonoskii* is another of these little azaleas which, while perfectly hardy, has tiny flowers and, except for its autumn foliage colour, is of no real garden value.

Last of the series we again have a plant to which the name is given to the garden form, *R. yedoense,* which has pretty pale rose-purple double flowers. It is a colour somewhat difficult to place in the garden as it is apt to clash with other azaleas, though by itself it is quite handsome. I have an idea it is none too hardy. The single form, var. *poukhanense,* is also attractive but it is too loose growing at Exbury to be really attractive.

Subseries Schlippenbachii. The next Subseries of Azaleas although small contains some of the most beautiful and showy species in the section, but they all require a little care in the woodland with a cool root run, leaf mould and watering in dry summers. The first to mention, *R. quinquefolium,* is, as I have already stated, sometimes confused with *R. pentaphyllum*. It is a shrub or small tree, 4-25 feet high: it more often, however, seems a shrub in this country. It is attractive in leaf with its five pretty leaves at the end of each branchlet and its soft green foliage, often margined with deep purple. But it is when its little white flowers cover the bush that this plant is most attractive, and as the flowers seem to be pretty long lasting, the cool whiteness of its blooms catches the eye of every visitor to the garden during the fortnight or so that it is in bloom. It is particularly attractive when planted right at the end of the path with a background of some blood red arboreum or Thomsonii hybrids. *R. reticulatum* is perhaps better but wrongly known in our gardens as "rhombicum" or "dilatatum". It has magenta-purple flowers, bright and large, coming out before the leaves and, growing as it does, from 6-8 feet or more in height in our gardens - up to 25 feet in nature - it forms a bright picture in the woodland, as it is extremely floriferous. It must, however, be kept by itself or it can be grown alongside any white Rhododendron or *R. amoenum,* but must be kept away from the clearer colours, though obviously it would go with any of the sulphur-coloured ones. It is less fastidious than other members of the series and seems a hardy plant in our gardens. When we come to the rhododendron that gives its name to the series, *R. Schlippenbachii*, we have one of the most beautiful azaleas that has ever come back from Asia to our shores. It forms a large, densely branched shrub, 3-15 feet tall, with large deciduous green leaves and most beautiful large, pale pink flowers, shading almost to white in some forms or to deep rose pink in others. It flowers in early May just before the leaves come out, but only just, and the fresh green tips at the end of the buds help the pink flowers in the picture they make in the woodland. It is, however, fastidious as to soil, liking plenty of leaf mould, it does not stand the summer drought well and it does not like a late spring frost, and if for these only a sheltered position is necessary, but no place in the garden can be too good for this beautiful plant, which should be grown by all who have the room and climate for it. The last of the series, *R. Weyrichii,* a vigorous shrub from 3-15 feet in height, also opens its flowers before its leaves, which are of a bright red with a slight carmine blotch: they are large and showy and where the plant can be grown it is well worth a place in the garden, but as it comes from southern Japan it is slightly more tender.

Subseries Tashiroi. The only other subseries of the Azalea Series is that of Tashiroi, which contains only one species, which is not in cultivation and needs no comment.

BARBATUM

The Barbatum Series is much larger and contains some valuable garden plants, perhaps the most valuable of all being *barbatum* itself. As the name implies, all members of this series are more or less hairy, sometimes only just around the bud, sometimes on the new shoots or even under the leaves and sometimes persisting for more than one year - some of the bristles feel sticky to the touch, though the gum, or whatever it may be, never seems to come off on to one's hands. A tree of 30-60 ft. in height, *barbatum* is perfectly hardy but, flowering as it does in February or March, is often cut in cold gardens. Its flowers are, however, the most frost resistant of all the big Rhododendrons and often when all other Rhododendrons are a sorry sight from a distance it flaunts its compact scarlet trusses to the winter sky. Its variety *carneum* is pink, and pleasing enough in its way, but I prefer the type. With all these tree Rhododendrons patience is required to see their beauty, but no Rhododendron garden in warm districts should be without this species.

R. Smithii is very near to *barbatum* itself but is a slower growing, more compact tree, with darker green leaves and all its shoots are intensely bristly. Its flowers are perhaps a little deeper red and it is as attractive, if not more so than *barbatum* itself: it flowers perhaps a little later. Both these plants, however, seem to have flowers which are very attractive to the tits as there must be copious honey glands at the base of the flowers which the birds pick to pieces. At Exbury I keep them off the plants by providing a coconut or a little bird cake made of lard, etc.

In the Subseries Crinigerum, *crinigerum* is a shrub eventually some 12 ft. in height, but flowering when 2-3 ft. high and as much through. It has been sent back many times. In its best forms it is a most attractive shrub with clear pinky-white flowers with a deep crimson blotch. Its hairy stems, its dark green leaves with thick yellow indumentum behind, make it an attractive evergreen and it is perfectly hardy in itself, but unfortunately it flowers in April when its flowers are apt to succumb to a spring frost. In spite of Forrest's thinking it the worst species he ever collected, various explorers must have been attracted by its beauty because of the number of times it has been sent back, and certainly Rock has sent some very charming forms home to us. Its variety *euadenium,* which seems to be mid-way between *crinigerum* and *glischrum,* is a rather taller, quicker growing shrub, with quite attractive rose-pink flowers as seen at Exbury. Not enough is known of it yet, however, to decide upon its value as a garden plant.

In Subseries Glischrum are a number of species, none of them showy but some of which are worthy growing in a collection of Rhododendrons. *Diphrocalyx,* a shrub of 5-13 ft. in height, has a calyx two-thirds of the way down the corolla, giving almost a double effect. Its small lax trusses of rose-coloured flowers are quite attractive, but one plant of it is probably sufficient. *Exasperatum,* a very hairy shrub, said eventually to be 10-15 ft. in height, with rusty brick red flowers, is at present 2-3 ft. high in our gardens. It is, however, a very distinctive species and interesting from that point of view. So far as I know it has not yet flowered in cultivation. *Glischroides,* a tree or shrub 6-15 ft. in height, and its variety *arachnoideum,* which is distinguished by the whole undersurface of the leaf being covered with a cobweb of white hairs, is in my opinion one of the best of this series. Its white, chintz-like flowers, flushed with pink with a crimson blotch, are most attractive when the weather allows them to open. Its foliage is fine also, but it is really only suitable for warm gardens along the sea coast as it opens it flowers in February. *Glischrum* I have discarded from Exbury except for one plant, as its mauvy-pink flowers leave me cold. I have been in very hot water with the late Sir Herbert Maxwell about my dislike of this plant: he sent me truss after truss to try and convince me of its beauty. It was flowering really well at Exbury the same weekend that I received one of these trusses, a bush about 5 ft. being covered with 20-30 trusses, all perfect; I took Mr Bean to see it and asked him if he did not admire it. He said: "Why do you like it? You have many hybrids out at the present time with much prettier flowers". And as his view coincided with mine, I let the matter drop. *R. habrotrichum,* a shrub of 4-10 ft. in height, with hairy stems and darker leaves, is much more attractive. Its trusses may be a little smaller, but the pale rose of its flowers is purer and there are forms with even white flowers. It also flowers later at the end of April or early May and is quite a pretty plant for the garden.

In the Subseries Maculiferum, there is *maculiferum* itself, which is perfectly hardy and

R. quinquefolium ‘Five Arrows’ FCC 1967 at Exbury

flowers at the end of April with small white trusses. It is said to grow up to 30 ft. in height but flowers at quite a small size, and whether it is the deep black purple blotch at the base that shows off the whiteness of the flower, I know no Rhododendron which seems so pure in its whiteness. Some forms are said to be slightly flushed with pink, but these should be avoided. *Pachytrichum* is another Rhododendron which has got me into hot water - I have never yet seen a form which gives me any pleasure. Its white flowers are not white, but an ugly rose, and the deep purple blotch does not improve them. There is an Award of Merit form which is worth growing, but unless this can be procured, it should be avoided. Its near ally - *strigillosum* - is, however, quite worth a place in the garden; a shrub from 12-20 ft. in height, it has been called the Chinese *barbatum.* It is almost as hairy as *Smithii* itself; it is a bush, not a tree; its trusses are looser than *barbatum* with large individual bells; but as it flowers in February it is only suitable for mild districts. Here again discretion is required in purchasing a plant, as only the blood-red form should be grown.

The last member in this subseries is, in my opinion, the most attractive - *pseudochrysanthum,* a bush or shrub 1-9 ft. in height, with white to pale pink flowers or deeper, and crimson spots within, it is one of the most beautiful of the April flowering Rhododendrons. A small group of it planted at Caerhays filled me with delight some years ago, and in 1940 I was able to enjoy its beauty at Exbury, though it was only some 2-3 ft. in height. A small growing shrub, it wants a front position.

BOOTHII

In the Boothii Series we again have quite a different class of rhododendron, nearly all dwarfs and more fitted for the front row of the shrubbery or the rock garden. Unfortunately they are all slightly on the tender side. *R. aureum,* a small shrub of 2-4 feet in height with greeny-yellow or pale yellow flowers, though in some cases they are almost bright yellow in colour, while Forrest sent home seed of a plant which grows 12-15 feet or more in height. Unfortunately this rhododendron is distinctly tender - it is not really happy at Exbury and only grows in the most sheltered positions though it usually manages to open its flowers. It has been sent home over and over again and some of the forms are distinctly hardier, but it is of little use for the general run of gardens, though where it can be grown, I think in Cornwall and along the western seaboard, it is a charming plant. *R. auritum,* which was sent home by Kingdon-Ward under No. 6,278, is very closely allied but is considerably hardier and, so far, grows and flowers freely in the open at Exbury. It is a shrub of about 10 feet in height with pale yellow flowers with a slight tinge of pink on the lobes. Its leaves are more leathery and darker and it seems a sturdier grower and worth trying in moderately warm gardens. *R. Boothii* itself is only mentioned as it is the type plant of the subseries. It is excessively tender and not a good garden plant in our climate, being epiphytic in its native habitat Bhutan. *R. cerinum,* which was sent home by Forrest, is also epiphytic on Abies in Upper Burma but, coming from a higher altitude, some 10,000 feet, has lived in the open at Exbury some seven or eight years growing in a sheltered position in the woodland. In the rhododendron house it is quite pretty in early March when covered with its small bright yellow flowers. *R. deleiense,* one of the newer members of this series, introduced by Kingdon-Ward, is an attractive plant, somewhat like *tephropeplum,* but I have an idea it is hardier and will be more suitable for general cultivation. At Exbury certainly it has not suffered from the frost in any shape whatsoever and it was very pretty this year with its rather dark clear purple flowers, larger than *tephropeplum* and with rather larger foliage, the twigs also being rather stiffer and more shrub-like, though it flowered freely on plants only some 9-12 inches in height. It should be pretty as an edging in the woodland to a semi-shady path, but it is too small a grower to be planted out without some preparation in the way of clearing the ground of weeds and turning it over. *R. leucaspis* is growing in our gardens as the result of Kingdon-Ward's uncanny knack of picking seed from likely-looking plants even if they are not in flower and hitting on a "winner"; he found it in steep grassy slopes in the Tsangpo Gorge at about 10,000 feet elevation and, not recognising its foliage, sent home seeds. When they flowered with large, flat saucer-shaped milky-white flowers, almost as large as *moupinense,* but flatter and whiter, in March or early April, it immediately caught the eye of all who had raised it from seed. I have seen it in robust health in a cold garden in Buckinghamshire, and although it requires shelter because of its early flowering habit and seems to do better in semi-shade, it is well worth a trial in the garden of every rhododendron lover. *R. megeratum,* although it comes from a higher altitude some 12,000-13,000 feet - in Yunnan, is a more difficult plant to grow. It probably likes the rock garden, being a dwarf shrublet only a few inches high, sometimes 1 foot, with bright yellow solitary flowers, attractive in themselves, while the bright green glistening foliage with very bristly leaf stalks is also attractive. It is sometimes epiphytic on old fir trees and probably wants plenty of leaf mould to do well. *R. sulfureum* - a loosely branched shrub of 2-4 feet in height, with its smooth red bark and bright yellow flowers - is an attractive plant where it can be grown, but it is tender, and as it comes from moist shady ledges in cliffs in Yunnan at 9,000-10,000 feet elevation, it requires drainage, plenty of water during dry summers and shade, and is more suitable for the southern and western counties than the interior, though it does live and flower in sheltered positions in the open at Exbury. *R. tephropeplum,* which I have already mentioned when describing *R. deleiense,* is a very pretty shrub or bush 2-4 feet in height, and as it comes from south-eastern Tibet at 14,000 feet elevation, on ledges or limestone cliffs and rocky slopes, should be hardy. Some of the earlier forms introduced, however, with their bright magenta-rose flowers, must have come from lower elevation as they are distinctly tender, though later introductions from both Forrest and Kingdon-Ward proved hardier. Forrest sent home one variety with almost white flowers which is very attractive and which has never suffered itself, though its buds have been frozen once or twice at Exbury. It is extremely floriferous as soon as it reaches a height of 1-2 feet and in a sheltered position as a front row plant is very attractive. I like this better than any of the coloured forms, though a variety sent home by Kingdon-Ward with shell-pink flowers is most beautiful: this, however, is on the tender side. It is a much to be recommended rhododendron for all who have the right climate.

CAMELLIAEFLORUM.

The Camelliaeflorum Series, containing two plants, of which the only one in cultivation is *R. camelliaeflorum,* is of but little interest for our gardens.

CAMPANULATUM

The Campanulatum Series contains some fine Rhododendrons. To anyone who likes foliage *aeruginosum* is well worth planting, the almost metallic silver-blue of its fresh foliage being as attractive as any flowers: incidentally, the flower buds should be picked off unless seed is required as the flowers are rather a poor ugly purple. It makes a spreading bush several feet in height and as much through. The Rhododendron which gives its name to the series - campanulatum itself - is a fine hardy shrub or small tree 12-18 ft. in height and as much through. The Knap Hill variety is probably the best and, as it has been growing for many years in that cold nursery, it should grow anywhere in the country. This particular variety variety has a fine brown suede on the back of the leaf and its trusses, though small are of a very pleasing blue-purple. Many forms exist with white, rosy-white or



R. leucaspis KW 6273 AM 1929 at Exbury

rosy-purple flowers more or less spotted and with a variety of indumentum at the back of the leaf. When the indumentum consists of numerous separate hair tufts it is known as *Wallichii,* and I have seen several very pleasing forms of this from seed collected in one of the Mount Everest Expeditions. Both these plants are well worth growing. So is *fulgens,* a shrub 6-12 ft. in height, with very small trusses of bright scarlet flowers in late February or early March. A perfectly hardy plant, like many of the early flowering Rhododendrons, the tits seem to like its flowers. *Lanatum,* a shrub 10-15 ft. in height, with a woolly brown indumentum on the under side of its leaves, has attractive pale yellow flowers, spotted with crimson purple. The secret of success in growing this Rhododendron, which is a somewhat difficult subject, is to plant it in pure leaf mould: it will not grow in gravelly soil or clay but with proper feeding it does well. The Rhododendron sent back by Kingdon-Ward as *lanatum* has been named *tsariense;* its leaves are very similar but smaller, with the same dense wool on the under side of the leaves. Its flowers, however, are different, being pale blush pink, cream or white, sprinkled with red spots. It seems to require the same treatment as *lanatum,* but is smaller growing and, so far as I know, has not yet flowered in this country.

CAMPYLOGYNUM

I doubt if there is any one family of plants which has such extreme variations in character and size as that of rhododendrons, and this is particularly brought out when one leaves the Campanulatum Series to discuss the Campylogynum Series. Here we come to a distinct alpine rhododendron: instead of a tree with large leaves we have a low shrub, usually only a few inches from the ground, though *The Species of Rhododendron* does say that some of them are up to 6 feet in height, but these must be very old plants. Their small, nodding solitary bells, either purple or blackish purple, sometimes almost crimson when seen with the sun behind them, are very attractive. There are but four species in the series, though as many sendings of seed have been sent home there are many minor variations in the different species, especially in the colour of the flowers. *R. campylogynum* itself is said to form a shrub eventually up to 6 feet in height, but I have never seen one more than 2 feet in height in this country. Growing as it does in moist open situations in the Chinese Alps at 9,000-10,000 feet elevation, it is a perfectly hardy plant and it is better in an open position, though it likes best of all to be in the rock garden, where it can get its roots against some cool sandstone which does not dry out in the summer. This is the giant of the series. *R. charopoeum* and *R. myrtilloides* are but 6-8 inches and 3-4 inches in height, the former coming from 12,000-13,000 feet, the latter from 10,000 feet elevation. I have some growing at Exbury from Farrer's seed, now fourteen years old and not more than 2 inches high, with very small leaves and very dense twiggy growth, that are almost pincushions. No cold seems to affect them in our climate but they do require light and should on no account be planted under trees. They are among the most desirable of rock garden rhododendrons, both for their foliage and the attraction of their little nodding bells, which are more like some small campanula than that of a rhododendron.

CAMTSCHATICUM

The next series -Camtschaticum - is another dwarf. It consists of three species, of which only *R. camtschaticum* is in general cultivation. It is a low growing deciduous under-shrub, about 6 inches high and, coming as it does from Alaska, can stand any frost. It also requires an open situation in the rock garden with plenty of stones to creep through, where it is not too difficult in our climate. It is not, however, of much garden value.

* The Dauricum, Ferrugineum and Glaucum Series paragraphs
are sourced from the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* 1935, pp. 80-94.

CAROLINIANUM

The members of the Carolinianum Series, coming as they do from America, are perfectly hardy in our country. Although not showy, the little bushes are quite pleasant with their rosy-purple or whitish flowers, and both *carolinianum* and *minus* make a pretty picture in the wild woodland in gardens which cannot grow the more tender species.

CINNABARINUM

The Cinnabarinum Series is one of the most attractive of the genus. *Cinnabarinum* itself, a hardy shrub to 10 ft. in height, has been sent back in numerous colour variations. I think I like the type best, with its reddish orange-yellow flowers. Its variety, *Roylei,* with its intense cinnabar red flowers makes a fine sight when the setting sun lights up its tubular flowers. Variety *blandfordiaeflorum* has smaller flowers, yellow, with the outside of the corolla flushed red at the base: it always attracts attention in the garden. Some of the forms sent back recently by Kingdon-Ward have colour variations ranging from apricot to deep orange and, so far as I have seen them in flower, are most attractive. *Concatenans,* a much dwarfer shrub, at present only 3-4 ft. in height, has rather more glaucous foliage and its yellow-apricot flowers are more attractive. It does not, however, seem to be quite so hardy as *cinnabarinum* itself. *Keysii* is unfortunately a tender shrub; it also has tubular flowers, smaller even than those of *blandfordiaeflorum*. The type has bright red flowers tipped with yellow - almost sealing-wax red, and it must be kept away from the many crimson hybrids which flower at the same time; but by itself it forms a fine splash of colour. Variety *unicolor* has flowers all red without any yellow tips and is said to grow up to 16,000 ft. in Bhutan, and plants from there should surely be hardy in our climate - I can only presume that all those growing here must have come from much lower altitudes. Its light green, slender leaved foliage makes a change from the usual heavy green of the Rhododendron wood.

DAURICUM *

A small group, indefinite, midway between the typical rhododendron and azalea, which contains but two species: *R. dauricum,* with its pinky-mauve flowers, is pretty in the early spring; its variety *atrovirens* has very dark green foliage, almost persistent, and deeper coloured flowers with a distinct purple tinge. I think this is the more usual form growing in our gardens. It is a very widespread Eastern species, but is not as valuable a garden plant as the other member of the series, *R. mucronulatum,* which should be in every garden. At Exbury it covers itself with its bright mauve flowers, weather permitting, on the 1st January, and while of course a frost will damage any that are out, it hardly ever misses a good display: even at Kew it is a valuable winter flowering plant, growing eventually 8-10 feet high and as much through. It should be given a sheltered position, though for cold gardens its variety *acuminatum*, which flowers several weeks later, is perhaps a better plant. I have seen the young shoots cut by late spring frost but, coming as it does from North-eastern Asia, it will stand any winter frost and quickly recovers from any slight set-back in the spring.

EDGEWORTHII

The Edgeworthii Series, beautiful as most of its members are, is unfortunately not fit for cold gardens. *Bullatum,* with its dark green crinkly leaves and its large fragrant white or flushed with pink or even pink flowers, can be grown in warm gardens in the south-west of England and along the western coast and should be in every garden there. It seems a more compact plant than *Edgeworthii* and a better doer, although the botanical differences are so

slight as to be negligible from the garden point of view. It makes a pretty greenhouse plant.

FALCONERI

The Falconeri Series, consisting mostly of tree Rhododendrons, together with the Grande Series, is certainly one of the noblest of the genus. *Falconeri* itself, a tree of 40-50 ft. in height, with large leaves and large trusses of pale yellow flowers with a purple blotch, is a magnificent sight in warm gardens sheltered from the wind in the months of April and May. At Exbury its flowers last longer on the tree than any other Rhododendron I know and I have had them in full beauty for nearly a month at a time. It requires semi-shade, a moist atmosphere and plenty of room, and, like all these large growing Rhododendrons, it is far finer as a specimen plant than crowded together with other shrubs. For those who have not the room for *Falconeri* itself, the Chinese representative *arizelum* is a good substitute. Although its leaves are very similar, it is only 10-20 ft. in height as a rule: it flowers at an earlier age with rather smaller trusses; but where *Falconeri* can be grown, this is my preference. *Basilicum,* another member of this series, is said to be rather hardier, also with large leaves more shiny above: but those I have seen in flower have not attracted me as they are mostly a muddy yellow splashed with crimson. It is said to grow up to 30 ft. in height, but at Exbury it resembles *arizelum* in its growth and, as it grows in the same district, has undoubtedly been crossed with *arizelum,* and some of these hybrids are growing in our gardens under perhaps this name. *Coriaceum,* a shrub or tree 10-25 ft. in height, with white or white-flushed rose flowers with a crimson blotch, has been sent back many times and in many varieties, most of which are worthless. Its white flowers in a small truss have little to commend them, and it would not be mentioned in this book were it not for two numbers which Forrest has sent back - 25622 and 25872 - both of which have rather larger trusses of white flowers that have attracted me very much at Exbury. *Eximium,* a rather smaller edition of *Falconeri,* should only be grown for its foliage; its flowers of a muddy pinkish yellow are not very pleasant, but the bright orange indumentum which covers its young foliage is very attractive in the woodland and makes it one of the most attractive of all foliage Rhododendron species. It will not, however, grow in a dry situation or in a dry atmosphere, and only shows to advantage in those districts where copious rainfall or ample watering can be given at the growing period. *Fictolacteum* has been sent back in many forms and many varieties. One of Forrest's photographs shows a bank of this Rhododendron in full bloom, as profuse as any garden hybrid, but it requires age to produce this result and like *arboreum,* it is at least twenty years before it is seen in any beauty. A shapely tree, 15-45 ft. in height, with its leathery green leaves and white flowers with a crimson blotch, it makes a magnificent picture when mature. The best form has been sent back by Kingdon-Ward under number 4509; this has larger foliage and larger flowers than any other that I have seen, though at present it is not yet big enough to show off its full beauty. It is, I believe, especially fine in Scotland, though the late Mr. Crosfield, of Embley Park, was the first to receive an Award of Merit for it. *Galactinum,* one of Wilson's plants, is perhaps the hardiest of the series, growing 15 or more feet in height; with grey-green foliage with white or pale rose flowers, spotted within, it always gives me pleasure, though perhaps it is one of the least showy of this series; it has the great merit, however, of being hardy anywhere in the country. The last member of the series to be mentioned, *Hodgsonii,* makes a tree 12-20 ft. in height and is really more useful as a foliage plant with its fine foliage of dark shining green. Its flowers vary from bright magenta to rather pale rose pink and are the least attractive part of it.

FERRUGINEUM

The Ferrugineum Series is a very distinct section of the rhododendron family, which comes from the mountains of Southern Europe, from the Pyrenees to Transylvania.

R. ferrugineum, with reddish-pink flowers, is a small shrub, very pretty when seen in bloom covering the hills, and found occasionally with white flowers. It succeeds pretty well in ordinary rhododendron positions, but seems more suitable for the rock garden.

R. hirsutum, which is found on limestone, is also to be found with white flowers and seems to be a better plant for our climate, growing equally well in non-calcareous soil. It can be distinguished by the leaves being fringed with bristly hairs.

R. Kotschyi, the other member of the series, from Transylvania, is not in general cultivation. Although not showy they are all three pretty little plants and of good garden value when well grown.

FORTUNEI

The Fortunei Series consists of six subseries, and in some of these the differences are so wide that they might almost be series in themselves. *Calophytum,* which gives its name to the first of these subseries, is one of the noblest Rhododendrons that Wilson sent back. It seems quite hardy in our climate: a small tree, said to be eventually 30-40 ft. in height, at present it is not much more than half that in our gardens and seems to make more of a spreading umbrella-shaped plant. It requires a sheltered situation and for its beauty a warm garden, as it flowers in March or April. It is a magnificent foliage plant with long leaves and bears large trusses of white or pink flowers with a deep blotch. Either of these forms is magnificent: the white is the one most frequently grown, but the pink variety which Dame Alice Godman showed from South Lodge, and which gained a First Class Certificate, is magnificent. I have seen as good a form at Caerhays, from which there are seedlings growing at Exbury. *Calophytum* should be grown as a specimen plant in sheltered woodland, and so should the two plants in Subseries Davidii - *praevernum* and *sutchuenense.* The late Mr. J. C. Williams would not recognise any distinction between these, but then he only grew *praevernum* at Caerhays which he called *sutchuenense,* a fine white Rhododendron with a crimson blotch with the flowers in rather a more compact truss than *calophytum* and with leaves not quite so long. *Praevernum* emanated from Kew, whence plants have been distributed to many gardens, and where its early white flowers won the admiration of all who saw it. The type *sutchuenense* has pink or lilac-pink flowers with or without a blotch and some of the plants raised from seed from the wild have flowers of an objectionable bright magenta colour. I believe most of the poorer forms have been eliminated from our gardens now. A so-called hybrid between these two species has flowered in our gardens and now is called *Geraldii.* When it first came out it was known as *sutchuenense* var. *Geraldii* as it first flowered at Wakehurst, and that particular variety, with its lilac-pink flowers and deep crimson blotch is certainly one of the most attractive of the early flowering Rhododendrons. I myself believe that these two plants merge into one another and that really there should be one species only. The earliest to open is sometimes in flower at the end of January or early February, but other forms are found which do not unfold their buds till March has come: of course, like all early flowering Rhododendrons, it depends upon the weather, as at home, they wait until the snow and frost of the Chinese Alps have gone and spring has come - in our climate a mild winter encourages them to open. Last year neither of the three plants described opened before April.

The Subseries Fortunei contains some good garden plants: *decorum* has been sent back numerous times from the Chinese Alps. The earlier importations by Wilson are probably the hardiest, but unfortunately have the smallest flowers. Both Kingdon-Ward and

R. calophytum var. *calophytum* at Exbury

R. calophytum var. *calophytum* at Exbury

Rock have sent back varieties and these two, perfectly hardy at Exbury, have fine white flowers in May. Some forms have been sent back with pinkish flowers but I have never managed to grow any of these at Exbury. A shrub or small tree up to 20 ft. in height, with sweet scented flowers which are pretty but apt to spot with rain. *Diaprepes,* very near *decorum* but with larger flowers which open in July, is unfortunately not hardy and suffers badly from bark splitting. Closely allied is *serotinum,* a tree 25 ft. or more in height, which often only flowers in September. This seems hardy. In the same subseries is to be found *discolor,* the most satisfactory of all the series for general cultivation in this country although it is not satisfactory in Scotland or in very cold places in the British Isles, where it is apt to split its bark. In most gardens in this country it forms a tall shrub, 20 ft. in height, with either white or pale pink flowers opening the first week in July and, when well established, it never fails to show its beauty: as it sets seed very freely the flower trusses must be picked off as soon as it has finished flowering, and this remark applies to all members of the series. *Fortunei* is perhaps the hardiest of all this series, with its pale lilac white flowers at the end of May or early June, it makes a small tree of 15-20 ft. in height, and its fragrance in a fine month makes it well worth growing in the woodland. The best variety undoubtedly is the one grown at Leonardslee, which the late Sir Edmund Loder used as one of the parents of his famous Rhododendron 'Loderi'. *Vernicosum,* with its four geographical forms *araliaeforme, euanthum, rhantum* and *Sheltonae,* has been sent back frequently by various explorers. They are all more or less hardy and make shrubs 10-15 ft. in height with small white or pinkish flowers; though *vernicosum* itself is the best, they are none of them really showy plants. A lighted match held to the leaf of any of these will melt the wax on the upper surface and give that shiny effect from which its name is derived, as the original specimen collected was dried too near the fire.

The Subseries Griffithianum consists of only one species, which gives it its name. A large shrub or small tree 14-20 ft. in height, with large white flowers with green spots, or sometimes flushed with pink, it is perhaps one of the finest of the Himalayan Rhododendrons. Specimens of this in full bloom at Caerhays or Heligan are perhaps among the most beautiful of all the species: it is unfortunate that it is only hardy in our very mildest gardens. At Exbury it has lived in the open for twenty years but only flowers occasionally. The Heligan variety seems to me the best and almost equal to it is the variety that Sir Edmund Loder used at Leonardslee as the other parent of 'Loderi'. I believe this was Mangles's original plant and it could be obtained from Smith, of Guernsey.

In the subseries Orbiculare, *orbiculare* makes a most beautiful round compact shrub up to 10 ft. in height and as much or more through. It should be planted as a specimen, where it will grow almost like a Dutch clipped yew. The best specimens were to be found at Caerhays, though they have grown so big that they have begun to touch and lose their distinguishing feature. Its flowers - rose pink - have a decidedly bluish tinge and are the least attractive part of the plant.

In Subseries Oreodoxa *Fargesii* makes an attractive shrub 10-15 ft. in height with pale rose pink flowers, which are also of a slightly bluish tinge: so it wants to be kept away from the reds. Flowering as it does in April, it requires a sheltered garden and the dead flowers must be picked off quickly, as once the plants have reached a certain age they flower all over like a garden hybrid. The plant itself seems hardy. The other member of the subseries, *oreodoxa* itself, in all its forms makes shrubs or small trees 10-15 ft. in height, flowers bright pink in bud - in some forms almost scarlet, fading to light pink and in some cases almost white; it is very attractive when the plants are mature when every tree is covered with bloom. It takes, however, some time to reach full flowering age. Its buds are perhaps the most frost resisting of all Rhododendrons, they even start opening and showing colour without being faded by frost. Flowering as it does in early March up to April, it is of no use in cold gardens, but the "glory of the mountains" is indeed attractive where it can be grown. *Haematocheilum* and various other varieties have only minor botanical differences.

FULVUM

In the Fulvum Series, *fulvum* itself makes a small tree up to 20 ft. in height, with rose flowers with a crimson blotch and shining dark green foliage with a downy orange indumentum underneath. It is a striking foliage plant and it flowers freely that here also it is attractive, but unfortunately as these come out in March and April they are often cut by a spring frost at Exbury. *R. fulvoides,* with similar coloured flowers but much larger leaves, is a fine foliage plant, but it also flowers too early for general use. Another plant with similar flowers is *R. uvarifolium; R. niphargum,* however, is hardly worth a place in the garden.

GLAUCUM

When we come to the Glaucum Series we come to one which contains some of the most attractive dwarf shrubs that will grow in our gardens, and also some which are hardly worth a place except for their foliage and healthy appearance. Amongst the latter is *R. brachyanthum,* the first of the series to be mentioned, with pale yellow or greenish-yellow flowers, very small, standing out from the little truss which covers the plant when it is in full bloom, though in spite of this it makes no show. The foliage of the plant emits an odour something like gas tar and it is in no way a striking rhododendron, though it makes a good little shrub in the woodland in front of larger specimens.

R. charitopes, on the other hand, is one of the gems of the rhododendron family. A small bush, 1 foot in height, or rather more at Exbury - it looks like reaching 2 or 3 feet. It covers itself in the spring with clear apple-blossom pink flowers speckled with crimson and is a most attractive sight in the rock garden, though it is an easy doer and I should imagine would equally well serve as an edging down a woodland path. It flowers usually towards the middle or end of April but seems quite hardy and well worth a place in the garden.

R. charitostreptum is another member of this series but we know very little about it in our gardens.

R. Genestierianum is one of the most interesting of all rhododendrons. It forms a shrub up to 12 feet in height, though Kingdon-Ward has sent back a form which in its native home grows 20 feet, with leaves large for the series, 4-6 inches long and only 1-1½ inches broad, quite white underneath. The flowers, which are very small, are plum purple covered with a glaucous bloom, and when seen with the sun shining through them, almost a maroon tinge; the flowers resemble more the *R. myrtilloides* section and it is curious to see so small flowers in such a big plant. The form which Forrest sent home is unfortunately very tender and only a few very miserable specimens survived at Exbury from several seed sowings. In Cornwall, however, it is an attractive foliage plant and quite interesting when in bloom and it should succeed well all along the western seaboard. Kingdon-Ward's form is only a few inches high now but survived last winter in the open without showing any ill effects.

That old Himalayan plant, *R. glaucum,* should be in every garden if only for the pungent aromatic scent of the leaf, though the dull pink flowers are most attractive in the spring when they cover the whole plant so that the foliage is not visible. It sets seed very freely and to keep the plant in health the flowers must be picked off every year, a laborious undertaking. The front edging of a woodland walk is eminently suitable for it and it seems quite hardy in ordinary rhododendron gardens.

R. hypolepidotum is another rhododendron with small yellow flowers, closely resembling *R. brachyanthum* though perhaps a little better coloured, and the foliage is not quite so pungent. It is of little value in our gardens.

R. pruniflorum is a charming little member of this series, forming a compact under-shrub 1-2 feet high, with small flowers of deep plum purple or nearly crimson or violet. It flowers rather later than most of the rhododendrons in this series and seems perfectly hardy. I like it very much along a woodland path, though the leaves when rubbed emit a strong and unpleasant odour, but there is no reason to rub the leaves beyond curiosity, and it is a plant I would warmly recommend to every rhododendron enthusiast.

R. shweliense, a shrub 2-2½ feet high with aromatic foliage and greenish-yellow flowers, is not so far as I know in cultivation.

R. sordidum, another little member of this family with aromatic foliage and small dark purple flowers, seems to resemble *R. pruniflorum* and is quite attractive in itself though smaller in every respect.

Lastly we come to *R. tsangpoense,* a small shrub of 1-2 feet high, forming a dense tangled scrub in sheltered or exposed situations in the wild, with pink or deep rose flowers. It seems easy to do and is quite an attractive little plant in the rhododendron garden, in fact, there are very few members of this series that I would willingly be without.

GRANDE

The Grande Series, like the Falconeri Series, contains the giants in the *Rhododendron* world. *R. giganteum* itself was discovered by Forrest, who found growing in a sheltered valley three trees which were some 90 ft. in height with 70 ft. circumference of branches - the trunk at 7 ft. from the ground was 9 ft. in circumference, with large trusses of rose crimson flowers - what a magnificent sight it must have been. Unfortunately, this Rhododendron is only hardy in the very south-west of England or the most sheltered gardens in Scotland. It has flowered in Scotland and I have seen one of its large bells. *R. protistum,* said to have creamy yellow flowers, is very attractive in foliage, but the seeds sent back have been collected from much smaller plants. It also is not hardy, nor, unfortunately, is *grande* itself, with which has been merged *argentum,* the one having a shiny under leaf, the other woolly, but intermediate forms have been discovered. This again is a fine Rhododendron for Cornwall and the west, with pale yellow flowers which open in February or March and, though it has grown at Exbury for many years, it never really seems to open its buds there: they are always caught by frost. Perhaps the hardiest of the series is *R. coryphaeum,* a large shrub or tree said to be 15 ft. in height but very slow growing, having only reached 4-5 ft. in height at Exbury though nearly twenty years old; perfectly hardy there, it has just reached flowering size - some forms have creamy white flowers but most that I have seen are flushed with a dingy pink which does not attract me. *R. Macabeanum,* with large shining green leaves and magnificent trusses of lemon-yellow flowers, seems hardy enough at Exbury but has not yet flowered there. In Cornwall it has begun to show its beauty and I should say it will be quite one of the best of the Grande Series, rivalling *sinogrande* in the size of its truss and the colour of its flowers. *R. sinogrande* is perhaps the largest leaved of all Rhododendrons: a tree 20-30 ft. in height, with large trusses of white or soft yellow flowers, it is a magnificent foliage plant where it can be grown. It should be planted young and not moved as, unlike other Rhododendrons, it will send its roots deep into the ground. Growing as it does in dense shade in the Chinese Alps it requires similar conditions in our climate, though to have the full effect of its fine foliage rich humus and ample moisture are necessary. The finest plants in this country are in Captain Johnstone's garden at Trewithen where, growing in what was once an old rookery, it has rapidly made a small tree with fine foliage and flowers freely. It will grow at Exbury and has flowered there, and it would grow in warm gardens inland in a sheltered position, but it might easily suffer from a cold frost.

HELIOLEPIS

In the Heliolepis Series the one most commonly grown in our gardens is *R. rubiginosum.* It is a very hardy plant, forming a large shrub up to 30 ft. high in the wild but not more than 15 ft. in our gardens so far as it flowers too freely to grow much. At the end of April it is very pretty when covered with trusses of small, rosy lilac flowers spotted with brown. This Rhododendron, as long as it has plenty of leaf mould round its roots, seems to tolerate a very slight amount of alkalinity. Very many forms have been sent back and they merge into *R. desquamatum,* which Rhododendron, however, is not so hardy and many forms of which flower in March - these forms are useless for most gardens. But some forms of *desquamatum* have larger, flatter flowers of a very pleasant shade of lavender purple. Farrer sent this home and so did Forrest. These two, which flower in April, are extremely handsome plants but unfortunately are on the tender side and only flourish in warm parts of Exbury; they should do well in the south and west. Although this is the extreme range of *R. desquamatum* on one side, I feel that either three species should be formed and this latter one be given another name, or else the whole merged into one species with varietal names. From the garden point of view the two extremes are very different, *R. rubiginosum* being an excellent garden plant if one likes the colour, whilst the latter is a most desirable plant where it can be grown.

In its best forms *R. heliolepis* itself, which gives its name to the series, is a small shrub, said to grow 10 ft. in height in the wild but at present only 4 or 5 ft. in our gardens with intensely aromatic foliage, almost unpleasantly strong if one crushes the leaves. Its chief merit is that it flowers in June with small trusses of pale rose-coloured flowers or almost white with darker spots. The pale forms are hardly worth growing and *brevistylum,* which comes very near it and which also flowers in late June with deeper rose-coloured flowers and crimson markings, seems a more desirable plant; it has not, however, been so easy growing at Exbury.

IRRORATUM

The Irroratum Series is a very large one; unfortunately most of its members are on the tender side and only fitted for gardens in the south and south-west, though some will grow in warm gardens inland. For those who can grow them a few lines on some of the species may be helpful. *R. araiophyllum,* a slender branched shrub, up to 16 ft. in the wild, has neat green foliage and pretty cupular flowers, white, or suffused rose outside, with a crimson blotch: it is only fitted for the warmest gardens. *R. eritimum* is another shrub which is only suitable for the south-west: its dark green foliage makes a pleasant shrub and some of its forms have attractive lilac flowers. The same may be said of *R. lukiangense. R. irroratum,* with its pale yellow flowers in March is a slightly hardier plant, but its trusses are small and on the whole it is hardly worth a place in the garden. A pale pink form, deeply spotted, gives me a good return at Exbury in most years. Perhaps the most attractive of all the Irroratum Sub-series, as far as I have seen it, is *R. laxiflorum.* It is a slender light green foliage plant and grows eventually up to 20 ft. in height and, as I saw it at Caerhays with its trusses of open, bell-shaped flowers, some pure white and some a shade of pink, it made me long to grow it at Exbury. Unfortunately, although it lives in the open, most years some of the pips are frozen in the bud, and as it flowers in April it is apt to catch a lot of spring frost.

The Sub-series Parishii consists of some of the most beautiful Rhododendrons introduced from the wild: unfortunately these also are none too hardy. *R. agapetum,* with its long leaves - introduced by Kingdon-Ward - and said to grow up to 20 ft. in height, has smallish trusses of crimson scarlet flowers in June. It dislikes moving intensely as it grows very late, and this peculiarity applies to most members of the sub-series; in fact, they want planting in their permanent position when small and never moving. *R. Elliottii,* the finest of all the sub-series, has magnificent scarlet trusses in May or the end of June, and makes a shrub at present 5 ft. high in our gardens but probably growing much taller. It unfortunately is apt to make a second growth when the rains come in the autumn if the weather is mild and these rarely harden sufficiently to withstand the winter frost. It is a curious Rhododendron as it seems to do better in some colder gardens than Exbury, though in the south-west it is perfectly hardy; wherever it can be grown it is well worth a place. *R. eriogynum* and *facetum* make tall shrubs with fine foliage, the young growth covered with a brown or grey indumentum; they have clear bright red flowers in June, but I personally cannot distinguish between them. It may be that the real *R. facetum* is not in cultivation, but I am convinced that all the plants growing in this country under these two names are but one species. They have been introduced many times; where planted and left undisturbed they will stand a good deal of frost and large plants at Exbury suffered no harm from the 1939/40 winter. The are, I believe, hardy also in warm gardens inland and are well worth a place in the woodland, but they require shelter and watering during the growing season should the rainfall be insufficient. *R. Kyawi* is probably the finest of this sub-series, a shrub or small tree 15-20 ft. in height with large dark green leaves. It opens its bright rose-scarlet trusses at the end of July or early August. It is unfortunately only hardy in the warmest of our gardens along the the extreme south-west of Cornwall or a few warm gardens along the western seaboard; where it can be grown it is well worth a place - at Exbury it will not survive in the open. It has been sent back both by Farrer and by Forrest, but Farrer's form is undoubtedly the finest. The last of the sub-series, *R. venator* - is a hardier plant; it should do in most warm gardens though occasional plants were touched by the frost at Exbury in the winter of 1939/40. A shrub up to 8 ft. in height, with small trusses of scarlet flowers towards the middle or end of May, it makes an attractive sight when covered with its flowers. It has been put into this sub-series, but in many ways seems intermediate between this and the Sanguineum Sub-series.

LACTEUM

The next series to be discussed is also difficult, namely, the Lacteum Series. Plants in this series also require to be planted early in their permanent positions as they do not like moving. *R. Beesianum,* a shrub or small tree, eventually 20 ft. in height, with large dark green leaves; I have never seen it more than 4 or 5 ft. in height in our gardens, while once at Caerhays I caught it in full beauty with the most delightful clear pink flowers in large trusses, well worth the place it occupied. *R. lacteum,* eventually a tree up to 30 ft. in height, is probably the finest Rhododendron ever introduced: its large trusses of clear yellow flowers are extremely beautiful in April: it seems hardy enough in sheltered positions, but slow growing and difficult, as exactly the right place has to be found for it and it must then never be moved. The fine collection of this Rhododendron at Werrington was unfortunately very thickly planted and attempts made to move them have not been very successful; I rather fancy that honey fungus has got in and a great many of the plants have died out. At Exbury I have three times lost it, but two fine plants are now in full vigour and seem to enjoy the position they occupy, which, protected from the north by a *ponticum* hedge, gets shade from the south by tall trees. These two plants came from Werrington some ten years ago and never fail to flower, though the pollen is often frozen. *R. Wightii,* a small tree 10-15 ft. in height, with rather loose trusses of pale yellow flowers and leave almost mid-way between this series and that of Falconeri, is a fine foliage plant but its loose trusses make it one of the least desirable of the series. This also seems difficult. *Traillianum,* a tree eventually 20 ft. in height with white flowers, is growing in our gardens but has nothing much to commend it.

LAPPONICUM *

The next series, that of Lapponicum, is one of the most difficult and complicated to describe in all the series of rhododendrons. They come mainly from the mountains of China, but are also present in the Himalayas, and occur both in north-eastern Asia and along the Arctic circle in Lapland and Greenland and Northern America. They are essentially moorland plants, used to all the airs of Heaven blowing freely over them and they do not grow well in shade. Open glades in the woodland seem to suit them best, as while they will stand a considerable spring frost with their flowers quite uninjured, a hard winter frost does not suit them unless they are covered with snow, which is what they obtain in their native habitat. They also like light soil, the kind of soil suitable for heather or ling, which they represent in the Chinese Alps. They do not like severe drought and, with the exception of *R. hippophaeoides,* which will almost grow in a bog, do not like stagnant water. Their little mauve purple or yellow flowers are so free as to cover the plant when in bloom and they are an attractive sight in April and May when in full flower and a sprinkling of bloom occurs again in October.

R. achroanthum, a shrub 2 feet in height with dull deep magenta red flowers, *R. alpicola,* with purple flowers, and *R. blepharocalyx*, with mauve flowers, are all small shrubs from the Chinese Alps, the latter from Eastern Tibet.

R. cantabile, from Yunnan, 14,000 feet high, has been or is about to be merged with *R. russatum,* from the Kari Pass. They are shrubs of 3-4 feet in height, with flowers varying between a dark violet and a deep purple blue, almost a deep lavender. In the best forms this rhododendron is quite one of the most desirable of the series. It makes rather a stiffer shrub than the majority of its relatives, having stouter branches, fewer of them, and rather large leaves. It is easily in the six best of the Lapponicums; its colour is very pure and as an edging to any yellow, pink or white rhododendron it makes a very pretty picture.

R. capitatum is a small shrub of 3 feet with mauve flowers, while *R. chamaezelum,* a matted shrub 6-8 inches in height, has yellow flowers.

R. chryseum, a small shrub 1½-2 feet high, with bright yellow flowers from the Mekong-Salween Divide, at 12,000-14,000 feet elevation, is indistinguishable from R. *muliense* from the Mu-li Mountains at a similar elevation. Both are found in openings in pine forests on stony pasture, their only distinction being in the number of stamens, which are five in *R. chryseum* and ten in *R. muliense;* but as I believe varieties have been found with six, seven or eight stamens, there is really no reason for separating them. They also are amongst the best of the alpines, being of a pleasing colour and mixing well with the mauves and blues of the majority, though flowering as they do generally among the latest of the series they are not seen at their best together. A little more fastidious perhaps than some of the others, they are not really difficult though, like so many alpines, to keep them in good health they have to be propagated from time to time, as they seem to go back when full grown.

R. complexum is a matted shrub with deep rose purple flowers, 1-2 feet in height and

* The Lapponicum and Lepidotum Series paragraphs are sourced from the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* 1936, pp. 41-48.

it comes from Yunnan.

R. cuneatum may be said to be the giant of the section growing as it does 4 feet or more in height with deep rose flowers, larger than usual in the series. It might almost be said to resemble a small Triflorum in general appearance though of course not botanically. Coming as it does from the Lichiang Range in Yunnan it is hardy and should be one of those rhododendrons which will tolerate an alkaline soil, as it is found on limestone cliffs in its native home.

R. dasypetalum, a small shrub up to 2½ feet high, with dark purplish rose flowers, is in some of its forms not very attractive, and I once described it as the poorest member of the series. I have since, however, flowered varieties which were quite pretty and as it is an easy doer, is worth a place in a collection, though its colouring is not so attractive as that of many others.

R. diacriturn is a matted shrublet from Yunnan up to 2 feet high with deep rose purple flowers with a white throat.

R. drumonium, a small tufted shrub about 1 foot high with mauve flowers, from open stony positions in pine forests, is most attractive at Tower Court. *R. Edgarianum*, with rose purple flowers and small leaves, a shrub 3 feet in height from Tachienlu between 12,000-15,000 feet elevation, is also worth growing.

R. fastigiatum, with light purple flowers, is an erect little shrublet from Yunnan. The *R. fastigiatum* of the Trade is a dwarf shrub with glaucous foliage and one of the best of the alpines, but not what it pretends to be.

R. flavidum, a small shrub intricately branched, growing eventually 2-3 feet or more in height, with pale yellow flowers, is one of the first of the Lapponicums to open and very often in full beauty in March or early April, so that a sheltered position is advisable. Its flowers also are more easily affected by frost than others of the series, but in spite of these drawbacks it is one which pleases me almost as much as any and its delicate colouring reminds me always of a ray of wintry sunshine in the distance. It was formerly known as *R. primulinum*.

R. hippophaeoides is the most amenable of the series in cultivation; it will grow in dry or wet situations but I think prefers the latter, where it forms a shrub 2-3 feet in height. Unlike its description in *The Species of Rhododendron,* which gives it as having a few rather leggy branches in the wild, in cultivation it will grow into as fine a plant as it is allowed to. The flowers also vary considerably in colour, and while the typical variety may be pale lilac, varieties with deep lavender blue flowers are known and white ones, also clear rose. It is one of the most useful of all the alpines and seems to be eminently suitable for our climate.

R. idoneum, a small cushion-like shrublet up to 18 inches in height, with deep purplish blue flowers, comes from Yunnan at 13,000 feet elevation.

R. impeditum, a low shrublet with mauve or light purplish blue flowers, coming from open peaty pastures at 15,000-16,000 feet elevation in the Lichiang Range, is a very attractive rhododendron in its better forms; though possibly owing to its elevation a little more fastidious as to treatment, it is well worthy of a choice situation in the rock garden.

R. intricatum, a small intricately branched shrublet with mauve flowers, also comes from 12,000-15,000 feet elevation in Western Szechwan in grassland and moorland and requires a similar position. It is very distinct on account of its hidden stamens.

R. lapponicum itself, which has given its name to the series - a name given to it by the great Linnaeus himself - was figured in the *Botanical Magazine* in 1831. It is in cultivation now in but very few gardens. Its purplish flowers are among the least attractive of the series and, coming as it does from Lapland and Greenland, where it is deep in snow the whole winter long, it does not like our climate.

R . litangense, with dull plum purple flowers, is a small shrub of 2-3 feet. *R. lysolepis,* a small shrub with deep violet or pinkish violet flowers and rather larger leaves, is in cultivation.

R. nigropunctatum, with pale purple flowers from Szechwan, and *R. nitidulum,* with violet flowers from Mupin, are of lesser interest, while *R. nivale,* a low prostrate shrublet 15-18 inches high from Sikkim in Southern Tibet, with bright magenta flowers, is a rhododendron which has been introduced and lost to cultivation owing to the difficulty of keeping it alive in our climate.

R. orthocladum, a small shrub up to 4 feet in height, with mauve or lavender blue flowers from Northern Yunnan on limestone cliffs, is a pretty little rhododendron with more open flowers than perhaps the usual run of the series and is attractive in the rock garden. It also is not too difficult.

R. paludosum, with bright violet flowers and an intricately branched shrublet, is one of Ward's introductions. *R . parvifolium,* with pale rose magenta flowers, and also white ones, comes from North Eastern Asia, inhabiting cold alpine marshes in Kamschatka and the Island of Sakhalin. It is not in cultivation.

R. polifolium, a small shrub with mauve flowers, *R. polycladum,* a small shrub up to 4 feet with purple flowers, and *R. ramosissimum,* 3 feet in height with dark purple flowers, require no particular comment.

R. ravum, a small shrub of 4 feet with deep rose flowers, is pretty and not too difficult; but *R. rupicola,* a shrub 1-2 feet or more in height with deep plum crimson flowers, while attractive because of its very dark and unusual colouring, is not too easy, coming as it does from 13,000 feet elevation on limestone cliffs.

In *R. scintillans,* from the Lichiang Range 11,000-14,000 feet high, we have one of the finest Lapponicums that has been sent back to this country. It has come on numerous occasions and some of the forms have mauve flowers of a nondescript hue; these varieties should be shunned. The best variety has flowers of a bright lavender blue, almost a true blue in colour, so deep and so clear that their beauty is a great joy at the end of April. This variety is well worth planting in drifts and masses in the open ground, for it is a kindly plant and does well in all gardens where rhododendrons flourish and so far has shown no signs of going back. If I could grow only one Lapponicum this would be my choice, and if I had a small garden and could grow only one rhododendron, I would hesitate before discarding *R. scintillans*.

R. setosum, from the Sikkim Himalaya, 11,000-16,000 feet, has purple pink flowers.

R. stictophyllum, a small shrub intricately branched, with small leaves, has mauve to rose flowers and is quite pretty; so is *R. tapetiforme,* a small shrublet forming a carpet, with pink flowers, but coming from the high elevation of 15,000 feet it is none too easy. A form in commerce is 1-1½ feet high already and seems to grow better than the type plant.

R. telmateium, however, a small shrub up to 3 feet high from only 10,000-12,000 feet altitude, with deep rosy purple flowers with a white corolla throat, is very pretty in our gardens with its small foliage and is apparently amenable in our climate.

R. thymifolium is another pretty little plant with mauve flowers, and so is *R. verruculosum* with purple flowers, a shrub of 3 feet, very free flowering.

R. violaceum, with violet purple flowers, a shrub of 4 feet in height, and *R. Websterianum,* with rosy purple flowers, a shrub of 3 feet, are also attractive, and so is *R. yungningense,* with deep purple flowers, 1-1½ feet in height.

Other members of this family not in *The Species of Rhododendron* are *R. Bulu,* a small erect shrub of 18 inches with pure white flowers from 10,000 feet elevation in Lusha; *R. spilanthum,* a small shrub, with foliage similar to *R. hippophaeoides,* and mauve flowers;

also *R. microleucum,* another small white Lapponicum with an affinity to *R. scintillans,* which appeared at Exbury and I believe elsewhere amongst seedlings raised from Forrest's introduction. It is a pretty little plant giving a welcome change in the colours of the Lapponicum section, and I hope it will soon be more freely distributed.

LEPIDOTUM.

The Lepidotum Series consists also of alpine shrubs or shrublets and they might be described as being mid-way between the Glaucum and the Lapponicum Series in their general characteristics.

R. Baileyi, a small shrub up to 3 feet in height, is very pretty in June with its small reddish purple flowers. It seems an easy doer and, though not very showy, always pleases me with its display after most of the alpines are over.

R. elaeagnoides, a shrub up to 9 feet in height, has solitary nodding flowers either yellow or dull reddish purple.

R. imperator, a dwarf shrublet forming a flat carpet with bright purple flowers, is one of the best introductions of Kingdon-Ward. Seen at its best at Embley Park it was a beautiful sight, but I rather fancy it is not very long lived though easily propagated by cuttings.

R. lepidotum, with pale greenish yellow, pink or purple flowers, and *R. obovatum,* with purple flowers, are both shrubs 3-4 feet high. The purple form of *R. lepidotum* is very pretty at Tower Court, whilst *R. obovatum* is very attractive there also.

R. patulum, a prostrate shrub introduced by Ward, has solitary purple flowers.

R. pumilum, a small shrublet with semi-prostrate branches and almost pure pink nodding bells, is a most attractive shrub and for some years made a good show at Exbury, but the old plants went back when they were about seven years old and the new ones, which were propagated from them, are not yet big enough to flower. A choice situation in the rock garden is wanted for it.

R. thyodocum, a shrub up to 5 feet in height, with reddish purple flowers, so far as I know is not in cultivation, though the last member of the series, *R. uniflorum,* a dwarf shrublet with solitary purple flowers, is pretty in a minor way.

MADDENII

The Maddenii Series consists mostly of tender species only fitted for very warm gardens or greenhouses with very few exceptions. In the ciliicalyx Sub-series, *R. burmanicum* is a very pretty shrub for a greenhouse, with greenish yellow or yellowish white flowers, sweet-scanted, 6 ft. or so in height: a greenhouse shrub except in the very warmest gardens, and even there it is none too hardy; this remark also applies to *R. carneum,* a shrub of about the same height with pretty flesh-coloured flowers: it is attractive in a cold house. *R. ciliatum,* on the other hand, one of the hardiest of the series, makes a spreading shrub up to 6 ft. in height, with white flowers tinged with rose in April. It is hardy all along the coast and in warm gardens inland, though as it flowers at the end of March and early April it cannot be grown in gardens which suffer much from spring frosts. *R. ciliicalyx* itself is perhaps the best of all for the greenhouse, especially if it can be planted out; it is, however, extremely tender. *Johnstoneanum,* which forms a large bush with pale yellow flowers, perhaps better described as greenish-white tinged with yellow, is hardy at Exbury and nearly always displays its beauty there at the end of April: but it would be better in warmer gardens and should not be tried in cold places. *R. Scottianum* is a most attractive small shrub, with very fragrant white flowers, but is only fitted for the warmest gardens. *R. supranubium,* another white sweet-scanted Rhododendron in this series, differs from the others in having solitary or only two flowers in a truss, but is only fitted for the extreme south-west. It lived for some years at Exbury but eventually succumbed. *R. taronense,* a shrub up to 10 ft. in height with fragrant white flowers and a yellow blotch, flowering in April, is another beautiful greenhouse plant: and so are many others which are not mentioned here as they are not fitted for general cultivation in this country. *R. Valentinianum* must, however, be mentioned as it seems fairly hardy, perhaps nearly as hardy as *ciliatum;* a small shrub 2-3 ft. in height, with small bright butter-yellow flowers, it is an attractive species and survives at Exbury.

In the Sub-series Maddenii *crassum* has been sent back many times in recent years by all the explorers from the Chinese Alps. In the wild it forms a tree up to 20 ft. in height, with sweet-scented white flowers, rather fleshy, in June or July. I have plants growing at Exbury which have survived the two cold winters we have had and they flowered this summer; some forms are undoubtedly hardier than others - in some places in Cornwall it has been severely crippled and some of my plants suffered in the winter of 1938/39 worse than in 1939/40, but the hardier plants are worth a place in all gardens which are as warm or warmer than Exbury. *R. Maddenii* and *R, manipurense,* very similar shrubs or trees, with white or pink flowers, coming from the Himalayas, are rather more tender but, flowering late also, they are well worth a place in gardens in the south-west, and a form at Heligan which is known as *Jenkinsii* has beautiful pink flowers scented like orange blossoms. *R. polyandrum,* the last one of this series to be mentioned, particularly noticeable because of the number of stamens it possesses, is a shrub of 3 ft. or more in height with white or pale yellow flowers, is not much hardier. The form with pale yellow flowers, however, which was raised at Nymans and which received the Award of Merit, is well worth growing. At Exbury in the open it succumbed to the winter of 1939/40.

The Megacalyx Sub-series is essentially for the greenhouse. *R. Dalhousiae,* a thin shrub 6-10 ft. in height with large tubular flowers, white flushed pink, fragrant: *R. Lindleyi,* also with large tubular flowers, white flushed with rose in April, are both splendid greenhouse plants. The latter has lived for some years in the open at Exbury but was killed last winter. It should do in gardens in the extreme south-west and so should *megacalyx,* a shrub with deliciously fragrant pure white flowers, trumpet-shaped - I have seen it flowering well in Cornwall. *Nuttallii,* on the other hand, and *sinonuttallii,* both magnificent tall shrubs for the greenhouse with large yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers, sweet-scented, only linger on a wall in Cornwall and are best in a greenhouse. So is *R. rhabdotum,* one of the most curious Rhododendrons ever sent back, as it has crimson lines all down the corolla, and has magnificent large cream coloured flowers. *R. Taggianum,* a small shrub with trumpet-shaped white flowers, is rather hardier; it has flowered in the open at Exbury and should do all along the south-western and western seaboard.

MICRANTHUM *

Rhododendron micranthum, which is in a series by itself, is quite unlike any other rhododendron and resembles a small spiraea, with its tiny milky-white flowers covering the bush. It was the first of Wilson's introductions to flower and was the cause of many people saying that the new Chinese rhododendrons would be of no use. Flowering as it does at the end of June, or early July, it is amusing to have a bush in the garden, but of no real garden value.

* The Micranthum, Moupinense, Neriiflorum, Ovatum, Ponticum, Saluenense, Scabrifolium, Semibarbatum and Stamineum Series paragraphs are sourced from the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* 1937, pp. 33-49.

MOUPINENSE

The Moupinense Series is another small one, consisting of *R. dendrocharis, R. petrocharis* and *R. moupinense.* Only the last of these is in cultivation, but this is one of the most delightful and charming shrubs ever introduced. Perfectly hardy, it flowers at the end of January or early in February and so to the dweller in a cold climate is only occasionally seen in bloom; even at Exbury it gets cut by frost every now and then, but there are usually more buds to open and its large azalea-like flowers, white or white flushed rose or sometimes even rosy-red, are a delight on a winter's day. It should be grown largely in the mildest climates, and even in cold gardens a small bush is worth a gamble, while it is a charming cold greenhouse shrub. Several interesting hybrids have been made from it, the best of which are probably R. 'Cilpinense', raised at Bodnant, and R. 'Tessa', raised at Tower Court.

NERIIFLORUM

When we come to the Neriiflorum Series we come to one of the most puzzling of all the series of rhododendrons and one which has probably not yet been properly worked out. There is little doubt that there is no series in which plants are inclined to run more into one another; mountain scrub as they are, they seem to have hybridised and inter-hybridised over and over again and in every valley one may find plants with variations which are distinct and yet too near to form separate species.

The first of the Subseries to deal with is Forrestii, which consists of five species, of which *R. erastum, R. porphyrophyllum* and *R. serpens* are not in cultivation so far as I am aware.

With regard to *R. Forrestii* and *R. repens,* the only difference is that the colour of the under surface of the leaf is purple in *R. Forrestii* and green in *R. repens,* but as these have been found to vary in cultivation, the two might well be merged together and *R. repens* only will stand. It is a prostrate woody shrub, 6-18 inches or more high, climbing over moist boulders or hanging over rocks. With its very small leaves and large flowers of brilliant crimson scarlet, usually in pairs, it is a striking object for the rock garden and, if planted in the open, after it has reached a certain size will flower quite freely, though as its flowers open in March they are apt to be cut by a spring frost. The plant itself is hardy. Various forms of it have been described, such as *R. chamae-Thomsonii* and *R. chamaethauma,* but as, curiously enough, *R. repens* will cross easily with the Arboreum Series, the Barbatum Series, the Thomsonii Series and, naturally, with any other member of the Neriiflorum Series, I believe that all these larger forms are only hybrids, in fact, variations in foliage and flowers of plants that have been raised at Exbury from seed sent home by Forrest make this almost a certainty. *R. repens* is well worth growing in any garden.

The Haematodes Subseries consists of some very attractive garden shrubs. *R. catacosmum,* a shrub 6-9 feet in height, with large crimson scarlet flowers and a very big calyx, is quite hardy in our gardens but flowers, unfortunately, at the end of March, when it is very susceptible to spring frost. It is one of the finest of the series, however, and well worth growing in warmer gardens; and so is *R. chaetomallum,* which is rather a smaller shrub, 4-5 feet in height, with leaves with a tawny, woolly indumentum and flowers varying from deep black crimson to bright red. A form has also flowered at Exbury with orange flowers. A variety *xanthinum* has not yet flowered and shown its colour, which is said to be pale yellow. This rhododendron also unfortunately comes into flower too soon for most gardens and is usually at its best in early spring, varying according to the weather between March and April. Patience is required for it, as with all other members of the same series, as they never flower when small; a large bush in full bloom well repays any waiting.

R. chionanthum, with white flowers, is not, I believe, in cultivation, nor do we know much about *R. coelicum;* but when it comes to *R. haematodes* we have one of the finest scarlet rhododendrons that has come back from China. Flowering as it does late in May, this is a rhododendron that can be more widely grown, though in cold gardens I have known it to split its bark. It is a dwarf shrub or bush as much as 10 feet high, with dark green leaves heavily covered underneath with a woolly indumentum and a fine truss of deep crimson flowers, almost blood red in colour. I fancy it likes a rather heavier soil than most rhododendrons, and this perhaps applies to most members, at any rate of this subseries if not to all members of the Neriiflorum Series. At Exbury it flourishes in ground which contains a little clay, though it also requires plenty of leaf mould on which to feed.

R. hemidartum is another attractive member of this sub-series with deep rich crimson flowers. It is a shrub about 4 feet in height, but again its early flowering habit - March - renders it only fitted for warmer gardens, though it is a perfectly hardy plant in the average British climate. It is very closely allied to *R. pocophorum,* to which the same description may apply, in fact, the only real difference from the non-botanists' point of view is that *R. pocophorum* has the under surface of the leaves covered with a woolly indumentum while *R. hemidartum* only has a few patches here and there.

The last member of the subseries, *R. mallotum,* is the only one to form a small tree, which it does, attaining a height of about 12 feet, and Farrer found it flowering above Hpimaw with snow all round, the scarlet of its flowers showing up vividly against the white surface. In England it is often out by February and, although some forms are better than others, most of those I have seen have had a tinge of blue in the trusses and they are the least attractive in colour of the whole series. Its brilliant tomentum is, however, a good feature, and with its large dark leaves it makes a good foliage plant even if its flowers are too often cut by frost. This rhododendron is also growing in heavy soil at Exbury, in which it seems to luxuriate.

The Subseries Neriiflorum itself is a small one, but most of the plants in it which are in cultivation are worth growing.

R. Albertsenianum, a shrub 4-7 feet high, is not in cultivation so far as I know, though a plant at Exbury which has flowered for two or three years now and which is obviously a rogue, is very akin to this species. It has bright crimson flowers and is very attractive when covered with its blooms.

R. euchroum is certainly not in cultivation and I have a shrewd suspicion that it is merely a hybrid between *R. sperabile* and *R. scyphocalyx*.

R. floccigerum is very varying in the colour of its flowers. A shrub 3-5 feet in height, with the leaves usually covered with little clumps of hairs, though var. *appropinquans* is completely glandular, having no indumentum at all. Numerous varieties have been sent back, of which the large majority are rather a poor crimson, nothing like as good as the other members of the series; occasionally a fine deep crimson form can be found, and a bush fully covered with bloom is not unattractive even in the poorer forms. These red flowered varieties are usually out in April; other varieties have been sent back with pale yellow flowers with rose margins and lines, some of which flower early in May and others not till June - they are more curiosities than beautiful and yet to some people attractive, though they are not everyone's fancy.

I suppose no rhododendron makes a bigger splash of scarlet than the beds of *R. neriiflorum* to be seen in some Cornish gardens. The type, with small round leaves greyish-white underneath, and bright crimson flowers, grows to be some 5 or 6 feet in height and so covers itself with flowers that the leaves are hardly visible. It is better in a warm garden

R. haematodes ssp. *chaetomallum* F 20333 ‘Tower Court’ at Exbury

R. mallotum at Exbury

and is apt to have its buds killed and even itself to suffer from frost in inland gardens. A hardier form is *R. euchaites,* which is a taller plant altogether and in the wild is sometimes found 15-20 feet in height, where it forms a small tree, though in open ground it is more bushy. Equally free flowering and a brighter red than *R. neriiflorum* with rather larger flowers and leaves, this is certainly a very desirable rhododendron and the best of the series, while *R. phoenicodum,* which was sent back in the first instance by Farrer and later by Forrest, has smaller leaves together with smaller flowers, but also of a bright crimson scarlet. I have never seen it doing quite so well as *R. euchaites* nor flowering so freely, though as far as the plant itself is concerned it seems perfectly hardy; it is certainly not so amenable to cultivation but quite an attractive plant. Two other sub-species, *R. agetum* and *R. phaedropum,* I have not yet identified in cultivation.

R. sperabile, which also was sent back by Farrer in the first instance and later by Forrest, is a bush of 3-6 feet in height, with a whitish or pale cinnamon indumentum under the leaves and crimson flowers, not quite so scarlet as *R. neriiflorum* or *R. euchaites* and, though free flowering, as it makes a somewhat looser bush it does not give the same crimson effect. It is, however, an attractive plant and worth a place in the garden, and at Exbury it never fails to open its blooms in April or early May. Var. *wiehsiense* has much longer and relatively narrower leaves; it is certainly more tender than *R. sperabile* and many sendings of it frequently get cut by frost at Exbury, though in the rock garden planted on top of a crag it seems flourishing enough.

The last of this sub-section is *R. sperabiloides* and in this we have one of the most attractive of any of the Series Neriiflorum and a plant which seems to grow admirably in our gardens, making a small bush at present 4 feet high and as much through at Exbury, and still growing regularly. It unfortunately flowers a little early, being usually at its best at the end of March, but it covers itself with blooms, and these are of a fine scarlet crimson, which show up well in the early spring sunlight. The general habit of the leaves and plant resemble more the Sanguineum Subseries of this section, but the reproductive organs clearly point to its being a member of the Neriiflorum Subseries.

The Subseries Sanguineum is one of the most puzzling subseries in the whole Species of Rhododendron and I think undoubtedly it wants working out again. For the purposes of this article I will dwell very shortly on many of this section which have not yet flowered freely in our gardens and of which but little is known, and will only lay stress on those about which we already know sufficient to tell whether they are going to make good plants for the garden or not.

R. aperantum, which is the most dwarf in this subseries, is a dwarf spreading shrub a few inches in height and apparently makes mats many feet across in due course. Like most members of this series, because it is a small plant it must not be imagined that it will flower at an early stage, and though it has now grown for some years in our gardens, it only very occasionally throws up a flower. At Exbury it has usually been red in colour, though a pale rose one just managed to open its bud this year. It is not an easy rhododendron; coming from a high altitude it probably misses its covering of snow and, as a result, is apt to lose its leaves in our winters. It is said to have flowers ranging from white to rose, deep rose, orange and yellow, and all these colour variations have been sent home by Forrest, but whether they will ever come true remains to be seen as variability in the colour of the flower occurs even in close proximity. For a rock garden it should be an ideal plant, and for anyone who has patience and is prepared to take a considerable amount of trouble, it should be well worth growing.

R. apodectum is a rhododendron very similar to *R. dichroanthum.* It forms a shrub 4-8 feet high with dull orange flowers tinged with rose; it flowers a fortnight after *R. dichroanthum* and to my mind is an attractive plant well worth growing. It seems fairly amenable to cultivation in any ordinary rhododendron soil. At Exbury although it has flowered freely it has never made the same show as other members of this series have done.

R. citriniflorum, a dwarf shrub 2-4 feet in height, makes a neat little bush with pale yellow flowers slightly tinged with pink, the under surface of the leaves being covered with a dense fawn indumentum. It is a pretty little bush, but growing at 13,000 feet altitude is a little fastidious as to situation. At Exbury in the rock garden it has been very attractive and has flowered freely there. It succumbed unfortunately to an attack of honey fungus and only one or two plants remain, which had to be removed to another situation where it is not doing quite so well.

R. cloiophorum, with its sub-species *R. asmenistum, R. leucopetalum, R. mannophorum* and *R. roseotinctum,* I have not yet distinguished in flower. It is a dwarf shrub four feet in height.

R. dichroanthum, a shrub 2-6 feet in height with grey-green leaves and a greeny-white indumentum underneath, is now a well-known rhododendron in our gardens with pale salmon to orange flowers; the best forms are almost pure dull orange, and these are the ones which should be sought for. It seems a fairly hardy rhododendron and, flowering as it does at the end of May, suitable for most gardens in this country. A large bush fully covered with its rather lax trusses is very attractive and gives a quite unusual shade of colouring. Its hybrids are only just beginning to flower, but should be most valuable, producing a new shade of colouring in rhododendrons.

R. didymum, an alpine shrub 2-3 or 4 feet in height, covers itself with its black crimson flowers in June, and in full bloom in the sunshine is, in my opinion, a most attractive rhododendron. The light in London is too dull for it and it never shows to best advantage on the exhibition table. It seems one of the easiest species of the series to grow and is happy in whatever position it is put in as long as the soil is acid and has a certain amount of humus in it. A plant not only for the large garden but for the small one.

R. eudoxum, with eight sub-species, is a typical Sanguineum, growing eventually up to 6 feet in height. Like *R. cloiophorum* it is not yet fully worked out and all the sub-species probably run into one another. Those of its paler varieties that I have seen in flower are not very attractive and so far as I can distinguish it at present, it can only be recommended to the collector. At present it is a shy flowerer in our gardens, but it may not have reached a mature age.

R. fulvastrum, with pale lemon yellow flowers, is a typical Sanguineum which I have not yet seen in beauty.

R. haemaleum, a small under-shrub of 2-4 feet in height with a rather loose truss of 3-5 flowers, has black crimson flowers a month earlier than *R. didymum.* Forms intermediate between this and *R. sanguineum* have been collected, and this caused the late Doctor Stapf to merge the two species into one. From the garden point of view, however, they are quite distinct. *R. haemaleum* itself is perhaps among the lesser attractive of this series. I have never seen it so free-flowering as *R. didymum* and its rather lax sparse truss does not lend itself to show, but it is an interesting rhododendron and worth a place in a collection.

R. herpesticum, a small shrub only 12 inches or so in height, has dull yellow to orange red flowers and is quite pretty in the rock garden, though I have not seen a plant with flowers of so good a colour as *R. dichroanthum*

R. himertum is another shrub with pale yellow flowers, which probably will be merged with other members of the series.

R. horaeum, with deep crimson flowers, is a procumbent shrub of only ½-1 foot in height. It is almost a dwarf *chaetomallum*.

R. sanguineum itself in its typical form has bright sealing-wax red flowers and forms a good truss. The type plant named by Franchet seems to have many more blooms in the inflorescence than those given in *The Species of Rhododendron,* and the latter perhaps caused Doctor Stapf to merge it with *R. haemaleum;* the leaves also are more leathery, broader and of a different green. It makes a pleasing little under-shrub of 3 feet in height and good forms of it should be a pretty sight in our gardens when they reach a free flowering size. It is not too easy, coming from a high altitude and missing its winter snow in our climate. The forms approaching *R. haemaleum* in flowering character should be avoided; the best that I have flowered at Exbury have come from Rock's seed.

R. scyphocalyx, a dwarf shrub eventually reaching 4 feet in height but, so far as I have seen it at Exbury, not likely to attain this for many years. It has flowers of a dull orange or cinnabar colour, usually of a dingy, dirty hue and hardly worth a place in the garden. I have never seen a good form raised from Farrer's seed but later importations from Forrest of var. *septentrionale* have clearer orange yellow flowers, almost approaching the colour of *R. dichroanthum,* and this latter variety is well worth growing. Flowering as it does later than *R. dichroanthum,* this carries on the flowering period, but so far I have only seen a few odd flowers on the plant and I do not know if it will be as attractive a garden shrub as *R. dichroanthum* itself.

R. torquatum, with shades of salmon or scarlet flowers, I have not yet identified, while *R. trichophlebium* is not in cultivation.

OVATUM

The next series we have to deal with, that of Ovatum, is but a very small one.

R. Bachii and *R. hongkongense* are not in cultivation, while *R. leptothrium* is really only hardy in Cornwall, though some forms have lived at Exbury for many years and have produced an odd flower or two, where, however, it is not to be compared for beauty with those growing in warmer gardens. I should think it would be a difficult colour to place correctly in the garden, but so vivid is the rose and so pure the colour that the shade of bright magenta in it in no way detracts from its merit. As a foliage plant alone it is worth growing, with vivid red brown young growth and graceful light green foliage; for all who can grow it, it is a very desirable rhododendron.

R. ovatum itself, which gives its name to the series, has white or white and pink spotted flowers, not of any garden merit, while *R. Vialii* is not, so far as I am aware, in cultivation.

PONTICUM

The Ponticum Series of rhododendrons contains some of the hardiest larger plants, all of them capable of being grown in any rhododendron garden in our islands, though the early blooming of one or two of them may detract from their flowering beauty in very cold gardens.

R. adenopodum, a bush 4-10 feet high, with attractive clear pale rose flowers, is one of the gems of the series, and after seeing a large bush of it in full bloom at Heligan I hurriedly proceeded to acquire a specimen for Exbury, though I believe one has to wait a considerable time for its full flowering beauty to develop.

R. brachycarpum, a robust shrub of 6-10 feet, with small creamy white flowers flushed with pink, is not a very attractive rhododendron and hardly one to be recommended to any but the collector. I have seen a form with yellowish flowers flushed pink, however, which is quite pretty and worth growing.

R. caucasicum, a shrub usually not more than 3 feet in height, with pale creamy-yellow flowers or tinted rose, spotted within at the back, is quite an attractive rhododendron and R. 'Cunningham's Sulphur' is thought to be merely a good variety of this. Extremely hardy, it flowers early in May, but its flowers are too papery for my liking and it has not the beauty of *R. campylocarpum*.

R. chrysanthum, a small alpine shrub 6-12 inches in height, has pale yellow flowers of no particular merit.

R. Degronianum, a compact rounded bush 3-4 feet in height with clear soft pink flowers, is an attractive rhododendron and very easily grown. It has been much confused with *R. Metternichii* and most of the *R. Metternichii* in our gardens and all the forms of *R. Metternichii* var. *pentamerum* are merely *R. Degronianum.* It is one of the most common species of Japan.

R. Fauriei, a shrub 5-10 feet high with white or yellowish flowers with a pink flush and numerous green spots, is by some regarded as *R. brachycarpum,* and no doubt some of the plants which are grown as *R. brachycarpum* in our gardens are merely this. It is a more attractive plant than *R. brachycarpum* itself, though nothing to write home about.

R. hyperythrum, a bush with stout branches and flowers said to be purple spotted, coming from Formosa is probably not quite so hardy as other members of the series. At Exbury it has flowered from seed sent back by Wilson with pure white trusses, not large in themselves but most attractive when covering the whole bush. These, however, unfortunately develop in April, which is too early for most gardens. So far as I have seen it, however, I cannot speak too highly of it.

R. Makinoi, a round bush 3-7 feet high, with long, very narrow leaves covered with a white tomentum which gradually changes to pale yellow, and pale pink flowers, has long been in cultivation in our gardens as a narrow-leaved form of *R. Metternichii,* or *R. Degronianum* as it should have been called. It is, however, quite distinctly a good species and with its soft pink flowers is an attractive hardy rhododendron. *R. Metternichii,* with clear pink flowers and seven lobes to the corolla, has only recently been introduced to this country and is not in general cultivation. A plant which flowered at Exbury had very attractive clear pink blooms, but it is too small yet to know what its value is from a garden point of view.

R. Smirnowi, a broadly branched shrub 3-6 feet in height, with ugly rose purple flowers, has the only merit of being hardy and having rather attractive foliage of dark green leaves with a dense woolly tomentum underneath.

R. Ungernii, a shrub or small tree 16-20 feet high, has small trusses of pale rose flowers or white flushed rose with fine spotting in July. Coming as it does from the Caucasus it is perfectly hardy and quite a pleasant plant in the woodland in full bloom, though it is apt to make its growth at the same time which detracts from its beauty somewhat. It is the last but two of the species of rhododendron to flower and is very often still in bloom when *R. auriculatum* comes out. Because of its hardiness and because of its late flowering character, it is quite a desirable plant for our gardens.

R. yakushimanum, with pale rose flowers, is not in cultivation.

All these belong to the Subseries Caucasicum.

Then we come to the Subseries Ponticum. *R. californicum,* a shrub 6-12 feet in height with rosy-purple flowers marked inside with yellowish spots, is not a very attractive plant.

R. catawbiense is a spreading shrub, 6-10 feet high with very magenta purple flowers and a rhododendron which has left its mark on many of the Waterer hybrids. It will stand any degrees of frost below zero that the climate of the Alleghenies in U.S.A. can give it. But

R. degronianum ssp. *yakushimanum* at Exbury

R. degronianum ssp. *yakushimanum* at Exbury

beyond this it has no merits and, in addition, as it is on this plant that the rhododendron fly finds its natural breeding ground, both it and all its hybrids are very apt to attacks of this insect.

R. maximum is another rhododendron which will stand zero temperature and with its small flowers, light rose-purplish or white, spotted yellowy-green, it is at any rate better than *R. catawbiense.* In cultivation a shrub 4-12 feet in height, or perhaps a little more, it certainly belies its name, both its leaves and flowers being on the small side, and it is only worth growing in extremely cold gardens or for its late flowering habit, as this is usually not much before July.

R. ponticum, the common mauve rhododendron naturalised in so many of our woods, requires no comments. I believe, however, that many of the plants growing in our woodlands have some other blood mixed with them, as crosses made with Waterer hybrids always revert to the purple, and these have been planted out and sown themselves. The typical shrub should be only 15 feet high.

SALUENENSE

The Saluenense Series is another section of alpine rhododendrons of dwarf habit, liking an open position but on the whole very amenable to cultivation in our gardens. They flower as a rule later than the Lapponicum Series, which is as well as they have flowers which vary from rosy purple to bright magenta and do not mix well with the majority of rhododendrons.

R. calciphilum, or "lime lover", apparently confined to limestone in the wild, seems to grow equally well in ordinary rhododendron soil. It is a prostrate shrub with rosy purple flowers.

R. calostrotum, a small shrub up to 1 foot or more in height in our gardens, is a pretty little plant for the rock garden or for any open situation at the edge of a woodland. Very free flowering with bright reddish purple flowers, it is an attractive rhododendron. The first introduction of Farrer seems to grow taller than the later importations of Forrest: both are equally attractive in their own way. It flowers at a young stage and I should think would require raising afresh from seed every eight to ten years.

R. chameunum, with deep rose purple flowers, is a typical Saluenense, and while not so distinct as *R. calostrotum,* is well worth a place in the garden. It looks like growing 1-2 feet high.

R. charidotes, a dwarf shrublet, is not I believe in cultivation, nor have I discovered *R. cosmetum* with its purple rose flowers.

R. fragariiflorum is the one colour exception in this series, its flowers being crushed strawberry. It forms a shrublet not more than 6 inches in height and when in flower is very attractive, though coming from an elevation of 14,000-15,000 feet it is not an easy doer.

R. keleticum, a semi-prostrate shrublet 6 inches or more in height, with deep or bright purplish crimson flowers, is an attractive plant for the rock garden and forms a dense mat several feet in diameter, and when in full bloom is very pretty.

R. nitens is a pleasant little Saluenense, 1-2 feet in height with crimson purple flowers.

R. prostratum, from 15,000-16,000 feet altitude, with violet pink flowers, forms a low shrublet only 4 inches in height; while *R. radicans,* a prostrate shrub only 2-4 inches high, is the dwarf of this series and with purple flowers forms a good mat in the rock garden, spreading laterally over some considerable distance. Although from 14,000-15,000 feet altitude on open stony moorland, it seems very amenable to cultivation.

R. riparium, a neat shrub 1-1½ feet or more high, with grey-green leaves and bright purple flowers, is one of the gems of the series and is found growing along river banks, but these must have been very dry banks as at Exbury, at any rate, it does not like a damp situation at all. Some forms are better than others, but I certainly think that this species has the most attractive coloured flowers of any of the series.

R. saluenense, a shrub about 2 feet in height, rather loose and untidy, with deep purple crimson flowers, is also a good rhododendron and some of its colour forms, especially the deep bright magenta purple ones, are particularly pleasing.

SCABRIFOLIUM

The Scabrifolium Series, consisting of small shrubs up to 8 feet in height, comprises plants suitable for our gardens as front edging plants.

R. hemitrichotum, a shrub 2-3 feet or more in height with pale rose flowers deeper at the margin, is a very attractive rhododendron, very similar in general appearance to *R. racemosum* and flowering about the same time, but having rather smaller flowers not so rounded. It is a very pretty, easy growing rhododendron.

R. mollicomum, with rather deeper coloured flowers slightly bluer in shade, seems to be slightly more on the tender side, and where it can be grown it is also an attractive rhododendron: and so is *R. pubescens,* a shrub 3-4 feet in height with pinky-white flowers, deeper outside. It is distinguished by the dense down which covers the leaves and stems.

R. scabrifolium, with white or pink flowers, although so far I have only seen the white form in our gardens, growing 2-3 feet or more in height, while coming from a lower elevation seems fairly hardy in our gardens, but it is unsuitable for cold districts as it opens its flowers at the end of February or early March. When in full bloom in the winter sunshine it is a very attractive plant and should be widely grown in warmer gardens; even at Exbury its beauty is too often cut short by the frost. *R. spiciferum* I have not yet seen in bloom.

And last of all comes that queer *R. spinuliferum,* with its crimson red almost cinnabar flowers, its curious tubular corolla with a narrow hole through which the stamens are eventually exserted. It grows up to 8 feet in height, and although at first thought to be extremely tender, seems perfectly hardy at Exbury where every year it pleases me with its free flowering habit. It is a delightful rhododendron for our gardens and as it does not flower till May, it never misses giving a show in an average spring.

SEMIBARBATUM

The Series Semibarbatum consists of but one species, *R. semibarbatum,* with insignificant white flowers hidden by the leaves, coming from central and southern Japan. It forms an upright shrub 2-10 feet high, its only merit being its autumn colour.

STAMINEUM

The Stamineum Series is a large group of tender rhododendrons, of which but very few are in cultivation in this country and I shall only mention three.

R. stenaulum, which in the wild forms a tree 16 feet or more in height, is a rhododendron for the very mildest gardens in the extreme south west, and even there it is not exactly happy; but in the greenhouse with its axillary lavender rose flowers, deliciously fragrant, it is an attractive rhododendron: and so is *R. pectinatum,* with its pure white flowers and a yellow blotch and very similar habit, but I should think equally if not more tender than *R. stenaulum.*

The only one that I have seen growing out-of-doors is *R. stamineum* itself, with white flowers and a yellow blotch or rose. In Cornwall this is quite a pretty rhododendron, but it is only fitted for the very mildest gardens.

TALIENSE *

The Taliense Series, with which we now have to deal, consists of four sub-series and a large number of species. They are mostly perfectly hardy plants, but in many cases flower very early in the year, so in cold districts are apt to have their flowers frozen. As a general rule its members are the least attractive of the Rhododendrons which have come from the Chinese and Himalayan Alps though, like many wild Rhododendrons, the first few flowers produced give little idea of what a well grown bush can be when smothered with flowers.

In the Sub-series Adenogynum, *R. adenogynum* itself, a shrub up to 9 ft. in height, with dark green leaves and brown indumentum, has white flowers shaded rose with crimson spots at the base. The truss is of a very fair size and a full grown bush should be very pretty early in April when covered with bloom. At present, however, it is not big enough in our gardens and has only shown a few odd flowers. *R. adenophorum* is very closely allied to this species, though slightly more glandular, while *R. alutaceum* lacks a large calyx though otherwise resembling them. *R. Balfourianum* is another very closely allied species, which differs only in a broader leaf and a more plastered indumentum.

R. Bureavii, a small tree or shrub 6 ft. in height, with rose coloured or reddish flowers and crimson markings according to the *Year Book,* but white as I have seen it flowering at Exbury, is worth growing if only for its foliage and, in my opinion, it is the only one of this Sub-series which should be in every garden. Its attractive dark green leaves, its thick bright rusty-red indumentum on the under surface, one of the finest indumentums on any Rhododendron, make it a most attractive evergreen at any time of the year, while when it is covered with its flowers it should be quite a pretty sight in the spring. It is apparently perfectly hardy. *R. bureavioides* is very like it and, coming from Northern Szechuan, differs merely in a botanical manner though its flowers are said to be larger.

R. circinnatum, a small tree 20 ft. in height, with thick cinnamon coloured indumentum, we know little about from the garden point of view, while *R. codonanthum,* with yellow flowers, is not in cultivation.

R. cruentum is a close relative of *R. Bureavii,* with white or white flushed rose flowers. It may be that the plants which have flowered at Exbury as *R. Bureavii* with white flowers are really this species.

R. detersile, a shrub about three feet high with a small compact truss, though placed in this Sub-series suggests affinity with the Sub-series Roxieanum.

R. detonsum, a shrub 9-12 ft high, is closely allied to *R. adenogynum* but has practically no indumentum.

R. dumicola, with its white flushed rose flowers and faint crimson blotch, has a very thin tawny indumentum and is closely akin to *R. mimetes,* but with rather a larger calyx. It differs from this plant also botanically.

R. elegantulum, a bush or shrub 3-5 ft. in height, is also closely allied to *R. Bureavii,* but has narrower leaves with a more velvety and less woolly indumentum.

R. Faberi, with its sub-species *R. faberioides,* differs only in botanical details from *R. Prattii,* a shrub with white spotted pink flowers, which is one of the less interesting Rhododendrons, while *R. wuense* is not in commerce.

The Sub-series Roxieanum contains a large number of closely allied species, some of which have been merged by Dr. Hutchinson, and there is little doubt that many of the slight differences, not only in this sub-series but in the whole series, are really due to isolation in the different districts where they grow and from the garden point of view some of them can very well be amalgamated. The general feature of this sub-series is the narrow leaf, the frequently marked incurving of the leaf margin and the small congested truss.

R. bathyphyllum, a low shrub 3-5 ft. in height, with equally narrow leaves and white flowers with copious crimson spots, is closely allied to *R. cucullatum,* which is now merged into *R. Roxieanum.*

R. comisteum, a shrub 2-3 ft. in height with small narrow leaves and deep rose flowers with a few crimson spots, is said to be a beautiful species running in the direction of the Sanguineum Sub-series.

R. globigerum, a shrub 3-6 ft. in height, is a rather coarse plant with larger, flatter leaves and white flowers. *R. gymnocarpum,* a shrub 2-3 ft. in height or more, has deep claret crimson flowers and should be an attractive plant, though the number of flowers in the truss - only three to four - will not make it very showy.

R. iodes, a shrub 6-8 ft. in height with white flowers and crimson spots, is a small leaved form of *R. triplonaevium. R. lampropeplum,* a shrub 2-3 ft. in height with congested foliage, is an Eastern representative of *R. proteoides,* differing in the larger leaves and in the white or pale rose flowers.

R. microgynum, a shrub 4 ft. in height, with dull soft rose flowers and faint crimson spots and a buff coloured, thin felted indumentum, is an attractive shrub. At Exbury the Rhododendron identified by Edinburgh as this has deep claret coloured flowers and bears some resemblance to the Sanguineum group. It seems perfectly hardy and usually flowers at the end of April or the beginning of May.

R. perulatum, a shrub 2-4 ft. in height with pale to deep rose flowers, is distinguished in the sub-series by the comparatively large calyx. This is another of the Rhododendrons of this series which shows relationship with the Sanguineum Sub-series and it might easily be that some time in the past members of these two series have crossed together, with results which puzzle the botanist.

R. poecilodermum syn. *R. Roxieanum.*

R. pronum is a prostrate shrub of 3-10 in., with creamy yellow flowers and deep crimson markings.

R. proteoides, a much branched shrub of 1-3 ft. in height, with flowers ranging from pale cream to canary yellow and from creamy white or yellow faintly flushed rose to deeper rose tint, is the smallest leafed species in the Taliense Series and is a perfectly hardy Rhododendron enimently suited for the rock garden for those with the patience to wait. For so far as I know it has not yet flowered in our gardens although it has been here for many years. An extremely slow growing Rhododendron but worth growing as a curiosity.

R. recurvum (syn. *R. Roxieanum*), *R. Roxieanum* and the species which have been merged into it are shrubs 4-9 ft. in height, and are all attractive with long narrow leaves, which from the foliage point of view are quite amusing to grow, though their small trusses of white flowers spotted with crimson are not particularly impressive. A well grown plant, however, covered with flowers would be quite attractive, and any of these are quite interesting in the garden.

R. russotinctum, a shrub 6-8 ft. in height and white flushed rose flowers with a few crimson spots, is very akin to *R. triplonaevium* and *R. tritifolium:* none of them are of particular interest.

We now come to the Taliense Sub-series. *R. aganniphum,* a shrub 2-4 ft. in height with the usual white flowers and red spots, very closely allied to *R. flavorufum* and is some ways suggestive of a small *R. Clementinae.*

R. agglutinatum, which has very similar flowers, is closely related to *R. schizopeplum. R. Clementinae,* a shrub 4-10 ft. in height, with attractive green oval to oblong-oval leaves,

*The Taliense, Thomsonii and Trichocladum Series paragraphs are sourced from the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* 1938, pp. 29-45.

R. bureavii AM 1939 at Exbury

with a pale fawn indumentum, at first glossy and resembling a kid glove, can easily be recognised by its triangular bud. Forrest named this Rhododendron after his wife, so he must have thought highly of it, but it is a difficult plant to grow and I dare say it does not much like transplanting. The few flowers that I have seen, creamy-white flushed rose, have not been over attractive, but there are forms with bright rose flowers and deeper crimson markings and in its mature state it may be an attractive plant in our gardens.

R. doshongense, a typical shrub 2-3 ft. in height with pink flowers and dark purple spots: *R. flavorufum,* a shrub 2-6 ft. in height with white flowers and crimson spots: *R. glaucopeplum,* a shrub 6-8 ft. in height with bright rose flowers, is closely allied to *R. aganniphum. R. lophophorum* is a little know species, near to *R. phaeochrysum,* which is a shrub of 6-18 ft. in height with the usual white flowers and crimson markings. *R. Principis* is not in cultivation.

R. Przewalskii, a high alpine species from 10,000-14,000 ft. altitude - a bush 3-9 ft. in height, has many flowering forms, many of which have been collected by Rock. I have not yet seen the flowers, though Rock speaks highly of it. At Exbury it is not too easy, like many plants from these high altitudes.

R. Purdomii is not yet in cultivation.

R. schizopeplum, a shrub 3-12 ft. in height, has the usual flowers of the series, and, coming from 12,000-14,000 ft. altitude, should be quite hardy, while *R. sphaeroblastum,* with white flowers marked with crimson spots, is near *R. Przewalskii* but rather more robust. *R. syncollum* is so close to *R. pseudochrysanthum* that it may be merely a variety.

R. taliense, a shrub 4-8 ft. in height with a compact truss of creamy yellow or cream flowers flushed rose with deep crimson markings is in some of its forms quite attractive in our gardens; a perfectly hardy Rhododendron with deep green foliage, it makes a nice round bush, but is one of the lesser attractive of the Chinese Rhododendrons.

R. vellereum, a bush or small shrub 6-15 ft. in height with white flowers or flushed rose with purple or crimson spots is an attractive Rhododendron, sent home by Kingdon-Ward, with rather larger leaves of a paler green than the majority of this series with a kid glove-like, pale yellow indumentum. It has flowered at Exbury and the flowers were quite attractive and one of the most interesting of this sub-section.

Sub-series Watsonii. *R. inopinum,* with creamy white flowers and a deep crimson blotch and crimson spots is closely allied to *R. paradoxum.*

R. rufum, a shrub or small tree, has white flowers or pink spotted crimson, and is near to *R. Weldianum.*

R. Wasonii, a bush about four feet high with dark green leaves and pinkish rose or creamy white flowers spotted within, or sometimes pale yellow, is an attractive Rhododendron, especially the yellow form, which does so well at Bodnant: while *R. Wiltonii,* a bush 3-15 ft. in height, with leaves paler above and felted reddish brown below, is a handsome Rhododendron worth growing. The white flowers with a deep claret blotch or flushed pink with red spots are attractive, and while the altitude from which it comes is lower than many of the other members of the series, it is perfectly hardy at Exbury. It is pretty in leaf and flower, which can be said of but few members of this larger series.

THOMSONII

Dull as are many members of the Taliense Series, the same can hardly be said of the Thomsonii Series, of which there are few which are not worth growing.

The Sub-series Campylocarpum contains certainly some of the best Rhododendrons for a small or medium sized garden. *R. callimorphum* is a shrub 4-9 ft. in height, with the small orbicular green leaves typical of the series and carries little trusses of open bell-shaped rose coloured flowers, deeper rose in bud, with a crimson blotch. It is a charming little plant, very floriferous, hardy for most gardens but flowering perhaps a little early for the coldest. As with all members of the series, open woodland seems to suit it best where it can get a little sun but not too much and be clear of the drip of trees. Also, like other members of the series, it dislikes getting dry and in times of drought requires watering though it cannot stand stagnant water at the root.

R. caloxanthum, a shrub 3-5 ft. in height with the typical round green leaves of the series, has trusses of pale yellow flowers the same colour as *R. campylocarpum* and with a similar red blotch. It, however, flowers a week to a fortnight earlier, thus extending the flowering season of those delightful coloured Rhododendrons. Although the *Species of Rhododendron* says that in nature it is a small bush as compared with *R. campylocarpum,* it shows signs in some its forms of growing to a considerable size: nevertheless it is eminently suitable for a small garden where flowers in the middle or at the end of April have a chance of showing their beauty. Among some of the forms which have been raised from wild seed, several plants have appeared in various gardens with orange coloured flowers and rather a loose truss. These may be natural hybrids, but all the same they are worth securing and at least one nursery gardener has been propagating some of these forms. In all it is a delightful Rhododendron, and so is *R. campylocarpum,* which is described as a small bush 4-8 ft. in height, but which in some cases might almost be described as a small tree. It has a slightly longer leaf than several members of the sub-series and of course is well known in our gardens, having been introduced for a number of years. It still remains one of the prettiest yellow flowered Rhododendrons that we have and although its trusses are not as large as those of *R. lacteum,* it is certainly less fastidious, more easily grown and much more floriferous than that grand species. Two forms are in existence, the old dwarf form of Hooker, which makes more of a bush and which has perhaps slightly more intense yellow flowers, and another form to which the varietal name of *elatum* has been given, which is a big, laxer growing shrub, taller and with its buds - like *R. caloxanthum* - tipped with orange, though eventually they fade. This latter form is far the most valuable for hybridising, as it throws when crossed with whites, not only pale yellows, but also ivories and delightful shades of pink tinged with yellow, whilst the type when crossed with a white Rhododendron throws many pale yellows.

R. cyclium, a shrub 4-6 ft. in height which is very near to *R. caloxanthum,* has a more orbicular leaf with a more leathery texture and differs also in flowering later. It is very often the middle of May before its flowers expand to their full beauty. It seems, also, to be a bigger growing shrub and to take longer to develop to maturity before it covers itself with flowers, It is, however, an equally attractive member of the sub-series.

R. hedythamnum, a species with pale rose coloured flowers, from the Tali Range, forming a shrub 4-5 ft. in height, I have not yet seen in flower. *R. myiagrum,* a shrub 3-5 ft. in height, has such sticky pedicels that in Yunnan and also in our English gardens they catch any small fly that settles upon them, which has given rise to its name. It is rather like a smaller leaved *R. cyclium* but has white flowers, sometimes spotted, and while pretty in its quiet way, is the least attractive of this section.

R. telopeum, a shrub 3 ft. in height with yellow flowers, is again allied to *R. caloxanthum,* from which it differs in its smaller foliage, and its form known as *R. telopeoides* has rather less orbicular leaves. Both are charming small plants, and as they appear to flower after *R. campylocarpum* has lost its beauty, are valuable in prolonging the season of yellow flowering Rhododendrons.

The next Sub-series, Martinianum, consists of but two species. *R. eurysiphon,* is a link between *R. Martinianum* itself, and the Sub-series Thomsonii species, and is a shrub 3-5 ft.

in height, with flowers broadly bell-shaped, creamy white or from pale rose more or less heavily flushed and conspicuously spotted crimson, to deep magenta. It is a pretty plant but nothing like as pretty as *R. Martinianum* itself, which is a charming little species, well suited for any garden however small. It makes a shrub 3-6 ft. in height with much slenderer flowering shoots than are usually found in this series and with little trusses of 2-3 flowers each of long bell-shaped flowers, pale rose in colour. Forrest sent this Rhododendron home a good many years ago and those who have seen bushes of it in full flower at Werrington will search the nursery gardens to acquire it for their own.

The Sub-series Selense, consisting of quite a number of species and sub-species, appeals to least of the Thomsonii Series and, in fact, so small at present do I consider their garden value that I consulted Mr. Stevenson about it; he confirms my views on the matter and I cannot do better than quote what he has written.

"The Sub-series Selense consists of a considerable number of species and sub-species. Generally they are shrubs eventually reached 6-8 ft. in height and diameter. They have a very attractive compact habit of growth and neat small foliage.

"Unfortunately, like some other Rhododendrons, many years are required before they are sufficiently mature to flower really well. Single trusses are not effective and they seem to have little flowering merit until they have passed possibly their 21st birthday.

"Even then they will have to be planted in considerable quantity to give anything like the effects that have been seen in China and Tibet by their introducers.

"There are many botanical differences amongst the various species, but so far, from a garden point of view, they are very like each other.

"Colour does not appear to be any reliable guide, as most of them seem to be capable of producing many shades from rose through light yellow to white.

"It is too early to make a critical comparison of their flowering merits, but at the moment possible *erythrocalyx* sub-species *docimum* and *jucundum* seem to be the best".

At Exbury two or three plants growing there as *R. selense* have flowered and borne pale yellow trusses, occasionally flushed with rose and seem to me very attractive indeed. *R. calvescens* has pale rose flowers: *R, cymbomorphum* is said in the *Species of Rhododendron* to be the only one with yellow flowers in the sub-series, but I believe, since the book was published, others have flowered: *R. dasycladum,* a rather larger shrub of 6-10 ft. with bristles on the shoots, has white or rose coloured flowers: *R. erythrocalyx,* also with rather larger leaves than the average has creamy white flowers with a pale crimson blotch and spots; whilst its sub-species *R. beimaense, R. docimum, R. eucallum* and *R. truncatulum,* all of which have minor botanical differences, have more or less white or pinkish white flowers.

R. esetulosum has creamy white, flushed rose, crimson spotted flowers: *R. jucundum,* altogether a bigger plant, 6-20 ft. in height has rather flat, fleshy flowers, either rose or pale rose, or almost white: *R. manopeplum,* has creamy white flowers: *R. rhaibocarpum,* a shrub of 4-7 ft., near *R. dasycladum,* has white flowers occasionally flushed rose - this has flowered many times in our gardens but is not of great garden value: *R. selense* has white, flushed rose or rose coloured flowers, but I believe many different coloured forms occur, probably as many as in *R. Stewartianum;* its sub-series are *axium, chalarocladum, dolerum, duseimatum, metrium, nanothamnum, pagophilum* and *probum. R. setiferum* has creamy white flowers, crimson at the base and is allied to *R. jucundum: R. vesitum* has smaller flowers and is allied to *R. dasycladum* and *R. rhaibocarpum* but has smaller leaves with a distinct tawny indumentum.

The next Sub-series, Souliei, contains some of the most charming members of the Rhododendron family. With the exception of one they all have small, flat, saucer-shaped flowers, and when covered with these are quite delightful.

The first member of the sub-series, *R. astrocalyx,* is, from the garden point of view, best grouped together with *R. croceum* and *R. Wardii* as forms of one species, and there is no doubt that these three will eventually be merged, the plants being practically indistinguishable from the garden point of view, though *R. Wardii* perhaps is bigger growing and is more apt to make a small tree, while the others remain as bushes. They all have heart-shaped round leaves and pale yellow flowers, crimson in bud, and with a flash of crimson at the base. They all take some years before they flower freely and when young the new growth often comes at the same time as the flowers, thus hiding their beauty; later on, when they set bud freely on many shoots, the young growth does not come till after the flower and then, in the middle of May, their many trusses of wide open flowers make a pretty sight. By then *R. campylocarpum* has left its beauty behind till the next year. No collection of Rhododendrons should be without one of them, and in gardens where *R. chasmanthum* can be grown, a mixture of the two in open woodland makes a very pretty picture.

R. astrocalyx grows from 3-5 ft. in height; and *R. croceum* and *R. Wardii* from 15-20 ft. high.

R. puralbum, a shrub 12-15 ft. in height, seems to be a white form of *R. croceum* and is a charming and desirable species.

All these rhododendrons seem to take kindly to our woodland and although some forms may be more tender than others, on the whole they thrive in the sheltered Rhododendron gardens provided semi-shade and a reasonable amount of moisture in dry periods is available.

R. Bonvalotii is an imperfectly known species, not in cultivation.

R. litiense is slightly smaller in leaf, in flower and in size, but equally attractive.

R. Souliei, a shrub 6-12 ft. in height, with open cup-shaped flowers, pure white or a beautiful shade of shell pink, is a perfectly delightful Rhododendron. It seems, however, to be more at home in the eastern counties than in the south and west and will stand a considerable amount more cold than the previously mentioned members of this series. In western Szechuan it grows in woodlands and thickets and woodland is where it thrives best in this country. In Cornwall and at Exbury it is not really at home but where it can be grown it is one of the most charming of all Rhododendrons.

The last Rhododendron species included within this sub-series, *R. Williamsianum,* is a small shrub, 3-5 ft. in height, and as much through, with small trusses of 3-5 flowers, sometimes only two and usually not more than three or four, of pale pink bell-shaped flowers, which are perfectly delightful, especially when some of the young shoots, which are a lovely shade of reddish brown, are just beginning to appear. It is apt to grow rather early and the new shoots are frequently frosted in cold gardens so that the following year no flower is seen, or only a few, and this mars its beauty. But when seen at its best in Cornish gardens in robust health covered with its pink flowers, it is one of the best Rhododendrons introduced into this country and well worthy of the name it bears. Semi-shade in the woodland and a warm position is required, leaf mould and water during drought, but any codling that this Rhododendron may receive is amply repaid in the gardens where it flourishes.

The Sub-series Thomsonii, the last section of this series, consists also of a number of species nearly all of which are well worth growing.

R. cerasinum, a medium-sized, thick-set bush, of 10-12 ft. in height, has the smallest leaves of this sub-series of Rhododendrons, three times as long as they are broad and of a dull green. The flowers are said to be creamy white with a broad cherry band, or cherry red

R. cerasinum KW 6923 ‘Cherry Brandy’ at Exbury

or brilliant scarlet with five deep purple pouches at the base. So far I have only seen flowers of the cherry red one and of a rather dull white with a pale pink band, though I am told that some with better colours have flowered in other gardens. From the description given by Kingdon-Ward, who discovered it in south-eastern Tibet, it appears to be a most desirable Rhododendron, though it is one of those where selected forms will no doubt appeal more to those who like effects in their gardens. As with so many of its relations, when young the flowers are low down and hidden by the foliage, but at maturity it makes a pretty little bush and when covered with its bells will no doubt take its proper place in our gardens.

R. cyanocarpum, a shrub or small tree 5-20 ft. in height with roundish leaves of a pale blue-green, has flowers white or flushed rose, or even a rich soft rose. With pure white flowers it is a most attractive rhododendron and can be compared with a white *R. Thomsonii,* but most of the varieties I have seen have flowers stained with rather a purplish rose, when it is not attractive. It is very early flowering - at the beginning of April - so it is only for the warmer gardens.

R. eclecteum, with more triangular leaves and usually deep brown buds, is a shrub up to 7 feet or I fancy more in height, with every variety of colour - from flushed white to deep rose, rose magenta, shell pink, pale yellow, sometimes spotted, sometimes unspotted. It has been sent home time after time by different collectors in the Chinese and Burmese Alps. In its best forms in a warm garden free from spring frosts, it is quite one of the most attractive early flowering rhododendrons, but it must be grown where it can be protected from spring frosts, for it is at its best about March, though sometimes a little earlier and sometimes later, and like so many rhododendrons with fleshy flowers, a couple of degrees of frost will turn them into a brown pulp. A vase filled with flowers picked from different plants makes a very pretty picture, and although some forms are better than others, none are really bad. Here again better varieties will no doubt vegetatively be produced in time.

R. brachyandrum is a variety with dark spotted flowers and *R. bellatulum* has smaller leaves and bright rose flowers. Like all the series it dislikes drought and like other members of this subseries it will stand a little more shade than the Souliei subseries.

R. Hookeri, a tall erect shrub of 12-14 feet, has pale green leaves and the veins on the under-surface of the leaves studded with isolated hair tufts, which feel like small hooks to the fingers when run along them. This magnificent rhododendron with large trusses of brilliant scarlet-crimson flowers, is quite one of the finest of the older Himalayan rhododendrons but unfortunately is none too hardy and only fitted for the very warmest gardens or a cool greenhouse. At Exbury it lives in the open but has not yet flowered there and its chief beauty is in the Rhododendron house, where every year it makes a magnificent display. It grows extremely early and the slightest frost affects the young growth, so that the secondary shoots that come away later are not strong enough to make flower bud. It was the only rhododendron to have these big hooks on the under-surface of the leaves, but Kingdon-Ward has lately sent back one which from the leaves has been identified as *R. Hookeri* but which he states to have amethyst purple flowers. This rhododendron is growing at Exbury and the leaves have the characteristic veins but are not quite the same in shape as those of *R. Hookeri* and it certainly does not grow so early. It may be a closely allied but different species.

R. hylaeum, a round-headed tree 20-40 feet in height has the usual fleshy flowers of the series, of a pale rose colour more or less dappled a deeper tint, but is so far only little known in cultivation. I have seen a few odd flowers at Exbury on a young seedling about 5 feet high, and judging by them I should imagine it to be the least interesting of the subseries.

R. Meddianum, a shrub about 6 feet in height, has rather longer leaves less rounded than those of *R. Thomsonii* and even brighter scarlet crimson flowers, almost the colour of *R. Hookeri,* and though on the tender side it grows later and has flowered for the last two years at Exbury. In a sheltered garden it is quite one of the most desirable rhododendrons and a group at Werrington or at Caerhays when covered with their flowers makes a dazzling sight and one not readily forgotten. Its variety *atrokermesinum* has still darker and larger flowers. No one who has a garden suitable for growing this rhododendron should be without it.

R. Stewartianum, a small graceful bush 3-7 feet in height with rather smaller pale green elliptic leaves, is another very valuable rhododendron in the colour of its flowers: they range from pure white or clear soft yellow through white flushed rose to deep rose margined deep crimson with or without markings, and I have some growing at Exbury with apple-blossom flowers. These and the pale yellow ones are in my opinion the most attractive and I should rate it very high indeed were it not for its early flowering habit - the end of February will sometimes see a few flowers and March is its usual period, a month too full of cold winds and frost to make it a really popular rhododendron, though it is well worth a gamble and one may enjoy its beauty for a week before the weather turns unkindly, even in a cold garden.

And the last not only of the subseries but of the series is *R. Thomsonii* itself, that grand old Himalayan species, with its deep blood red flowers at the end of April or beginning of May, which in the past has brought so much pleasure and delight to so many of our gardens. A bush or small tree 6-14 feet in height or more, it is a fine stand-by, though it must never be allowed to set seed pods for it flowers so freely when it reaches adult size and so much strength is taken out of the plant by its effort to reproduce itself that it will go back very quickly if it is not attended to as soon as the flowers have begun to fall.

TRICHOCLADUM

The next series and the last one to be dealt with this year is the Trichocladum Series. Its members all consist of little deciduous bushes 2-5 feet in height with small, pale yellow, flat flowers. When fully grown a bush covered with these is quite attractive in a refined way. Some have more greeny-yellow flowers but generally differences are more botanic than from a garden point of view and require but little mention.

R. chloranthum has yellow flowers tinged with green. *R. lepidostylum,* a shrub only 1 foot in height with pale yellow flowers, is worth growing for the delightful glaucous green young leaves alone, and it should be in any collection of rhododendrons.

R. lithophilum has pale yellow flowers, *R. lophogynum* the same, *R. mekongense* yellow tinged with green.

R. melianthum, a shrub 6-8 feet in height with yellow flowers, is probably one of the best of the series. It was introduced by Kingdon Ward and is certainly one which should be selected.

R. oulotrichum has precocious yellow flowers. *R. rubrolineatum,* a shrub 5 feet in height, is closely connected with the Triflorum Series and has yellow flowers lined and flushed with rose on the outside. Its leaves also are sub-persistent and it is rather a distinct member of the series.

R. semilunatum has rather deeper yellow flowers while *R. trichocladum* with greenish-yellow flowers spotted with dark green, is probably the one that is most common in our gardens but, though quite pretty, it would never take a front place.



R. thomsonii at Exbury

R. viridescens has pale yellow flowers.

TRIFLORUM *

The Triflorum Series is quite one of the most attractive and useful in the whole range of this genus. The lightness of the foliage and the bushy effect of the plant is a relief to the heavy dark green foliage of most rhododendrons; their floriferousness and general effect of the flowers make them very attractive, not only as rhododendrons but for general planting in shrubberies, added to which a great many of them are hardy, easily grown shrubs.

In the Subseries Augustinii, *R. Augustinii* itself is too well-known now to require any description. Of the two forms originally sent back by Wilson the deep blue one is slightly on the tender side, while the pale lilac is very much hardier. The two crossed together have given at Exbury a fine pale blue rhododendron, perfectly hardy there. Mr. Stevenson has been crossing the best forms of the green-eyed *Augustiniis* together, with striking results. There is no doubt that by selection and further crossing in this species a hardy race of good coloured forms will be evolved. These, however, will have to be propagated by cuttings and it is plants grown from cuttings rather than seedlings that the purchaser should seek.

R. chasmanthoides and *R. chasmanthum* should really be merged together, both forms being found in batches of plants raised from the same packet of seed from the wild. It is unfortunately not so hardy as *R. Augustinii* and will not grow at Tower Court. At Exbury it flourishes and is now some 5-10 feet in height, where it flowers a fortnight after *R. Augustinii* with beautiful blue lavender flowers and rather more of a truss than *R. Augustinii* itself.

R. villosum, a similar shrub, has the young shoots much more hairy than either of the previous two and flowers of bright magenta, attractive, but care in planting is necessary. These three are the only members of the Augustinii Subseries in general cultivation, *R. bivelatum,* with small rose coloured flowers, and *R. hirsuticostatum,* with whitish rose flowers, so far as I know are not available.

In the Hanceanum Subseries *R. afghanicum* is a poisonous shrub and should not be grown. *R. Hanceanum,* a dwarf shrub up to 3 feet in height, with flowers whitish or pale yellow, is attractive in a minor way. Some forms are much better than others. It seems perfectly hardy at Exbury.

The Subseries Oreotrephes consists of a number of shrubs with grey-green, almost round leaves and lilac flowers. They bear a close resemblance to one another and it is really difficult to distinguish between most of them except for minor botanical differences. The flowers, however, vary somewhat as they do in the previous subseries and here again plants propagated from cuttings are advisable. Harry White crossed together two of his best *R. oreotrephes* and produced a very fine race of seedlings, one of which at Exbury nearly always takes a prize when shown at the Rhododendron Show.

R. oreotrephes itself, 7 feet or more in height, with mauve or mauvy-pink flowers, is an attractive shrub perhaps, like other members of this series, a little more fastidious about position. They dislike moving more than most members of the Rhododendron family and I fancy prefer semi-shade. The better form is very beautiful in flower.

Very near it but a little later and a rather dwarfer bush is *R. timeteum.*

I think the most beautiful of the family is *R. exquisitum,* which was named from two plants at Exbury bought from Harry White and raised by him as Subseries Oreotrephes, Forrest 20489. About 6 or 7 feet high at present at Exbury, this plant has very lovely pale grey-mauve flowers with hardly any spots: and of all this subseries I put it the highest.

*The Triflorum, Vaccinioides and Virgatum Series paragraphs
are sourced from the *Year Book of The Rhododendron Association,* 1939, pp. 29-36.

R. artosquameum is another rhododendron very similar to *R. oreotrephes,* with beautiful rose coloured flowers without markings, but it is probably a slightly variable species as *R. cardioeides, R. pubigerum* and *R. trichopodum* have been merged into it by Dr. Hutchinson. Since doing this a number which was sent back as *R. artosquameum,* Forrest 20481, was provisionally called *R. siderophylloides* by Dr. Hutchinson when shown by Mr. Crosfield. This was a particularly fine form, but it is doubtful if it is worthy of specific rank and it should probably be changed to *R. artosquameum,* to which rhododendron the award should be transferred.

R. apiculatum, with dark purple flowers, *R. bracteatum* with white flowers spotted with red, and *R. sycnanthum,* with deep rose lavender flowers, are other members of the subseries of no particular merit for the ordinary gardener.

In the Subseries Polylepis *R. Amesiae* with purple flowers and *R. concinnoides* with pinkish-purple flowers are not of special note. In general the Polylepis Subseries is not particularly attractive.

In *R. concinnum,* with which has been merged *yanthinum, Benthamianum, coombense, ioanthum* and *laetevirens,* there is again a distinction between the botanist and the gardener. From the botanical point of view these names may all belong to the same species: from the garden point of view they are different. The poor forms of *R. concinnum* are only worth the bonfire, but some of its varieties are extremely attractive. *R. Benthamianum,* with deep violet flowers, always gives me great pleasure. It is not perhaps as attractive a blue as *R. Augustinii,* but when I see it in flower I always mean to propagate it and then somehow always seem to forget - it is well worth a place in any collection of rhododendrons.

R. yanthinum, with rather more magenta coloured flowers, is sometimes confused with *R. pseudo-yanthinum,* which is a more showy garden plant, with deep magenta flowers. It is this latter plant which should be bought for the garden.

R. polylepis itself is, in my opinion, the worst of the whole group, in fact, the whole series.

The Subseries Triflorum contains some fine rhododendrons. *R. ambiguum,* a shrub 5 feet or more in height with rather darker green leaves than most of the series, has pale yellow flowers spotted with green. There are better forms of this rhododendron in cultivation and it is best to buy plants raised from cuttings from the best varieties. If this is done when the plants are mature they are very pretty in a sober way in the woodland and I always admire my group of this rhododendron when in flower.

R. bauhiniiflorum, said to have been sent back by Kingdon-Ward from one of his recent expeditions, I have not yet seen in flower. It is very close to *R. triflorum*.

R. flavantherum, a shrub 6-10 feet in height with bright clear yellow flowers, is also one of Kingdon-Ward's plants. So is *R. kasoense,* a shrub with yellow flowers and red anthers. Neither of these two, however, have I seen in flower.

R. Keiskei, a low compact shrub with lemon yellow flowers comes from Japan. In many ways it might be called a dwarf *R. lutescens* and is very attractive in the rock garden when covered with its crowded blooms in the early spring.

R. lutescens itself is a fine shrub for a warm garden. Not only is its light green foliage always graceful and pleasing but its bronzy young shoots are attractive in the spring, and in some forms its yellow flowers are very fine. Unfortunately it begins to open its flowers at Exbury in February and these are often frosted, but so numerous are the buds that there is always a succession to come on, and I rarely miss a year without seeing its beauty at some time or another. Should there be a period free from frost during its flowering time, it is as beautiful a rhododendron as one could wish to see although people with cold gardens would

be disappointed with it. It is perfectly at home in our climate, as it seeds itself freely at Exbury.

R. triflorum, a shrub 8 feet or more in height, with light yellow flowers spotted with green, has been introduced for many years. Quite at home in Cornwall, it is a little too tender for northern gardens, though it flourishes at Exbury. Its great beauty is in its bark, which it seems to shed every year - the cinnamon colour of this is very beautiful when it is held up to the sky.

R. Wongii, with cream coloured flowers, I have not seen. *R. xanthocodon,* sent home by Kingdon-Ward, is one of the connecting links between the Triflorum and the Cinnabarinum Series. Its flowers are more bell-shaped than any other of the whole series and a well grown plant with light green foliage and yellow bells is very pretty in May. It seems, however, to be slightly on the tender side and requires a sheltered situation at Exbury.

The Subseries Yunnanense, the last subseries of this series, is also the largest. Of *R. aechmophyllum* and *R. Bodinieri* I know little. *R. caeruleum* used to be known as *R. eriandrum* and while, strictly speaking, it was necessary to alter the name, this is another instance where botanical nomenclature is contrary to garden interests. I suppose the type plant must be a dark colour, but all those growing in my garden are white and raised from seed sent back by Rock. I consider it the best of all the white Triflorums and am propagating it freely as it seems a good doer and perfectly hardy. It is a bushy shrub, at present about 5 feet high and it does not look as if it is going to grow much taller. It is a good plant to have in the garden in May as whites are always useful to avoid colour clashes. *R. charianthum,* a shrub with rose coloured flowers densely spotted with red on the upper part of the corolla within, is very near *R. yunnanense*.

R. chartophyllum is also very close to *R. yunnanense* but the leaves are more deciduous and it also flowers considerably earlier in the season. When completely deciduous it is known as *R. chartophyllum praecox*. In the latter form the flowers come before the leaves and it always looks to me a little naked. It is a pleasant enough little shrub, very free flowering and apparently hardy but not, in my opinion, as good as many others of the same subseries.

R. Davidsonianum, a bushy shrub 6-10 feet in height with pink flowers with red spots, very variable in colour and mostly inclined to mauve. By selection, however, real clear pinks can be secured and Bodnant received an Award of Merit for a very fine form a year or so ago. It is a hardy rhododendron and very pleasing in its best forms.

R. erileucum, which I have not seen, is very closely allied to *R. zaleucum,* nor do I know *R. hesperium,* with smoky rose-lavender flowers, nor *R. hormophorum,* a shrub up to 3 feet in height with rose flowers.

R. hypophaeum, with flowers white tinged with rose, and *R. leilungense,* with pale rose coloured flowers, are not in general cultivation.

R. lochmium, with pink-lilac flowers is very closely allied to *R. Davidsonianum,* very pretty in full bloom it is no better than that plant.

R. longistylum, a shrub up to 7 feet in height, with small pink or white flowers, is a pretty little bush but nothing like so showy as other members of the family. It is really only worth a place in the collector's garden.

R. pallescens appeared as a stray at Exbury, but since then it seems identical with Rock No. 59578. It is a very free flowering little bush with white or pinky-white flowers and red spots and is perfectly hardy there. It is very attractive when in flower and so well worthy of the Award of Merit it received some years ago.

R. pleistanthum is very nearly allied to *R. Davidsonianum. R. rigidum* is a loose growing shrub with very pale rose coloured flowers of no particular merit although quite pretty, like all the other members of the family.

R. Searsiae, with white or mauve coloured flowers, a small shrub or bush, is another plant which makes a great show every spring, completely covering itself with flowers and apparently quite hardy. Its colour is perhaps not so good as some other members of the family but none the less attractive.

R. siderophyllum, a shrub 4-9 feet in height with whitish to violet flowers, and *R. stereophyllum,* a shrub 6 feet in height, with very small flowers, need no particular description.

R. suberosum, a shrub 5-7 feet in height with white or white flushed rose flowers, is an attractive member of the family but it makes rather an untidy bush, though the white forms are quite pleasing.

R. tatsienense is only a name. *R. Vilmorinianum,* a weak growing shrub with yellowish white flowers then white with ochre coloured spots, does not appeal to me particularly, but when we come to *R. yunnanense* we have quite the finest member of this subseries. The flowers are pinkish or nearly white spotted with red, sometimes a very fine pale lavender, perfectly hardy and forming a large shrub eventually, it covers itself with flowers every year and as these come rather later than the majority of the series, it is suitable for nearly every garden. A bush of this in full vigour and flower in the open is a great joy in the garden.

Would that *R. zaleucum* was hardier! Its leaves, silvery-white beneath and grey-green above, make it an attractive foliage plant, while the fine lilac coloured flowers are large and pretty at the end of April or early in May, when it is in bloom. It is only just hardy at Exbury where it does not flower every year.

VACCINIOIDES

The Vaccinioides Series consists entirely of small epiphytic shrubs of no garden value or interest, so I do not propose to describe them.

VIRGATUM

The last series in these articles - Virgatum - consists of three species, only two of which are well worth growing. *R. oleifolium,* sent back by both Forrest and Kingdon-Ward, is unfortunately none too hardy, only just surviving at Exbury, where, however, the pale pink form sent back by Ward and the white form by Forrest, delight me with their delicate flowers in the early spring; they are both worth growing in a cool greenhouse so pretty are they. They are small shrubs, requiring a front place in a warm sheltered situation where they are as free from frost as possible.

R. racemosum is so well-known that it is hardly worth describing. All its forms are good. The one I like least is the one that has been sent back as *R. racemosum* var. *oleifolium,* not to be confused with *R. oleifolium* itself. This one always opens its flowers precociously in February or March and usually gets frozen at Exbury. But the late forms, either the dwarf form introduced by Forrest or the taller form of Rock, are all beautiful front row plants in the woodland and flower freely every year. They are perfectly hardy in this country and suitable for any garden, although the fact that they flower at the beginning of May may make them not too suitable for gardens where late spring frosts occur.

R. virgatum, the least attractive of the series, is the Himalayan form of *R. oleifolium* and was sent back by Hooker many years ago. However, it is a pretty plant in Cornwall with its pinkish flowers, but it is no hardier than *R. oleifolium* itself and nothing like so good or attractive a rhododendron.

HYBRID RHODODENDRONS

The early flowering hybrids are perhaps of less interest to the general public than those which come out after April is drawing to a close, yet in the favoured districts of Cornwall and the western sea-board they are only occasionally spoilt by frost. At Exbury and in the warmer gardens inland they are somewhat of a gamble, but what fun one gets out of them in a favourable year, and what a joy to walk through the woods on a dull February day and see colour already beginning to appear on countless bushes.

I suppose the two early hybrids which are in nearly every garden - 'Nobleanum' and its various forms, and 'Praecox' - are too well known to need descriptions, but only last year I noticed that the nursery gardeners are still confused about 'Nobleanum Venustum', which is easily the best of that hybrid. I think Rogers of Southampton were the first to distribute it, and the lovely pink flowers delight me every year, a much clearer pink than the dull form which is sometimes exhibited at the R.H.S. Hall.

After a cold December, January and early February were very mild and 'Bric-à-Brac', a cross between *moupinense* and *leucaspis,* was in full beauty. A neat small bush, rather stiffer and more compact than *moupinense,* it is usually white but some have a pink flush; it resembles *leucaspis* in the rounder flower and the bent style.

At the same time 'Bo-Peep' (*moupinense* X *lutescens*) was beginning to open its pale primrose flowers and 'Tessa', that fine cross of Mr. Stevenson's between *moupinense* and 'Praecox', was expanding its rosy purple buds.

Of the larger Rhododendrons 'Red Admiral' had already fully opened some of its magnificent blood-red flowers. This giant hybrid from Caerhays between *arboreum* and *Thomsonii* never fails to open its first blooms at Exbury in the first week of February and continues over the next two months to show its beauty, occasionally marred by a frost. It is easily the best of the reds and 'Abbot', a hybrid between *Delavayi* and *Thomsonii,* which opens at the same time and which is also first rate, is certainly not quite so good. 'Cornubia' of course, one of the best hybrids from Penjerrick, is fully out in some of its forms, and while it is a magnificent Rhododendron, it has neither as good a truss nor as good a colour as 'Red Admiral'. But 'Red Admiral' has been made by both Gill and Loder, and while both these latter crosses are good and better than either 'Abbot' or 'Cornubia', they are not as good as the Williams' cross, while as for 'Tregedna', which flowers at the same time, it is not in the same class and is really no longer worth growing: nor is 'Harrisii', or even 'Harrisii Superba', though this latter hybrid opens somewhat later.

'Alix' (*barbatum* X *Hookeri*), had opened its first flowers and was very fine in the woodland. It is a good red with no trace of blue in it, but its truss is not as big as 'Red Admiral'; it is, however, brighter than 'Shilsonii' and as it comes earlier than that plant, is a useful stop-gap.

Some crosses between *Ririei* and *sutchuenense* are a lovely large-flowered mauve and look very well as long as they are kept away from the reds. Luckily the birds do not like them as much as they do *Ririei* itself, which is picked to pieces for the honey.

R. sutchuenense X 'Cornubia' is a disappointing Rhododendron. Some forms may be better than others and one shown by Colonel Stephenson Clarke, which got an Award of Merit, is probably the best of them. The same cross at Exbury has given very poor results and nearly all have been burnt; why I do not know, but none of the hybrids of 'Cornubia' has turned out well at Exbury.

'Lord Milner', a rather later *barbatum* hybrid of unknown parentage, crossed with *calophytum* gives some very pleasing pinks and one was in full beauty on February 13th.

A *R. sutchuenense* cross with a white or pale pink *arboreum,* or as I shrewdly suspect, *praevernum* x *arboreum* from Caerhays (for all the *sutchuenense* at Caerhays are, I believe, but *praevernum*) gives a very pleasant pinky-white hybrid with a nice truss and was just beginning to expand its blooms.

24th February 1938

A fortnight's cold weather has checked the Rhododendrons from expanding their blooms and very little more has come out during that period.

Why is it that very often hybrids between two later flowering Rhododendrons are often so precocious? 'Aries' (*neriiflorum* X *Thomsonii*), a fine scarlet Rhododendron is already beginning to open its buds, though neither of its parents flowers before the end of April. Twice I made the cross. The second batch is finer and though some flower early, there are many unopened buds.

1st March 1938

'Aries' (the first cross) is fully out, and a very fine Rhododendron it is with a large calyx. This is the first year that I have seen it in full bloom although it has tried to open its buds for several years now; but it has always been frosted, and that may still happen.

'Christmas Cheer' was still a mass of flower yesterday; it has now been in full bloom for over two months, and it is a *caucasicum* hybrid which pays better rent, I believe, than any other, especially as the tits seem to leave it alone, though they will pick 'Nobleanum' to pieces.

'Shilsonii' is opening fast, and while it is a fine deep red, will not bear comparison with 'Red Admiral'.

'Crossbill' (*spinuliferum* X *lutescens*) is just beginning to open its apricot-yellow flowers and a very pretty Rhododendron it is, one easily made and quick-growing and early-flowering from seed.

Fargesii X white *arboreum* is beginning to open its buds. Here again we have an instance of two later Rhododendrons throwing back to an early-flowering period.

21st March 1938

A sharp frost put an end to the display at Exbury and for a fortnight the garden was desolate; but now it has recovered a great deal of its beauty, though rain is badly wanted. The later flowering 'Shilsonii' are in full beauty.

One of the first of the *lacteum* crosses to flower, white *arboreum* X *lacteum,* is fully out, a fine white truss, ivory-tinted in bud. The same plant flowered last year and also another one which was pinky-yellow. I think it will be a finer cross than *sutchuenense* X white *arboreum,* first made at Caerhays and which is very pretty in the garden today. *Arboreum* X *calophytum,* on the other hand, have been somewhat disappointing, though one or two have had quite large flowers and retained the blotch. *Hookeri* X *arboreum* makes a fine red Rhododendron without any blue in it.

Fargesii X *Thomsonii* is opening its rosy bells. This is a cross which was made at Bodnant and it gives me intense pleasure every year. The owner is a little sceptical and thinks it did not take and that it is only a particularly fine form of *Fargesii* they had at Bodnant which has produced this delightful Rhododendron. A group of *Fargesii,* almost next to the plants I received from Bodnant, however, seem to me to dispel this; mine were all raised from seed, from the bed of Fargesii at Caerhays and, I believe, are as good as any in the country. The real difference is in the colour, as all the *Fargesii* have a faint tinge of blue in them, whereas the Bodnant plant is much purer.

A fine scarlet hybrid of Magor's - 'Daphne' - with its curious double calyx is a pretty dwarf bush and makes a fine splash of colour against the dark fir trees.

R. 'Red Admiral' at Exbury

R. calophytum X *irroratum* produced quite a nice Rhododendron which received an Award of Merit, but I do not think it is as good as *calophytum* X *arboreum* in its best forms.

R. irroratum X *arboreum* is flowering at Exbury with small trusses of pale-pink flowers but, while quite pretty in the wood - too pretty to be burnt - it would never take an Award of Merit.

29th March 1938

The warm weather has continued and Rhododendrons quite out of season are coming into bloom. The first flowers of 'Bibiani' ('Moser's Maroon' X blood-red *arboreum*) are already expanded. I do not know what blood 'Moser's Maroon' has in it but it is certainly a very fine parent.

Some of the *neriiflorum* crosses with garden hybrids are in full bloom and, although perhaps better doers and rather hardier, they are not as good as the best forms of *euchaites.*

'Edmundii' has been in full bloom for some time, its parentage unknown though obviously with *barbatum* in it. It is curious how this hybrid, so admired only a few years ago, is quite a blue-red in comparison with many of the hybrids now available, and while it may perhaps stand a trifle more frost, it soon looks shabby and I am afraid now has to take a back seat, and the same can be said of the 'Duke of Cornwall'.

'Adjutant' (*sperabile* X *neriiflorum*), a very free-flowering red hybrid, is covered with bloom, but here again it is not better than either of its parents, if as good.

'Cornish Cross' is beginning to expand some of its flowers. It is curious how the plants at Exbury, while perhaps not quite so big in bell as the plant that comes from Penjerrick, are more pleasing and truer to colour, varying from pale strawberry to deep red.

'Dr. Stocker' X *Thomsonii* is not so good; the trusses are smaller, more lax and of a duller pink, though some have a faint strawberry colour.

I do not think *caucasicum* blood is of value except for earliness, it always produces such papery flowers. While saying this a pleasing cross between *caucasicum* and *campylocarpum* was fully out this week with pale yellow flowers, very pretty behind some Lapponicums.

5th April 1938

The number of Rhododendron hybrids to commence opening their flowers was considerable, but they received a rude shock on Sunday evening with one degree of frost in the screen. All those with Thomsonii Series blood in them fared badly in the cold part of the garden.

What a pretty small Rhododendron 'Crossbill' is. This has been made two or three times at Exbury as I admired it so much at Caerhays, and all the offspring of this cross are attractive, some creamy, some reddish-orange. But one of the original 'Crossbill' from Caerhays was recrossed with *spinuliferum* and an exceedingly pretty brilliant orange-red hybrid has ensued, a bigger flower and brighter than *spinuliferum,* though it takes a good deal to beat *spinuliferum* itself when a biggish plant is in full bloom.

Another Rhododendron which surprised me was *Falconeri* X *sinogrande.* The best *Falconeri* I had in flower at Exbury was fertilised with pollen from Captain Johnstone's best yellow *sinogrande,* and the result has been a flower deeper in colour than *lacteum* ('Fortune', F.C.C., 1938). I have had to wait many years for this - so far only one has bloomed; there are fourteen or fifteen more of the same cross growing on at Exbury and it will be very interesting to see what their flowers are like.

'Avalanche' (*calophytum* X 'Loderi') has been in full bloom now for ten days. I like the white form best but the pink one is very beautiful also. The two plants with the best flowers so far seen to set regularly every year, but here again although the cross has been made many years there are still some unflowered seedlings.

Haematodes X blood-red *arboreum* of Magor was fully out with fine trusses of an amazing scarlet. The plants I have are quite first class and are a great credit to their raiser.

The second batch of 'Aries' have now been good for a fortnight. They are very constant - out of fifty or sixty plants a dozen are equally good and the others very little behind.

'Abalone' (*callimorphum* X *campylocarpum*) in its varied forms is beginning to open, but those in the top wood suffered severely from the frost.

'Moonstone' (*Williamsianum* X *campylocarpum*) in a sheltered wood retained its beauty - all shade of cream, ivory and pink. I think it is one of the prettiest crosses ever made. I have been in love with it ever since I saw it at Caerhays and have three or four batches of seedlings coming along, all pretty.

'Dr. Stocker' X a pinky. *arboreum* is in flower with white or pinky-white flowers. All of them are tolerable but of the batch which I have at present flowered only one is really good and somehow it has got a thicker and fleshier bloom than the majority, in which the papery flower of 'Dr. Stocker' seems to predominate.

Thomsonii X 'Loderi' has been quite pretty. This is I think an improvement on Gill's 'Aurora', which is *Thomsonii* X 'Kewense' - its flowers are a deeper colour. There is no doubt of the fine results to be obtained from using a good 'Loderi' - the improvement which Sir Edmund Loder obtained by using improved parentage is clearly indicated in the progeny.

'Dawn's Delight' X blood-red *arboreum* has not been a success; tender and with a little blueness predominating, only one plant is retained at Exbury as a memento. 'Dawn's Delight' itself, one of Mangles's hybrids, is a fine thing with no trace of blue in it, but its parentage with *Thomsonii* has also been disappointing. With some of the later species it has, however, given good results.

27th April 1938

Frost put an end to the display at Exbury and in most other parts of the country as well, but in spite of the cold winds the warm sun is again beginning to open buds and the main spring rush has begun.

Various named varieties of 'Naomi', some pink and some with almost a touch of yellow, are all uninjured; the extra touch of *Fortunei* blood added to the already existing *Fortunei* in 'Aurora' having given hardiness.

'Yvonne' ('Aurora' X *Griffithianum*) was crippled in all but the mildest parts of the wood. This also is a very pleasing Rhododendron but definitely on the tender side.

'Carmen' (*repens* X *didymum*) is a pretty dark red dwarf Rhododendron and although in an open position the buds were uninjured.

'Humming Bird' (*Williamsianum* X *haematodes*), which emanated from Caerhays, is a little shrub with pretty rosy-red bells - very floriferous and most attractive.

'Susan' (*campanulatum* X *Fortunei*), emanating from Lanarth, is certainly one of the most beautiful mauve Rhododendrons I know and should be in every garden.

'Annabella', which is *campanulatum* X 'Loderi', and 'Lamellen', which is *campanulatum* X *Griffithianum,* both with pleasant white flowers, are not opening properly this year, partly due to the frost and partly to the drought. There is no doubt in my mind that the variety of *Griffithianum* used is most important from the point of view of all those who live in the somewhat colder parts of the country, such as the New Forest and Sussex. From my own experience at Exbury, those crosses made with the Heligan variety of *Griffithianum* - a very

fine form indeed, which has been sent out by Smith of Guernsey, and which I believe was Mangles's original variety and was used by Sir Edmund Loder in his famous 'Loderi' strain - are quite satisfactory. The form known as 'roseum superbum' largely used by Lowinsky, a form which he obtained from Gill, produces very tender offspring and I have completely discarded its use. The form used by Mr. George Johnstone is also much too tender for northern gardens. His 'Luscombei', 'Shilsonii' and *barbatum* crossed *Griffithianum* have given a lovely range of strawberry-coloured hybrids, very beautiful in his garden, but alas, too tender for me at Exbury where only occasionally I flowered some of them and I am reluctantly discarding all of them be degrees to make room for hardier varieties; and yet the parentage on the other side if crossed with one of the hardier forms of *Griffithianum* should give perfectly satisfactory results.

'Blue Tit' in its various forms is a very attractive little dwarf and so is *fastigiatum* X *Augustinii,* or rather the *fastigiatum* of the trade.

'Blue Diamond' is another one of these dwarfs, which are very pretty planted as a front edging to some pale pink or yellow Rhododendrons. The genius of the cross is undoubtedly Mr. J. C. Williams, who was first to prove it possible.

A pretty yellow cross between *Valentinianum* and *primulinum,* emanating also from Caerhays, is a pretty background to 'Blue Tit' but it is in but few gardens, though there is no reason why the same cross should not be made again.

A cross between *chasmanthum* and *Augustinii* - 'Electra' - has produced some very fine deep blue Rhododendrons and, coming as it does mid-way between the flowering seasons of *Augustinii* and *chasmanthum,* will be a useful stop-gap.

All the *campylocarpum* hybrids are beginning to come out and a very fine range indeed they are - I do not know which I like the best. Mr. F. J. Rose, gardener at Townhill Park, has raised a fine batch with *Fortunei;* I have seen them in their full beauty and there are no bad ones, although of course some are better than others.

'Penjerrick' (*campylocarpum* var. *elatum* X *Griffithianum*) is too well known to need eulogy.

R. campylocarpum has been crossed with *souliei* and gives a delightful hybrid very much smaller than 'Penjerrick' but equally attractive. Here again when the variety *elatum* of *campylocarpum* is used yellows, pinks and whites are the result, while with Hooker's *campylocarpum* constant pale yellow is produced. There is no doubt that var. *elatum* gives infinitely better results in hybridising and should be the only one used. With 'Loderi' it has produced 'Barbara', a Rhododendron with as many shades of colour as 'Penjerrick' and, curiously enough, with rather better trusses of flowers though perhaps the individual ones are not so large. But then 'Penjerrick' never has such big flowers at Exbury as it does in some gardens. *Campylocarpum* X 'Dr. Stocker' ('Damaris') gives magnificent results at Logan but this hybrid, alas, is not available to the public.

16th May 1938

The majority of the forms of 'Loderi' raised at Leonardslee are good, some better than others, but there is little to choose. Some nurserymen are not averse from selling 'Kewense' crosses which they hade made as forms of 'Loderi' and the purchaser must be aware of this. Many of the named forms are in the trade; 'King George' is perhaps one of the best. I personally am very fond of 'Venus', but that is perhaps because the original plant is at Exbury. Anyhow, they were a magnificent mass of flower on the occasion of the Rhododendron Show.

R. campylocarpum X *cyclium* is even prettier than *campylocarpum* X *callimorphum* with an equal variety of colour from pink to white and yellow. *Campylocarpum* X 'Luscombe' also gives fine results. *Campylocarpum* X 'Naomi' - 'Carita' - has an equal range of colour.

Some of the *Griersonianum* hybrids are beginning to come into bloom. 'May Day' (*haematodes* X *Griersonianum*) is again an instance of a hybrid flowering before either of its parents, with its brilliant scarlet flowers, more brilliant than any other Rhododendron perhaps, and *scyphocalyx* X *Griersonianum.* Then all the Rhododendrons had a rude shock and 4° of frost on the night of the 8th-9th May put an end to all in the Upper Wood.

But it is curious how soon new flower comes after four or five warm days and by the 15th May the wood was quite gay with all the different 'Lady Bessborough' in flower, creams, pinks and apricots. It is a far finer hybrid than 'A. Gilbert', which is a constant pale primrose-yellow.

'Sir John du Cane' (*Thomsonii* X *discolor*), with its old-rose-coloured flowers, is a fine hybrid but it is doubtful if it will ever get an Award of Merit.

But *discolor* X 'St. Keverne' has produced 'Sir Frederick Moore' with fine bold large trusses of pink or rosy-coloured flowers with no trace of blue in them; a first-class hybrid in its best forms which one day will be as sought after as 'Lady Bessborough'.

In the meantime 'Lady Chamberlain' and 'Lady Rosebery' - *cinnabarinum* var. *Roylei* X 'Royal Flush', pink and orange forms - have come out but are flowering very little this year. 'Lady Berry' ('Rosy Bell' X 'Royal Flush') was frosted.

For all who can grow it 'Royal Flush' is undoubtedly the finest of these hybrids, but where 'Royal Flush' cannot be grown the other two are good stop-gaps.

Lord Aberconway produced a primary cross last year between *cinnabarinum* var. *Roylei* and *polyandrum,* and I should think this will make a very valuable Rhododendron in due course.

Up to now most of the hybrids have been between species or a species and a hybrid, but I think mention must be made of some of the Lowinsky Rhododendrons. He raised a good many at Tittenhurst and made numerous crosses not only with a species on one side but between hybrid and hybrid, with the result that a great many have had to be discarded. When he parted with his Rhododendrons, a large proportion of them came to Exbury. Unfortunately his book with the crosses in got mislaid and it is only possible to guess at some of the parentage. There are undoubtedly some outstanding and very beautiful seedlings amongst those which came to Exbury and grafts of a great many of the best have been given to nursery gardeners so as to make them available to the public.

The Rothschild Rhododendron Introductions:

The Azaleodendron Introductions:

Charmian
Vervaeneanum X *callimorphum*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink

Galloper Light
AM 1927
Flower Colour: Salmon
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall



R. ‘Galloper Light’



R. ‘Galloper Light’

The Deciduous Azalea Introductions:

Annabella
Flower Colour: Yellow-orange-rose

Aurora
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink

Balkis
Flower Colour: Yellowish-white

Ballerina
Cecile X ?
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Balzac
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Height: Tall

Basilisk
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Cream
Height: Tall

Bazaar
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Beaulieu
Flower Colour: Cream

Beaulieu
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink

Berryrose
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Brazil
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Bride's Bouquet
Flower Colour: White-pink

Bright Forecast
Flower Colour: Yellowish-orange

Bright Straw
Flower Colour: Yellow

Brimstone
Flower Colour: Yellow

Canasta
Flower Colour: Yellow-olive-orange

Caprice
Flower Colour: Rose-pink

Cecile
Flower Colour: Carmine
Height: Tall

Clarice
Flower Colour: Salmon

Coronation
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink

Corringe
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Crinoline
Flower Colour: White-pink

Debutante
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink

Desert Pink
Flower Colour: Pink

Eisenhower
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Height: Medium

Exbury Apricot
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Height: Medium

Exbury Cream-yellow
Flower Colour: Yellow

Exbury Pink
Flower Colour: Pink

Exbury Salmon-orange
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Exbury White
Flower Colour: White

Exbury Yellow
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow

Favor Major
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow

Fawley
Flower Colour: White-pink

Firefly
Flower Colour: Deep orange

Gibraltar
Flower Colour: Orange-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Ginger
Flower Colour: Orange-pink

Glowing Embers
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Gold Dust
Flower Colour: Yellow

Golden Dream
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow

Golden Girl
Flower Colour: Yellow

Golden Glory
Flower Colour: Yellow

Golden Horn
Flower Colour: Yellow-ivory

Golden Sunset
AM 1956
Flower Colour: Yellow-red
Height: Tall

Gwynnid Lloyd
Flower Colour: White-pink

Honeysuckle
FCC 1933
Flower Colour: Pink

Hotspur
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Orange-red
Height: Tall

Hotspur Orange
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Height: Tall

Hotspur Red
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Height: Tall

Hotspur Salmon-buff
Flower Colour: Pinkish-buff

Hotspur Yellow
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Tall

Hugh Wormald
Flower Colour: Yellow

John Jennings
FCC 1927
Flower Colour: Red

Kathleen
Flower Colour: Orange

Kipps
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Madeleine
Flower Colour: Pink

Marina
Flower Colour: Yellow

Marita
prunifolium X *viscosum*
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Mary Claire
Flower Colour: Pink

Middle East
Flower Colour: Orange

Night Light
Flower Colour: White

Old Gold
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow-pink

Orient
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange

Oxydol
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Pink Delight
Flower Colour: Pink

Pink Ruffles
Flower Colour: Pink

Quaker Maid
Flower Colour: Pinkish-white

Radiance
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow

Rennie
Flower Colour: Red-yellow

Rocket
Hotspur X ?
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow

Royal Command
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange
Height: Tall

Royal Lodge
Flower Colour: Vermilion-red

Salmon Orange
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink

Sand Dune
Flower Colour: Pink-orange-yellow

Scarlet Pimpernel
Flower Colour: Red

Scarlett O'Hara
Flower Colour: Red

Silver Slipper
AM 1962 & FCC 1963
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Tall

Soft Lips
Flower Colour: Yellow

Sonia
Flower Colour: White-pink

Strawberry Ice
AM 1963
Flower Colour: Chinese Coral-Porcelain Rose
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Medium

Sugared Almond
Flower Colour: Pink

Sun Chariot
AM 1963 & FCC 1967
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: Late May
Height: Tall

Sunset Boulevard
Flower Colour: Pink

Sunset Pink
Flower Colour: Pink

Sunte Nectarine
AM 1996
Flower Colour: Reddish-orange-yellow
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Surprise
Flower Colour: Creamy-pink

Swallow
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow

Tangiers
Flower Colour: Orange

Tessa
Flower Colour: Orange

R. ‘Annabella’


R. ‘Ballerina’


R. ‘Ballerina’


R. ‘Ballerina’

R. ‘Basilisk’ AM 1934

R. ‘Basilisk’ AM 1934

R. ‘Basilisk’ AM 1934

R. ‘Beaulieu’



R. ‘Beaulieu’

R. ‘Berryrose’ AM 1934

R. ‘Berryrose’ AM 1934

R. ‘Brazil’


R. ‘Bright Forecast’


R. ‘Bright Forecast’


R. ‘Bright Forecast’

R. ‘Bright Straw’

R. ‘Canasta’

R. ‘Cecile’

R. ‘Cecile’

R. ‘Clarice’

R. ‘Clarice’



R. ‘Eisenhower’



R. ‘Eisenhower’



R. ‘Eisenhower’

R. 'Eisenhower'

R. ‘Exbury Salmon-Orange’

As any rhododendron-savvy nurseryman will confirm, even today, with all the mod cons technology can provide, rooting deciduous azalea cuttings could be described as a 'bitch'. First off, the scions are softwood, pliable and hairy. They can become desiccated very quickly and are easy prey for a whole raft of fungal diseases. Second, once rooted, if they do not make any new growth before the onset of winter, most will fail to break away in the spring and simply rot in the ground.

For this reason, even in the south of England, most nurseries bring their potted stock plants indoors in early January, then up the temperature and light levels progressively over the next few weeks, so that by March, the plants are in bloom and the vegetative buds have fully extended. This gives the rooted cuttings the advantage of an extra few months to send out new shoots before autumn's chills freeze all activity. And while on a buying spree to the old Reuthe nursery near Sevenoaks in Kent during the late 1980s, 'G' himself took me into the hothouse at Crown Point, where all the azaleas were being forced, so I could see the cacophony of bloom (which given that patches of snow still lay on the ground outside and a week earlier the blizzard had dropped enough flakes to collapse two of the polytunnels, was truly wondrous).

Back in the day, long before computer-assisted misting units were readily available, deciduous azalea hybrids were often propagated by stool layering, where a whole plant was 'thrown' onto its side and each and every limb pegged down. Except it then takes two years for each of the branch tips to form enough roots to sustain a new plant once lifted and separated from its parent. And even more time to grow into a saleable specimen.

At Exbury, thanks to Lionel de Rothschild's deciduous azalea breeding programme, 'Exbury Salmon-orange' and 'Exbury White' - along with many other 'colour' cultivars - can all be propagated by sowing seed, a far simpler and easier process. And because of the repeated crossing and selection of their parents that took place over several previous generations, the juveniles come true (which means you too can self-pollinate your own clone and easily build-up a stock of near-identical plants).

Lionel's selection technique is documented in *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (written by C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, and first published by Exbury Gardens and Cassell Ltd in 1967):

> 'As each new batch of seedlings flowered, he selected two of the best reds, the best pinks, the best yellows and so on. He went for colour, substance, vigour, size, texture and decorative quality. He then went on to cross his selections, always keeping them in their colour categories. Every single seedling, however small and slow, was planted out, but, as each year another generation flowered, he destroyed all but the chosen few. Thousands of plants thus went on the bonfire every year'.
>
> Which means that now:
>
> 'Enormous quantities are raised from seed from Lionel's selected colour strains and the "Exbury Azaleas" sold by colour groupings'.



R. 'Exbury White'



R. 'Exbury White'

R. ‘Fawley’

R. ‘Firefly’

R. ‘Gibraltar’

R. ‘Gibraltar’



R. ‘Gibraltar’



R. ‘Gibraltar’



R. ‘Gibraltar’

R. ‘Ginger’

R. ‘Ginger’

R. ‘Ginger’

R. ‘Glowing Embers’

R. ‘Gold Dust’

R. ‘Gold Dust’

R. ‘Gold Dust’

R. ‘Golden Girl’

R. ‘Golden Horn’

R. ‘Golden Sunset’ AM 1956

R. 'Golden Sunset' AM 1956

R. ‘Golden Sunset’ AM 1956


R. ‘Golden Sunset’ AM 1956


R. ‘Golden Sunset’ AM 1956


R. ‘Golden Sunset’ AM 1956

R. ‘Hotspur’ AM 1934

R. ‘Hotspur’ AM 1934

R. ‘Hotspur’ AM 1934

R. ‘Hotspur’ AM 1934

R. ‘Hotspur’ AM 1934

R. ‘Hugh Wormald’

R. ‘Hugh Wormald’

R. ‘John Jennings’ FCC 1927

R. ‘Kathleen’

R. ‘Klondyke’

R. ‘Klondyke’

R. ‘Mary Claire’

R. ‘Mary Claire’

R. ‘Old Gold’

R. ‘Oxydol’

R. ‘Oxydol’

R. ‘Oxydol’

R. ‘Pink Delight’

R. ‘Pink Delight’

R. ‘Pink Ruffles’

R. ‘Royal Command’

R. ‘Royal Lodge’

R. ‘Royal Lodge’

R. ‘Scarlet Pimpernel’

R. ‘Scarlet Pimpernel’

R. ‘Scarlet Pimpernel’



R. ‘Scarlet Pimpernel’

R. ‘Silver Slipper’ AM 1962 & FCC 1963

R. ‘Silver Slipper’ AM 1962 & FCC 1963

R. ‘Strawberry Ice’ AM 1963

R. ‘Strawberry Ice’ AM 1963

R. ‘Strawberry Ice’ AM 1963

R. ‘Strawberry Ice’ AM 1963

R. ‘Sunset Pink’

R. ‘Sunte Nectarine’ AM 1996

R. ‘Sunte Nectarine’ AM 1996

R. ‘Sunte Nectarine’ AM 1996

R. ‘Sunte Nectarine’ AM 1996



R. ‘Sunte Nectarine’ AM 1996

The Evergreen Azalea Introductions:

Audrey Wynniatt
Bassett Wood X *kaempferi*
Flower Colour: Cerise
Height: Medium

Bengal Fire
kaempferi X *oldhamii*
Flower Colour: Flame Red
Height: Medium

Eddy
kaempferi X Apollo
AM 1944
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: Late June
Height: Medium

Imbros
simsii hybrid
Flower Colour: Rose
Bengal Height: Low

Lady Ivor Churchill
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Low

Leo
Malvaticum X *kaempferi*
AM 1997
Flower Colour: Orange-pink
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Low

Louise
kaempferi X unknown
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Medium

Marie
kaempferi X unknown
Flower Colour: Cerise
Height: Medium

Naomi
Malvaticum X *kaempferi*
Flower Colour: Salmon
Height: Medium

Nigella
scabrum 'Kanabo' X Louise
Flower Colour: Cerise

Nimrod
scabrum 'Kanabo' X Louise
Flower Colour: Orange-pink

Pekoe
Malvaticum X *kaempferi*
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Low

Pippa
kaempferi X Mucronatum
Flower Colour: Lilac-pink
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Sir William Lawrence
Hinodegiri X *kaempferi*
AM 1958
Flower Colour: Soft pink
Height: Medium

Tamarisk
scabrum 'Mikado' X *kaempferi*
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink
Height: Medium

R. ‘Audrey Wynniatt’


R. ‘Bengal Fire’


R. ‘Bengal Fire’


R. ‘Bengal Fire’

R. ‘Bengal Fire’

R. ‘Eddy’ AM 1944

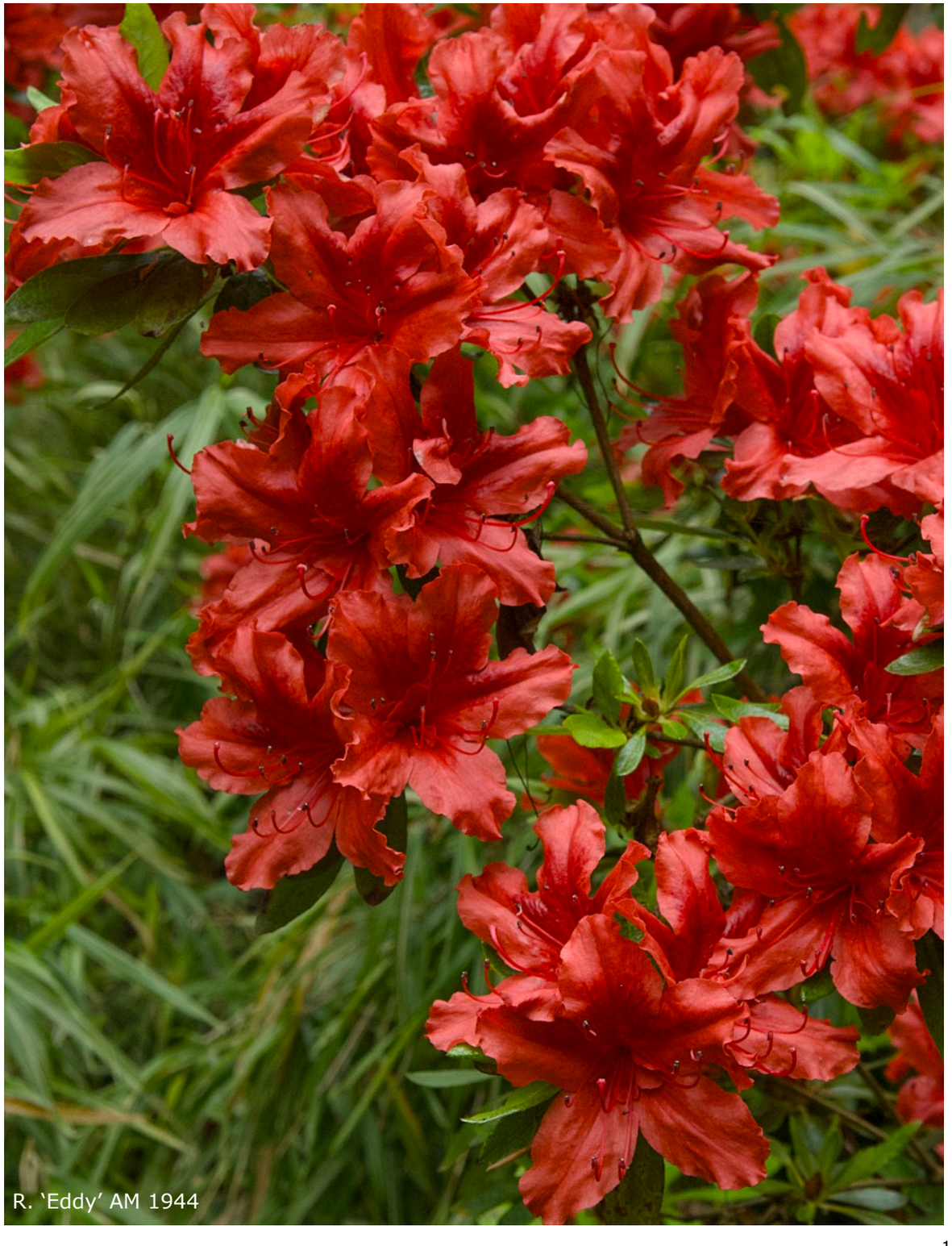
R. 'Eddy'
kaempferi x 'Apollo'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 Late May-June 2.5m x 3m

There are three possible evergreen azaleas named 'Apollo' that Lionel de Rothschild could have used in the pairing with *R. kaempferi* – LR 864 in the Exbury studbook – the end result of which was the incandescent R. 'Eddy'. The trio are all deemed to be 'Indian Azaleas', which were a group of hybrids created for forcing or indoor cultivation in the heated conservatories or greenhouses of the late Victorian era. So by and large, outdoor planting was a no-no, even in the mildest UK gardens, though a few individuals from this swarm bested winter's chills on a long-term basis and survive to this day in southern or west coast woodland glades. A few clones were later shipped across the Atlantic and became the kernel for the 'Southern Indian Azaleas' developed in the Deep South of the USA and now a feature of the plantation house estates from South Carolina, down through Louisiana to Florida.

The earliest bred member of the 'Apollo' troika was reared by Joseph Knight (1778-1855) of the Royal Exotic Nursery on Chelsea's King's Road (later the Knight & Perry emporium) and introduced in 1843; the youngest, a creation of C. Schulz of Hanau, in Germany, available for purchase from 1878 onwards. Charles Turner of the Royal Nursery, Slough, was responsible for the middle plant, exhibited in 1873 to great acclaim and recipient of an FCC from the RHS. The first and last have semi-double flowers that are coloured deep scarlet and vivid reddish-orange respectively, while Turner's creation has white blooms faintly streaked red. Whichever of the trio was actually chosen by L de R, the seed matured by *R. kaempferi* resulted in progeny with deep red corollas each 7.5cm across at the mouth that emerge singly from a multitude of buds late in the season. Stamens and style are infused with the same tone and there are faint darker flecks on the upper lobes. And mature bushes are literally awash with bloom, and backlit, provide an arresting display.

Named for Lionel de Rothschild's eldest son, who would later prove to be another master hybridiser, 'Eddy' follows *R. kaempferi* in its habit, and foliage: open and wispy, the branches often grouped in tiers; deep green and elliptic, the leaves turning bright red in autumn. Hardiness is sufficient for planting along the east coast despite the duality in the heritage, a sunny spot essential to ripen the wood, the dappled shade of an open woodland glade preserving the depth of colour longest and the backdrop of trees, the perfect darkened canvas against which the flowers can blaze.

The entry for 'Eddy' in the revised edition of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* published in 1979, shows the cross to have received an Award of Merit from the RHS in 1944. Despite the fact that this award is confirmed in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* for 1944, carried by unanimous votes, this citation is not recorded in the 1958 First Edition of the *IRRC* nor does it appear in Volume 1 of the 2004 Second Edition*,* though the parentage details are credited as coming from Exbury's publication. Nor was the suggestion that the plant be considered one of the Kaempferi Hybrid Azaleas adopted even though the previous false association with *R. oldhamii* was dispelled.


R. 'Eddy' AM 1944

R. ‘Eddy’ AM 1944

R. 'Eddy' AM 1944

R. ‘Louise’ AM 1939

R. ‘Louise’ AM 1939

R. ‘Pekoe’

R. ‘Pekoe’



R. ‘Sir William Lawrence’ AM 1958

R. ‘Sir William Lawrence’
‘Hinodegiri’ x *kaempferi*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 Late April-early June 1.6m x 2.5m

Lionel de Rothschild selected and named just fifteen evergreen azaleas from the thousands of seedlings he raised from pairing *R. kaempferi* as both seed and pollen parent with a variety of species and hybrids. *R. oldhamii* and *R. scabrum* were among the former, ‘Apollo’, ‘Bassett Wood’, ‘Malvaticum’ and ‘Mucronatum’ the latter. Yet the *IRRC* invariably lists all his evergreen azalea hybrids as *kaempferi* x *oldhamii* crosses despite evidence to the contrary being presented by the authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, along with Lionel’s own article on the matings in the *Year Book of the Rhododendron Association,* 1935. In the Exbury studbook, ‘Sir William Lawrence’ is entry LR 298 and its parentage is given as ‘Hinodegiri’ x *kaempferi,* that equation fully accepted herein in preference to the ‘official’ and clearly discredited combination.

The shrub itself is probably the best evergreen azalea hybrid raised at Exbury to date, tall-growing and wide-spreading, yet still compact and densely-filled with dark green, glossy foliage. The blooms are soft pink funnels spotted maroon on the dorsal lobe. Each corolla is around 5cm across at the mouth, two or three emerge from each flower bud and the bushes become an unbroken sheet of colour from a young age onwards. A position in full sun yields the best results whether a specimen is planted in the south or the north of the UK and if the season is mild, the flowers will open at the end of April, though May into early June is the norm.

Apparently, a pretender with Rose Bengal flowers, flat-faced and unspotted, shading white towards the centre and opening in June, is also being distributed under the very same epithet. That appellation salutes Sir William Matthew Trevor Lawrence (1870-1934), 3rd Baronet Lawrence of Ealing Park, who was a noted horticulturalist and hospital administrator, President of the Alpine Garden Society, Treasurer of the Royal Horticultural Society and a recipient of the Victoria Medal of Honour.

R. ‘Sir William Lawrence’ AM 1958

R. ‘Sir William Lawrence’ AM 1958

R. ‘Sir William Lawrence’ AM 1958

The Lepidote Introductions:

Berylline
spinuliferum X *valentinianum*
Flower Colour: Yellow-rose
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Biskra
cinnabarinum Roylei X *ambiguum*
AM 1940
Flower Colour: Orange-rose
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Bo-peep
lutescens X *moupinense*
AM 1937
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: Late March
Height: Low

Bric-à-brac
leucaspis X *moupinense*
AM 1945
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: March
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Bulbul
edgeworthii X *moupinense*
AM 1949
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: April

Candida
augustinii X *ambiguum*
Flower Colour: Blush

Chaffinch
Countess of Haddington X *ciliatum*
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Low

Cowbell
ciliatum X *edgeworthii*
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Eldorado
johnstoneanum X *valentinianum*
Flower Colour: Yellow
Height: Low

Eleanore
rubiginosum Desquamatum X *augustinii*
AM 1943
Flower Colour: Purple
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Electra
chasmanthum X *augustinii*
AM 1940
Flower Colour: Violet-blue
Height: Tall

Elena
cinnabarinum Blandfordiiflorum X *yunnanense*
Flower Colour: Primrose-white

Exbury Spinulosum
spinuliferum X *racemosum*
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: April
Height: Medium

Firefly
Crossbill X *spinuliferum*
Flower Colour: Yellow-apricot
Flowering Time: April-May

Ilona
valentinianum X *auritum*
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: April-May

Iola
valentinianum X *edgeworthii*
Flower Colour: Primrose-cream
Flowering Time: April
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Lady Berry
Rosy Bell X Royal Flush
AM 1937 & FCC 1949
Flower Colour: Rose Opal-Jasper Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Lady Chamberlain Apricot
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Apricot

Lady Chamberlain Chelsea
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Orange-pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Lady Chamberlain Exbury
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
FCC 1931
Flower Colour: Salmon-orange
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Lady Chamberlain Gleam
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: orange-yellow
Height: Medium

Lady Chamberlain Golden Queen
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
FCC 1947
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink-orange

Lady Chamberlain Ivy
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Salmon

Lady Chamberlain Oriflamme
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Orange-red

Lady Chamberlain Salmon Trout
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Salmon Trout (Freshly Cooked)

Lady Chamberlain Seville
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Orange

Lady Rosebery
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
AM 1930 & FCC 1932
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Tall

Lady Rosebery Dalmeny
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Saline Pink

Lady Rosebery Etna
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush
Flower Colour: Rosy-pink

Lady Rosebery Pink
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush

Lady Rosebery Pink Dawn
cinnabarinum Roylei X Royal Flush

Parisienne
valentinianum X *burmanicum*
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: April
Height: Low

Quaver
leucaspis X *sulfureum*
AM 1968
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Quiver
ciliatum X *lutescens*
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: April-May



R. 'Biskra' AM 1940



R. 'Biskra' AM 1940

R. 'Biskra'

cinnabarinum x *ambiguum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6 Mid April-early May 5m x 3m

Before the devil's serpent known as Powdery Mildew struck, "Lover's Lane" in Exbury Gardens was densely planted on both sides by a host of clones of the pendant-flowered crosses 'Lady Chamberlain' and 'Lady Rosebery'. Visit today however and only Solent Strain azaleas will be seen hedging the path, for so savage was the fungal attack – annually defoliating most of the shrubs – that all had to be removed, leaving just a few scattered specimens of the 'Ladies' across the entire 200-acre estate. Yet that fate did not befall another of Lionel de Rothschild's *R. cinnabarinum* crosses, which came through the plague times almost unscathed: a seedling grown from a pairing where *R. ambiguum* from the ranks of Subsection Triflora provided the pollen - R. 'Biskra'.

5m-high specimens of this pairing will still be found in many gardens up and down the country, for not only is 'Biskra' resistant to the mildews, but it is also one of the hardiest *cinnabarinum* hybrids introduced to date. The plant's habit is tall and willowy, slender and open, graced with clusters of elliptic-shaped leaves around 6.5cm long, dark green above and very scaly below. The abaxial leaf surface is also densely covered with minute, crimson-coloured, resin-bearing cells, and it is likely that this profusion of sticky glands plays a central role in preventing the fungus from establishing on the foliage. And that is just capital. For a well-grown mature plant blooms with unfettered abandon each season and is an absolute eye-catcher.

The flowers are pendant, narrowly trumpet-shaped, in a truss of up to eight corollas, their colour, vermilion blended with biscuit in the AM clone (deep rich orange, flushed rose), but also deep pink through orange, or even bluish-pink, these latter forms fast fading-out to an unappealing brownish-salmon-orange. The former clone, however, retains its pigmentation without paling until almost the moment that the corollas are discarded, unless planted in near full sun.

The 'Biskra' seed parent was actually a plant of the plum-crimson-flowering *R. roylei,* which is now considered synonymous under *R. cinnabarinum,* though maintained as Roylei Group courtesy of the RHS.

R. ‘Biskra’ AM 1940

R. ‘Biskra’ AM 1940

R. ‘Biskra’ AM 1940

R. ‘Bo-Peep’ AM 1937

R. ‘Bo-Peep’ AM 1937

R. ‘Bo-Peep’ AM 1937

R. ‘Bo-Peep’ AM 1937



R. ‘Bric-à-brac’ AM 1945

R. ‘Bric-à-brac

leucaspis x *moupinense*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 Late February-March 1m x 2m

If you garden where spring frosts are a problem or winter temperatures regularly dip below -10ºC, then Lionel de Rothschild’s *leucaspis* x *moupinense* cross, the delightful R. ‘Bric-à-brac’, must remain on the wish list unless additional protection can be moved into place whenever a frost is predicted to cover a mature specimen and so protect the flower buds before they swell, and the wash of bloom once those buds open. Alternatively, a container-based plant could be wheeled into a heated greenhouse or conservatory whenever danger threatens if such facilities are to hand. And if they are, then the extra effort will be well rewarded when in late February through early March a plant is adorned with hundreds of pink or white trusses.

For ‘Bric-à-brac’ is a stunner, as those who cultivate rhododendrons in near frost-free Gulf Stream-protected woodland will confirm.

The hybrid comes in two flavours: the scintillating pure-white blooms of the AM clone, faintly spotted on the dorsal lobe and graced with contrasting chocolate-coloured stamen anthers; and those with blush-pink corollas, more distinctly spotted, where the tonal polarity between facets is not so explicit. Putting the pigmentation differences to one side, each form is enchanting, growing into a small bush no more than 1m high, open yet neat, and with shiny, peeling bark on mature specimens. The foliage too is bronze-coloured, but only at first, the leaves changing in time to a glossy dark green, decorated with lepidote scales below, the young stems bristly and glandular. Bud scales are brightly coloured and persistent. And the blooms, carried in loose trusses of three corollas, are small wide-open funnels 3.5cm long that are near 5cm across at the mouth when fully expanded.



R. ‘Bric-à-brac’

R. ‘Bric-à-brac’

R. ‘Eldorado’

R. ‘Eleanore’ AM 1943

R. ‘Eleanore’ AM 1943

R. ‘Eleanore’ AM 1943

R. ‘Electra’ AM 1940

R. ‘Electra’

chasmanthum x *augustinii*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H4 Late April-May 6m x 4m

Lionel de Rothschild made the pairing that resulted in the stunning R. ‘Electra’ during the spring of 1937. At the time, both parents were regarded as individual specific species, with the cross recorded as *R. chasmanthum* x *R. augustinii* in the Exbury stud book. Today’s classification rightly assigns the duo subspecies ranking, so the full combination becomes *R. augustinii* ssp. *chasmanthum* x *R. augustinii* ssp. *augustinii,* though the abbreviated delineation remains accurate and is more widely used, especially in conversation.

‘Electra’ is a willowy upright grower to 6m or more, well-cloaked in matt green, narrowly elliptic leaves, each around 6.5cm long, the undersides of which display a scattering of golden-coloured scales. Plants flower from a young age - confirming such, the RHS Award of Merit was received on April 30th 1940 and given to a specimen that had germinated less than four years earlier - while mature shrubs are usually covered in bloom from head to toe. Carried in trusses of 4 to 7, the corollas are widely funnel-shaped with a fairly short tube, and described as violet-blue, heliotrope, or a mix of violet and lavender. They are paler in the throat and have two rays or a fan of chartreuse spots and flecks on the upper lobe, with the whole fading to near white just before the discard.

Juveniles can be a little touchy when first planted, but once established are vigorous and without problem. Like their parents, hardiness is not of the first-order and while successfully grown in gardens along the east coast, a warm and sunny site, protected from late spring frosts is essential.

A darker-toned clone is also in circulation under the ‘Electra’ epithet.

That honorific is likely plucked from the Greek tragedies by Euripides or Sophocles, or perhaps the plays by Aeschylus, Alfieri, Galdós, Giraudoux, Hofmannsthal or O'Neill. Less likely would by the Neo-Freudian psychological complex; the Haeffner opera - the one by Richard Strauss is ineligible as it is spelt with a ‘k’; and likewise the German football club (now disbanded). And while the Electra Private Equity Investment Trust might otherwise have been a shoo-in, it was only founded in 1976. Equally, the so-so thoroughbred racehorse (1906-1918) was long dead by 1940, with any resultant tins of pet food surely a far distant digestive memory, if indeed any who might have unknowingly consumed the broodmare were themselves still alive to recall the event. There are also so-named terrestrial features that could have donated the appellation, as well as municipalities, a building in Moorgate, any number of long-forgotten nonentities who believed themselves famous at the time, plus ships, planes, railway engines and a recently conceived serif typeface.

Or perhaps L de R simply found the flowers ‘electric’ - ?



R. ‘Electra’ AM 1940

R. ‘Electra’ AM 1940



R. ‘Electra’ AM 1940

R. ‘Elena’

R. ‘Elena’



R. ‘Lady Berry’ AM 1937 & FCC 1949

R. ‘Lady Berry’

‘Rosy Bell’ x ‘Royal Flush’

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H4-5 Late April-May 3m x 3m

Introduced from Exbury in 1935, gifted an Award of Merit in 1937 and then a First Class Certificate in 1949, Lionel de Rothschild’s ‘Lady Berry’ is a more tender variant on the ‘Lady Chamberlain’ theme, despite the given parentage. The award clone has pendulous tubular-campanulate flowers held in loose trusses of five. Each fleshy trumpet is around 7.5cm long and some 6cm across at the widely flaring mouth, shaded rose-opal within and jasper-red without, the latter tone paling towards the lobe rim. The aromatic leaves are ovate through oblanceolate in shape, bright green and glossy above, densely scaly below, each extending close to 10cm in length by 3.5cm in width. A whorl of foliage will be found at the end of each long branchlet, the overall habit upright. Mature specimens will therefore basically be a criss-cross of ascending bare twigs and branches, this partly the result of the plant’s susceptibility to the powdery mildew fungus, but mostly because of the natural willowy disposition, which is a shame, for the two RHS floral commendations are fully justified.

The registered parentage of ‘Lady Berry’ as shown above is questioned by the doyens on two counts: the clear influence of *R. cinnabarinum,* despite it only contributing 25% of the genes as stated; and the fact that the given pairing is between a diploid seed parent and a polyploid pollen donor. Had ‘Royal Flush’ matured the capsules, the genetic barriers would have been lower, indeed the ovules could have been fertilised through a process known as apomixis, which would have led to not a trace of *R. ciliatum* or *R. glaucophyllum* being apparent in the outward appearance of ‘Lady Berry’ as is clearly the case. So while genetic examination may at some stage prove the entry in the Exbury studbook to be correct, until such sequencing is available, the accepted advice is to cough loudly whenever the given parentage is quoted.

‘Lady Berry’ requires a mild south coast or western seaboard locale to prosper, with the high rainfall levels of the latter now known to be conducive to the unchecked spread of the powdery mildew fungus, so although once widely planted, today, mature specimens of this fabulous plant will rarely be encountered.



R. ‘Lady Berry’ AM 1937 & FCC 1949

R. ‘Lady Berry’ AM 1937 & FCC 1949

R. ‘Lady Berry’ AM 1937 & FCC 1949

R. ‘Lady Chamberlain’

R. ‘Lady Rosebery’ AM 1930 & FCC 1932

R. 'Lady Chamberlain' and R. 'Lady Rosebery'
cinnabarinum x 'Royal Flush'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 May-early June 3m x 3m

The 'Lady Chamberlain' Named Forms:
Apricot Lady Chamberlain (apricot).
Chelsea (orange and pink).
Exbury Lady Chamberlain - FCC 1931 (orange or yellow, overlaid salmon).
Gleam (orange-yellow, lobes crimson tipped).
Golden Queen - FCC 1947 (salmon-pink, shaded orange).
Ivy (salmon).
Oriflamme (orange-red).
Lady Chamberlain Seville (bright orange).
Salmon Trout (salmon-pink).

The 'Lady Rosebery' Named Forms:
Lady Rosebery - AM 1930 & FCC 1932 (purplish-pink).
Lady Rosebery Dalmeny (soft saline pink).
Lady Rosebery Etna (rosy-pink).
Pink Dawn (pink).
Pink Lady Rosebery (pink).

LR 178 and LR 179 in the Exbury Gardens stud book both detail the pollination of a plant from *R. cinnabarinum* Roylei Group by the J. C. Williams *cinnabarinum* x *maddenii* hybrid 'Royal Flush'. An orange-flowering clone of the latter was used for the first entry, one with pink blooms servicing the second. This was down to the distribution of 'Royal Flush' from Caerhays, which appears to have included most of the seedlings that germinated, and the colour spectrum of such span wavelengths from yellowy-bronze to coppery-bronze, though the 'orange form' - specifically, with orange-pink corollas, buff yellow within, the throat orange - and the 'pink form' - specifically, with rose-red corollas, soft pink within - were also propagated vegetatively (as were individuals with apricot and cream flowers).

Exbury has registered nine selections from the seed tray of the first pairing under the 'Lady Chamberlain' epithet (with the cross later duplicated by Henry McLaren using a different form of *R. cinnabarinum* to produce R. 'Bodnant Yellow'), and four from the second pairing gathered together beneath the 'Lady Rosebery' banner (with Lord Digby at Minterne House, Cerne Abbas, christening a fifth in 1954). In addition, the number of synonyms for the pride as a whole runs into double figures and many hybridisers have wrongly registered crosses involving R. 'Lady Chamberlain' as a seed or pollen parent. This error is down to the fact that technically, such a plant does not exist: because it was the 'Exbury' clone that was the first to be unveiled; which basically makes the 'Lady Chamberlain' appellation a cover-all (though there is a de facto 'Lady Rosebery' clone and even at Exbury today, plants may be found simply tagged with a 'Lady Chamberlain' label).

C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* state that 'Lady Rosebery' should in fact be regarded as a clone of the 'Lady Chamberlain' grex, since they are the same cross, despite the colour variations of 'Royal Flush'.

That advice is duly noted and followed herein, with the two hybrids and all of their various clones gathered together.

Lionel de Rothschild made the pairing in the early to mid 1920s, revealing 'Lady Rosebery' in 1930 and 'Exbury Lady Chamberlain' in 1931. The plants are tall growing and upright in habit, with arching branches that become decidedly 'leggy' in too much shade. The ovate-lanceolate foliage mirrors *R. cinnabarinum:* dark-green and waxy above; scaly and grey-green below; the juvenile leaves tinted blue-green. The corollas are tubular-campanulate in shape, flaring widely at the mouth, quite heavily textured, and held in a loose and pendulous truss of three to six luminous trumpets. Mature bushes will flower profusely and are a stunning sight. But all of the clones suffer if sited in full sun in the southern counties and require a sheltered position in gardens along the east coast, with Peter and Kenneth Cox reporting that the plants are only just hardy in the woodland at Glendoick (*The Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* Batsford, 1988).

For many years, the "Lovers' Lane" path in Exbury Gardens was the home of many splendid specimens of the 'Lady Chamberlain' and 'Lady Rosebery' pride, but only a few remain in place today, and these are pale shadows of what once stood resplendent, for the hybrids are susceptible to the rust fungus, and worse, to the *Erysiphales* - the powdery mildews. These parasites can completely defoliate otherwise healthy plants and lead to a shrub's premature death if treatment is not swiftly begun. But back in the day, when the mildew attacks first began, the symptoms seen were different to those observed on other genera, with the discolouration on the underside of the leaves hardly noticeable until the fungus was very well established, and amongst the plants effected, only the deciduous azaleas showed distorted leaves or the usual extensive patches of white mycelium. Equally, as no enclosed fruiting bodies - cleistothecia - are produced on infected rhododendrons and as different strains of powdery mildew attack different plant groups - the one hitting the azaleas for instance is different to the pox scourging the rhododendrons - it has been very difficult to identify exactly which *Erysiphales* taxa are involved, though current research has established that more than three types of the fungus are present on the lepidote or elepidote species and their hybrids.

Treatment with a fungicide basically involves repeated power spraying of either the most susceptible plants or every rhododendron in the garden. And both the upper and lower surfaces of all the leaves present on a bush need to be thoroughly drenched, with such applications taking place on days without rain so the chemicals are not washed-off or diluted by already wet foliage. Alternatively, increase air circulation by thinning out any shelter, site the most vulnerable cultivars in open positions well away from any likely sources of infection - stands of wild *R. ponticum* and beds of rose bushes are frequently mentioned as the worst hosts - and then let nature take its course. Some plants will die, but most will battle-on, often showing little ill effect. Species and hybrids of Subsections *Cinnabarina* and *Thomsonia* are the plants most likely to fall foul of the disease, but *R. argipeplum, R. barbatum, R. fulgens, R. glaucophyllum, R. griersonianum, R. kyawii, R. mekongense* and *R. wallichii* are all prone to the contagion, while the McLaren hybrid 'Elizabeth' will often be the first hybrid rhododendron to succumb.

Yet many fine specimen plants, from both the 'Lady Chamberlain' and 'Lady Rosebery'

prides, may still be encountered in rhododendron gardens up and down the country today, but as the photographs illustrate, few are completely disease-free.

Lionel de Rothschild's chosen epithets for his hybrid prides are both honourifics, one for Ivy Chamberlain, the other for Eva Primrose:

Ivy Muriel Chamberlain née Dundas (1878-1941), married the British statesman Sir Joseph Austen Chamberlain in 1906, and assisted him to bring about the Locarno Treaties in 1925 when he served as Foreign Secretary. She also campaigned for the relief of women and children during the Spanish Civil War.

Eva Isabel Marion Primrose née Bruce (1892-1987), was the Countess of Rosebery. Her husband Harry, the 6th Earl of Rosebery, was the son of Hannah Primrose, née Rothschild, the daughter of Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild; while the ancestral home of the Roseberys is Dalmeny House, on the Firth of Forth to the northwest of Edinburgh.



R. 'Lady Chamberlain'



R. 'Lady Rosebery' AM 1930 & FCC 1932

R. ‘Exbury Lady Chamberlain’ FCC 1931

R. ‘Exbury Lady Chamberlain’ FCC 1931

R. 'Apricot Lady Chamberlain'

R. ‘Apricot Lady Chamberlain’

R. 'Lady Rosebery Dalmeny'

R. ‘Lady Rosebery Dalmeny’

R. ‘Lady Rosebery Etna’

R. ‘Lady Rosebery Etna’

R. ‘Quaver’
leucaspis x *sulfureum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H4-5 Mid March-early April 1.3m x 2.5m

A *leucaspis* x *sulfureum* pairing was never going to win any awards for hardiness, nor ease of cultivation, but the blooms of this Exbury beauty finally won-over the members of the RHS Floral Committee in 1968 when they gifted a yellow-green clone of ‘Quaver’ an Award of Merit. The flowers are carried in a loose truss of between four and six widely funnel-shaped corollas, each 2.5cm long and wide, the epithet encompassing clones with cream through primrose-yellow blooms. The funnels are held by a deeply-lobed calyx, each ciliate arm of which may be up to 0.8cm long. The best forms exhibit a deeper yellow pigmentation in the corolla throat and have a style and stamen filaments similarly flushed, with the anthers inheriting their chocolate colouration from the seed parent.

‘Quaver’ is a low-growing shrub, but it is not a dwarf, having a dome-shaped tight habit that can hit 1.3m high and spread-out to twice that length in time. It is well-clothed with dark green, elliptically-shaped foliage, the leaves glossy above, glaucous and with pitted, dark brown scales below, the blades around 6.5cm long by 3cm wide. New growth is bronzy at first and up-close, the leaf margins will be found to be fairly hairy.

If the requirements for swift drainage and dappled shaped are taken as read, the primary consideration must be shelter from low temperatures, especially as the flower buds begin to swell in early March and are easily damaged. That mature specimens are usually awash in bloom through the second half of March into early April is no consolation if the display is regularly hit by even a degree or two of frost and then directly struck by strong early morning sunlight. For any open corollas will be ruined along with any partially developed buds, plus more serious injury could result from bark split. So outwith the mildest gardens of southern England and those sites along the west coast licked by the Gulf Stream, ‘Quaver’ will need the most protected spot available if it is to succeed long-term outdoors and the floral display be enjoyed for anything more than a day or two.


R. ‘Quaver’ AM 1968

R. ‘Quaver’ AM 1968

R. ‘Quiver’

R. ‘Quiver’



R. ‘Quiver’

R. ‘Quiver’

ciliatum x *lutescens*

Hardiness	Flowering Period	Height & Spread
H4-5	Early April	1.3m x 2.5m

‘Quiver’ is possibly the most overlooked and neglected Lionel de Rothschild hybrid ever introduced. And unjustly so, for not only is it one of the most floriferous rhododendrons ever bred, but up-close, those blooms are sublimely beautiful: small creamy-white funnels initially flushed with pink. But it is absent from nearly all the standard texts and even when listed - in the two-volume Second Edition of the *IRRC,* or *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* for instance - those entries are basic bare-bones.

So:

The match was made at Exbury in 1937, with pollen from *R. lutescens* placed onto the style of *R. ciliatum,* and the pairing produced a low-growing shrub that forms a mound twice as wide as it is high. The habit is upright and ascending, the branches of a mature plant forming a crisscrossing structure covered in a cloak of dark green, elliptic-lanceolate leaves that mirror those of the pollen provider in shape, length and eciliate margins. Four through seven corollas emerge from each terminal flower bud, forming a loose usually flat-topped truss, and so many inflorescences open across a mature plant that the bush appears to be covered in snow.

The hybrid was introduced to the rhododendron world by Edmund de Rothschild in 1950, but appears then to have fallen off the radar, even that of most rhodophiles: for it completely escaped the attention of the RHS floral awards committee members, as well as the hybridising fraternity; has possibly never been propagated by any of the specialist nurseries; and consequently, is rarely found in gardens, even those with major collections, (the Sir Harold Hillier Garden in Ampfield, on the outskirts of Romsey, excepted).

Two cultivation-related reasons might be responsible for the latter quandary however, as a lack of hardiness means the shrub can only thrive in the mildest of UK gardens, and the early April bloom time requires a frost-free site if the flowers are to be enjoyed for any length of time. But when set in such sheltered environs, with dappled shade provided in those fairylands located in southern England, ‘Quiver’ will be an annual delight.

R. ‘Quiver’

The Elepidote Introductions:

Abalone
campylocarpum X *callimorphum*
Flower Colour: Primrose
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Abbot
thomsonii X *delavayi*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: Early February
Height: Tall

Adder
thomsonii X *diphrocalyx*
Flower Colour: Red

Adelaide
Aurora X *thomsonii*
AM 1935
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: April
Height: Medium

Adjutant
neriiflorum X *sperabile*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Advie
Cornubia X *diphrocalyx*
Flower Colour: Rose
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Aeolus
Lady Bessborough X *souliei*
AM 1994
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink

Aida
George Hardy X *auriculatum*
Flower Colour: White

Akbar
Loderi King George X *discolor*
AM 1952
Flower Colour: Rose Madder
Flowering Time: June

Albatross
Loderi X *discolor*
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Albatross Townhill Pink
Loderi X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Albatross Townhill White
Loderi X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Alix
barbatum X *hookeri*
AM 1935
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: March

Alpaca
Sir Charles Lemon X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Alpine Glow
Loderi X *calophytum*
AM 1938
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Alpine Rose
Loderi X *calophytum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Tall

Amalfi
Cornubia X *calophytum*
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: February-March
Height: Tall

Ambrose
Queen Wilhelmina X *chaetomallum*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink

Amour
wardii X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Yellow

Androcles
arboreum X *calophytum*
AM 1948 & FCC 1990
Flower Colour: Rhodamine Pink
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Angelo
griffithianum X *discolor*
AM 1935
Flower Colour: Bluish-pink
Height: Tall

Angelo Diadem
griffithianum X *discolor*
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Annabella
campanulatum X Loderi
Flower Colour: White-mauve
Height: Tall

Annapolis Royal
falconeri X *sinogrande*
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Antonio
Gill's Triumph X *discolor*
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Antonio Omega
Gill's Triumph X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Apache
Gill's Triumph X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Red

Arab
williamsianum X *sperabile*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Low

Argosy
discolor X *auriculatum*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Argosy Snow White
discolor X *auriculatum*
AM 1938
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Ariel
discolor X Memoir
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Asteroid
Doctor Stocker X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Rosy-pink
Flowering Time: April

Avalanche
Loderi X *calophytum*
AM 1934 & FCC 1938
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Avocet
discolor X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: White

Ayah
discolor X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Pastel Pink
Height: Tall

Ayesha
discolor X *arboreum*
AM 1992
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Early May
Height: Tall

Aztec
arboreum X *irroratum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Banshee
auriculatum X John Tremayne
Flower Colour: White-pink

Barbara
campylocarpum Elatum X Loderi
Flower Colour: Cream
Height: Tall

Barbet
dichroanthum X *callimorphum*
Flower Colour: Creamy-pink

Baron Lionel
yakushimanum (Exbury Form) X *yakushimanum*
Flower Colour: Yellowish-white

Bastion
Bibiani X *elliottii*
AM 1996
Flower Colour: Red
Height: Tall

Battle Axe
Gill's Goliath X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Pink

Bauble
Dawn's Delight X *campylocarpum*
Flower Colour: Creamy-yellow
Flowering Time: April-May

B. B. C.
The Don X *neriiflorum* Euchaites
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April

Beau Brummell
Essex Scarlet X *facetum*
AM 1938
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Medium

Beaulieu Hawk
wardii X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Yellow

Beer Sheba
cerasinum seedling
Flower Colour: White
Height: Low

Belisha Beacon
Essex Scarlet X *arboreum*
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: May

Belle
discolor X *campylocarpum* Elatum
Flower Colour: Lemon

Bellerophon
Norman Shaw X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: June-July
Height: Tall

Belvedere
Doncaster X *dichroanthum*
Flower Colour: Apricot Pink

Berryrose
Doncaster X *dichroanthum*
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Bibiani
Moser's Maroon X *arboreum*
AM 1934
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Blanc-mange
Godesberg X *auriculatum*
AM 1947
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Blushing Bride
Dawn's Delight X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Rosy-carmine

Boadicea
thomsonii X *hookeri*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: March
Height: Tall

Bobolink
discolor X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Apricot-yellow
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Bonbon
souliei X *maximum*
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: May

Bonito
discolor X Luscombei
AM 1934
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Bow Bells
Corona X *williamsianum*
AM 1935
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Break of Day
Dawn's Delight X *dichroanthum*
AM 1936
Flower Colour: Orange
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Brenda
John Henry Agnew X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Brigadier
Dawn's Delight X *arboreum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Bright Eyes
griffithianum X *diphrocalyx*
Flower Colour: White-pink

Brinco
Loderi X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Brocade
williamsianum hybrid
Flower Colour: Blush White
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Burning Bush
haematodes X *dichroanthum*
Flower Colour: Tangerine Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Bustard
auriculatum X Penjerrick
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: July
Height: Tall

Caliban
Doncaster X *haematodes*
Flower Colour: Scarlet

Caliph
details unknown

Carex
irroratum X *fargesii*
AM 1932
Flower Colour: Lilac-pink
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Carex Blush
irroratum X *fargesii*
Flower Colour: Blush Pink
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Carex White
irroratum X *fargesii*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Carita
Naomi X *campylocarpum*
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Carita Charm
Naomi X *campylocarpum*
Flower Colour: Cream-peach-pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Carita Inchmery
Naomi X *campylocarpum*
Flower Colour: Biscuit-salmon
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Carmania
Souvenir d'Anthony Waterer X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Carmen
didymum X *forrestii* Repens
AM 1989
Flower Colour: Red
Height: Dwarf

Cassiope
details unknown

Chanticleer
thomsonii X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: April-May

Charles
falconeri X *sinogrande*
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Charlotte de Rothschild
discolor X Saint Keverne
AM 1958 & FCC 1992
Flower Colour: Whitish-pink
Height: Tall

Churchill
falconeri X *sinogrande*
AM 1971
Flower Colour: Creamy-yellow
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Clarice of Langau
didymum X *haematodes*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Low

Clove
sperabile X Haemaleum
Flower Colour: Blood Crimson
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Constance
(*cinnamomeum* var. *cinnamomeum* x *griffithianum*)
X *auriculatum*
Flower Colour: White

Costa del Sol
caloxanthum X *lacteum*
AM 1969
Flower Colour: Yellow-red
Height: Medium

Cream Halcyone
souliei X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Ivory-white
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Cremorne
Luscombei X *campylocarpum*
AM 1947
Flower Colour: Rose-yellow

Crest
wardii X Lady Bessborough
FCC 1953
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Crimson Banner
Doctor Stocker X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Red

Damozel
Unknown X *griersonianum*
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Height: Medium

Day Dream
Lady Bessborough X *griersonianum*
AM 1940
Flower Colour: Crimson-Geranium Lake
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Devagilla
discolor X Cornubia
Flower Colour: Rosy-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Devaluation
auriculatum X *arboreum*
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Diogenes
Red Argenteum X *calophytum*
Flower Colour: Creamy-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Diva
Ladybird X *griersonianum*
AM 1937
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June

Dollar Princess
Sir Frederick Moore X Tally Ho
Flower Colour: Carmine-pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Dolly
Dawn's Delight X *griersonianum*
AM 1931
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Dorcas
Bagshot Ruby X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Dormouse
Dawn's Delight X *williamsianum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Height: Low

Dragonfly
facetum X *auriculatum*
Flower Colour: Carmine-red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Drum Major
arboreum X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May

Drusilla
Essex Scarlet X *campylocarpum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Dulcibella
Diphole Pink X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Dunlin
Dawn's Delight X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Rosy-red

Dusky Maid
Moser's Maroon X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Easter Egg
fulgens X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Blood Red

Emmeline
Essex Scarlet X *haematodes*
Flower Colour: Red

Endeavour
cinnamomeum var. *cinnamomeum* X *lacteum*
AM 1983
Flower Colour: Yellowish-white
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Endymion
Lord Milner X *hookeri*
Flower Colour: Red

Ernestine
yunnanense X *cinnabarinum* Roylei
Flower Colour: Lilac-pink
Flowering Time: April-May

Esmeralda
Loderi King George X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Pink-rosy-pink

Esperanza
barbatum X *strigillosum*
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Esmeralda
Loderi King George X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Pink-rosy-pink

Esperanza
barbatum X *strigillosum*
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Esterel
cinnamomeum var. *cinnamomeum* X *meddianum*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Ethelred
Gill's Crimson X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Crimson

Ethyl
campylocarpum X *orbiculare*
Flower Colour: Pink-cream
Flowering Time: April
Height: Medium

Euphrosyne
arboreum X Loderi
AM 1923
Flower Colour: Carmine-pink
Flowering Time: April-May

Eureka
arboreum X *hookeri*
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Europa
ungernii X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Rosy-lilac

Eurydice
cinnamomeum var. *cinnamomeum* X Loderi
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Rosy-pink
Flowering Time: April

Exburiense
didymum X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: July-August

Exbury Albatross
discolor X Loderi
FCC 1935
Flower Colour: Blush Pink
Height: Tall

Exbury Angelo
griffithianum X *discolor*
FCC 1947
Flower Colour: Blush Pink-white
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Exbury Calstocker
calophytum X Doctor Stocker
AM 1948 & FCC 1990
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Exbury Cornish Cross
thomsonii X *griffithianum* (FCC Form)
AM 1935
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Exbury Fabia
dichroanthum X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Apricot-yellow-salmon-pink
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Exbury Isabella
griffithianum X *auriculatum*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: June-July
Height: Tall

Exbury Matador
griersonianum X *strigillosum*
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: April-May

Exbury May Day
haematodes X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Exbury Naomi
Aurora X *fortunei*
AM 1933
Flower Colour: Biscuit-lilac-pink
Height: Tall

Exbury Red Cap
didymum X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: June

Exbury Souldis
souliei X *discolor*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Fairy Light
Lady Mar X *griersonianum*
AM 1990
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May

Fancy Free
Lowinsky Hybrid No. 1690 X *facetum*
AM 1938
Flower Colour: Pink-salmon
Flowering Time: May-June

Fandango
Britannia X *haematodes*
Flower Colour: Crimson-scarlet
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Fantasy
Lowinsky Hybrid No. 1284 X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May

Felis
dichroanthum X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Yellow-orange
Flowering Time: June
Height: Low

Fez
King George X Haemaleum
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Fire Bird
Norman Shaw X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Salmon-red
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Firedrake
Sardis X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Flashlight
callimorphum X *campylocarpum*
Flower Colour: Yellow-pink

Fortune
falconeri X *sinogrande*
FCC 1938
Flower Colour: Primrose-yellow
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Fortune Montreal
falconeri X *sinogrande*
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Fortune Ottawa
falconeri X *sinogrande*
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Fortune Sandringham
falconeri X *sinogrande*
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Francis Hanger
dichroanthum X Isabella
AM 1950
Flower Colour: Chrome Yellow
Flowering Time: June

Fusilier
elliottii X *griersonianum*
AM 1938 & FCC 1942
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Gaul
Shilsonii X *elliottii*
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Gaul Mastodon
Shilsonii X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Gay Gordon
Beau Brummell X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Hunting Coat Red
Flowering Time: May

Geisha
Pineapple X *dichroanthum*
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

General Sir John du Cane
thomsonii X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Rose Madder
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Gibraltar
Bibiani X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Gipsy King
King George X *haematodes*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May

Glamour
Margaret X *griersonianum*
AM 1946
Flower Colour: Cherry-red
Flowering Time: April-May

Goblin
Break of Day X *griersonianum*
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Salmon-rose
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Goblin Pink
Break of Day X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Medium

Golconda
Beau Brummell X *dichroanthum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May-June

Golden Dream
campylocarpum X Naomi
Flower Colour: Creamy-yellow-pink
Height: Tall

Golden Horn
elliottii X *dichroanthum*
AM 1945
Flower Colour: orange-salmon-red

Gondolier
Lady Harcourt X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May

Good Cheer
Lord Milner X *sutchuenense*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Grace
fortunei X *cinnamomeum* var. *cinnamomeum*
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Grenada
Lady Rumbold X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May

Grenadier
Moser's Maroon X *elliottii*
FCC 1943
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Height: Tall

Grenadine
Pauline X *griersonianum*
AM 1956 & FCC 1982
Flower Colour: Cherry-orange
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Grisette
cinnamomeum var. *cinnamomeum* X Doctor Stocker
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Grosclaude
haematodes X *facetum*
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Height: Medium

Halcyone
souliei X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Halton
lacteum X Naomi
AM 1967
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Happy
Pauline X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May

Hawk
wardii X Lady Bessborough
AM 1949
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Hawk Falcon
wardii X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Hawk Kestrel
wardii X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May

Hawk Merlin
wardii X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Hereward
Dolly X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Rosy-pink

Herga
Break of Day X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May

Hermes
apodectum X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Orange-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Hesperides
Ayah X *griersonianum*
AM 1988
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: Late May

Hypatia
Mrs R. S. Holford X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June-July
Height: Tall

Iago
Romany Chai X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Rosy-crimson
Flowering Time: May

Ibex
griersonianum X *pocophorum*
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Ibis
Adelaide X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Cerise-pink
Flowering Time: April-May

Icarus
A. Gilbert X *herpesticum*
AM 1947
Flower Colour: Biscuit-rose
Flowering Time: May

Icenia
Moser's Maroon X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May

Ida
J. G. Millais X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Rosy-red

Idaho
Dolly X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Brick Red
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Idealist
wardii X Naomi Exbury
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Height: Tall

Iliad
Nereid X *kyawii*
AM 1949
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Low

Illyria
Romany Chal X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: June-July

Impi
didymum X Moser's Maroon
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Indian Lake
Flowering Time: June
Height: Medium

Inamorata
wardii X *discolor*
AM 1950
Flower Colour: Sulphur Yellow
Flowering Time: May-June

Inchmery
The Don X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Indiana
scyphocalyx X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Orange
Flowering Time: June
Height: Low

Indomitable
souliei X General Sir John du Cane
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: June

Ingrid
Tally Ho X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Intrepid
Beau Brummel X *kyawii*
AM 2005
Flower Colour: Rosy-red
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Iolanthe
Blancmange X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Cerise-pink
Flowering Time: July
Height: Tall

Ironside
Midsummer X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: July
Height: Tall

Isis
Carex X *annae* Laxiflorum
Flower Colour: White

Islay
kyawii X Romany Chai
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: June-July
Height: Tall

Isme
wardii X *venator*
Flower Colour: Yellow-rose
Flowering Time: April-May

Ispahan
Fabia X *wardii*
Flower Colour: Tangerine-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Istanbul
Mrs H. Stocker X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June

Istar
dichroanthum X Naomi
Flower Colour: Yellow-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Ithica
septentrionale X *facetum*

Ivan
B. de Bruin X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: July
Height: Tall

Ivanhoe
Chanticleer X *griersonianum*
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Iviza
Fabia X Bustard
Flower Colour: Salmon-orange
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Jacobean
Bibiani X Haemaleum
Flower Colour: Maroon
Flowering Time: April-May

Jacqueline
facetum X Albatross
Flower Colour: Flesh Pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Jacques
dichroanthum X Day Dream
Flower Colour: Orange-pink
Flowering Time: April-May

Jaipur
forrestii Repens X *meddianum*
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Semi-Dwarf

Jalisco
Lady Bessborough X Dido
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Jalisco Eclipse
Lady Bessborough X Dido
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Height: Medium

Jalisco Elect
Lady Bessborough X Dido
AM 1948 & FCC 1987
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Height: Medium

Jalisco Emblem
Lady Bessborough X Dido
Flower Colour: Yellow

Jalisco Goshawk
Lady Bessborough X Dido
FCC 1954
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Height: Tall

Jalisco Janet
Lady Bessborough X Dido
Flower Colour: Yellow

Jalisco Orange
Lady Bessborough X Dido

Jamaica
Break of Day X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Orange
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Janet
Avalanche X Doctor Stocker
AM 1950
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Late April
Height: Tall

Jason
lacteum X Penjerrick
AM 1966
Flower Colour: Chartreuse Green-Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Jasper
dichroanthum X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Orange-cream-yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Jasper Pimento
dichroanthum X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Orange-red

Jeritsa
griffithianum X Lady Bessborough
AM 1951
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Jervis Bay
wardii X Lady Bessborough
AM 1951
Flower Colour: Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Jester
dichroanthum X Naomi
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Low

Jibuti
griersonianum X Gill's Triumph
AM 1949
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: June

Jiusepa
dichroanthum X Day Dream
Flower Colour: Biscuit-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Joana
wardii X Albatross
Flower Colour: White-cream

Joanita
lacteum X *caloxanthum*
Flower Colour: Green-gold
Flowering Time: Late April
Height: Tall

Jocelyne
lacteum X *calophytum*
AM 1954 & FCC 1956
Flower Colour: White-cream
Flowering Time: March-April
Height: Tall

Jordan
dichroanthum X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Orange-pink
Flowering Time: April

Josephine
wardii X Ayah
Flower Colour: Cream-yellow
Flowering Time: May

Joyance
wardii X *scyphocalyx*
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Jubilant
Lady Bessborough X Dido
AM 1966
Flower Colour: Buttercup-Chrome Yellow
Height: Tall

Judith
Loderi X General Sir John du Cane
Flower Colour: White-pink

Jutland
elliottii X Bellerophon
AM 1947
Flower Colour: Geranium Lake
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Karkov
griersonianum X Red Admiral
AM 1947
Flower Colour: Carmine-rose
Height: Tall

Kiev
elliottii X Barclayi Robert Fox
AM 1950
Flower Colour: Blood Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Kilimanjaro
elliottii X Dusky Maid
FCC 1947
Flower Colour: Currant Red
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Kingcup
dichroanthum X Bustard
AM 1943
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May
Height: Low

Kingsway
discolor X *zeylanicum*
Flower Colour: White-pink

Kola
Isabella X Tally Ho
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June

Lady Bessborough
discolor X *campylocarpum* Elatum
FCC 1933
Flower Colour: Creamy-white
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Ladybird
discolor X Corona
AM 1933
Flower Colour: Coral-pink
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Lady Limerick
Flower Colour: Rose Madder-Neyron Rose
Height: Tall

Lady Montagu
griffithianum X *thomsonii*
AM 1931
Flower Colour: Salmon-pink
Flowering Time: May

Leo
Britannia X *elliottii*
AM 1948 & FCC 1989
Flower Colour: Crimson-scarlet
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Leonore
auriculatum X *kyawii*
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Crimson
Flowering Time: July-August
Height: Tall

Lindberg
Lady Bessborough X Dido

Lionel's First
lacteum X *sutchuenense*
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Flowering Time: Mid April
Height: Tall

Lionel's Triumph
lacteum X Naomi
AM 1954 & FCC 1974
Flower Colour: Dresden Yellow
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Major
haematodes X *thomsonii*
Flower Colour: Crimson-red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Mandalay
haematodes X *venator*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Marathon
Pauline X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Red

Marianne Hardy
lacteum X *discolor*
FCC 1982
Flower Colour: Creamy-white

Marie-Antoinette
Albatross X Ariel
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Tall

Mariloo
Doctor Stocker X *lacteum*
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Mariloo Eugenie
Doctor Stocker X *lacteum*
AM 1950
Flower Colour: Cream
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Mariloo Gilbury
Doctor Stocker X *lacteum*
AM 1943
Flower Colour: Creamy-pink
Flowering Time: April
Height: Tall

Marshall
haematodes X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Scarlet-red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Melody
Loderi Venus X General Sir John du Cane
Flower Colour: Creamy-pink
Flowering Time: Late May-June

Melrose
dichroanthum X Avocet
Flower Colour: Pink

Memory
King George X *haematodes*
AM 1943
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May

Michele
griersonianum X Afghan
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May

Minerva
Sir Frederick Moore X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Minnehaha
Corona X *souliei*
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Low

Mohamet
dichroanthum X Tally Ho
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Yellowish-pink

Montreal
discolor X *campylocarpum* Elatum
Flower Colour: Stone Cream
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Moonbeam
Naomi X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: White-Primrose Yellow
Flowering Time: May

Moonglow
Loderi Venus X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: May

Mosaique
ambiguum X Cinnkeys
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Yellow
Flowering Time: May-June
Height: Medium

Mouton Rothschild
Beau Brummel X *elliottii*
AM 1958 & FCC 1991
Flower Colour: Red
Height: Tall

Mrs Anthony Seys
fortunei X Unknown
AM 1986
Flower Colour: Creamy-white-purplish-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Mrs Arthur James
Essex Scarlet X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Pink

Mrs Leopold de Rothschild
B. de Bruin X *griersonianum*
AM 1933
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: April-May

Nancy
Prometheus X *neriiflorum*
Flower Colour: Rose

Naomi
Aurora X *fortunei*
AM 1933
Flower Colour: Pink-yellow
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Astarte
Aurora X *fortunei*
AM 1997
Flower Colour: Greenish-yellow
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Carissima
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Pink-creamy-white
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Early Dawn
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Glow
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Hope
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Pink-mauve
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Nautilus
Aurora X *fortunei*
AM 1938
Flower Colour: Rose-orange-yellow
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Nereid
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Lavender-yellow
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Orpha
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: White flushed pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Pink Beauty
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Rhodamine Pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Pixie
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Naomi Stella Maris
Aurora X *fortunei*
FCC 1939
Flower Colour: Buff-cream-lilac-pink
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Nehru
griersonianum X Huntsman
Flower Colour: Scarlet
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Nicholas
ponticum hybrid
AM 1965
Flower Colour: Petunia Purple
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Norman Shaw
discolor X B. de Bruin
AM 1926
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: Late June-July
Height: Tall

Octavia
Akbar X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May-June

Octopus
dichroanthum X *kyawii*
Flower Colour: Orange
Flowering Time: June
Height: Low

Oklahoma
Bellerophon X Tally Ho
AM 1975
Flower Colour: Red

Olympia
Day Dream X *elliottii*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: June

Opaline
discolor hybrid

Operetta
Ambrose X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Crimson-red

Ophelia
callimorphum X *auriculatum*
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: April-May

Oregonia
Gladys Rillstone X *griersonianum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: June

Organdie
A. Gilbert X *herpesticum*
AM 1947
Flower Colour: biscuit-yellow

Ottawa
discolor X *campylocarpum* Elatum
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Oxlip
williamsianum X *wardii* Litiense
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: April

Paris
Aurora X *fortunei*
Flower Colour: Rose-purple
Flowering Time: Late April-May
Height: Tall

Perdita
souliei X Lady Bessborough
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Height: Tall

Persimmon
dichroanthum X *elliottii*
AM 1945
Flower Colour: Orange-red
Height: Medium

Philomene
Fabia X Bustard
Flower Colour: Straw-pink

Phoenix
Dawn's Delight X Tally Ho
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Medium

Pinafore
campylocarpum Elatum X Loderi
Flower Colour: White-pink
Flowering Time: April-May

Pink Halcyone
souliei X Lady Bessborough
AM 1988
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Pirate
B. de Bruin X *meddianum*
Flower Colour: Red

Prelude
wardii X *fortunei*
AM 1951
Flower Colour: Yellow-green

Quadrille
Sulphur Yellow X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Cream
Height: Tall

Quaker Girl
hyperythrum X Avalanche
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: Late March-April
Height: Tall

Queen of Hearts
meddianum X Moser's Maroon
AM 1949 & FCC 1986
Flower Colour: Chrysanthemum Crimson
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Querida
Red Knight X *elliottii*
AM 1952
Flower Colour: Carmine
Flowering Time: April-May

Red Rock
Bibiani X *elliottii*
AM 1970
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Repose
lacteum X *discolor*
AM 1956
Flower Colour: Whitish-cream
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Retreat
facetum X Lowinsky Hybrid No. TL 3630
Flower Colour: Red-pink
Flowering Time: May
Height: Tall

Reverie
auriculatum X Saint Keverne
Flower Colour: White
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Rickshaw
Golden Horn X Lady Bessborough
Flower Colour: Biscuit Orange
Flowering Time: June
Height: Medium

Rimini
apodectum X *discolor*
Flower Colour: Orange-red-yellow
Flowering Time: June
Height: Tall

Roberte
discolor X *campylocarpum* Elatum
FCC 1936
Flower Colour: Rose-pink
Flowering Time: Late May-June
Height: Tall

Romany Chai
Moser's Maroon X *griersonianum*
AM 1932
Flower Colour: Reddish Terracotta
Height: Tall

Romany Chal
Moser's Maroon X *facetum*
AM 1932 & FCC 1937
Flower Colour: Cardinal Red
Height: Tall

Rosemary Seys
Aries X Moser's Maroon
Flower Colour: Crimson

Rosemary's Choice
Romany Chal X *facetum*
Flower Colour: Red
Flowering Time: July
Height: Tall

Rosy Queen
Doctor Stocker X *thomsonii*

Rouge
Lowinsky Seedling No. 1249 X *elliottii*
AM 1950
Flower Colour: Reddish-carmine

Salutation
griffithianum X *lacteum*
Flower Colour: Cream
Height: Tall

Sir Frederick Moore
discolor X Saint Keverne
AM 1937 & FCC 1972
Flower Colour: Purplish-pink
Height: Tall

Solent Queen
griffithianum X *discolor*
AM 1939
Flower Colour: Rose-white
Height: Tall

Solent Snow
griffithianum X *discolor*
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Solent Swan
griffithianum X *discolor*
Flower Colour: White
Height: Tall

Stanley
falconeri X *sinogrande*
Flower Colour: Yellow-green
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Swan Lake
auriculatum X Godesberg
Flower Colour: White

Tito
details unknown

Welcome Stranger
lacteum X *discolor*
AM 1977
Flower Colour: Yellow-green

Yvonne
Aurora X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: White-rose-pink
Height: Tall

Yvonne Dawn
Aurora X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Flesh Pink-white
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Yvonne Opaline
Aurora X *griffithianum*
AM 1931
Flower Colour: Ivory White-pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Yvonne Pearl
Aurora X *griffithianum*
Flower Colour: Pink
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

Yvonne Pride
Aurora X *griffithianum*
AM 1948
Flower Colour: Pink-white
Flowering Time: April-May
Height: Tall

R. ‘Abbot’

R. ‘Adder’

R. ‘Adelaide’ AM 1935

R. ‘Akbar’ AM 1952

R. ‘Akbar’ AM 1952

R. ‘Albatross’ AM 1934

R. ‘Albatross’

‘Loderi’ x *discolor*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 June 9m x 6m

Named Forms:

Albatross AM 1934 (white flushed pale pink).
Albatross Townhill Pink.
Albatross Townhill White.
Townhill Albatross AM 1945 (fuchsia-pink).

The authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, describe R. ‘Albatross’ as “one of the glories of Exbury and one of the world’s most beautiful rhododendrons”. Written in 1967, their words still hold true today, for Lionel de Rothschild’s cross of pre-1930 vintage - LR 171 in the stud book - is one of the finest woodland plants able to be grown in British gardens. Yet describing R. ‘Albatross’ as a plant, even as a shrub, is misleading, for it conjures up visions of neat little suburban bushes, prim and well groomed, when for all intents and purposes, a tree is to hand. And a very tall and wide-spreading one at that, which often adopts an umbrella-shape when a single trunk is dominant, a massive dome otherwise.

The ‘Albatross’ blooms are deliciously scented, carried in huge trusses of 12 broadly-funnel-shaped corollas, very similar to those of R. ‘Loderi’, the seed parent, but with more distinct mahogany rays in the throat. To say the cross was free-flowering would be doing it a disservice, as in most years there is simply an overabundance of bloom and a mature specimen will literally stop you in your tracks. Regrettably, there is one failing: the leaves are only held for one year; which can lead to a sparse appearance when the corollas fall.

The new H5 rating given above - the Royal Horticultural Society revised and updated the UK plant hardiness system after two exceptionally cold winters (2009/10, and 2010/11) to reflect the actual climatic conditions gardens across the country experience, with the temperature ranges now given as the absolute minimums a plant will tolerate rather than long-term average minimums - indicates that the cross is reliably hardy to -15°C, though it will tolerate -18°C in mid-winter. So it can be grown in most UK gardens, but not at the coldest locales or on exposed sites, where the foliage will also suffer damage from high winds.

Four named clones have been widely distributed, two of them award winners. Propagation is by graft or layering, so although the few specialist nurseries still trading will usually have one or two youngsters available, specimens will be absent from your local garden centre no matter how extensive its range.

The ‘Townhill’ clones are Exbury-gifted seedlings of the cross that were then raised and registered by Louis Montagu, the second Baron Swaythling, whose garden was a stone’s throw from Exbury on the other side of Southampton. However, lineage details for R. ‘Townhill Albatross’ in the *IRRC* entry show ‘Loderi King George’ listed as the seed parent, which would mean an association with R. ‘Akbar’. Phillips and Barber list it under R. ‘Albatross’. Regrettably, parentage details for R. ‘Albatross Townhill Pink’ and R. ‘Albatross Townhill White’ are absent from either tome.

Knowledgeable rhodophiles will have noted that the FCC-winning clone, namely R. ‘Exbury Albatross’ is missing. That is because it was the result of a separate mating, with L de R reversing the pairing, so having R. ‘Loderi’ provide the pollen, while *R. discolor* matured the seed. At the time, such was considered to be irrelevant, but today, we know that genetically this makes a difference, as each cell’s organelles - the chloroplasts and mitochondria, for instance - are solely provided by the female parent. So even though outwardly the offspring from both crosses may look similar, peer deeper and that will be found not to be the case. In consequence, cultivars that previously had been associated within the same hybrid ‘group’, are herein divided into two ‘prides’.

A much more detailed explanation of this transmogrification is provided in Volume 7 of *Temperate Rhododendrons* - pages 24-31, the text concluding the ‘Tribulations - One Necessitating Change’ essay - this freely available to download from the RCMG website. In consequence therefore, the photographs of R. ‘Exbury Albatross’ will be found on pages 310 and 311.



R. ‘Albatross’ AM 1934

R. ‘Albatross Townhill Pink’

R. ‘Albatross Townhill White’

R. ‘Alix’ AM 1935

R. 'Amalfi' AM 1939

R. ‘Androcles’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990

R. ‘Androcles’
arboreum x *calophytum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 March-April 7m x 4m

Lionel de Rothschild’s pairing of *R. arboreum* and *R. calophytum* used superior forms of both species to produce a group of offspring with a tree-like, upright habit mirroring the seed parent. The named selections from the seed tray - all of which were grown to maturity, the discards then torched on a bonfire - are all well-filled with long, narrowly-elliptic dull green leaves mid-way between the two parents, but they display flowers that are more reflective of *R. calophytum*. Borne in trusses of up to thirty campanulate corollas, those on the award-winning clone open rhodamine pink and have four lines of darker purplish-pink spots across the upper lobes that spread from a deeper coloured blotch in the throat.

Exbury boasts quite a few specimens of ‘Androcles’ scattered throughout its 200 acres, but some of these - despite escaping the flames - are decidedly inferior and nearer *R. arboreum* florally. The best clone, with a more spreading habit, will be found at the far end of the Winter Garden, though some branches have been lost to storm damage since these photos were taken and the label denoting it a recipient of the Royal Horticultural Society’s largesse had become detached. Freedom of flowering usually runs in phases, alternating between a good year, when each branch tip boasts a truss, and two successive leaner seasons, when the plant is working up to its next floral overabundance.

Clearly named for the lion-befriending ex-slave of ancient fable, R. ‘Androcles’ was introduced in 1933 and although not distributed widely, one or two specialist nurseries still offer grafted youngsters for the discerning connoisseur. That probably wouldn't be the case had it been tagged with an ‘Arbophytum’ moniker as would likely have occurred if the pairing had taken place in the West Country garden of one of Lionel’s contemporaries, E. J. P. Magor, the number one fan of the egregious nomenclature system for hybrids regrettably conceived by the otherwise eminent botanist and Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour.



R. ‘Androcles’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990

R. ‘Androcles’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990

R. ‘Androcles’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990

R. ‘Angelo’ AM 1935

R. ‘Angelo’
griffithianum x *discolor*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 Late May-June 8m x 5m

Named Forms:
Angelo AM 1935 (pure white, spotted green within).
Angelo Diadem (white).
Exbury Angelo FCC 1947
(pale blush pink outside at first, becoming white, spotted green within).
Sheffield Park Angelo AM 1950
(pure white, but with a faint greenish-yellow blotch in the throat).
Solent Queen AM 1939
(very pale rose, fading to near pure white, spotted green within).
Solent Snow (white with green markings).
Solent Swan (pure white).

Even though J. C. Williams of Caerhays had won the race to put pollen from *R. discolor* onto the stigma of *R. griffithianum* and introduced his hybrid ‘Cornish Loderi’ a year or so before R. ‘Angelo’ came on to the scene, it is the Lionel de Rothschild pairing of these two species that will be found planted in nearly all the milder UK woodland rhododendron gardens. For it is taller-growing, blooms slightly later and the flowers are superior. Listed as LR 127 in the Exbury stud book, in maturity the progeny are tree-like, often topping the 8m-mark, with an open habit and long, ovate leaves, which despite being dull green are still attractive to the eye after the corollas fall.

But of course it is the blooms that maketh the plant:

Sweetly scented and carried in a tall, sumptuous truss of nine, ten or even twelve individual funnel-shaped, seven-lobed trumpets, each corolla is simply enormous, easily 14cm across at the mouth. Colour varies depending on which clone is to hand and as usual, too many were released, leading to them being mixed-up in the nursery trade, but the AM form originating from Exbury is described as being pure white inside and out, from blush pink buds, with a speckling of pale green spots within, while the FCC plant, registered separately as R. ‘Exbury Angelo’, retains a blush pink flush on its outer surface at first.

The cross was duplicated at Sheffield Park by Arthur Soames and this also has pure white flowers, these with a greenish-yellow blotch in the throat, and is a recipient of an Award of Merit.

Exbury’s third award-winner from the LR 127 mating - given the name of R. ‘Solent Queen’ when introduced in 1939 - has blooms that open a very pale rose before fading to white. ‘Solent Snow’ and ‘Solent Swan’ would be fawned over if their sisters did not exist, as would ‘Angelo Diadem’, introduced by Michael Haworth-Booth, but now very rarely found.

The green spotting displayed on all the clones may also be bisected by streaks of reddish-brown on the dorsal lobes. These fan out from a small, darker coloured blotch deep in the corolla throat, which is sometimes obscured by the ovary.

A sheltered and shady woodland environment is a prerequisite for anyone setting out on a quest to obtain a young plant, which will have been propagated by grafting or layering, as cuttings rarely root for any but those with the greenest of fingers. Yet expect that peregrination to be long and arduous, for few individuals will be found at any of the remaining specialist nurseries and these require a good deal of searching out.


R. ‘Exbury Angelo’ FCC 1947

R. 'Exbury Angelo' FCC 1947



R. ‘Solent Queen’ AM 1939

R. ‘Antonio’ AM 1939

R. ‘Argosy’

R. ‘Ariel’

R. ‘Asteroid’

R. ‘Ayalanche’ AM 1934 & FCC 1938

R. ‘Avalanche’
‘Loderi’ x *calophytum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 Late March-April 8m x 6m

Named Forms:
Alpine Glow AM 1938 (delicate pale pink).
Alpine Rose (deeper, delicate pale pink).
Avalanche AM 1934 & FCC 1938 (pure white, with a small magenta blotch).

A more appropriate name for this cross would be hard to conceive, especially when the flowering is prodigious and the weather has stayed mild, for R. ‘Avalanche’ does then indeed resemble a snowslide hurtling down a mountain. From head to foot, the plant is covered in football-sized pure white globes, each made up of twelve to fourteen funnel-shaped corollas, individually 10cm wide at the mouth and with a small magenta blotch deep in the throat that extends upwards in three lines of colour. And if any rhododendron in full bloom can stop you in your tracks, it will be this one.

Again, ‘plant’ is a totally inadequate descriptor for this giant, which will easily reach and likely top the 8m-mark and spread out almost as wide. It bears long elliptic-oblong leaves, which although only held for one year, are large enough to avoid a leggy look - at least, on well-grown mature specimens. New growth follows *R. calophytum* in having rose-red bracts, while up close, the pedicels will also be found to display a similar tint.

Placement in a woodland environment is a must, to protect the leaves from any violent gusts of wind and the flowers from frost, though a sunny site is also needed to produce the most shapely specimen and maximise flower bud production. Too much shade will result in bare trunks at ground level, far fewer flowers and these held way up in the canopy. And mirroring many of the large-leaved species and their hybrids, the quantity of bloom alternates on a two- or three-year cycle, especially when deadheading becomes no longer practical.

Exbury introduced two other clones from the cross: R. ‘Alpine Glow’, which received its own Award of Merit in 1938, and is graced with ‘delicate’ pink flowers that swiftly lose their flushing; and R. ‘Alpine Rose’, which boasts a suffusing of deeper pink.

Lionel de Rothschild’s rhododendron masterpiece has so far been used as a parent to create just eleven other hybrids, but only one or two of these - ‘Galactic’ and ‘Quaker Girl’, for instance - come close to matching the majesty of ‘Avalanche’.


R. ‘Avalanche’ AM 1934 & FCC 1938

R. ‘Avalanche’ AM 1934 & FCC 1938

R. ‘Alpine Glow’ AM 1938

R. ‘Ayesha’ AM 1992

R. 'Ayesha' AM 1992

R. ‘Aztec’

R. ‘Aztec’

R. ‘Barbara’


R. ‘Barbara’


R. ‘Barbara’

R. ‘Barbara’
campylocarpum x ‘Loderi’
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 April-May 4m x 3m

Named Forms:
Barbara (cream flushed soft pink).
Pinafore (white, veined pink, flushed pink at the lobe margins).

The taller-growing form of *R. campylocarpum,* now unofficially posited as Elatum Group, was the seed parent for ‘Barbara’, while R. ‘Loderi’ gifted the pollen, with the match made in 1934. L de R described the flowers as being of ‘many shades of colour’ with ‘a good truss’ (*The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* Cassell, 1967), and in ‘Barbara’ the corollas are cream with a soft pink flush. That trait is inherited from *R. campylocarpum,* and the tint is most pronounced in the ‘Pinafore’ selection, where the staining at the lobe margins and along the veins is delightful, the tone deepest at the tip of each corolla just before it opens. Some sources detail a dark blotch in the throat, but this was not evidenced on the original plants at Exbury, nor detailed by C. E. Lucas Philips and Peter N. Barber in their register of the garden’s hybrids.

Both require a semi-shaded woodland placement to be at their best, so the flowers and foliage are protected from too much sun and any winter extremes, with each perfect for placement in a southern or western garden, but not in the coldest sites.

R. ‘Pinafore’

R. ‘Pinafore’

R. ‘B. B. C.’

R. 'B. B. C.'

R. ‘Beau Brummel’ AM 1938

R. ‘Beau Brummel’ AM 1938

R. 'Bellerophon'

R. 'Bellerophon'

'Norman Shaw' x *facetum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6 Late June-July 4m x 3m

'Bellerophon' is one of Lionel de Rothschild's lesser-known hybrids, overlooked by the cognoscenti until by chance they stumble upon a mature specimen in late June through mid July: in full flower; lighting up a woodland glade; when virtually every other rhododendron has long since dropped its corollas unless the blood of *R. auriculatum* flows through its veins. And even then, those blooms will be nowhere near as attention grabbing as the display on this cross. At which point, cameras and phones are quickly retrieved, shutters click and the search for a label begins. For festooned in globular-shaped, tight-knit trusses of ten large florets or more - glowing balls of bright crimson - this tall and elegant shrub annually covers itself in bloom.

That crimson colour is best retained in a dappled shade placement, where the poise and compactness of the inflorescence can too be protected, each luminous orb set against a cluster of long and glossy, attractive lanceolate-shaped leaves. If there is one fault, it is that the foliage is only retained for one year, with the leaves discarded soon after the new growth expands. Yet mature specimens do not appear straggly or gaunt so well-clothed is the whole. Hardiness too is high, especially for a late-flowering red hybrid, a strength inherited from the seed parent that allows this shrub to be planted throughout the UK wherever rhododendrons thrive. The quandary, bordering on the criminal, is why it remains so rare a find, absent from most woodland gardens and rhododendron texts. As is the lack of an AM or FCC award.

L de R's choice of epithet is once again inspired: Bellerophon, the Greek mythologic hero who speared and slaughtered the Chimera from his winged horse Pegasus. Except that honorific might also have a more mundane origin, and originate from an association with the now closed Royal Navy shore base located close to Exbury in nearby Portsmouth; or even a particular class of dreadnought battleship.



R. 'Bellerophon'



R. 'Bellerophon'

R. ‘Berryrose’ AM 1934

R. ‘Bibiani’ AM 1934

R. ‘Blanc-mange’ AM 1947

R. ‘Boadicea’

R. ‘Bonito’ AM 1934

R. ‘Bonito’ AM 1934

R. ‘Bow Bells’ AM 1935

R. ‘Bow Bells’

‘Corona’ x *williamsianum*

Hardiness	Flowering Period	Height & Spread
H5-6	May	2m x 3m

Take pollen from one of the most distinctive and beautiful rhododendron species so far discovered and place it on the style of a hybrid with possibly the most jarring flower colour ever bred. Within the gamut of seedlings that could emerge from that pollination, one or two are going to be very special. Maybe, even exceptional.

Lionel de Rothschild did exactly that; made the ‘Corona’ x williamsianum pairing; and revealed his selection from the seedlings that germinated in 1934: one of the finest hybrids ever created. Which he christened ‘Bow Bells’. And no other epithet could ever have been more appropriate. As to exceptional - the plant won an Award of Merit in 1935 and is now one of the most widely grown rhododendron crosses ever introduced.

Like its two parents, R. ‘Bow Bells’ has a medium-sized dome shaped habit, upright and well-filled with foliage, but fortunately it is without the brittle branches and stymied vigour of ‘Corona’, nor does it rock on its own roots. Young growth is copper-red, a trait inherited from *R. williamsianum,* while the mature leaves are ovate in shape, somewhat stiff, up to 6.5cm long and dark green in colour. A placement in light dappled shade will prevent them scorching in southern gardens while not inducing any legginess or reducing flower bud formation, which is usually profuse. Those blooms are deep cerise when they first open, expanding into bright pink, broadly campanulate cups, the pigment paling towards the margins, but deeper on the reverse. Carried on long pedicels in a lax truss of up to seven corollas, each individual member of this septet is 4.5cm long and 6cm wide at the mouth, with a few crimson spots on the dorsal lobe.

Regrettably, a number of clones are in commerce, differing in ultimate height, though all are lower growing than the AM plant, and in the intensity of their flower colour, so choose carefully. Unsurprisingly, any number of other hybridisers have used ‘Bow Bells’ in their breeding programmes, but none of the progeny so far released from that experimentation has outshone or supplanted the original.



R. ‘Bow Bells’ AM 1935

R. ‘Bow Bells’ AM 1935

R. ‘Bow Bells’ AM 1935

R. ‘Brocade’

R. ‘Brocade’

R. ‘Brocade’

R. williamsianum hybrid

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H6 Late April-May 3m x 2m

‘Brocade’ is one of the few Lionel de Rothschild rhododendron hybrids where the full parentage is unknown. Not that the UK’s premier hybridiser had any doubts, for it is listed in his stud book as ‘Vervaeniana’ x *williamsianum,* which - for those without a photographic memory that encompasses the entire 2-volume *IRRC* and its multiple supplements - is an evergreen azalea receiving pollen from an elepidote species. But somewhere along the line, in the seed pan, the cold frame or the nursery bed, or when the capsules were gathered, there was a mix up. For this stunningly beautiful shrub is anything but an azaleodendron. A *R. williamsianum* hybrid certainly, but not the faintest trace of an evergreen azalea exists in any of the characteristics on display. Hence the parentage choice shown above, which follows that currently printed in the Second Edition of the *IRRC*.

However, if you progress onward from the R. ‘Brocade’ entry for another 1,234 pages, switching volumes as you do, the listings for all those plants borrowing the Vervaene surname will be to hand: eleven registrations, excluding the synonyms; all of them evergreen azalea hybrids.

Bar one.

R. ‘Vervaeneanum’, the second of those entries, was listed by Standish & Noble in their 1850 catalogue. The *IRRC* has it as a rhododendron, but without any parentage details, though two synonyms are detailed, ‘Vervaeneanum Flore Pleno’ and ‘Fastuosum Vervaeneanum’. The flowers are recorded as being ‘purplish-lilac, paler in the centre, with yellowish to brownish yellow spots’, these carried in a compact truss of 11-19 corollas that were between 4.5 and 7cm wide, opening at the end of May. They are also described as being double, which rather puts the kibosh on the proposition being worked up. Except for the fact that Pam Hayward, the RCMG Archivisit and former Year Book editor, spotted a recurring entry in the ‘List of Hybrid Rhododendrons’ published in successive editions of the *Year Book of the Rhododendron Association*.

Namely, ‘Vervaneana’.

In a register exclusively populated by lepidote or elepidote hybrid rhododendrons.

The single line entry reports that ‘Vervaneana’ had mauve flowers, was hardy anywhere in the British Isles, especially if provided with a modicum of shade, but was regarded as ‘old fashioned and not up to present-day standard’, this last an addendum appearing from the 1933 edition onwards. President of the Rhododendron Association and the chief contributor to the Year Books, was a chap called Rothschild.

Lionel Nathan de Rothschild.

Hybridiser of ‘Brocade’ and likely owner of a specimen of ‘Vervaneana’.

Which in all probability was the Standish & Noble ‘Vervaeneanum’, ‘mauve’ and ‘purplish-lilac’ corollas being pretty much one and the same thing, and within the 200 acres of woodland garden at Exbury, a planting site almost certainly offered just the lightly shaded nook the cross required. The International Rhododendron Registrar also agrees with Pam’s deductions and changes to the parentage of ‘Brocade’ are set to appear shortly if they are not already in print.

Introduced in 1934, R. ‘Brocade’ builds up over the years into a large rounded bush, 2m high or a touch less in the sunnier south of England, nearer to 3m in the woodland gardens along the east and west coasts at higher latitudes. The main branches are often found to bow slightly, possibly weighed down by the weight of bloom produced each season on a mature specimen. For those flowers develop from the tip of each branchlet, purple-red buds expanding into trusses of six, loosely held peach-pink bells, a deeper rose-pink externally, each 5cm in length, 6cm across, with very frilly lobe margins, while the leaves are oblong-ovate, up to 7.5cm long and 4.5cm wide, matt green and fairly stiff.

And that makes ‘Brocade’ yet another cracker from L de R, able to stop you in your tracks when awash with bloom. Overlooked by the award committees to date, hopefully that complete injustice will also soon be rectified.



R. ‘Brocade’

R. ‘Brocade’

R. ‘Carex’ AM 1932

R. ‘Carex’ AM 1932

R. ‘Carex Blush’

R. ‘Carex White’

R. ‘Carita’

R. ‘Carita’ AM 1945

R. ‘Carita’ AM 1945

R. ‘Carita’

‘Naomi’ x *campylocarpum*

Hardiness	Flowering Period	Height & Spread
H5	April-May	5m x 6m

Named Forms:

Carita (greenish-yellow)
Carita AM (primrose-yellow).
Carita Charm (cream, flushed deep peach pink).
Carita Inchmery (rose-salmon-pink and biscuit-yellow).

The decision to place pollen from *R. campylocarpum* onto the stigma of R. ‘Naomi’ has been described as one of Lionel de Rothschild’s ‘happiest and most inspired matings’ (*The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* 1967) and one glance at any of the registered or unregistered offspring from the cross confirms that judgement in spades. ‘Naomi’ and other members of the ‘Aurora’ x *fortunei* pride - LR 108 in the Exbury stud book - had already secured two awards from the RHS and would later garner another three, including an FCC for the ‘Stella Maris’ clone in 1939, but for this pairing, it was the original ‘Naomi’ selection that was pollinated by a particularly good form of *R. campylocarpum*.

The resulting seedlings developed into upright, dome-shaped bushes around 5m high and a touch more than that in width, though for many years the growth habit was almost columnar, while older individuals are prone to become more open. The foliage is elliptic-ovate in shape, rounded at the apex and base, medium-sized, dark green in colour and somewhat shiny. Mature shrubs begin to open their mass of flowers from mid April onwards, the buds initially mushroom-pink, and each inflorescence is populated by ten, twelve or thirteen campanulate corollas, the lobe tips of which are often recurved. And a well-grown specimen in the right place in the garden will be festooned with bloom from head to toe.

Four clones have been introduced and distributed: ‘Carita’, with greenish-yellow flowers initially flushed pink; the AM plant, with primrose-yellow blooms; ‘Carita Charm’, opening cream corollas that are flushed and overlaid deep peach-pink; and ‘Carita Inchmery’, the deepest-coloured introduction, displaying a blend of rose-salmon-pink and biscuit-yellow that appear fawn-pink from a distance and fade to tints of opal with age.

The cross has but one failing: in southern gardens, if planted in full sun, the leaves of ‘Carita’ will burn on a hot and cloudless day in summer. So initial selection of a spot that benefits from light dappled shade is therefore crucial.

‘Carita Golden Dream’ - more properly ‘Golden Dream’ as registered - is the result of a separate pairing that reversed the parentage - so *campylocarpum* x ‘Naomi’ - and although outwardly - morphologically - clearly similar, it cannot be considered a member of the ‘Carita’ pride because its mitochondrial and chloroplast DNA is different (see page 225 for an explanation of the genetics, and pages 340 and 341 for the photographs).



R. ‘Carita Charm’

R. ‘Carita Inchmery’

R. 'Carita Inchmery'

R. ‘Carmen’ AM 1989

R. ‘Carmen’ AM 1989

R. ‘Chanticleer’

R. ‘Chanticleer’

R. ‘Charlotte de Rothschild’ AM 1958 & FCC 1992

R. ‘Charlotte de Rothschild’ AM 1958 & FCC 1992

R. ‘Charlotte de Rothschild’ AM 1958 & FCC 1992

R. ‘Charlotte de Rothschild’
discolor x ‘Saint Keverne’
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 May 5m x 6m

Named Forms:
Charlotte de Rothschild AM 1958 & FCC 1992(whitish-pink)
Mary Roxburghe (pink).
Sir Frederick Moore AM 1937 & FCC 1972(whitish-pink).

A *R. discolor* x ‘Saint Keverne’ pairing made at Exbury in 1930, with Lionel de Rothschild naming and introducing the first selection from those seedlings, ‘Sir Frederick Moore’, just seven years later in 1937. The epithet honours a former director of the Glasnevin Botanic Garden, near Dublin in Ireland, and the plant immediately secured an Award of Merit from the RHS. It would win a First Class Certificate in 1972.

‘Mary Roxborough’ - sometimes seen as ‘Mary Roxburghe’ (which in fact is the correct spelling, the *IRRC* entry notwithstanding) - was selected by Lionel’s son Edmund in 1954 and christened long past the Floors Castle siege (though the tabloid headlines were even then still reverberating).

The third clone to be released did not come into its own until 1958, when the full potential of the flowers was seen for the first time: huge whitish-pink corollas, flushed deeper pink outside and spotted chocolate in the throat; each 8cm long and 11cm across at the mouth, with frilled lobes; and fourteen of those campanulate funnels held in each immense balled truss.

Edmund de Rothschild promptly named the selection for his youngest daughter, then just a precocious two-year-old, now, the world-renowned soprano Charlotte de Rothschild, and the RHS Floral Committee were again immediately forthcoming with an Award of Merit, though the FCC took rather longer, following thirty-four years later in 1992.

Of the three clones, ‘Charlotte de Rothschild’ is easily the standout, forming an upright and sturdy shrub that will hit 5m in height and spread wider. The structure is open, but adequately cloaked with spirals of dark green elliptic leaves at the branch tips, the blades up to 20cm long. On a good year, the flowering is profuse, with enormous football-sized trusses arrayed across the whole shrub, a sweep of pink from head to foot. At other times - when the previous season has been less than perfect, the weather conditions averse or the shrub unable to garner the reserves needed for such a display - only a few trusses open, these reduced in size and flamboyance.

But when the conditions are right, this stately giant is a knockout that will bowl you over like her namesake’s oratorio performances.



R. ‘Charlotte de Rothschild’ AM 1958 & FCC 1992

R. ‘Sir Frederick Moore’ AM 1937 & FCC 1972

R. ‘Sir Frederick Moore’ AM 1937 & FCC 1972

R. ‘Constance’

R. ‘Constance’

R. ‘Constance’



R. ‘Costa del Sol’ AM 1969

R. ‘Costa del Sol’

caloxanthum x *lacteum*

Hardiness	Flowering Period	Height & Spread
H5-6	April-Early May	3m x 2m

‘Costa del Sol’ can be difficult, a trait exhibited by many hybrid crosses where *R. lacteum* is either the seed or pollen parent.

Here, in a pairing with *R. campylocarpum* ssp. *caloxanthum,* it is the latter, the low rounded shape and tight habit confirming such, for the plant was initially exhibited as a clone of R. ‘Joanita’, the registration of which reverses the parentage. At Exbury, where both pollinations were made in the 1930s, ‘Joanita’ is now topping the 6m-mark and is far closer to *R. lacteum* in form and foliage than the 2m compact dome of ‘Costa del Sol’. However, away from the strong sunlight of southern England, ‘Costa del Sol’ too loosens up, adding another metre to its ultimate height and adopting a more open, though still relatively compact, demeanour.

The foliage on display is elliptic, near 12cm long by 5cm wide, dark green above and with a slightly concave profile, the leaves having a thin, pale brown indumentum coating their lower surface. The criss-cross of branches is sturdy, the structure upright or ascending. Young plants, however, take several years to begin blooming freely, but when the flowers finally arrive in quantity, the wait will prove to have been worth it, for they are exquisite, creamy-yellow bells suffused in places with red, like ice-cream shot through with streaks of strawberry swirl.

The official description is, of course, more reserved, simply stating strong orange-yellow; that for the award clone, only logged as pale yellow, deepening outside to brilliant yellow at the base. Open-campanulate corollas flushed deep red in the throat are borne by both selections and they are carried in a loose truss of fifteen bells, plus or minus one. Yet neither evocation adequately portrays the blooms. Nor is the red streaking consistent, either from one clone to another, or indeed, year-to-year. So it is likely dependent on environmental factors influencing the flower buds as they form, much like a hard winter will often deepen the pigmentation.

Or maybe it is just *R. lacteum* being *R. lacteum*.

The epithet of course is an honorific for the coastline of Andalusia in southern Spain, once pristine and quiet, home to a few fishing villages, but now a concreted-over tourist-magnet more reminiscent of Blackpool or Southend, only with sun and yachts and far higher prices.

R. ‘Costa del Sol’ AM 1969

R. ‘Costa del Sol’ AM 1969



R. ‘Costa del Sol’ AM 1969



R. ‘Damozel’ AM 1948

R. ‘Day Dream’ AM 1940

R. ‘Diva’ AM 1937

R. ‘Dollar Princess’



R. ‘Dormouse’

R. ‘Dormouse’

‘Dawn's Delight’ x *williamsianum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6 April-May 2m x 2.5m

Mirroring the behaviour of its seldom-seen mammalian namesake, the nocturnal *Muscardinus avellanarius,* Lionel de Rothschild’s ‘Dormouse’ is rarely encountered in the UK’s rhododendron gardens despite it being one of the most beautiful crosses that master hybridiser ever created. Indeed, it is even lacking an entry in the otherwise exemplary record of the gardens at Exbury, *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (C. E. Lucas Phillips & Peter N. Barber, Cassell, 1967).

R. williamsianum provided the pollen, while another L de R stalwart ‘Dawn’s Delight’ - a pink-flowering Mangles *griffithianum* hybrid - was again put into service as the seed parent. According to the Exbury stud book it had already been used in just such a capacity to germinate ‘Brigadier’, ‘Bauble’, ‘Break of Day’, ‘Blushing Bride’, and ‘Dolly’ (with respectively *R. arboreum, R. campylocarpum, R. dichroanthum, R. discolor* and *R. griersonianum*) and would later be assigned ‘Tally Ho’ to give ‘Phoenix’ and *R. thomsonii,* to mature ‘Dunlin’, but none of these pairings would come close to the refined, delicate pink bells that grace ‘Dormouse’.

Each widely campanulate corolla is deep pink around the frilly lobe margins, and paler pink towards the centre, which gives a delightful two-tone effect. The trusses are loose and open, holding clusters of 4 to 6 blooms, these often amassed into a mantle that covers the entire plant, though never so tightly as to completely obscure the leaves or branches. The foliage is broadly elliptic through rounded, with the leaves sometimes kidney-shaped, up to 7.5cm long and 5.5cm wide, copper-coloured as *R. williamsianum* when first extending from the bud, a dark glossy green when mature, and held for three, sometimes four years, so giving the rounded structure a very bushy appearance.



R. ‘Dormouse’

R. ‘Dormouse’

R. ‘Esterel’

R. ‘Esterel’

R. ‘Eureka’ AM 1939



R. ‘Eurydice’ AM 1939

R. ‘Exbury Albatross’ FCC 1935

R. ‘Exbury Albatross’ FCC 1935


R. ‘Exbury Calstocker’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990


R. ‘Exbury Calstocker’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990


R. ‘Exbury Calstocker’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990

R. ‘Exbury Calstocker’ AM 1948 & FCC 1990

R. ‘Exbury Cornish Cross’ AM 1935

R. ‘Exbury Cornish Cross’ AM 1935

R. ‘Exbury Cornish Cross’ AM 1935

R. ‘Exbury Cornish Cross’ AM 1935

R. ‘Fairy Light’ AM 1990



R. ‘Felis’

R. ‘Fire Bird’

R. ‘Flashlight’

R. ‘Fortune’ FCC 1938

R. ‘Fortune’ FCC 1938

R. 'Fortune'

falconeri x *sinogrande*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H4 April-May 8m x 6m

Named Forms:

Annapolis Royal (pale greenish-yellow, striped vivid purplish-red at first).
Charles (pale greenish-yellow, blotched vivid purplish-red).
Churchill AM 1971 (creamy-yellow, blotched deep red).
Fortune FCC 1938 (clear primrose-yellow, blotched crimson).
Fortune Montreal (pale creamy-yellow, blotched crimson-red).
Fortune Ottawa (creamy yellow, blotched crimson-red, flushed pink in bud).
Fortune Sandringham (pale yellow-green, with deep red markings in the throat).
Stanley (yellow-green, lobes flushed pink, blotched purplish-red).

May, 1922:

R. sinogrande has been flowering haphazardly in British gardens for around three years and a plant in the woodland garden at Trewithen, George Johnstone's home between Truro and St. Austell in Cornwall, is about to open its first bloom in cultivation.

Many admirers soon agree that it is the finest specimen yet seen and one of Johnstone's friends in the Rhododendron Society, the merchant banker Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, who has motored from Hampshire to view the shrub, is allowed to collect pollen from the inflorescence. Returning to Exbury, his 2,600-acre estate in the New Forest, the grains are applied to the stigma of one of the best clones of *R. falconeri* then available: for Rothschild is in the process of creating the world's premier rhododendron garden and his financial resources are virtually unlimited.

In *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (written by Peter N. Barber & C. E. Lucas Phillips, and published by Exbury and Cassell Ltd in 1967), Lionel's wife, Marie Louise, recalls the occasion when the progeny from that pollination first flowered:

> 'It was a lovely April day when Exbury had donned its Riviera look. As we walked into the woods we saw this magnificent plant holding up its glorious blooms to a deep blue sky. In the evening, Lionel gathered his family to a round-table conference to discuss the merits of the new seedling. There it stood in the largest vase available, looking most majestic. Not only was the flower outstanding, but its stance and bearing were bold and commanding. Its great leaves were disposed so as to remind me of the Discobolus, the Greek thrower of the discus with arm stretched out and poised for the throw.'

That was in 1938, sixteen years after the pairing, and the name chosen for the cross was 'Fortune', not to honour the 19th century Scottish botanist and plant hunter, but an acknowledgement that chance and good luck had combined to produce a masterpiece. Such was formally acknowledged when R. 'Fortune' immediately secured a First Class Certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society when exhibited later that same month. Indeed, as Jane Brown writes in *Tales of the Rose Tree* (Harper Collins, 2004), the cross 'was thought the finest hybrid produced by that date' and is 'the floral equivalent of a painting by Augustus John or Stanley Spencer, a plant of museum quality.'

At Exbury, the various named clones selected from the germination - each and every seedling of which was grown on until it bloomed (as was Lionel's practice with all his crosses, those plants not meeting his exacting standards then ruthlessly culled and soon fuel for the bonfire) - are today scattered throughout the grounds, apart from in the Winter Garden, where they are gathered together in groups and guilds, tree-like and spectacular in bloom, drawing devotees from far and wide. As Edmund de Rothschild, Lionel's eldest son, details in an article titled *The Living Garden* (*Journal American Rhododendron Society,* Volume 43, Number 4):

> 'We then come to the banks of Rhododendron 'Fortune', *R. falconeri* x *R. sinogrande*. These form huge trusses. It is not often that they all flower together but during the time I have been in charge at Exbury, which is really since 1947, they have only flowered superbly twice. The first time there was a frost and the second time it was a magnificent sight. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother has been many times to Exbury, so on May 1st, 1987 she came to lunch with us on a private visit as she was told about the fantastic flowering of these splendid rhododendrons. As she arrived she said, "Am I too early?" I was able to say, "No, Your Majesty, they are perfect;" and on May 10th, Her Majesty the Queen came on a similar visit and said "Am I too late?" I was able to say, "No, Your Majesty, they are as perfect as when Her Majesty your mother came 10 days ago!" She remarked that the public also in the garden on that day seemed so surprised at seeing her doing the same as them, namely sightseeing.'

And Jane Brown even admits to falling to her knees before the same stand (*Tales of the Rose Tree,* page 3).

For like all the very best rhododendron hybrids, 'Fortune' outshines both its highly illustrious parents:

The habit is magisterial, a single trunk or multiple stems reaching skyward for 8m or more, mature specimens enormous domes or towers, especially along the west coast where rainfall is prodigious. The leaves are equally gargantuan, covered in a glaucous bloom when they first unfurl, becoming dark green and bullate above as in *R. sinogrande,* but with the felted, fawn-coloured indumentum of *R. falconeri* below. They are obovate-elliptic in shape and attain 42cm in length in southern gardens, the blades extending even more where elevated humidity levels allow and taking fully two years to mature. Once plants are of an age where flowering begins, specimens soon adopt the three-year cycle common to all the large-leaved rhododendrons, a welter of bloom followed by two lean seasons where the shrub is building up its resources for the next spectacular display. And every so often, when the perfect set of circumstances coalesce, that pageant becomes an almost wanton extravaganza with huge honey-golden globes bedecking the tips of each and every branch. And an individual truss may attain 23cm in height and be composed of between 25 and 30 ventricose-campanulate bells.

The corollas of the FCC clone are pure primrose-yellow, each bearing a small crimson blotch at the very base of the throat.

Those of the AM-awarded 'Churchill' - introduced in 1971 and named for the greatest Englishman who ever lived - creamy-yellow with a deeper toned blotch.

Other clones include 'Annapolis Royal' - pale greenish-yellow, faintly striped purplish-red when newly open - named for the once capital city of Nova Scotia; 'Charles' - an honorific for the-then Prince of Wales, now King Charles III - pale greenish-yellow with a vivid purplish-red blotch; and 'Stanley' - pale yellow-green, blotched purplish-red and with pink flushed lobe margins - the epithet borrowed from the capital of the Falkland Islands. All were introduced in the early 1980s and there are several others, labelled but so far unregistered, growing in the Exbury woodland: 'Fortune Montreal', 'Fortune Ottawa' and 'Fortune Sandringham' to list but three, the latter named by Queen Elizabeth on one of her many private visits to the gardens.

The hardiness of the hybrids matches that of their parents, mature plants coping with occasional mid-winter overnight lows down to -15ºC, but succumbing if temperatures fall lower than that, especially over a prolonged period, as was vividly demonstrated in Kent during the Continental cold spell the county experienced in 1984-85. Shelter for the leaves is also essential as their second-year development will be impaired if hit by more than a degree or two of frost and the petioles will snap if the blades are subjected to wildly gusting winds.

Grafted plants are occasionally available from the few specialist nurseries that are still in business, these, as you would expect, commanding commensurately high prices. Selfed seedlings - even if hand pollinated - should be avoided like the plague, because they will never come true and the flowers will be a disappointment a decade or more after planting. But the real thing, a vegetatively-propagated plant of 'Churchill' or the 'Fortune' FCC clone, set in a snug haven on the west coast but with room to become a colossus, will literally rock your world.



R. 'Fortune' FCC 1938



R. 'Fortune' FCC 1938

R. ‘Fortune’



R. ‘Churchill’ AM 1971



R. ‘Fortune Montreal’



R. ‘Stanley’

R. ‘Francis Hanger’ AM 1950

R. 'Fusilier'



R. ‘Fusilier’ AM 1938



R. ‘Fusilier’ FCC 1942

R. ‘Fusilier’

elliottii x *griersonianum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H4-5 May-June 6m x 4m

One of the aims of Lionel de Rothschild’s rhododendron breeding programme at Exbury was to create hybrids with pure flower colours that were completely devoid of any undertone, top-of-the-list and one of his life’s missions being a red without the slightest hint of any blue, purple or mauve. And in ‘Fusilier’, his *elliottii* x *griersonianum* pairing, a major step forward was achieved. That he also created one of the most beautiful woodland hybrids per se is a bonus still enjoyed by rhodophiles and garden visitors worldwide to this day.

The shrub is tree-like in its habit, open and airy in its comportment.

Mid green leaves, narrowly elliptic in shape and up to 18cm long, are clustered at the branch tips and held for two years, a few for three, swaddled in a brown tomentum when they first extend.

Flowering is usually prolific, beginning at a young age, the large, flat-topped trusses holding around ten corollas in a loose array.

Each is tubular-funnel-shaped, 7.5cm across at the mouth, fleshy, with a ring of five nectar pouches at the base of the throat, and their colour is a brilliant orange-red through soft scarlet, heavily spotted darker on all the lobes.

Glandular pedicels and red-tinged petioles complete the picture.

Unfortunately, and despite the strident and manly connotations of its military epithet, ‘Fusilier’ is a child of tender parents, so in the UK is restricted to the mildest planting sites along the west coast or those in the south where winter temperatures do not fall below -12ºC. Bereft of this negative, its fabulous blooms would be lighting-up each and every collection of rhododendrons across the length and breadth of the country - they really are that good.

One other annoyance also applies: the various clones in commerce.

Both the FCC and AM plants are slightly different, Exbury having shown the latter in 1938, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Bolitho of Trengwainton, Penzance, the former in 1942. And because their creator was generous in distributing seedlings amongst his friends, one or two of these are also likely to be in circulation. So buyers beware.

R. ‘Fusilier’

R. 'Gaul'
'Shilsonii' x *elliottii*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H4-5 April-early May 5m x 7m

Named Forms:
Gaul (deep ruby red)
Gaul Mastodon (deeper red).

'Gaul' is an advanced staging post on Lionel de Rothschild's quest to create the perfect red rhododendron with no undertone to the corolla colour, his choice of parents this time taking the pollen from *R. elliottii* and placing it on the stigma of Richard Gill's award-winning blood red *thomsonii* x *barbatum* cross 'Shilsonii'. And the plant he created is simply outstanding, bequeathed with fine foliage, and on mature specimens, generously bedecked with large, flamboyant, deep red globes.

The habit is upright and tree-like, though the dome is wider spreading than it is tall, the branches sturdy and with copper-coloured bark. Leaves are broadly ovate in outline and sometimes convex in profile, dark green in hue and matt, carried for just one year, but the whorl of blades at each branch tip is easily sufficient to provide an adequate cloak across the framework. The dense flower trusses are composed of around twenty tubular-funnel-shaped corollas, individually small, just 4.5cm long by 5cm wide, but the whole impressively large, especially when hundreds of globes cover an older plant. Their colour is a pure, deep ruby-red, with all the lobes liberally decorated with a spray of darker speckles - though these are not overbearing - the corollas waxy and not spoilt by rain. A cupular, colour-matched calyx completes the picture.

Yet reflective of many of the Rothschild reds, hardiness is a drawback, the shelter of a woodland glade essential and although when full-grown, plants will come through a short mid-winter dip down to around -15ºC, if the UK's maritime climate is up to its usual tricks, hard spring and autumn frosts can prove deadly to youngsters and cause branch dieback in adult specimens. Southern and west coast gardens are therefore more likely to provide the mild conditions required for long-term success.

Dappled shade in the south is also essential, but if light levels are reduced too much - by the canopy closing in overhead, for instance - leggy growth will result. To a degree this can be mitigated by pinching the terminal growth buds or by later recourse to the secateurs, but such practices are really just a sticking-plaster solution to a bad planting position.

A second clone, 'Gaul Mastodon', with 'richer' deep red flowers, has also been introduced.


R. 'Gaul' AM 1939

R. ‘Gaul’ AM 1939

R. ‘General Sir John Du Cane’

R. ‘Gibraltar’

R. ‘Gibraltar Bastion’ AM 1996

R. ‘Gipsy King’

R. ‘Goblin’ AM 1939

R. ‘Golden Dream’

R. ‘Golden Dream’

R. ‘Golden Horn’ AM 1945

R. ‘Grenadier’ FCC 1943

R. ‘Grenadier’

‘Moser's Maroon’ x *elliottii*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 May-June 6m x 4m

‘In colour, again like most beginners, Lionel’s first inclinations were towards the red shades. His object in breeding in this colour range was to produce a pure red, devoid of any blue infusion.’

‘What he disliked - as many rosarians also do - was a red with a blue undertone, which often becomes an overtone as the flower ages. He accordingly began to breed out this infusion and did so with complete success. For this, among other varieties, he repeatedly used ‘Moser’s Maroon’ as soon as it was available, valuing it on three scores: for its hardiness; for prolonging the rhododendron season; and for giving profundity of tone in the red sector’.

Those two quotes come from *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* written by C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, which was first published by Cassell in 1967. The authors go on to cite Lionel’s *meddianum* x ‘Moser’s Maroon’ cross R. ‘Queen of Hearts’ as ‘perhaps his highest achievement in red’ and that may indeed be so, although other, equally respected doyens, would put forward the hybrid featured here: ‘Grenadier’.

Like many of the tall growing, red-flowering Rothschild crosses, hardiness is not this hybrid’s strong suit, though it is a mite tougher than ‘Fusilier’ for instance. Plants will survive winter lows down to -15ºC without damage providing that the new shoots have fully hardened, but because that growth begins relatively late in the season, an early autumn frost can wreak havoc. Moreover, both the flowers and the foliage require a spot in at least dappled shade for them to be at their best - an even denser patina in the southern counties - which further extends the time required for the branchlets to ripen. It also exacerbates an already leggy habit. Yet where mild conditions prevail, along the west coast, as well as in the south, ‘Grenadier’ will light up the woodland with its fabulous blood-red globes for much of May and June, with a plant once photographed at Arduaine Gardens in Argyle, Scotland, carrying the flowering season on into July.

‘Grenadier’ displays around a dozen, large, funnel-campanulate corollas in each of its trusses, the trumpets of a waxy substance and some 9cm across when fully expanded. A ring of five small nectar pouches will be found at the base of the throat and a spray of dark, red-black speckles observed on the dorsal lobes, these not quite at the visual disfigurement levels of ‘Kiev’ or ‘Kilimanjaro’, but a clear distraction. The leaves are dark or mid green in tone, elliptic in shape, flat or convex in profile and up to 20cm long.

Regrettably, as with many of the hybrids distributed from Exbury, a number of clones have been released onto the market, these slightly inferior to the FCC-awarded plant, so prospective purchasers should check on which clone is being offered for sale before swiping their debit card.



R. ‘Grenadier’ FCC 1943

R. ‘Grenadier’ FCC 1943

R. ‘Grenadine’ AM 1956 & FCC 1982

R. ‘Grisette’

R. ‘Grosclaude’ AM 1945

R. ‘Grosclaude’

haematodes x *facetum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 Mid May-early June 3m x 4m

Lionel de Rothschild’s ‘Grosclaude’ is the result of a *haematodes* x *facetum* pairing that was genetically predestined to have red flowers from the get-go, as well as indumented foliage. While superficially similar to the various ‘May Day’ clones, it flowers two to three weeks later than those Werrington Park and Bodnant *R. griersonianum* hybrids, with the blooms often extending their presence into early June. These are held in a loose, often slightly pendulous truss of between six and twelve tubular-campanulate corollas, individually around 5.5cm in length, flaring at the mouth to 6.5cm wide, fleshy in texture, glossy, and a glowing blood red in tone. The petals are moderately speckled brownish-black and have margins that are somewhat wavy. A large, irregular calyx, with lobes coloured to match the corolla and which are sometimes close to 3cm in length, completes the picture, clamping the blooms to their pedicels.

Dark green obovate-lanceolate-shaped leaves provide the perfect foil and enhance the hue of the flowers:

Each may be up to 11cm long and 4cm wide, with slightly recurved margins. Their lower surface is covered with a thick, brown tomentum that turns a darker, brownish-orange with age. Held on the bush for two years, the blades adequately cloak a young plant until it ascends beyond 1.5m or so in height, after which more and more of the supporting framework will be in evidence, but close to two decades will be required before this milestone is achieved unless set in too much shade. If left unchecked, a shrub around 3m high by 4m or so in width will be the ultimate result, across which a bevy of flower buds will open each year, but usually not in quantities sufficient to form an unbroken sheet of colour.

Hardiness is insufficient for many colder gardens along the east coast and inland despite the -15ºC winter rating, with the owners of Glendoick for instance - a woodland garden located a few miles to the east of Perth in Scotland - reporting that ‘Grosclaude’ regularly suffered from bark split due to late spring frosts (Peter and Kenneth Cox, T*he Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* Batsford, 1988). The two authors also confirm that a number of clones are in circulation and that ‘some are hardier than others’.

‘Grosclaude’ is entry 827 in Lionel de Rothschild’s Exbury stud book; was introduced in 1941; and received an Award of Merit from the RHS in 1945. As to the chosen epithet, if an honorific, the likely contenders could include: the Swiss artist Louis-Amié Grosclaude (1784-1869), who was commissioned to paint a portrait of N. M. Rothschild (1777-1836) in the early 1800s; a professor from Geneva, another L. A. Grosclaude, who in April 1900 formulated the Invariable Calendar; Maurice Grosclaude, who was a middle-distance runner and competed for France in the 1924 Olympic Games; or Pierre Grosclaude, writer, President of the Society of French Poets between 1946 and 1952, and later author of a highly-rated biography on Guillaume-Chrétien de Lamoignon de Malesherbes.

Regrettably, and despite a page 1 Google search listing, Gérald Grosclaude, an unmarried confectioner born in 1887, who drowned when the Titanic sank in 1912, is probably not being gifted botanic posterity, however deserving the merits of his case for such an honour might be.



R. ‘Grosclaude’ AM 1945



R. ‘Halcyone’

R. ‘Halcyone’
souliei x ‘Lady Bessborough’
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 Late May 4m x 2.5m

Named Forms:
Halcyone (pink).
Perdita AM 1948 (paler pink, fading to cream).

A very fine *R. souliei* hybrid where the only influence of the pollen parent, Lionel de Rothschild’s own ‘Lady Bessborough’ cross, appears to be in the ease of cultivation, for the corollas, leaves and habit are mirrored in any number of clones of the seed parent species. The flowers are carried in an open, flat-topped truss of around seven bowl-shaped corollas, each 9cm across at the mouth, rosy-pink in bud, white flushed pink when fully expanded, heavily lined and speckled darker pink.

Introduced in 1940, a paler clone has also been distributed under the same epithet.

A third selection - R. ‘Perdita’ - named by Edmund de Rothschild and introduced in 1948, has eight corollas in the truss, these saucer-shaped, 5.5cm long by 7.5cm across, and paler pink in hue, fading-out to a creamy-white and displaying a few claret-coloured spots at the base of the dorsal lobes. This clone garnered an Award of Merit from the RHS when first exhibited.

Alan Hardy repeated the combination at Sandling Park, Kent, in the mid-1960s, securing an AM in 1988 for his ‘Pink Halcyon’, though it is a selection from a reverse pairing, also made at the same garden some years earlier, which is usually associated with the two Exbury hybrids. Named ‘Sandling’ and introduced in 1965, its open-funnel-shaped rhodamine-pink corollas are also AM-invested, with ‘Lady Bessborough’ clearly influencing not only the flowers, but the leaf shape - oblanceolate rather than elliptic - and the plant’s habit. Genetically, this hybrid has a completely different set of chloroplast chromosomes and mitochondria to the other three plants as such are the exclusive gift of the seed parent, so to group ‘Sandling’ with them in the same pride would be wrong.

R. ‘Halcyone’

R. ‘Perdita’ AM 1948

R. ‘Perdita’ AM 1948

R. ‘Hawk’ AM 1949

R. ‘Hawk’ AM 1949

R. 'Hawk'

wardii x 'Lady Bessborough'

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6 Late April-May 5m x 3m

Named Forms:

Amour (pure pale yellow).
Beaulieu Hawk (pale yellow).
Crest FCC 1953 (primrose-yellow).
Hawk AM 1949 (yellow).
Hawk Kestrel (rich yellow).
Hawk Merlin (deep yellow).
Jervis Bay AM 1951 (primrose-yellow, crimson blotch).

The 'Hawk' pride of yellow-flowering hybrids was once considered the best proponents of this tone available in a rhododendron and even though newer crosses have supplanted the hue, for sheer beauty and poise, the flowers are still in a league of their own, especially those of the FCC-awarded 'Crest'.

The pairing - *wardii* x 'Lady Bessborough' - was made twice by Lionel de Rothschild in the 1930s and is first entered as LR 708 in the Exbury studbook, with the duplicate crossing listed 'one hundred hybridisations later on, at 804' (*Rhododendrons at Exbury,* by Peter N. Barber, published within *The Rhododendron and Camellia Year Book 1970*). The pollen provider was one of L de R's own crosses, a *discolor* x *campylocarpum* combination that he (and subsequently many other hybridisers) used frequently in their machinations. The clone of *R. wardii* that matured the first set of capsules was grown from seed collected near Muli, in southwestern Sichuan, by Frank Kingdon-Ward in 1921, under the field number 4170. This plant had secured Lionel an Award of Merit from the RHS in May 1931 and had bright yellow flowers, flushed green, with no blotch. Interestingly, that same year - indeed on the very same day, May 19th - another of his wardii specimens secured its own AM:

Shown as *R. litiense,* which has now been made synonymous under the botanically earlier-described *R. wardii,* and likely grown from seed collected by George Forrest, this plant too displayed unmarked yellow flowers.

Given that pure colour was one of L de R's breeding goals and the only substantial difference between the two then-specific species was leaf shape - at the extremes, oblong for *R. litiense,* broadly ovate or near orbicular for *R. wardii* - and a waxy glaucous underside to the foliage of *R. litiense* (instead of simple pale green), dabbing both plants with 'Lady Bessborough' pollen would appear to have been a no-brainer. Yet no entry in the Exbury studbook reflects such a match. But even so, keep that possibility in mind.

Lionel died in January 1942, so may not have seen any of his *wardii* x 'Lady Bessborough' clones flower. The revised edition of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (Cassell, 1979, page 30) indicates this to be the case for 'Hawk', which first bloomed in 1949, but *Bean's Trees & Shrubs* reports that many of the juvenile plants began to flower around 1940, which - to confuse matters even further - is the date given in the Second Edition of the *IRRC* for their conception. Equally, the authors of the first mentioned tome muddy the waters by telling us that after germination:

> 'Lionel required that every seedling should be grown on to flowering stage, however small or late. "Weeds grow fastest" he would say. Indeed, the celebrated 'Hawk' is said to have come from the smallest seedling in a pan of which he gave the rest away'.

This homily appears on page 29 of their work and is seemingly incompatible with the statement made just seven paragraphs later and reported above. Yet Phillips and Barber also detail Lionel giving 'some clones of the celebrated Hawk grex' to King George VI, 'hybrids and seedlings, some of which subsequently won high awards under the skilful cultivation of Sir Eric Savill' (*ibid.* page 19).

The 'Hawk' pride epithet, chosen by Lionel's eldest son, Edmund, who had inherited the estate after his father's death, borrows one of the Admiralty's designations for Exbury House, which they used during World War II, commandeering the property in order to accommodate the naval planning staff responsible for organising the D-Day landings.

Exhibited from Windsor, the clone that may or may not have flowered for the first time in 1949 came from the initial *wardii* x 'Lady Bessborough' pairing. Technically, the epithet should be 'Exbury Hawk', though it is now universally just 'Hawk', with the former appellation relegated to synonym status in the *IRRC.* Its corollas are apricot in bud, opening to a pale greenish-yellow, and each is funnel-shaped, usually with 5 deeply emarginate lobes, some 5cm long by 6.5cm across. They are carried in a loose, flat-topped truss of around 10 blooms.

'Hawk' immediately scooped an Award of Merit for the Crown Commissioners, however, it should be noted that the plants distributed under this epithet have a few small streaks of crimson at the base of the dorsal lobe, which can sometimes coalesce into a blotch, and according to Bean may not be the true award clone.

'Jervis Bay' was the next clone to bloom, its corollas more broadly funnel-shaped, a touch larger, and with slightly wavy lobe margins. They are primrose-yellow in hue. Here the crimson streaking is more pronounced, a distinct blotch that sometimes separates-out into two rays.

The epithet maintains the naval connection and the plant received an AM in 1951.

Next up, in 1953, was 'Crest', and this caused a sensation. For the corollas were widely-funnel-shaped, heavily textured and long lasting; had seven lobes rather than five or six, these rounded at the apex; and were carried in globular trusses of twelve, the placement of each shallow trumpet within the whole perfect. Their hue, moreover, is a clear primrose-yellow, shading deeper towards the centre. And they are unmarked, except for the merest hint of streaking at the very base of the throat.

The members of the RHS floral committee instantly deemed the plant worthy of a First Class Certificate, but some questioned if it really was a 'Hawk'.

The authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, give a partial answer:

> 'It ensued from Lionel de Rothschild's second cross, when perhaps he used a different wardii. This might account for the different floral style, build and quality.'

This of course matches with the account of 'Crest' given by Edmund de Rothschild in his *"Five Favourite Rhododendrons"* entry for a symposium collation published in *The Rhododendron and Camellia Year Book 1956:*

> 'Perhaps the finest yellow so far raised, when this was shown at Vincent Square three years ago it was such an improvement on the other varieties of 'Hawk' that it was suggested by some members of the Rhododendron Committee that it was not a 'Hawk'. In point of fact there was no doubt of it being a 'Hawk', but what was not generally known was that my father, the late Lionel de Rothschild, made the cross twice and it is thought that he used a different *R. wardii* on the second hybridisation. This might account for the completely different make up of the flowers.'

Indeed.

Still holding that *litiense* thought?

Despite neither of the two quotes above mentioning such?

Or equally, Exbury never registering a cross with a *litiense* x 'Lady Bessborough' parentage? As would have been required, because the species still retained its specific status right through the 1950s, indeed all the way up until 1982.

Good.

So, the question has to be: would Lionel not have considered making that second pairing with his other AM-awarded plant?

In the *Trees & Shrubs* entry for 'Crest', Kew's preeminent curator - or rather the team of experts contracted to keep subsequent editions of his masterpiece up-to-date (for he died in 1947 having never seen the hybrid in flower) - reports that in this case the seed parent 'has asserted itself over the other two parents: *R. campylocarpum* with its red eye, and *R. discolor,* which usually imparts a streaked throat to its offspring'.

Kingdon-Ward's 4170 seedling of *R. wardii* had failed to do this with the first batch of seedlings, so perhaps the different clone used was actually not *R. wardii,* but *R. litiense* as theorised?

Documentary evidence is lacking, providing confirmation only that 'Crest' did indeed emerge from the second set of seedlings, and one suspects that even modern-day geneticists might have a hard time delineating what was bred with what. One thing that is clear however: the seven lobes found on the 'Crest' corolla are part of the inheritance from *R. discolor*.

All members of the 'Hawk' pride are woodland rhododendrons, tree-like and with upright habits. Their foliage is retained for just one year, falling soon after the new growth begins to expand, so the framework of ascending branches found on a mature specimen can often be left bare, the shrub burdened with a decidedly sparse appearance when devoid of bloom. Those leaves are elliptic, oblong-elliptic or oblong-ovate in shape and up to 11.5cm long by 6.5cm wide - the figures quoted, being the maxima given for 'Crest' - dark green in tone, matt or shiny. 'Hawk' and 'Jervis Bay' have been rated hardy down to -15ºC, 'Crest' to -21ºC, with the latter at Exbury 'unaffected by frost or wind' according to Messrs Phillips and Barber. Young plants will of course require a touch more cosseting, and take quite a few years to begin budding-up, but will then flower freely, if not with abandon, unless grown in too much shade.

A word of warning:

Propagation via tissue culture has led to the 'Crest' clone at least being widely available, with plants even stocked by the larger garden centres. Sadly however, the initial batch of plantlets was grown from a shoot tip that had not come from the FCC plant, although this 'oversight' has since been corrected. Many rhodophiles of course will insist that their plants are produced from rooted cuttings or scions grafted onto suitable understocks, for the perceived and real negatives now associated with micro-propagated liners in their view, outweigh their lower cost (see *The Cultivation of Rhododendrons,* by Peter Cox, published by Batsford in 1993).

In addition to the named forms set out above, three other clones have been registered: 'Hawk Buzzard' was listed in 1989 and is presumed to be a selection from the Rothschild pairing; 'Hawk Falcon' was introduced by the Reuthe nursery in the 1960s and is described as "a good yellow" and has L de R credited as the hybridiser; and pre-1958, 'Windsor Hawk' was logged, with no hybridiser credit given. The latter two entries do however confirm a *wardii* x 'Lady Bessborough' parentage.



R. 'Jervis Bay' AM 1951

R. ‘Crest’ FCC 1953

R. ‘Crest’ FCC 1953

R. ‘Hesperides’ AM 1988


R. ‘Ibex’ AM 1948


R. ‘Ibex’ AM 1948


R. ‘Ibex’ AM 1948


R. ‘Icarus’ AM 1947

R. ‘Icarus’
‘A. Gilbert’ x *herpesticum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 Late May 1.6m x 2m

Named Forms:
Icarus AM 1947 (biscuit, shaded rose).
Organdie AM 1947 (lemon-yellow, margined rose).

One of the few crosses made by Lionel de Rothschild that has bi-coloured flowers, ‘Icarus’ and sister seedling ‘Organdie’ were both introduced and exhibited by his eldest son, Edmund, in 1947, the pair both scooping AM awards from the RHS. The former has six or seven-lobed corollas that are deep rose-pink in bud, opening biscuit, shaded rose, with a hint of orange; the latter, five-lobed campanulate bells, pale lemon-yellow, with rose tints around the lobe margins and at the base of the throat. The corollas are individually around 5cm long by 6.5cm wide, and carried in a flat-topped truss of eight.

Each selection is low growing and compact, following the pollen parent species rather than the seed parent hybrid, *R. dichroanthum* ssp. *herpesticum* var. *herpesticum* rarely attaining a height of more than 0.6m, although its var. *scyphocalyx* sister can achieve 2.5m. Yet the male pigmentation genes are clearly enhancing the usually fleeting pink tint found at the lobe margins of ‘A. Gilbert’.

Matt green, oblong-lanceolate leaves to 10cm long - slightly smaller on ‘Organdie’ - are only held for two years, exposing much of branch framework to view, but whereas taller shrubs would appear leggy in consequence, here the effect is in no way detrimental.

The pedicels of both named clones are glandular: those on ‘Icarus’, often flushed brownish-red; ‘Organdie’ remaining pale green.

Greek mythology is the likely source of one of the epithets, Icarus’s DIY wings melting in the heat of the sun and ignominiously ending his escape from Crete, while the other - more usually spelt Organdy - is a form of cotton cloth that has a very sheer and crisp finish.

R. ‘Organdie’ AM 1947

R. ‘Idealist’ AM 1945

R. 'Idealist'
wardii x 'Exbury Naomi'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 Mid April-May 3m x 3m

The entry for 'Idealist' in *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, Cassell, 1967) describes the shrub as 'one of the most beautiful rhododendrons ever raised' and without a shadow of a doubt that is certainly the case. The corolla colour, while pale, is pure; the foliage, a perfect foil for the sublimely balanced flower truss; and the habit, dignified and assured, without a trace of flamboyance. That the cross has so far only garnered an Award of Merit is an inexcusable oversight - subtle allure likely trampled by overblown exuberance in the eyes of the floral committee members.

'Idealist' is a *wardii* x 'Exbury Naomi' pairing, LR 903 in the stud book, the only registered rhododendron with such a parentage as 'Falkner Allison' and 'Tosca' are from reverse matings - so, 'Exbury Naomi' x *wardii* (made respectively and separately by Edmund de Rothschild and Francis Hanger) - while 'Vienna' comes from a 'Naomi' x *wardii* match. And despite numerous authors suggesting the cross was repeated at Exbury in the 1950s, or grouping 'Idealist' together with the other three hybrids, the geneticists will all collectively shake their heads from side to side and explain that the organelles are completely different, the exclusive gift of the female parent and that the distinct and dissimilar mitochondria and chloroplast cells - amongst a host of others - directly influence character differences in the plants concerned. For instance, Peter and Kenneth Cox rightly describe 'Vienna' as an inferior clone in their *Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids* (Batsford, 1988). It is. And that is partly down to the mitochondria that power that hybrid's cells not being as efficient as those of 'Idealist'. This is because they are the gift of *R. griffithianum* - via 'Kewense', though 'Aurora' to 'Naomi' - not the largesse of *R. wardii.* And as the oft-made comparison between R. 'Kewense' and R. 'Loderi' makes abundantly clear, they come from a poor form of that species as well.

It was the greenish-yellow-flowering AM-winning form of *R. wardii* that provided the organelles for 'Idealist'. Lionel had grown the plant from Frank Kingdon-Ward's 4170 collection, made near Muli in southwestern Sichuan in 1921, and the inheritance is immediately apparent in the habit, as well as the flowers. The hybrid's constitution is vigorous, yet it rarely tops 3m in height and develops into a neat and impeccably proportioned dome formed from an upright-ascending framework of stout branches. The leaves are glossy green, oblong-elliptic in shape, to around 15cm in length, connected to the stems by purple petioles, a distant echo from *R. fortunei*. The flowers are coral-pink in bud, this tone present as a distinct flush when the corollas first open, but soon completely submerged beneath a clear greenish-yellow, the hue pristine across the bowl except for two small crimson rays at the base of the dorsal lobe. The corollas are widely-campanulate, again reflective of *R. wardii,* held on long, erect pedicels, ten to twelve per perfectly formed truss, individual funnels displaying five through seven lobes, an inconsistency apparent even within the same inflorescence.

The hybrid is hardy down to -18ºC, so is sufficiently robust to cope with all but the coldest, inland gardens, but the blooms, produced in profusion on mature specimens, require a dappling of shade to avoid being bleached by the sun, though opening from mid April onwards, they could also be hit by a late frost if set outwith the protection of a sheltered woodland.

Foregoing any one-upmanship in superlatives, 'Idealist' is simply one of the most outstanding creations in Lionel de Rothschild's legacy of rhododendron hybrids.


R. 'Idealist' AM 1945

R. ‘Iliad’ AM 1949

R. ‘Impi’ AM 1945

R. ‘Inamorata’ AM 1950

R. ‘Inchmery’

R. ‘Indiana’

R. ‘Indomitable’



R. ‘Intrepid’ AM 2005

R. 'Intrepid'

'Beau Brummel' x *kyawii*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H4-5 Late June-July 5m x 4m

A virtually unknown, late-flowering red hybrid created by Lionel de Rothschild in the late 1930s or very early 1940s after his 1934 'Essex Scarlet' x *facetum* pairing began flowering around 1938. That cross, the award-winning 'Beau Brummell', was daubed with pollen from *R. kyawii* - the latter's consensus phonetic pronunciation apparently being 'cho-ee-eye', which can be broken down as the Chinese lass Harry Potter first kissed, then an 'E', with a single peeper in conclusion. And the result? An open, yet sturdy shrub, which lights up the hillside glade where it is planted at Muncaster for much of July, though bloom time may be earlier elsewhere, because it is given as May-June in both the *IRRC* and *The Rothschild Rhododendrons*.

R. 'Intrepid' is tall and wide spreading, the framework airy. It has large, broad and glossy-green leaves, elliptically shaped with a convex profile and distinct mucro at the apex. They are held for two years, with a few stretching into a third season, so the criss-cross of sturdy branches is far from bare.

The flowers are a pure rosy-red in tone, spotted darker on the dorsal lobes, individually funnel-shaped, with sixteen to twenty corollas combined in the tight, flat-topped to dome-shaped truss. Pedicel and calyx are also stained rosy-red.

At first glance, those corollas appear to be lacking any stamens, but a closer inspection will reveal a quintet present within each bloom. For they have amazingly short filaments, with the anthers barely exserted above the nectar pouches and only rarely peeking out of the throat. In contrast, the style is long and graceful, curving upward along its final third and flushed with a pigment to match its surrounds.

Regrettably, although the seed parent is hardy down to -21ºC, the pollen provider comes from quite low elevations in Upper Burma (Myanmar) and western Yunnan, this restricting 'Intrepid' to a placement in the UK's milder locales along the west coast and in its southern counties.



R. 'Intrepid' AM 2005



R. 'Intrepid' AM 2005

R. ‘Isis’

R. ‘Ispahan’

R. ‘Ivanhoe’ AM 1945

R. ‘Iviza’

R. ‘Jacques’

R. 'Jalisco'

'Lady Bessborough' x 'Dido'

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 Late May-June 3m x 3.5m

Named Forms:

Exbury Jalisco (dusky yellow, faint green undertone - unregistered).
Jalisco Eclipse AM 1948 (primrose yellow, blotched and speckled crimson).
Jalisco Elect AM 1948 & FCC 1987 (primrose yellow, lobes paler, spotted brownish-red).
Jalisco Emblem (pale yellow, blotched darker).
Jalisco Goshawk FCC 1954 (greenish-yellow, dorsal lobes darker and spotted crimson).
Jalisco Janet (yellow).
Jalisco Orange (orange?).
Jubilant AM 1966 (buttercup yellow, throat deeper, dorsal spotted green).
Lindberg (yellow).

Like many of the rhododendron hybrid prides, officially, there is no actual plant that can be associated with the 'Jalisco' epithet, for the appellation is a coverall for a set of nine award-winning selections from the 'Lady Bessborough' x 'Dido' cross, made by Lionel de Rothschild at Exbury in the late 1930s. That a whole troop of hybridisers have made their own pairings with this non-existent 'Jalisco' taxon - including many famous names who should have known better - is testament to how flawed the grex-group concept really was once exposed to basic human nature. And even the registered clones flaunt the rules: 'Jalisco Jubilant' and 'Jalisco Lindberg' respectively made synonyms of 'Jubilant' and 'Lindberg' in the 2004-published two-volume Second Edition of the RHS *International Rhododendron Register and Checklist* instead of the reverse; 'Exbury Jalisco' accepted when the pride designation should precede the garden of origin. Regrettably - like much of accepted botanical nomenclature with its host of inbuilt mistakes frozen in concrete and unable to be put right because of dogma - the Registrar's hands are, of course, decidedly tied by the whims of history.

Thankfully, the plants themselves are cracking, and among Lionel de Rothschild's finest creations, the pairing recorded as LR 833 in the Exbury studbook.

Basically dome-like in form, from 2.5 to 3m high and a little more in width, the branches are upright-ascending, the structure fairly open despite a whorl of quite large matt green leaves at the tip of each branchlet. Foliage shape and size varies between the selections: 16.5cm long by 6.5cm wide and narrowly elliptic for 'Jalisco Eclipse'; obovate and 15cm by 5cm for 'Jalisco Elect'; and ellipses just 12.5 by 5cm for 'Jubilant'.

The flower trusses average between 7 and 10 blooms each, are flat-topped and open, sometimes pendulous, with only 'Jubilant' clustering 12 to 14 corollas into a more tightly packed globe. Their profile is funnel-campanulate, sometimes widely so, or tubular-funnel-shaped, with seven lobes, between 6.5 and 9.5cm across at the mouth when fully expanded, though the acknowledged star of the group, the FCC-awarded 'Jalisco Goshawk', has blooms that stretch to 12cm between opposite lobe tips. Of waxy substance, the trumpets vary between primrose and buttercup-yellow, some clones with tints of pink, the dorsal lobes often spotted or speckled crimson, and similarly blotched at the base of the tube.

Red-flushed pedicels support the flowers of two of the named selections.

King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (later, The Queen Mother), along with their two daughters, were frequent visitors to Exbury in the 1930s and they would often depart with gifts of hybrids or seedlings. A tray of 'Jalisco' juveniles thus arrived at Windsor and was placed in the care of Sir Eric Savill and later overseen by Hope Findlay, amongst these were the clones that later would be named 'Eclipse', 'Elect' and 'Goshawk'.

Cultivation is usually without problem despite a couple of the selections being prone to powdery mildew infection. Hardiness is sufficient for the mildest sites along the east coast, although some mature specimens in Kent are known to have succumbed in the hard winter of 1984-85 and replacement plants may have suffered a similar fate in more recent times. A modicum of shade in southern gardens will preserve the depth of the corolla colour, though too much will adversely effect the usually compact habit, while a sheltered position in full sun will assure prodigious flower bud production in northwestern locales such as Cumbria and Argyll.

The pride epithet appears to have been borrowed from a state in west-central Mexico, on that country's Pacific coast, as despite 54,100,000 possible results being available in just 0.6 seconds after clicking the mouse on a Google search, the multitude of restaurants boasting authentic refried cuisine, along with a recently-formed drugs cartel, have been discounted.



R. 'Jalisco Eclipse' AM 1948

R. ‘Jalisco Elect’ AM 1948 & FCC 1987



R. ‘Jalisco Elect’ AM 1948 & FCC 1987

R. ‘Jalisco Goshawk’ FCC 1954

R. ‘Jalisco Goshawk’ FCC 1954

R. ‘Jalisco Janet’

R. ‘Jubilant’ AM 1966

R. ‘Janet’ AM 1950

R. ‘Jason’ AM 1966

R. ‘Joanita’

R. ‘Joanita’

R. ‘Joanita’

lacteum x *caloxanthum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5-6 April 6m x 3m

Introduced in 1942, so most likely paired in the early to mid 1930s, ‘Joanita’ is a *lacteum* x *caloxanthum* combination that is often confused with ‘Costa del Sol’, another of Lionel’s hybrids, but one which reverses the given parentage. Yet so alike are the pair - florally and in foliage, if not in habit - that even Exbury got the two mixed up in 1969 when presenting plants to the RHS Floral Committee, ‘Costa del Sol’ receiving the Award of Merit, but with a ‘Joanita’ label attached, although this was subsequently corrected. The authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* Messrs. Barber and Phillips, maintain that ‘the plants are quite different in flower and in habit of growth’, but distribution of the two to many UK rhododendron collections - at least as youngsters - would indicate that identity checks are still going awry. For only mature specimens can be differentiated on size, ‘Costa del Sol’ following *R. caloxanthum* in making a domed plant around 2 to 3m high, ‘Joanita’ soaring to 5m or more and matching the tree-like form of *R. lacteum*.

Matt green, elliptically-shaped and quite large leaves are the perfect foil for the flower trusses, which are pure green-gold in the best forms, but more often streaked or irregularly flushed with pinkish-red. That latter state, though not reported in the official descriptions, is certainly the case on the ground, even at Exbury, and a small crimson blotch will be found at the base of the dorsal lobe, this hue extending to encompass the five nectar pouches gathered around the bottom of the tube. Trusses can vary from seven campanulate bells to over twice that number, so can be loose and open, or form an open-centred, flat-topped cluster. ‘Joanita’ is also plagued by the same ‘difficult’ reputation of its seed parent, with some gardeners finding intensive care is needed to prevent an early demise, though clearly - as 6m-high specimens tend not to spring up overnight - other practitioners have either been lucky in their choice of planting site or prepared the ground more diligently.

A second quote from *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* must also be challenged: that ‘the parentage virtually guarantees yellow flowers’. Visitors wandering around Brentry Woodland at the Sir Harold Hillier Garden towards the end of April, might chance upon an orange-red form of ‘Joanita’. Labelled as such, it is a stunner. But the plant remains unregistered and its choice of pigmentation officially unacknowledged.



R. ‘Joanita’

R. ‘Joanita’ (Orange-Red Form)



R. ‘Jocelyne’ AM 1954 & FCC 1956

R. ‘Jocelyne’ AM 1954 & FCC 1956

R. ‘Josephine’

R. ‘Jutland’ AM 1947

R. ‘Karkov’ AM 1947

R. ‘Karkov’

griersonianum x ‘Red Admiral’

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H4-5 April 4m x 3m

The registered colour of R. ‘Karkov’ is carmine-rose, but as the photographs confirm, there is much more red in the tone than the official description implies, a not surprising state of affairs given that two out of the three species that comprise its lineage - *R. arboreum, R. griersonianum* and *R. thomsonii* – are somewhat noted for their crimson-hued blooms.

Lionel de Rothschild’s cross was introduced in 1947 to critical acclaim and the globular trusses of sixteen large, funnel-shaped corollas, immediately scored an Award of Merit from the RHS. Individually, the five lobes of each flower are liberally spotted darker, but the wash of speckles is muted, never becoming a distraction. The hybrid is also taller-growing than many texts report, often topping 3m in time, with a few specimens now approaching the 4m-mark in height, while the shrub’s framework is generally well-cloaked in mid-green narrowly-elliptic leaves, each blade around 15cm long with a thinly-plastered fawn indumentum below, though this is often shed by maturity.

Two negatives should be highlighted:

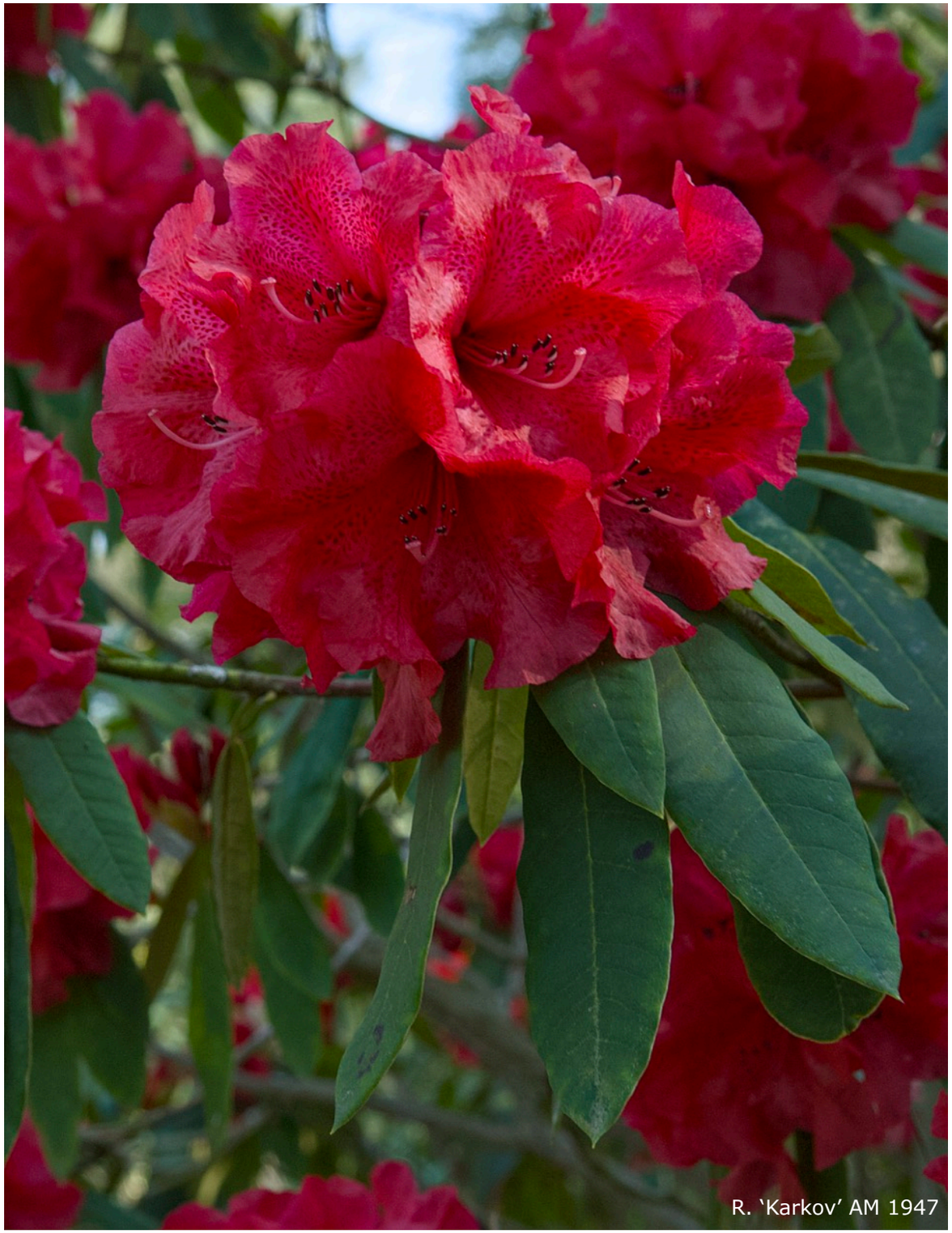
Leaf spot can sometimes disfigure the foliage, though this detriment is basically visual and often negligible, while hardiness levels have been inherited from the seed parent, so ‘Karkov’ will only succeed long-term when sited in gardens along the west coast or in sheltered woodland establishments in the south.

The ‘Karkov’ epithet is of course borrowed from a city in eastern Ukraine that is more usually spelt Kharkiv or Kharkov today. Virtually raised to the ground over the course of four battles in the Second World War between Nazi and Soviet forces, the city has recently returned to the headlines due to Russian-sponsored unrest in 2014 and President Putrid’s subsequent invasion of Ukraine in 2022 - oh, if the late Freddie Forsyth’s ‘Jackal’ was real and he could be persuaded to holiday in Moscow!

Two-hundred-and-fifty miles to the west of Kharkov, the Ukrainian capital Kiev (now, Kyiv), provided the appellation for another L de R cross, this with possibly the darkest red flowers found on any rhododendron hybrid, while a dormant volcano three-thousand-six-hundred miles directly south - Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, the highest mountain in Africa - supplied the moniker for another. Yet unlike ‘Karkov’, where the degree of black spotting on the flowers is not overly dominant although clearly present, the sooty pox on the flowers of ‘Kiev’ and ‘Kilimanjaro’ - inherited from *R. elliottii* - most certainly is, being not only excessive, but diverting. So while the blooms of ‘Kiev’ and ‘Kilimanjaro’ are undoubtedly marvellous from a distance - huge blood-red globes, luminous when backlit by the sun - viewed up-close, the blemish across their petals might best be described as ‘Merrickian’ with regard to the former, and certainly unprepossessing in the latter.

Another factor a prospective purchaser should consider is habit. ‘Kiev’ is decidedly leggy and lank, ‘Kilimanjaro’ poorly branched in addition, while ‘Karkov’, though upright and open, is usually more compact and bushier, producing better, rounded specimens.

This critique is echoed by the authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* who write that ‘Kiev’ is ‘effective only in woodland’ despite being ‘one of Edmund de Rothschild’s favourites’. Note too that the flower buds of ‘Kilimanjaro’ are erratic, with the Herculean trusses that carried-off an FCC in 1947 produced only when the previous season’s growth cycle has benefited from perfect conditions.



R. ‘Karkov’ AM 1947

R. ‘Kiev’ AM 1950

R. ‘Kilimanjaro’ FCC 1947



R. ‘Lady Bessborough’ FCC 1933

R. ‘Lady Bessborough’
discolor x *campylocarpum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 Late May-June 4m x 3m

Named Forms:
Belle (pale lemon).
Lady Bessborough FCC 1933 (creamy-white).
Montreal (deep cream or biscuit).
Ottawa (white).
Roberte FCC 1936 (rose-pink, speckled red).

The Exbury stud book indicates that the *discolor* x *campylocarpum* pairing that resulted in the five registrations of the ‘Lady Bessborough’ pride was Lionel de Rothschild’s one hundredth recorded pollination within the genus. As if to mark the significance of that event, the resulting offspring proved outstanding, with the first named selection from the group of seedlings now recognised as one of the finest of the Rothschild rhododendrons and used extensively in further matings by not only its progenitor, but also rhodophiles far and wide.

The quintet follow *R. discolor* in hardiness, as well as foliage and flower shape, with habit and height a compromise between the two parents, while the influence of *R. campylocarpum* is clearest in the pigmentation. Specimens bloom profusely from the end of May through into the first half of June, with the long-lasting funnel-campanulate corollas each 6cm long by up to 8.5cm across, six or seven-lobed with wavy-edged margins, and carried in large but loose trusses of around 10 trumpets. Cream or pink are the preponderant hues on opening, paling from darker toned buds.

The ‘Lady Bessborough’ epithet honours one of Mrs Lionel de Rothschild’s life-long friends, Roberte de Neuflize Ponsonby (1892-1979), Countess of Bessborough, whose husband Vere, the 9th Earl, served as Governor General of Canada between 1931 and 1935. The four other registrations - ‘Belle’, ‘Montreal’, ‘Ottawa’ and ‘Roberte’ - are clearly linked to that term in office or the lady herself.


R. ‘Lady Bessborough’ FCC 1933

R. ‘Montreal’

R. ‘Montreal’

R. ‘Ladybird’ AM 1933

R. ‘Lady Montague’ AM 1931

R. 'Leo' AM 1948 & FCC 1989

R. ‘Leo’

‘Britannia’ x *elliottii*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H6 Late May-June 6m x 4m

Named for Lionel’s youngest son, Leopold David de Rothschild (1927-2012), introduced in 1948 by his oldest son and heir, Edmund Leopold (1916-2009), it is likely that the blooms of ‘Leo’ were never seen by their creator, who had died, suddenly, in January 1942. And that is a shame. For not only are they scintillating when backlit - crimson-scarlet balls of flame - but they stand at the zenith of his breeding experiments to flower a red rhododendron without a blue undertone in the corolla pigmentation. And unlike ‘Fusilier’, ‘Grenadier’, ‘Karkov’, ‘Kiev’ and ‘Kilimanjaro’, this addition to the Rothschild canon is hardy enough to be cultivated in gardens across the whole of the UK. Better still, it has a much better deportment than its contemporaries. While best of all, it lacks the full-on rash of heavy black spots that up-close so disfigure the blooms of so many of his other dark reds.

Pollen from *R. elliottii* was paired with ‘Britannia’, the near ironclad hybrid from the Dutch nursery firm of C. B. van Nes & Sons that had been gifted an FCC from the RHS in 1937 and which Lionel had already used as a seed parent to fashion ‘Fandango’ (*R. haematodes* being the other half of that equation). In ‘Leo’, the combination resulted in a shrub with a fine upright then spreading habit that produced a stout framework of branches able to carry the extra weight of the flowers without succumbing to gravity - think ‘Queen of Hearts’. The leaves are large, elliptic in shape, dark green in colour above with a thin wash of indumentum below, each up to 20cm long by 9cm in width, and they are carried for three sometimes four years. Old specimens will reach the dimensions of a small tree, but the canopy overhead will remain densely filled with foliage and provide the perfect foil for the blooms. These cloak the shrub from late May into June, and are produced with abandon by mature plants.

Those corollas are campanulate in shape, 9cm across when fully expanded, of good substance and gathered together into a domed truss of up to twenty-five individuals. Their hue is bright crimson-scarlet with a modest, demure scattering of darker spots and speckles on the dorsal lobes, the style and stamens flushed reddish-pink.

‘Leo’ immediately won an Award of Merit from the RHS, but the FCC would take another four decades to be bestowed, finally being vouchsafed in 1989. Yet although highly rated throughout the rhododendron world, especially in the gardens of the Pacific Northwest and New Zealand, for some reason the hybrid has been overlooked in the UK. This could be due to the more tender nature and poorer habits of the other Exbury reds inadvertently tarnishing a shrub that can shrug-off lows down to -21ºC, or perhaps because even though it is tough enough to thrive at most sites, the foliage requires shelter from the wind and dappled shade to be at its best, factors that will also enhance the flowers. So the best specimens of R. ‘Leo’ will be found in a woodland environment, as the stunning specimens presented here amply demonstrate.



R. ‘Leo’ AM 1948 & FCC 1989

R. ‘Leo’ AM 1948 & FCC 1989

R. ‘Leo’ AM 1948 & FCC 1989



R. ‘Lionel's Triumph’ AM 1954 & FCC 1974

R. 'Lionel's Triumph'
lacteum x 'Naomi'
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6 April-early May 4m x 4m

Named Forms:
Halton AM 1967 (cream, tinted greenish).
Lionel's Triumph AM 1954 & FCC 1974 (cream, edged pink, blotched crimson).

When one of Lionel de Rothschild's crosses, paired in the closing years of the 1930s, opened its flowers for the very first time at the beginning of May 1954, fortune smiled down on Exbury that day.

For as the authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* report, the plant had been growing at the back of the estate yard, overlooked, for fourteen or more years, when it revealed 'huge trusses of deep, rich cream, enlivened by the ruddy eye of *R. lacteum* - for all the world as though a bumble bee were sitting in it'.

Two days later it was introduced at the RHS Rhododendron Show, and of course, immediately scooped an Award of Merit (the FCC would follow exactly twenty years later) and there and then was named 'Lionel's Triumph', for the blooms 'were at once seen to be of the highest floral quality'.

Given space, mature specimens of this *lacteum* x 'Naomi' combination will develop into a tall dome, easily 4m high and spreading just as widely, with sturdy branchlets that bear a whorl of large oblanceolate-shaped leaves at their tips, each of which is some 20cm long by almost half that across. The blooms are rose-pink in bud, transforming to a rich and deep, Cornish cream colour when fully expanded, but with an opaline-pink flush around the margins and a blotch of crimson streaks and flashes at the base of the dorsal lobe - the aforementioned *Bombus ruderatus*. Every inflorescence is populated with 18 campanulate bells, the corollas of good substance, 7.5cm long by 10cm across at the mouth.

Prospective purchasers should note that young grafted plants take seven or more years to begin flowering thanks to the retarding influence of the seed parent and then a good few more seasons can be added-on before the display becomes profuse. Then there is an attendant frustration to bear: mature shrubs only bloom well every other year. Yet on the plus side, 'Lionel's Triumph' is one of the easiest lacteum hybrids to grow, fully hardy and suitable for any UK garden where rhododendrons thrive, although the leaves and flowers will be at their best when sited in open woodland under light dappled shade. But beware of too dense an overhead canopy, as if such is allowed develop, the already leggy habit will become even more drawn-up.

In 1967 a second clone from the cross was introduced, Edmund de Rothschild, Lionel's eldest son, naming it 'Halton' (after another Rothschild-owned property in the Chilterns). This selection has 13 to 16 slightly smaller, widely funnel-shaped corollas in the domed truss, and their cream-tinted-green hue is without the pink flush or blotch. It too secured an AM from the RHS.

A third clone, midway between the two named forms, which lacks the crimson blotch but retains the pink tint around the margins, has also been distributed under the 'Halton' epithet.


R. 'Lionel's Triumph' AM 1954 & FCC 1974.

R. ‘Lionel's Triumph’ AM 1954 & FCC 1974



R. ‘Halton’ AM 1967

R. ‘Mandalay’

R. 'Marie Antoinette'

R. ‘Mariloo’

R. 'Mariloo'
'Doctor Stocker' x *lacteum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5 April 6m x 4m

Named Forms:
Mariloo (lemon-yellow, flushed green).
Mariloo Eugenie AM 1950 (pale cream, spotted crimson).
Mariloo Gilbury AM 1943 (pale creamy-pink, lobes striped deep pink outside).

On October 8th 1912, Marie Louise Eugénie Beer (1892–1975) became Mrs Lionel Nathan de Rothschild when she married the man who would become the United Kingdom's foremost rhododendron hybridiser in an age when competition for that title was unsurpassed. Yet it took Lionel until 1941 to find a plant worthy enough to be named for his wife. That rhododendron was christened 'Mariloo'.

The hybrid used pollen from one of the most notoriously difficult species to grow, *R. lacteum,* which was placed onto the style of R. 'Doctor Stocker', this a white-flowering *caucasicum* x *griffithianum* pairing made at Avery Hill, Eltham, in the 1890s. Amazingly, unlike virtually every other cross that has involved *R. lacteum,* the seedlings proved easy to grow and vigorous, and while the reason for this was unknown at the time, it is no doubt at least partially - if not wholly - due to the chloroplast genes and mitochondria inherited from the 'Doctor Stocker' cross, which would have come from that hybrid's female parent, *R. caucasicum*.

'Mariloo' proved to be tall growing, with thick branchlets and matt green, deeply veined leaves that reflected the pollen provider, these broadly elliptic in shape, 8cm wide and close to 22cm in length. Detractors will say that the hybrid is leggy, for the leaves are only held for one year and when plants are situated within the sheltered and shady surrounds of a woodland garden, the internodal growth can be quite long, especially if that shade is anything more than dappled. But such a planting site is required, for the new growth is vulnerable to cold winds and the hardiness rating will only cope with a mid-winter low down to -15ºC. Indeed, mature shrubs were reported to have been killed in Kent during the severe winter of 1984-85 (*The Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* Cox & Cox, Batsford, 1988).

In April however, the flower buds begin to expand, and any worrisome negative will quickly be dispelled unless an unseasonal frost strikes the blooms. Because as Francis Hanger, one of Exbury's past head gardeners reports: 'the extra large and perfect trusses outshine most other rhododendrons I know for quality and size' (C. E. Lucas Phillips & Peter N. Barber, *The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* Cassell, 1967).

Fifteen to twenty corollas, held on red pedicels, emerge from each inflorescence. At first, tubular-campanulate in shape, the mouth of the bowl continues to expand until each is a broadly campanulate bell 10cm wide with slightly wavy lobe margins. Their hue is a soft lemon-yellow, initially flushed with green, this tint vanishing before the blooms have fully developed, leaving the whole unmarred by spot, speckle or any other blemish: the cardinal goal of Lionel de Rothschild's rhododendron breeding programme.

Exbury introduced two other clones after Lionel's death: 'Mariloo Gilbury' in 1943, the flowers slightly wider at the mouth, creamy-pink in tone, with a crimson-pink stripe down the centre of each lobe on the outside; and 'Mariloo Eugenie' in 1948, the corollas pale cream, darker on the three dorsal lobes inside and these sometimes tinged crimson on the outside, the base of the throat stained crimson and above this, a scattering of small crimson spots. Respectively, they each secured an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society, in 1943 and 1950, but pristine in her perfection, the lack of the Floral Committee's largesse immaterial, their sister seedling outshines them both and is an absolutely superlative addition to the pantheon of rhododendron hybrids.


Marie Louise de Rothschild

R. 'Mariloo'

R. ‘Mariloo’

R. ‘Marshall’

R. ‘Memory’ AM 1945

R. ‘Mohamet’ AM 1945

R. ‘Mouton Rothschild’ AM 1958 & FCC 1991

R. 'Naomi'

'Aurora' x *fortunei*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H6 Late April-early May 8m x 6m

Named Forms:

Exbury Naomi AM 1933 (biscuit, tinged lilac-pink).
Naomi Astarte AM 1997 (greenish-yellow, flushed purplish-pink on lobes and outside).
Naomi Carissima (pale pink, flushed creamy-white).
Naomi Early Dawn (pale pink).
Naomi Glow (bright pink, throat flushed deeper).
Naomi Hope (pink, tinged mauve).
Naomi Nautilus (rose, tube flushed orange-yellow).
Naomi Nereid (crimson and lavender).
Naomi Orpha (white flushed pink).
Naomi Pink Beauty (rhodamine-pink, lobe centres shading creamy-pink).
Naomi Pixie (pink, blotched crimson in throat).
Naomi Stella Maris FCC 1939 (buff cream, shaded lilac-pink).
Paris (pale purplish-pink).

In May 1933, at just twelve years of age, Lionel Nathan de Rothschild's youngest daughter - Naomi Louisa Nina de Rothschild (1920-2007) - graciously allowed her father to borrow her Christian name for entry No. 108 in the Exbury studbook. It recorded a cross made in 1926 that had placed pollen from *R. fortunei* onto the style of a hybrid Lionel had originally purchased unflowered from Richard Gill's nursery in Cornwall. That rhododendron was 'Aurora' and when it bloomed for the first time in 1922, the soft pink corollas secured an immediate Award of Merit from the RHS. Hopes were high therefore for the seedlings of this *fortunei-griffithianum-thomsonii* mix when the first flower buds were set seven years after germination. And the blooms did not disappoint; indeed, the shrub upon which they opened went on to become the most famous and widely planted of all the Rothschild rhododendron hybrids: 'Naomi'.

That epithet is actually the cover-all pride name, for the premier introduction was 'Exbury Naomi', sweetly scented, with 14 funnels in a compact, globular truss, their hue lilac-pink on a biscuit-yellow ground, with the deeper tone most evident around the lobe margins. But it fades fast: in full sun; and only marginally slower in dappled shade. Expanding from deep cerise buds, the seven-lobed corollas are each 6.5cm long and up to 9cm across when fully dilated and like their seed parent, enticed an on-the-spot AM out of the RHS floral committee when first presented for assessment.

Bearing foliage that is a matt, mid green in tone, the blades broadly elliptic in shape, with each around 11.5cm long by 5.5cm in width, they are held for between one and two years. Beneath them, the shrub ultimately forms a small tree, sporting flower buds from top to bottom on a framework of sturdy branches.

The oldest plants of 'Naomi' at Exbury are now close to 8m in height with a spread not far short of that figure. They are also winter hardy down to -21ºC and can be grown in full sun if needs must, though of course, the blooms will suffer, especially in southern locales. The only negative to report is that the leaves are susceptible to powdery mildew infection through their *R. thomsonii* heritage, but thankfully, usually to a far lesser degree than that species.

As young plants, the 'Naomi' pride are not free-flowering, only with age producing the vast sweep of bloom for which they are justly renowned, so it was not until 1938 that 'Naomi Nautilus' was introduced, with 'Naomi Stella Maris' following a year later. And again, both clones were graced with coveted Royal Horticultural Society floral awards, the former an AM, the latter an FCC.

In total, thirteen named selections have now been registered, and while that count is far fewer than the twenty-two entries accrued by Sir Edmund Loder for his *fortunei* x *griffithianum* pride, it is still too many, even though one of the best - 'Naomi Astarte' - only garnered an AM in 1997. The clones have also become mixed-up, both in commerce and in gardens, and like 'Loderi' and 'Jalisco' - to mention but two examples - pairings recording 'Naomi' as one of the parents have been logged with the International Rhododendron Registrar even though technically such an entity does not exist, a state of affairs exacerbated by the 'Naomi' appellation being the accepted synonym of 'Exbury Naomi'.

Amongst the treasure trove of hybrids he created - some 1200 pairings; made over the course of little more than twenty years; resulting in 460 named and registered selections - members of the 'Naomi' pride were Lionel de Rothschild's personal favourites. Today, dotted throughout the woodland at Exbury and with mature specimens of all the clones long-established in public and private rhododendron collections across the length and breadth of Great Britain, 'Exbury Naomi' and her sisters take pride of place when in late April and on into May a gamut of opulent trusses covers each one of those plants. And their fragrance too acts as a magnet, drawing admirers from afar, as does the buzz of a thousand bees harvesting the abundance of soon to be honeyed nectar.



R. 'Exbury Naomi' AM 1933

R. ‘Exbury Naomi’ AM 1933

R. ‘Naomi Astarte’ AM 1997

R. ‘Naomi Early Dawn’

R. ‘Naomi Glow’

R. ‘Naomi Hope’

R. ‘Naomi Nautilus’ AM 1938

R. ‘Naomi Nereid’

R. 'Naomi Orpha

R. ‘Naomi Pink Beauty’

R. ‘Paris’

R. 'Paris'

R. ‘Nicholas’ AM 1965

R. ‘Nicholas’
ponticum hybrid
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H6-7 Late May-early June 4m x 4m

Credit for hybridising ‘Nicholas’ is rightly due one of the many *Apis mellifera* buzzing around Exbury Gardens, randomly pollinating the rhododendrons in their quest for nectar. This particular individual - long since departed for that great hive in the sky, but whose successors still flit about the woodlands in their thousands - arrived at a bush of *R. ponticum* and either left behind the pollen strings stuck to its thorax from an earlier foray or departed the plundered corolla with a new set of viscin threads and grains attached: to venture into some other wide-open floral embouchure nearby in order to secure its sugary stores. Because on this occasion, Lionel de Rothschild, the garden’s creator, did little more than admire the blooms one spring morning while strolling around his estate and impressed, subsequently made sure the bush and two nearby siblings were spared the billhook and given room to grow. The mystery cross was also added to the stud book, becoming one of only three registered Exbury rhododendrons whose parentage details are not known (*The Rothschild Rhododendrons,* revised edition, 1979).

In fact, it was Lionel’s eldest son Edmund who introduced and named the hybrid in 1965, borrowing for the epithet his own eldest son’s Christian name (Nicholas David de Rothschild, who is in charge of the gardens today). For the blooms that had first caught Lionel’s eye, then Edmund’s, and the attention of many more admirers since - including members of the RHS floral committee who gifted the hybrid an Award of Merit when first exhibited - are in a colour category all their own: a glowing petunia purple. This tone pales towards the centre of the lobes to be replaced by white, more so on the dorsal, where the paler hue enhances a scattering of green spots that would otherwise have been virtually obscured. Carried in a dense truss of nineteen, funnel-shaped, five-lobed corollas, each one 5cm long by 9cm across, mature specimens flower exuberantly towards the end of May, with the display extending into the first weeks of June.

At Exbury, ‘Nicholas’ has proved completely hardy and is grown in full sun, the habit and foliage benefiting from the exposure, although the bush is still an open framework of branches at the ends of which will be found a whorl of oblanceolate through narrowly elliptic pale to dark green leaves, somewhat convex in profile, each 15cm long by a third that in width. And it is the foliage that clarions the link with *R. ponticum* most strongly, not the blooms, which are atypical of that species. In other shadier locales or gardens further to the north, the structural character traits have generated negative reviews: Peter and Kenneth Cox, for instance, write that ‘unfortunately, this plant seems to have dreadful foliage, which is sparse and often chlorotic, and a worse habit’ (*The Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* Batsford, 1988), though they praise the flowers, describing them as ‘really striking, especially when first out’. So ‘Nicholas’ requires careful placement in a spot where its floral extravagance can still dazzle, but behind a fronting of lower-growing shrubs that can conceal its bare scaffold.


R. ‘Nicholas’ AM 1965

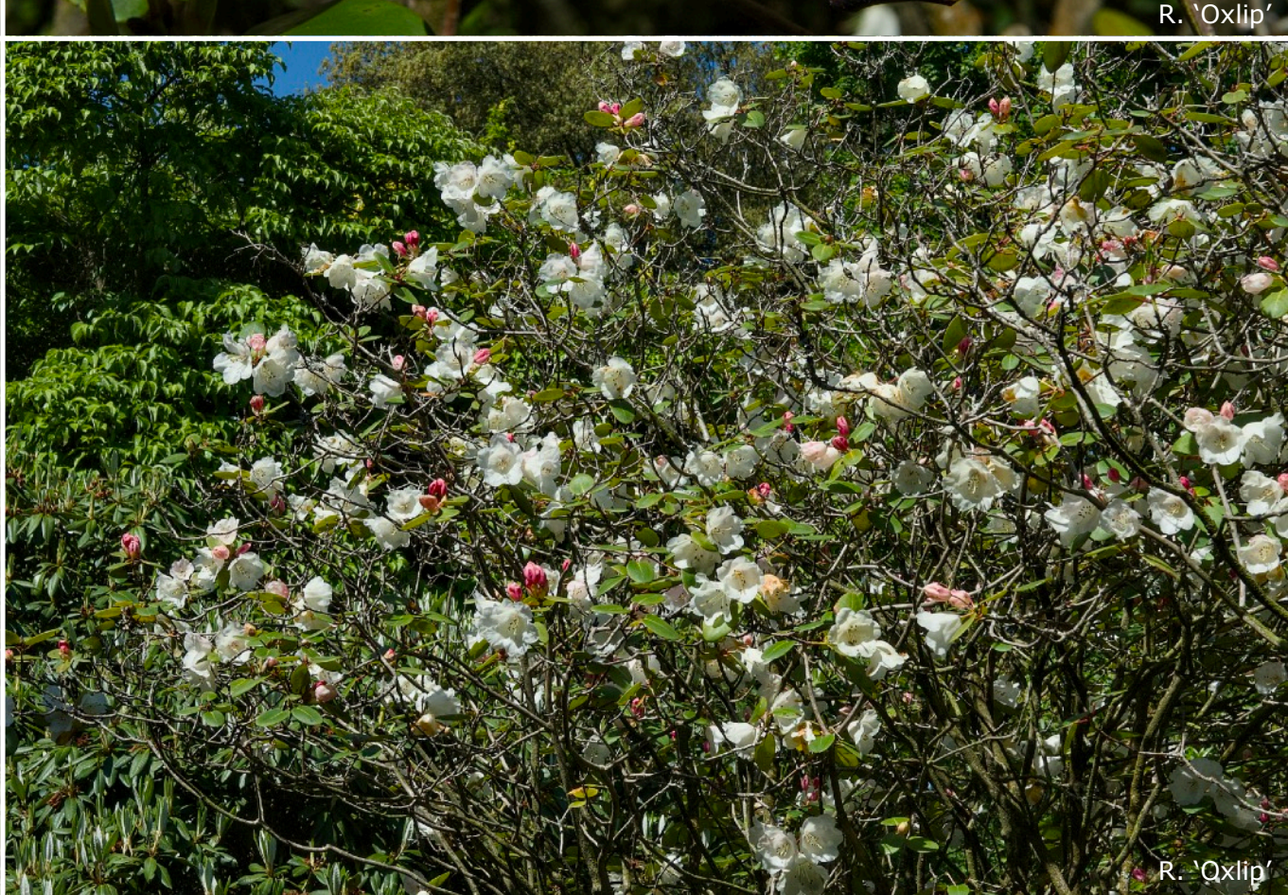
R. ‘Norman Shaw’ AM 1926

R. ‘Oklahoma’ AM 1975

R. ‘Oregonia’


R. ‘Oxlip’


R. ‘Oxlip’


R. ‘Oxlip’

R. ‘Prelude’ AM 1951

R. ‘Quaker Girl’

R. 'Queen of Hearts' AM 1949 & FCC 1986

R. 'Queen of Hearts'

meddianum x 'Moser's Maroon'

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H7 May 4m x 6m

There is a song on the Vanessa Williams 1991 album 'The Comfort Zone' that perfectly sums up Lionel de Rothschild's pairing of *R. meddianum* with 'Moser's Maroon', the latter that cast-aside hybrid he had clearly been fated to find in a French nursery - Track 6, *Save the Best for Last.* For it was one of the final crosses this master hybridiser made before his sudden and untimely death in January 1942, the match recorded as LR 1193 in the Exbury stud book. And in 'Queen of Hearts' Lionel produced 'one of the finest post-war rhododendrons, a striking shrub, an object of deep and moving beauty when in full bloom' to quote the authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (Cassell, 1967), C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter Barber, who - admittedly - do tend to go a bit doe-eyed with their prose. Contrastingly, at least according to the father and son authors of the 1988 Batsford-published *Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Hybrids,* Peter and Kenneth Cox, it is a shrub 'hardly worthy of an FCC, as despite the impressive flowers, it makes a poor garden plant'. The rub, however, is that both sets of authors are correct in their assessments: the floral display will stop you in your tracks; but the 'flamboyant' habit will have you pulling your hair out!

'Queen of Hearts' opens her flower buds in May, duly revealing some sixteen widely funnel-shaped corollas in each truss, these individually 6.5cm long and 7.5cm across at the mouth. They are a glowing chrysanthemum-crimson in tone, with a fan of black dots and dashes spread across their dorsal lobes. White stamen filaments then provide the perfect visual contrast. Each bloom has somewhat wavy corolla margins and is held in the embrace of a large red calyx, these with deeply cleft, acuminate lobes. The flower trusses are domed-shaped and they are produced in profusion, the vast quantity of bloom often weighing down the branches, which of course contributes to the straggly habit.

However, the main culprit responsible for such, is the hybrid's vigour, gifted by the mitochondria that came not from 'Moser's Maroon', but from *R. meddianum,* though the upright and lanky-leggy habit of the former has also been incorporated into the genetic mix of 'Queen of Hearts'. That parentage 'ensures a shrub of convenient size, 3.3 to 4m high, fairly close in structure in normal situations', though it should be noted that the authors of *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* were equating such a planting locale with that at Exbury on England's southern coast. Elsewhere, long internodal growth, with the consequent "Brewer's Droop" when in bloom, is the price to be paid for the ravishing floral extravaganza unless the shrub is sited in full sun, as evidenced in the photographs. Luckily, the foliage relishes just such a position.

Those blades are elliptic-lanceolate through obovate in shape and often slightly convex in profile. They are dark green above, matt, with distinctive veining and a yellow midrib, and covered with a thin but loose fawn-coloured indumentum below. Each is up to 11.5cm long by 5.5cm wide and they are held for two, sometimes three years, so a fairly dense patina of leaves can cloak much of the branch structure, although extended limbs will likely be left fully exposed. Regrettably however, a susceptibility to chlorosis may denude their number.

Lionel de Rothschild did not live to see his sumptuous creation in flower for it first bloomed in 1949 when it was introduced and named by his eldest son, Edmund, and gifted the first of its floral awards by the RHS. Thanks to its 'Moser's Maroon' inheritance, R. 'Queen of Hearts' is hardy enough to succeed and thrive in any UK garden where rhododendrons can be grown. However, context is the key to a successful placement, especially in northern locales where the intensity of the sun's rays will never be sufficient enough to maintain anything approaching a disciplined habit. So a woodland setting, where this exuberance will not look out of place in the surrounds, is the prerequisite. But a station where anything more than the merest flicker of shade caresses the leaves should be avoided. And there, in such a setting, 'Queen of Hearts' will show doyen and casual observer alike, why many consider it the finest of all the Exbury red hybrids.



R. 'Queen of Hearts' AM 1949 & FCC 1986

R. ‘Queen of Hearts’ AM 1949 & FCC 1986

R. ‘Queen of Hearts’ AM 1949 & FCC 1986



R. ‘Repose’ AM 1956

R. ‘Repose’
lacteum x *discolor*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H5-6 April-May 4m x 4m

Named Forms:
Marianne Hardy FCC 1982 (creamy-white).
Repose AM 1956 (creamy-white, with a greenish flush).
Welcome Stranger AM 1977 (pale yellow).

F1 crosses involving *R. lacteum* are known to be difficult in cultivation and ‘Repose’ can certainly be that, with even Exbury experiencing difficulties in maintaining plants long-term due to branch dieback. Poor drainage, too much shade, non-organic fertiliser applications, even too much direct summer sunlight are all contributing factors that can lead to a decline in a specimen’s health and ultimate death, though when the cultural conditions are just right - either through luck or judgement - Lionel de Rothschild’s *lacteum* x *discolor* pairing will reveal its true heritage and put on an opulent if not outright lavish floral display. But it will then take the shrub two or three years of growth before another such instance of abundance is repeated.

So R. ‘Repose’ is most certainly one of those rhododendrons that come with a ‘connoisseur’ tag pre-attached.

Conceived in 1936, eighteen large, campanulate-shaped bells, will be found in each open-topped truss, their hue creamy-white with just a hint of a greenish flush, the throat encircled pale yellow with the dorsal lobe quite heavily spotted and speckled crimson-green. From a distance, the corollas appear pale lemon. Foliage follows the seed parent, with the shrub opting for a domed habit as wide as it is tall.

Edmund de Rothschild, Lionel’s eldest son, introduced ‘Repose’ in 1950, the plant receiving its Award of Merit in 1956 when exhibited by the Slocock Nursery of Woking and Knaphill. Two other selections - ‘Welcome Stranger’ and ‘Marianne Hardy’ - both grown by the late Major Alan Hardy at Sandling Park, his estate near Ashford in Kent, have also received RHS floral awards, in 1977 and 1982 respectively, the former another AM, the latter garnering an FCC. ‘Welcome Stranger’ differs from ‘Repose’ in having pale yellow flowers, the tone deepening in the throat and the dorsal marked greenish-red, while ‘Marianne Hardy’ has creamy-white blooms with an orange-yellow dorsal blotch and elliptic-shaped leaves that can be up to 26cm long by 10cm across, near twice the blade dimensions found on the other two clones. Both of the Sandling Park-resident plants are also registered as being 7-lobed, while ‘Repose’ bears corollas that fluctuate, some being 5-lobed, others showing 6 or 7.

R. ‘Repose’ AM 1956

R. ‘Repose’ AM 1956

R. 'Repose' AM 1956

R. ‘Rickshaw’

R. ‘Romany Chai’ AM 1932

R. ‘Romany Chal’

‘Moser's Maroon’ x *facetum*

Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread

H5 June 6m x 6m

They were both introduced and gifted an Award of Merit in 1932.

Each has an epithet composed of ten letters where only the concluding character of the second word differs, an ‘l’ replacing an ‘i’.

Both boast ‘Moser’s Maroon’ as their seed parent.

And owe their existence to the hand of Lionel de Rothschild.

But in all other respects, the morphological disparities between a gypsy child and a gypsy girl - ‘Romany Chai’ to ‘Romany Chal’ - are the equivalent of those between chalk and cheese.

In a word, vast.

As the FCC awarded to the latter in 1937 confirms.

Along with the entries in the Phillips-Barber-penned *The Rothschild Rhododendrons.*

On ‘Chai’ - ‘a tall, lax, seldom elegant shrub’.

On ‘Chal’ - ‘one of Lionel’s great pre-war successes and a magnificent spectacle in the Exbury woods, where it glows like an enormous torch in June’.

C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber also conclude that though ‘Chai’ is a cousin to ‘Chal’, the former ‘otherwise yields its place’ to the latter ‘in excellence’.

Because unlike *R. facetum,* which provided the pollen for ‘Romany Chal’, the genes of *R. griersonianum* could not tame the wilder aspects of the ‘Romany Chai’ seed parent inheritance. So ‘Chai’ must be grown in full sun, well away from any overhanging tree branches and regularly assaulted with a pair of secateurs when young if anything approaching a half-decent frame is to be achieved. While ‘Chal’, though equally vigorous, can be left alone to form a huge, well-filled dome or pyramid, even though the -15ºC hardiness rating requires the shelter gained from nearby trees in the gardens of northern England and Scotland, along with shade to protect both flower and foliage from too much sun in southern locales.

The ‘Romany Chal’ tech specs are impressive:

Large but lax rounded trusses, formed from a dozen campanulate bells, the corollas 5cm long by 6cm wide and coloured a deep glowing cardinal red, with their upper lobes home to a moderate spray of black speckles and spots. Stamen filaments and style are also flushed red, as is the calyx, which has reflexed and glandular-ciliate lobes. Downy hairs also decorate the pedicels.

Oblong-elliptic blades, 12.5cm long and 5.5cm wide, are matt green above and have recurved margins, while a thin cloak of fawn tomentum will be found on the leaf underside, this extending along the petiole. And those leaves are retained on the shrub for two, and sometimes even three years, so the framework of supporting limbs on even mastodon-sized specimens are well-filled.

June is when the plant blooms and the display is in no-way skimpy, with mature shrubs free-flowering and sporting scarlet globes from head to foot, though not ever branch tip will host a bowl of flame. But again, as Phillips and Barber rightly proclaim, ‘Romany Chal’ will provide ‘a thrilling vision when the sun shines upon it’.

Regrettably, as is the case with too many other Exbury hybrids, the RHS floral awards appear to have been gifted to two different selections from the cross (if labels on specimens in that garden are accurate). Moreover, these two may not be the clone that was commercially distributed.



R. ‘Romany Chal’ AM 1932

R. ‘Romany Chal’ AM 1932

R. ‘Romany Chal’ FCC 1937

R. ‘Romany Chal’ FCC 1937

R. ‘Rouge’ AM 1950

R. ‘Yvonne’

R. ‘Yvonne’
‘Aurora’ x *griffithianum*
Hardiness - Flowering Period - Height & Spread
H4-5 April-May 6m x 4m

Named Forms:
Yvonne (white flushed pink).
Yvonne Dawn (flesh pink).
Yvonne Opaline AM 1931 (rose).
Yvonne Pearl (pearly pink).
Yvonne Pride AM 1948 (pale pink).

Despite being paired quite early-on in Lionel de Rothschild’s rhododendron breeding programme at Exbury - sometime before 1925, with the ‘Aurora’ x *griffithianum* cross designated LR 112 in the stud book - the seedlings that would eventually form the ‘Yvonne’ pride took many years to begin blooming freely. An example: ’Yvonne Opaline’ was still only spasmodically setting flower buds when it was introduced in 1931 and won a showbench Award of Merit. But then all were ‘lost’. Disappearing into the woodland following Lionel’s death in January 1942 and the subsequent reduction of the gardening staff brought about by the exigencies of World War II. Six year later, Lionel’s eldest son, Edmund, found the group ‘tucked away in a distant corner’ according to the entry in *The Rothschild Rhododendrons* (Phillips & Barber, Cassell Ltd, 1967) and in 1948 introduced a second selection, ‘Yvonne Pride’, which was also gifted an AM.

As a whole, the pride display their blooms in April through May, the timing of such dependant on the weather, carry around eleven bells in a very large, flat-topped, domed or globular truss, with the widely funnel-campanulate corollas some 8cm long by between 10 and 12.5cm across at the mouth. All are pink in the bud, but in ‘Opaline’ they open ivory-white flushed pink; ‘Pride’ pale pink; and in ‘Dawn’, which did not begin flowering freely until around 1979, flesh-pink. The leaves are basically elliptic in shape and vary from 15 to 17.5cm in length, averaging 7.5cm in width. They are dark green and matt above, paler and glabrous below, and retained for two years, while the shrubs, although ultimately of tree-like habit, remain fairly compact for many years.

The ‘Yvonne’ pride require a woodland setting to thrive, especially as they are only rated winter hardy to around -12ºC and Lionel himself is reported to have said that they were tender at Exbury. However, a mature specimen of ‘Yvonne Pride’ growing at Ray Wood, Castle Howard, in North Yorkshire, would suggest that that statement might best be taken with a rather large dollop of salt.


R. ‘Yvonne’

R. ‘Yvonne Pride’ AM 1948

Photographic Acknowledgements:

The full colour plant portraits presented in this and the other volumes of *The Rhododendron Hybridisers* resulted from innumerable trips to the woodland gardens and botanical/horticultural institutes of England, Scotland and Wales that specialised in Genus *Rhododendron,* which were open to the general public across the bulk of the flowering season, and that had accurately labelled collections. The images were mostly captured on a Nikon D200, and later, on a Nikon D810, using a variety of prime and zoom Nikkor lenses. In the main, RAW format files were used to store the digital images, this avoiding any unnecessary compression, and all the portraits were achieved 'handheld', on site, even the macro close-ups. No colour modification has been made to any of these photographs, nor were any filters employed to enhance or otherwise change the palette, pre or post capture, with natural light the only source of illumination.

What was photographed where is set out below, along with the website details of those gardens visited. Thanks is extended to each establishment for allowing images taken in a private-use capacity to be reproduced herein, this applying most especially to Exbury Gardens in Hampshire, which not unexpectedly, is home to the most extensive collection of Lionel's introductions in the UK.

Appreciation is also due their gardening staff, who maintain the species and hybrids in such robust good health despite the depredations of a changing climate. Getting to know many of these dedicated and world-class horticulturalists over repeated visits often prompted an exchange of invaluable knowledge, including insights into cultivation issues, provided the locations of some of their rarer specimens - that might otherwise have been missed despite the most diligent searching - and frequently occasioned an escort over or around beds of foreground perennials to admire and photograph a particularly distant-from-the-permitted-path or extremely well-hidden individual.

In addition, especial thanks is extended once again to Alan, Colin, Douggie, Mark, Maurice, Nigel, Pam, Patrick, and Richard, some of whom, sadly, are no longer with us, so for them, this laudation must once more be posthumous.

Key: AL - above left; AC - above centre; AR - above right; BL - below left; BC - below centre; BR - below right; L - left; R - right.

Arduaine Garden, Oban, Argyll:
https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/arduaine-garden
p. 174; p. 285.

Benmore Botanic Garden, Argyll:
https://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/benmore-botanic-garden/
p. 72; p. 73; p. 92; p. 93; p. 94 - AL, BL, R; p. 105; p. 106; p. 107 - AL; p. 110; p. 111; p. 118; p. 119; p. 264; p. 265; p. 282; p. 283; p. 284; p. 321; p. 348; p. 349 - R; p. 377; p. 385; p. 454 - R; p. 455; p. 470 - BR.

Brodick Castle Garden, Isle of Arran:
https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/brodick-castle-garden-country-park
p. 65; p. 181; p. 219.

Country Life:
https://www.countrylife.co.uk/
p. 15 - Exbury House in 1946; p. 18 - the Home Wood; p. 21 - the Augustinii Walk; p, 22 - the Rock Garden. All four photographs were included within Francis Hanger's *Exbury Rhododendrons* article for *The Rhododendron Year Book 1946,* each with a *Country Life* credit for the copyright but no other information.

Crarae Woodland Glen, Inveraray, Argyll:
https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/crarae-garden
p. 251 - AR; p. 416.

Exbury Gardens, Hampshire:
https://www.exbury.co.uk/
p. 7 R - Lionel de Rothschild, a portrait from *The Rothschild Rhododendrons: A Record Of The Gardens At Exbury,* written by C. E. Lucas Phillips and Peter N. Barber, and published by Exbury Gardens in 1967; p. 26; p. 27; p. 31; p. 33; p. 36; p. 37; p. 44; p. 45; p. 48; p. 49; p. 52; p. 55; p. 57; p. 61; p. 69; p. 71; p. 80; p. 115; p. 120; p. 126; p. 154; p. 155; p. 172 - BR; p. 173; p. 175; p. 176; p. 177; p. 182; p. 183; p. 184 - L; p. 185; p. 186; p. 187; p. 188; p. 191 - L; p. 194; p. 195; 198; p. 199; p. 200 - R; p. 201; p. 222; p. 223; p. 225 - R; p. 228; p. 229; p. 230; p. 231 - R; p. 232; p. 233; p. 234; p. 238; p. 242; p. 245; p. 246; p. 247; p. 248; p. 249; p. 250; p, 251 - L; p. 254; p. 255; p. 258; p. 259 - AR; p. 260; p. 262; p. 266; p. 274; p. 276; p. 278; p. 286; p. 287; p. 288; p. 289; p. 290; p. 291 - R; p. 294; p. 295 - L, R; p. 301; p. 302; p. 303; p. 304 - L, BR; p. 305; p. 306; p. 307; p. 308; p. 309; p. 310; p. 311; p. 312 - L, AR, BR; p. 313; p. 314; p. 317; p. 320; p. 322; p. 323; p. 325 - BL, R; p. 329; p. 330; p. 331; p. 332 - AL; p. 333; p. 336; p. 337 - R; p. 339; p. 343; p. 344 - R; p. 345; p. 347; p. 350 - L; p. 351; p. 352; p. 353; p. 358; p. 360; p. 361 - AL, BL, R; p. 363; p. 366; p. 374; p. 375; p. 376; p. 386; p. 387; p. 394; p. 396; p. 397 - R; p. 398; p. 402; p. 403; p. 409; p. 410; p. 411 - R; p. 412; p. 413; p. 414; p. 421; p. 422; p. 423; p. 428; p. 433; p. 434; p. 435; p. 436; p. 437 - R; p. 440; p. 441 - L, AR, BR; p. 442; p. 443; p. 452; 456; p. 458; p. 459; p. 460 - R; p. 470 - AL, AR.

Lakeland Horticultural Society, Holehird Gardens:
https://holehirdgardens.org.uk/the-society
p. 117.

Muncaster Castle Gardens, Ravenglass, Cumbria:
https://www.muncaster.co.uk/
p. 1; p. 9; p. 172 - L; p. 180; p. 239; p. 259 - BR; p. 263; p. 267 - R; p. 270; p. 271; p. 272 - R; p. 273; p. 296 - L; p. 297; p. 298; p. 299; p. 327; p. 328; p. 359; p. 367; p. 372; p. 373 - AR, BR; p. 378; p. 382; p. 383; p. 418; p. 419; p. 457; p. 470 - BL.

The National Portrait Gallery, London:
https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp81936/lionel-nathan-de-rothschild
p. 13 R - Major de Rothschild, Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry, photograph by Lafayette, *c.* 1918; p. 23 R - Major de Rothschild, Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry, in ceremonial uniform, photographed by Henry Walter Barnett, probably around 1905.

Nymans Garden, Handcross, West Sussex:
https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans
p. 66 - L, R; p. 168; p. 169; p. 400; p. 401 - R.

Ray Wood, Castle Howard, North Yorkshire:
https://www.castlehoward.co.uk/visit-us/the-gardens/the-woodland-garden
p. 148 - L, AR, BR; p. 149; p. 150; p. 151 - R; p. 152; p. 153; p. 165; p. 170; p. 171; p. 221; p. 279; p. 280; p. 316; p. 318; p. 338; p. 368; p. 369; p. 406; p. 407 - R; p. 408; p. 415; p. 461.

The Rothschild Archive:
https://family.rothschildarchive.org/people/105/portraits?gallery=Portraits
p. 10 R - Merchant banker at N.M. Rothschild & Sons Limited; p. 12 R - a youthful auto enthusiast at the wheel of one of his early cars; p. 417 R - Marie Louise de Rothschild.

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh:
https://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/royal-botanic-garden-edinburgh/
p. 89 - AR, BR; p. 104; p. 107 - BL, R; p. 130; p. 131; p. 132; p. 133; p. 134; p. 135; p. 141; p. 142; p. 143; p. 144; p. 145.

Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley:
https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley
p. 11 - Lionel de Rothschild feeding his tamed robins in the woods at Exbury. The photograph was included as the frontispiece of *The Rhododendron Year Book 1946,* but no source details were published with the image; p. 78; p. 79 - AL; p. 98; p. 158 - L; p. 159; p. 160; p. 161; p. 224; p. 292; p. 293; p. 381; p. 426; p. 453.

Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park:
https://www.windsorgreatpark.co.uk/en/experiences/the-savill-garden
p. 74; p. 75; p. 140; p. 147; p. 156; p. 157; p. 346; p. 432; p. 445 - R.

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Ampfield, Romsey:
https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hilliergardens
p. 70 - L, AR, BR; p. 79 - BL, R; p. 81; p. 82; p. 83; p. 84; p. 85; p. 86 - L, AR, BR; p. 87; p. 90; p. 91; p. 95; p. 96; p. 97; p. 99; p. 100; p. 101; p. 103; p. 108; p. 109 - L, R; p. 112; p. 113; p. 114; p. 116; p. 121; p. 122; p. 123; p. 124; p. 125; p. 127; p. 128; p. 129; p. 136; p. 137; p. 138; p. 139; p. 163 - R; p. 164 - L; p. 166; p. 167; p. 179 - L; p. 192; p. 193; p. 196; p. 197; p. 202; p. 203; p. 204 - L; p. 205; p. 220; p. 226; p. 227; p. 235 - R; p. 236; p. 237; p. 240; p. 241; p. 243 - R; p. 244; p. 252; p. 253; p. 261; p. 268; p. 277; p. 281 - R; p. 300; p. 315; p. 334 - R; p. 335; 337 - L; p. 340; p. 341; p. 342; p. 343; p. 354; p. 355; p. 357 - R; p. 362 - L; p. 364; p. 365 - R; p. 370; p. 371; p. 379 - BR; p. 380; p. 391; p. 404; p. 405; p. 420; p. 424 - BR; p. 425; p. 427; p. 429; p. 430; p. 431; p. 438; p. 444; p. 446; p. 447.

Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park:
https://www.windsorgreatpark.co.uk/en/experiences/the-valley-gardens
p. 5; p. 76; p. 77; p. 178; p. 256; p. 257; p. 269; p. 275; p. 319; p. 388; p. 389; p. 390 - R; p. 392; p. 393; p. 395; p. 439; p. 448 - L; p. 449; p. 450; p. 451.

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About the Author.

Julian Taylor-Whall was born in Lowestoft at the end of November, 1957. He received a grammar school education before embarking on a three-decades-long career with the BBC at Television Centre. During that time he worked on many of the now classic shows made in the production facilities there, the studios at Lime Grove and Elstree, and at the Television Theatre.

He retired early in 2008, moving to a small village in West Cumbria, just outside the Lake District National Park.

His interests include landscape and plant photography, music, film, writing, and of course, the cultivation of rhododendrons. His previous multivolume treatise on that genus can be freely downloaded at:

https://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/publications/books/temperate-rhododendrons

- above -
Atop Great Gable, a self portrait against cloud.

- *back cover* images -

R. ‘Dormouse’	R. ‘Bric-à-brac’
R. ‘Impi’ AM 1945	R. ‘Grosclaude’ AM 1945







