

[View this email in your browser](#)



Newsletter

November 2025

Dear Member

Tree of the month
Magnolia grandiflora
‘DD Blanchard’

A year ago today, members were taken to see this tree at RHS Wisley by Jack Aldridge. Wisley has had the National Collection of *Magnolia grandiflora* cvs (28 cvs and 29 taxa) since 2022.

Early plantings date from Jim Gardiner VMH and Matthew Pottage, former curators. Matthew's focus included foliage and indumentum colour which he wrote about in the RCMG 2023 Yearbook article *Magnolia grandiflora* at RHS Wisley.

During National Tree Week in the UK it seems fitting to choose a tree for foliage.

We thank Jack for sending this photograph of the copper coloured indumentum.

He says that the *Magnolia grandiflora* collection has been resilient to the high summer heat.

This tree was planted by the RHS Wisley Diploma students of 2019 - 2021.

Magnolia grandiflora ‘DD Blanchard’ is Jack's pick of all the magnolia cultivars for its fabulous foliage.



Magnolia grandiflora 'DD Blanchard' was selected for its compact, pyramidal habit and copper coloured indumentum.

It was propagated at Robbins Nursery in 1960 from a tree growing in the garden of Mr D D Blanchard of Wallace, North Carolina.

We thank Dave West our member and Head of Propagation at Hortus Loci for taking another beautiful image of the foliage below on the visit last year.

This tree has yet to flower at Wisley and if you have images of its flowers it would be great to see them. [Please contact us here](#)



As you are all aware, both our Yearbook and Bulletin Editors stood down at the last AGM, Unfortunately no volunteers came forward to take on either of these roles.

Therefore, it is with extreme gratitude and many thanks to Sian Thomas, for all her time and effort putting together our recent bulletin, which you will all have hopefully received and enjoyed reading. [Bulletin 148 can be opened by clicking here](#)

Sian has also very kindly agreed to work on our 2026 yearbook, which I am sure will come as a huge relief to everyone. We are currently on track to publish this next summer.

For our future bulletins, we are exploring potential options, but this is also very much dependent on contributions for articles and related images from our members. You don't have to be a Nobel Prize winner, and we have a publications team that can help edit and check contributions submitted for inclusion in the bulletin.

Please therefore, do consider writing an article, maybe you are a head gardener, own a nursery or just want to share your passion for our genera. Maybe you have visited some exceptional gardens or read an interesting new book. The possibilities are endless! We would like to publish a Bulletin early in the New Year and for this to happen we need your copy in the next two weeks please. [Email it to us here](#)

So, with many thanks again to Sian, and we very much look forward to doing everything we can to continue publishing both our bulletins and our yearbook.

Philip Eastell

Chairman



Plant collections proposed from South West England for the RHS Herbarium Wisley

This month we have been asked to support the RHS Herbarium at Wisley which is proposing to collect examples of the hundreds of plants being cultivated in the

The RHS Herbarium at present is rather South East biased, so it is proposed to widen the collection with samples from the South West Peninsula, whose climate is such that a very wide variety of plants are grown.

An application has been submitted by the RHS to The National Lottery Heritage Fund in the UK for a grant to support this important project, which we hope will be successful. A letter of support to this application has been included from the RCMG. The RHS 1851 Royal Commission Herbarium is the largest in the UK dedicated to ornamental plants and contains more than 92,000 specimens, now available online. More information about the work of the [RHS Herbarium can be found by clicking this link here.](#)



The Russell - Cotes Art Gallery and Museum Japanese Garden renovation project

The Russell- Cotes Art Gallery and Museum in Bournemouth, Hampshire UK, is home to the incredible collection of art and objects collected by Sir Merton and Lady Anne Russell-Cotes on their travels around the world, and in 1885 they visited Japan for around seven weeks.

This inspired them to create a Japanese Garden in 1901.

The Museum and Garden was formally opened to the public in March 1922 following the death of Lady Anne (1920) and Sir Merton (1921). It is now a registered charity.

The Japanese Garden is now in need of some restoration with suitable planting of appropriate *Azaleas* and *Rhododendrons*. Our chairman Philip Eastell visited the Art Gallery and Gardens this month and met the team there to offer help with their project

All offers of assistance, either by way of plants or financial donations will be very gratefully received.



Plant Committee News

Magnolia Review in 2026

The Plant Committee has several exciting upcoming projects.

Following the Evergreen Azalea review earlier this year, the RHS Woody Expert Group and ourselves will be conducting a review of *Magnolia* next year.

The last Round Table review of *Magnolia* was held in 2012. The Plant Committee are keen to involve our members. Please let us know if you would like to play a part by emailing us [here](#). More information will follow in our newsletters.

Magnolia 'Spectrum' above (*liliflora* 'Nigra' x *sprengeri* var *sprengeri* 'Diva') was raised by William Kosar of the US National Arboretum in 1963. It received the RHS Award of Garden Merit in 2012.

RCMG Yearbook

The 2026 Yearbook is now in production to be published in summer 2026.

We are asking for proposals for our 2027 and 2028 Yearbooks. We have had a good response so far and thank you to those who have shared insights and sent in articles. Please send your ideas - even if you cannot write these yourself, tell us what you would like to see. [Send the ideas you have here](#).

This gives an opportunity for a year or more of planning and production to take into account the season changes across the world and the photographs required.



A professional milestone

We congratulate our chair of the South East Branch on reaching a professional milestone in his career. Steve Peters has been elected to the Chartered Institute of Horticulture with the titled addition of MCIHort now added to his name.

Rhododendron augustinii (image above) is his favourite rhododendron.

Steve said of his election

“ It is a professional milestone that I regard with deep gratitude and quiet pride. To be welcomed into the CIH is not only a personal honour but also a recognition of the value we hold dear across our sector: stewardship, scientific rigour and the nurturing of horticultural excellence.

As South East Branch Chairman of the RCMG under the patronage of His Majesty King Charles III, I see this accolade as a bridge between heritage and innovation. It affirms the standards of curatorial care, inclusive education, lifelong learning and collaborative conservation, especially in the context of our plant genera and the wider cultural landscapes we serve with pride and honour.

An accolade such as this affirms these standards which we all uphold as passionate gardeners.”



Conservation of a Hydon hybrid

We would like your help to find a Hydon hybrid and one of its parents.

Hydon Nursery raised a number of *R yakushimanum* hybrids which were sent into The RHS Trial of *Rhododendron yakushimanum* and hybrids in 1996.

Rhododendron yakushimanum 'Koichira Wada', image above, is the parent of many hybrids and was the benchmark for the trial.

One not listed in the trial was *R. 'Stanley Rivlin'* which Arthur George named after an eminent British surgeon he knew well. *Rhododendron* 'Stanley Rivlin' (*R. yakushimanum* x *R. 'Royal Blood'*) was hybridised, named and then registered by Arthur George in 1972.

It is a strong red in bud, opening paler with outside flushed deep purplish pink, densely spotted crimson.

R 'Royal Blood' was raised by Francis Hanger in 1947 and then named and registered by the RHS in 1954. It is a deep campanulate strong red.

If you have either *R. 'Stanley Rivlin'* or its parent *R 'Royal Blood'* please contact us. It would mean a lot to Stanley's family.

International Dendrology Society Winter Webinar Series

The annual series of Zoom Webinars by the IDS has begun and will run fortnightly, on Wednesday evenings at 18:00 hrs GMT over Autumn /Winter months 2025- 2026.

Members and Guests are invited to join the presentations live. Whilst no charge is made for the webinar we ask that you use the donate button on the IDS website to make a donation for it.

links to booking can be found here.

A recording will be available on the IDS website for a short period following. Some of our members are speaking at these webinars and upcoming highlights are:



Early flowering *Camellia x williamsii* 'Gwavas'

2026 UK Show Diary

The first of the shows for 2026 is now weeks away. The Early Camellia Competition is at RHS Rosemoor on 14th/15th March. 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



Recommended Gardens

We need your help to add gardens to the Recommended Garden Scheme.

Our website has a collection of Recommended Gardens, which you can explore [here](#).

These are gardens that have each been recommended by at least two of our members as being worth visiting to see interesting collections of *Rhododendrons*, *Camellias* or *Magnolias*. This collection of gardens is not just for our members - we want everyone to be able to find interesting gardens near them, or where they may be travelling.

We currently have 140 gardens, and we want more. You will see that most are well known gardens, and mostly from the UK, though there are also good showings for Ireland and North America.

We would really like to have many more gardens across all geographic areas.

We would also like more of the less well known gardens, including smaller or privately owned, or those only open to the public occasionally (for instance under the National Garden Scheme, in the UK).

Please take a look at the gardens that are already on the list, and tell us about any of your favourite *Rhododendron*, *Camellia* or *Magnolia* gardens that are not there.

Please send your recommendation even if you don't know of another member who would also do so- someone may independently recommend it, or we might be able to help.

If you have any questions about the Recommended Gardens scheme, then please [email Nick Butler](#) the scheme coordinator.

December Newsletter

them here.



RHS

Rhododendron, Camellia
& Magnolia Group

Copyright (C) 2025 Rhododendron Camellia Magnolia Group . All rights reserved.

This email was sent to webmaster@rhodogroup-rhs.org

[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