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Newsletter

December 2025

Dear Member

Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year to you all. We look forward to seeing you in 2026, hearing all your garden news and wishing you many plant successes.

Plant of the month - early flowering *Camellia japonica* cvs



'NOBILISSIMA' camellia japonica, origine : Belgique 1836

Ludovic Bécel

***Camellia japonica* 'Nobilissima' AGM**

Thank you to Ludovic Bécel for these photographs of the early flowering *Camellia japonica* growing in his garden. Above is *C. japonica* 'Nobilissima' AGM which received its AGM in 2012. Although there are two possible accounts of its origin the accepted evidence is that the cultivar was raised as a seedling by Lefèvre in Belgium 1836. Flowers from December.



The deep pink flower is Ludovic's seedling of ***C. japonica* 'Gloire de Nantes'** AGM originally receiving its AGM in 1956. An early flowering hardy cultivar which has a very old and interesting history. It starts flowering freely in Europe from November through to April.

The other plant is ***Camellia japonica* 'Furō -An'** which received an AGM in 1956. A single beautiful pink flowering cultivar which blooms from December in Europe. Sometimes confused with *C.* 'Apple Blossom' in the UK.

Archive Coordination Team

Our new Archive Team is in place and is coordinated by Kevin Pratt who is responsible in his work for plant data and assists Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd CBE at Gresgarth Garden. The team members are Rod White, Mike Roberts, Robbie Sampson and Steve Peters. More about them and their work will feature in our Bulletins and Newsletters. You can contact [Kevin by email here](#). He shared with us his archive enthusiasm.

'Working with Plant Society archive material offers a window into the past. The records, photographs, journals and correspondence capture horticultural practices of our genera, cultural values and community spirit.

Archives preserve the artistry of past gardeners, their experiments and writings allowing future generations to learn from and build upon their legacy.

Holding onto archives (and digitising them) safeguards collective memory, ensuring that knowledge is not lost to time. They provide continuity, inspire creativity and strengthen identity.

It reminds us that as gardeners we are living historians shaped by those before us"



The RCMG Bursary Fund is open for 2026 applications

Our Bursary Fund is open for applications to support research and education. Small bursaries are awarded to support research and education projects specifically relating to Rhododendrons, Camellias or Magnolias, which further our knowledge of and/or promote these three genera. This could also be a grant towards travel expenses involved in carrying out the research. Informal enquiries about your application can be made by [emailing John Marston here](#).

The above photograph was taken by our latest Bursary Fund recipient Chris Tomlin who spent a week in Bremen. This is the early flowering *Rhododendron sichotense*.



Royal Warrant for Dan Turner at Millais Nurseries

Congratulations to Dan Turner, owner of [Millais Nurseries](#), who has been granted The Royal Warrant in recognition for the provision of plants traded with and used by the Royal Household. It is awarded to a person by name for up to five years. In 2018 David Millais was awarded The Royal Warrant and we congratulate Dan on securing this great honour following the transition of ownership of the nursery to him.



***Rhododendron* 'Christmas Cheer'** (image above) is a well known seasonal rhododendron, though sometimes out a little later than Christmas.. It isn't the only *R* 'Christmas Cheer' in the register. There are at least eight other *rhododendron* with a cultivar name including Christmas.

Others with names linked to the season are *R.* 'Mid-Winter' (a *dauricum* seedling) and *Rhododendron* Robin Redbreast Group.

What about guessing *Rhododendron* N - - - and *Rhododendron* P - - - - B - - -. we also have *R. Pudding* *R. Rudolph* and *R. Brandywine*.



'YULETIDE' camellia vernalis, origine : USA 1963

Ludovic Bécel

***Camellia vernalis* 'Yuletide'** originated in Nuccio's Nurseries and was registered in 1963. Double flowering ***Camellia sasanqua* 'Christmas Rose'** (image below) is so called because the opening buds are rose - like in mid winter. It blooms very early and is a x *williamsii* x *hiemalis* cross. Other *Camellia* with seasonal names are Christmas Glory, Christmas Bells and another Christmas Cheer. What about guessing *Camellia* C - - - - - C - - - - - and *Camellia* W - - - - - C - - - - y



***Magnolia* Fairy Magnolia 'Cream'** (image below) was raised by Mark Jury and recently featured in our Yearbook. 'Shaping up *Michelia*' is an article written by Abbie Jury which describes how, through years of experience with the *Michelia* group of the *Magnolia* family, they have learned that they can treat them as they do camellias when it comes to clipping and pruning *in their climate*. All *Michelia*s have been reclassified as magnolia. For more seasonal guessing - others in the Fairy Magnolia series are

M.Fairy Magnolia 'B - - - - '

M.Fairy Magnolia 'W - - - - '

M.Fairy Magnolia 'P - - - - - P - - - - '



Thank you for your feedback and emails

Many thanks to the *Magnolia* grower Michael Gottschalk from Lunaplant.de for this beautiful image of a flower of *Magnolia grandiflora* 'DD Blanchard' following our request for photographs.

A couple of members emailed us to say you had this tree and were waiting for flowers. and here is what we have to look forward to. It is a wonderful large flowering cultivar which was our plant of the month in November.

Many thanks to those who wrote to confirm they may have the Hydon *rhododendron* 'Stanley Rivlin' we are looking for. We have followed these up and are hopeful.

Through this newsletter we are now connected to the ongoing development at the historic Hydon Nurseries plot.

Please do email us with any of your news or questions [here](#)



Northwest Branch Event 24th January 2026 2pm

The North West has a branch talk at Ness Botanic Gardens by Tracy Snell Garden Manager at RHS Bridgewater.

Please contact [the branch](#) for booking and details.

2026 UK Show Diary

The Early Camellia Competition is at RHS Rosemoor on 14th/15th March and in the New Year we will be emailing the show schedule out and placing it on our website.

Below are all the UK shows for your diaries.

- 14th/15th March Early Camellia Competition RHS Rosemoor
- 11th/12th April Main Camellia Competition, Early Rhododendron Competition and SE Branch Show RHS Wisley
- 18th April North West Branch Show at Ness Gardens
- 25th/26th April Main Rhododendron Competition RHS Rosemoor
- 9th May Wessex Branch Show at Leonardslee Gardens
- 30th/31st May RCMG Centenary Cup Sir Harold Hillier Gardens



**RHS**Rhododendron, Camellia
& Magnolia Group

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