

[View this email in your browser](#)



Newsletter

April 2026

Dear Member

Welcome to this month's Newsletter. Full of member and Group news. If you are reading on a mobile device, remember to click on the 'read more' box to see the full content. Reading in your browser is a better experience. Thanks to all who contributed.

Plant of the Month

Rhododendron arboreum ssp delavayi



Our plant of the month was seen by members last week at The National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, Kilmacurragh, County Wicklow. A stand out plant in the garden

We thank Mary O'Neill Moloney from Kilmacurragh for this story of the plant.

One of the most important Rhododendrons in the collections at Kilmacurragh is Rhododendron arboreum subsp. delavayi.

It was originally collected by Pere Jean-Marie Delavay in the Yunnan province in Western China in 1884. The seed was sent to the Vilmorin nursery in Paris and they then sent on seeds a few years later to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London. A plant was sent from Kew to Thomas and Janet Acton (Kilmacurragh) in 1894 and it first flowered outside of China in Kilmacurragh in 1904.

This is the actual plant in Kilmacurragh today and we consider it one of the best 'reds' in the collection.



What a day in the garden we had. We thank Darach Lupton PhD, Curator of the National Botanic Gardens Ireland, all the garden team, our Ireland Branch members, Colin Jones our Ireland Branch Chair and Seamus's family and friends for a memorable experience for us all.

The plants, trees and landscaping of this garden are stunning. More than 60 people met together in the garden for the planting of the large magnolia tree *Magnolia laevifolia* 'Gail's Favourite' which the Group had gifted the garden to pay tribute to Seamus O'Brien.

More information about *Rhododendron arboreum* ssp *delavayi* [can be found here](#)

It is the Curtis Botanical Magazine from 1907 which shows the flower (painted from the Kilmacurragh plant) and write up from that time. There is also a write up of this plant on Trees and Shrubs [online here](#)

Details of upcoming competitions

RHS Rosemoor.

We wish all exhibitors, members, stewards and judges a good show tomorrow and Sunday. 25th and 26th April

RHS Harlow Carr

2nd May

[Harlow Carr Rhododendron Competition](#)

Wessex Branch Show

9th May

Leonardslee Gardens Show [information can be found here](#). Members can send their planned [attendance ahead to access free parking by emailing here](#).

RCMG Centenary Cup

30th and 31st May

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. [Attendance forms for members can be found here](#).

Members can attend free of charge if they send planned attendance ahead.



Louise Gardiner with the ICS (UK) Apprentice Plate and
Camellia japonica 'Finlandia Variegated'

International Camellia Society (UK)
Apprentice Plate
Awarded at RHS Wisley 11th April 2026

single bloom of Camellia. The bloom was *Camellia japonica* 'Finlandia Variegated' grown in the Camellia walk in the garden.

Registered in 1943 and originated in Japan. Louise was presented with the crystal plate (which had been engraved by a Dartington Glass master engraver) by Pat Short, Past President of the International Camellia Society.

This ICS (UK) competition is aimed at encouraging horticultural apprentices to enter the world of showing.



RHS Wisley International Camellia Society Plate

Best Camellia Bloom in Show was also awarded to Leonardslee Gardens for *Camellia japonica* 'Tiffany'. A large peony form. It was grown from Japanese Camellia seed provided by Ralph Peer, by Dr John H. Urabec, La Canada, California. Registered in 1962.



RHS Wisley Early Rhododendron Competition
Best in Show *Rhododendron falconeri*

The quality of rhododendrons at The Early Rhododendron Competition RHS Wisley was excellent. Best in Show was this *Rh falconeri* from Leonardslee Gardens. Well done to everyone who took part in the competition.



***Rhododendron* 'Richard Gill' (*Rh fortunei* x *Rh thomsonii*)
at The Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park**

Over the last few months we have been asking members for help to conserve some of the Gill Hybrids from the Gill Rhododendron Nursery, Tremough.

Trebah Garden, near Falmouth, Cornwall has launched a research and conservation initiative to identify, protect and re-establish historically significant rhododendrons linked to the renowned Gill Rhododendron Nursery at Tremough, Penryn.

Gill established a celebrated rhododendron nursery. His nursery supplied an exceptional range of species and hybrids to gardens across the UK and overseas.

We have established the existence of *Rhododendron* 'Edmondii' in Ireland and members saw this last week at Mount Congreve. a stunning plant and we shared an image of it in our previous Newsletter.

Are there any UK gardens which have *Rhododendron* 'Edmondii' ?

Are there any UK gardens which have *Rhododendron* 'Trebianum'?

We have been able to send to Edwin Lanyon an image of another Gill hybrid they were looking for to match at Trebah called *Rhododendron* 'Pink Perfection'. This is growing at Ramster Gardens in Surrey. Please send us any information you may have on *Rh* Edmondii or *Rh* 'Trebianum' growing in the UK [here](#).



CHOLLIPO ARBORETUM
FOUNDATION



We send our best wishes to the world famous Chollipo Arboretum, South Korea for their Show Garden at RHS Malvern in the UK 7th - 10th May. During the last few months we have been building a partnership with the arboretum.

Chollipo has an outstanding collection of magnolia and camellia as well as many woody plants and trees which are featured in their Show Garden.

Our collaboration is highly valued and extends to [Botanical Art in South Korea](#).

Mr Hee-hyeok Kang from the Arboretum is currently in the UK with the team and as we publish this Newsletter they are building their garden ' Blessings From The Sea ' in tribute to its founder Carl Ferris Miller. We wish them well.

Information about the arboretum [can be found here](#). Information about their garden at RHS Malvern [can be found here](#).



Diana Croft - The Rhododendron Woods

Our Chairman, Philip, continues his theme "Celebrating our Genera in Art" and he recently visited the Greenwich Printmakers to see their exhibition "In Bloom" at their gallery in Greenwich Market until the 5th May.

Our genera is represented by this wonderful linocut image created by Diana Croft "The Rhododendron Woods" which was inspired by a painting Diana made at Leith Hill Place, Surrey, where Caroline Darwin planted the Rhododendron Wood in the mid 1800's. She explains "I love the tangled branches and dappled sunlight contrasting with the bright splashes of colour that are so much a part of the Rhododendron Wood". There are many other lovely prints on display of both flowers, gardens and nature. [Further information can be found here](#)



Ashmolean Museum Oxford

Exhibition 'In Bloom - How Plants Changed Our World'

How Plants Changed Our World" exhibition currently at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and runs to the 16th August.

Here you can see and read about the great plant explorer Joseph Hooker's journeys into the Himalayas and his discovery of various rhododendrons. Beautiful paintings of camellias as well as numerous other botanical prints and drawing of tulips to poppies and roses to peonies.

With over 100 objects and paintings, all reflecting how plants changed our world, this is a fascinating exhibition that will appeal to anyone interested in plants, flowers and nature. [For more information can be found here](#)



New rhododendron species from Vietnam

Our Facebook Forum continues to be a place where news and images are shared. This month Richard Baines, Curator at Logan Botanic Gardens shared this image of

Branch Chairs

Being a member of a branch in the Group brings about the enjoyment of meeting like minded friends and colleagues and our branch networks are a vital part of our Group mission and purpose.

We thank Colin Jones, who will now be our Branch Chair for Ireland, taking over the role which Seamus O'Brien created and to support members in Ireland. This branch has more than 40 members and is continuing to go from strength to strength. Colin is Head Gardener at Salterbridge House and Garden, Waterford.

Our International Branch now has more than 250 members across the rest of the world. We thank Connor Ryan for being international branch chair for the last year. Connor has decided to step down to concentrate on his role at the Holden Arboretum. We would like to hear from our international members on how we can best enable you all to feel connected to our work. Our visit to Ireland last week included many international members. We will take the time to review this before planning a new International Branch Chair appointment . [Please write to us here](#) with your thoughts and ideas.



The Magnolia RHS Recommended AGM Review

Thank you to those who contacted us about this review which is still planned for 2026. Our plant committee will be involved in partnership with the RHS and more details will follow about it.

RCMG Centenary Cup Weekend 30th/31st May 2026

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

Jermyns Lane

Please download this form to confirm your plans for attending and send it to us here

Friday 29th May

2.00pm to 6.00pm Staging for the Centenary Cup Competition

Saturday 30th May:

7.00am to 10.00am Competition Day Staging for the Centenary Cup

10.00 am until 11.30am Judging.

All exhibitors will be asked to leave whilst judging takes place. The Gardens will be open to all attendees and competition entrants whilst the judging takes place.

11.30am Presentations. Immediately after judging is completed the presentation of the prize certificates for each class will be made. Once judging has been completed the show will be open to the public. The winner of the Centenary Cup will be announced and presented with the Cup.

11.30am approximately. There will be **guided tours for members and their guests** with the Head Gardener, Fran Clifton and the team after the presentations.

The show will also be open to the public on Sunday 31st May from 10am until 4pm.

Tea and coffee will be available in the Courtyard Café from 8am for RCMG attendees and competition entrants. Lunch will be available in the adjacent Courtyard Café

Any questions...please address them to the secretary here

Sunday 31st May: There will be an opportunity to visit other gardens in the area. At 11:00 **Tom Clarke** Head Gardener will be taking the Group around **Exbury Gardens** at a cost of £13.50 per person. At 2.30pm **Emma Page** owner of **Lepe House Gardens** is hosting a tour of the garden with refreshments .

Branch Events for your diary

North West and North Wales Branch

6th May Ned Lomax - a tour of National Trust Bodnant Garden.

South East Branch

6th May Visit to Mark Oddy's garden

20th May Visit to Wakehurst Place

Wessex Branch

9th May Branch Show at Leonardslee Gardens - confirm attendance here to access free parking

20th - 22nd May Trip to Bremen with Ireland branch members

South West Branch



Multi coloured magnolia crosses at Caerhays Estate

We share another short informative film on magnolia from Caerhays Estate. Thank you to Charles Williams VMH for producing these films for everyone to enjoy.

Contributions to our Monthly Newsletter

Our newsletter provides news and communicates updates on our work in a timely manner for members. Thank you for your positive feedback about it. [Please send your contributions for May here](#)

**RHS**Rhododendron, Camellia
& Magnolia Group

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group · Tregoning Mill · St. Keverne · Helston, Cornwall TR12 6QE · United Kingdom