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Newsletter

January 2026

Dear Member

Plants of the Month

***Camellia* 'Cornish Snow' and *Camellia* 'Winton'**

Raised at Caerhays in Cornwall in 1948, the hybrid *Camellia* 'Cornish Snow' flowers for most of winter into early spring. It is perfect to grow in the early weeks of a new year. *C. cuspidata* is the seed parent and *C. saluenensis* the pollen parent. It was awarded an AGM in 1993. Pink in bud, a white flower with a hint of pink on the outside and ideal for the smaller garden.



Camellia 'Cornish Snow' AGM

Camellia 'Winton', image below, is a pink form of the same cross. Carmine pink in bud, almond pink in flower with lots of buds at this time of year. Equally good as



Camellia 'Winton'

Three weeks ago Charles Williams VMH at Caerhays Estate [made this video](#) which describes *Camellia* 'Winton'. He also describes another Caerhays hybrid *Camellia* 'Cornish Snow Michael' named after Charles Michael, their Head Gardener.



The Great Seed Swop
Saturday 31st January 10.00am - 3.00pm
The Garden Room, Hilltop RHS Wisley

donated by our members and other plant societies and hundreds of packets from Wisley's plant centre. An opportunity to meet many like-minded friends from horticultural groups, clubs and societies. Throughout the day, visitors can bring and swap their seeds or take seeds in return for a donation.

The RHS Seed Workroom will be open for behind the scenes tours and education.

There are a series of seed related talks starting at 10.45am.

For more information [click here](#).

Resilience and hope after a month of storms

This month we pay tribute to the resilience and magnificent efforts of gardeners in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres who have faced challenging weather conditions.

Across the UK, especially in the South West and Northern Ireland, three named storms brought challenging weather conditions, with trees and plants coming down. After severe winds came a week of dangerous floods. It has been a very wet, muddy and windy few weeks.

On social media we have followed how the teams have coped and how quickly gardens re opened, ready for Spring. We send a message of support and thank them all. It seems that magnolia have been resilient.

These challenges open up opportunities and learning and the shelter belt tree plantings did their job. The images have been dramatic, hopeful and inspiring as they look to the future.

Trewithen Gardens in Cornwall posted on social media on 12th January "*A glimmer of hope from nature. Our first Asiatic Magnolia is about to flower. I have recorded the first flowering of this seedling tree of M. campbellii subsp. mollicomata every year since 2004 and its average flowering date is the third week of January, so about average this year. Magnolia are VERY wind firm, all of ours are intact and will put on their usual spring display*"

Another member, Darren Dickey, Head Gardener at Trebah Garden in Cornwall shared [this video on social media which tells the story - and the way in which the garden manages the evolution of trees](#), the upside of light and space. It does have sound and you may need to adjust your settings for it. It is uplifting and positive.



***Rhododendron* 'Trebah Gem'**

Trebah Garden Launches Initiative to Preserve Rare Heritage Rhododendrons - can you help?

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

Of particular importance to Trebah is *Rhododendron arboreum*. First discovered in 1799 and introduced to the UK in 1811, its true potential was realised through later hybridisation work, much of it led by Richard Gill. Gill established a celebrated rhododendron nursery . His nursery supplied an exceptional range of species and hybrids to gardens across the UK and overseas.

Trebah's sheltered valley and mild Cornish climate made it an ideal testing ground for many of Gill's plants, some of which were untried in Britain at the time. Several

The significance of Trebah's collection was recorded in 1924 by naturalist John Guille Millais, son of Pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais, who described his visit to the garden and three exceptional cultivars first associated with Trebah.

Today, of the three rhododendrons originally highlighted by Millais - 'Edmondii', 'Trebianum' and 'Trebah Gem'- only 'Trebah Gem' is currently identified in the garden. Trebah's Garden Committee has initiated a programme of research, identification and propagation to re-establish these plants so they can once again be enjoyed by visitors.

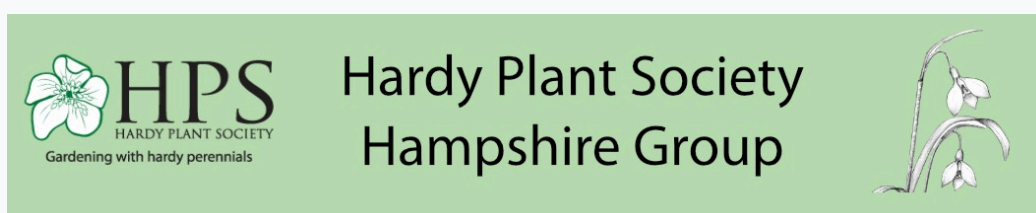
The work is being led by John Lanyon, former Head Gardener at several major National Trust gardens in Cornwall, alongside his son Edwin. Their expertise continues Trebah's long tradition of plant exploration and horticultural leadership. If you know where these two cultivars may be located please contact Trebah Garden directly [or mail us here](#).

Many thanks to Darren Dicky, Head Gardener Trebah Garden and James Lewis for this text and the above image of *Rhododendron* 'Trebah Gem'.



Philippe de Spoelberch VMM
Webinar by the Magnolia Society International
28th February 18.00 CET

Longtime Magnolia Society International member, RCMG member and Gresham Award Recipient, Philippe de Spoelberch will present on magnolia cultivation and growing at the [Arboretum Wespelaar](#) and Herkenrode (Belgium) . Registration details will soon be posted for this webinar on the MSI [website here](#) and on their social media sites.



Charles Williams VMH
A Talk on The Origins of *Camellia x williamsii*

is synonymous with camellias. His great-grandfather created the original *Camellia x williamsii* in the 1920s and Charles has carried that legacy forward, developing award-winning magnolias, rhododendrons, and camellias of his own.

Charles is a member of the RCMG Plant Committee and The Hampshire Group has extended an invitation to our members. We thank Martin Ward, the Chairman for this.

This talk will be **live-streamed** on Zoom by Charles from a Church Hall. If you live locally in Hampshire, you can either come to the hall (St Boniface Church Hall, Hursley Rd, Chandler's Ford, SO53 2FT) to listen to him there, or watch it at home. Group President, Roy Lancaster VMH will introduce Charles.

The cost for visitors (non-Hampshire Group Members) is £6.00 The talk starts at 14.30 GMT and the hall/and streaming will be open from 14.00 GMT

For more details and [to book this talk click here](#)

American Camellia Society National Convention 2026

This will be held between the 19th - 22nd February in Charleston, hosted by the Coastal Carolina Society. [Here is the itinerary of garden visits and talks.](#) Watch for the posts on social media if you are not attending.

Thank you for your photographs and emails

Thank you for sending your emails and photographs to us. The editors and publications team value receiving them. If you have any news you would like included in our Newsletter or Bulletin, please [send it here](#)

The image below could be of the largest *Rhododendron* 'Christmas Cheer' in the UK. Stood beside it is our member Tom Coward, Head Gardener at [Gravetye Manor](#) in Sussex. With thanks to Jim Gardiner VMH for sending this to us. It was taken in February 2024 at Gravetye Manor when in full flower. A photograph full of cheer in more ways than one.



North West Branch

7th March Paul Cook RHS Harlow Carr - Harlow Carr woodland - planning for the future and preserving historic collections. A talk at Ness Botanic Garden.

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

Wessex Branch

6th March Tour of the camellia collection at Nymans NT Garden in Sussex followed by a visit to High Beeches Garden nearby.

18th March Private garden visit - hosts are the Sampsons in Surrey.

20th-22nd May Joint visit to Bremen, Germany with Irish Branch members

South East Branch

18th April Private garden visit - hosts are the Wottens in Kent.

To book for branch events please contact branch chairs. Details on [our website here](#)

The RGMG Tour of Ireland Gardens 12th - 16th April is fully booked.

RHS Competitions

RHS Early Camellia Competition – Rosemoor 14/15 March

RHS Main Camellia Competition – Wisley 11/12 April

RHS Early Rhododendron Competition – Wisley 11/12 April

RHS Main Spring Ornamental Plant Competition – 11/12 April

RHS Main Rhododendron Competition – Rosemoor 25/26 April

Harlow Carr Rhododendron Competition – Harlow Carr 2/3 May

Autumn Ornamental Plant Competition - Hyde Hall 2/4 October

Branch Competitions

SW Branch Early Magnolia Competition – Rosemoor 14/15 March

SW Branch Ornamental Plants Competition – Rosemoor 14/15 March

SW Branch Rhododendron Competition – Rosemoor 14/15 March

NW & N Wales Branch Show – Ness Botanic Gardens 18 April

SW Branch Camellia Competition – Rosemoor 25/26 April

SW Branch Main Magnolia Competition – Rosemoor 25/26 April

SW Branch Floral Display Competition – Rosemoor 25/26 April

Wessex Branch Flower Show – Leonardslee 9 May

Group Competitions

Centenary Cup Competition – Sir Harold Hiller Gardens, Romsey 30/31 May

For information and show schedules please [email here](#)

Bulletin 149 was posted a week ago to members who receive a print version.
Many thanks to all those who contributed to it and it will arrive with you soon.
If you have not yet renewed your membership, please do so as soon as you can [here](#)



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