



# Newsletter

## of the American Magnolia Society

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2150 Woodward Avenue  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich. 48013  
Editor: John M. Fogg, Jr.  
Barnes Arboretum, Merion, Pa.

## The Goddess of Changyang Hsien

PHILIP J. SAVAGE, JR.  
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

IN THE LOVELY WOODLAND GARDEN OF CAERHAYS, near St. Austell, in Cornwall, grows a forty-five foot *Magnolia* that is both a delight and a puzzle to the horticultural world. Appropriately named *M. Sprengeri*, 'Diva', or Goddess, by Dr. Otto Stapf, this beautiful tree has a story that, although often told, will bear brief repeating here.

In the autumn of 1900, Dr. Ernest H. Wilson sent to his employers, the nursery firm of Veitch and Sons, a consignment of seeds collected in the woods around Changyang Hsien, a village "of the fourth class," just south of Ichang, in western Hupeh province, China.

When received in England, the various packets of seed were sown and cared for with the skill of long experience, each genus being treated according to its known needs, and in time a small number of *Magnolia* seedlings from Wilson's seed number 688 were lined out and growing at the Veitch nursery of Coombe Wood.

Sir Harry J. Veitch retired from business in 1913, and a liquidation sale being held at Coombe Wood, its treasures found their way to many great English gardens. Of the little row of *Magnolias* from seed packet number 688, one went to Caerhays, two to Bodnant and three to Kew. No one knows where the rest went, or indeed if their number was ever greater than six. When delivered, they carried the label *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens*, and as such they grew to flowering age.

The plants that went to Kew and Bodnant quickly developed an upright and columnar, but bushy, habit of growth and soon flowered, without causing any great excitement. The blossoms were white, with a faint pink stripe outside, and stood erect on the terminal twigs. Although they showed twelve tepals, as against the nine of *M. denudata*, their flowers lacked the voluptuous figure and rich scent of the latter species.

Even before it flowered, the Caerhays tree was notably different from the other five. A super-symmetrical grower, strongly treelike but attractively spreading, it gave every sign of developing into an outstanding specimen. Then one day in late March it flowered, and it was evident at once that here was something very special. Held upright on the branch tips, the flowers were beautifully presented. The well proportioned tepals had great substance, and when fully open, were an attractive saucer shape. Crimson pink on the outside, lighter pink within, their color was judged as good as all but the best forms of *M. Campbellii*. Each year thereafter produced a finer spectacle, and as an added bonus, the tree began to produce good seed, which Mr. J. C. Williams collected and sowed, generously giving seedlings to his many friends.

When the first flowers of this Caerhays marvel reached his hands, Dr. Otto Stapf realized he was examining a new species. Ernest Wilson, to everyone's surprise, strongly disagreed. Even after seeing the Caerhays tree in flower, Wilson maintained that the plant was "merely the wild type of the common Yulan tree." Dr. Alfred Rehder concurred with Wilson, and all specimens of pink or red flower color appear as *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens* in *Plantae Wilsonianae*.

During preparation of his book "Magnolias," the first real attempt at a monograph of the genus, Mr. J. G. Millais received a letter from curator W. J. Bean, of Kew. Dr. Bean wrote, in part: "I quite agree with you that the Caerhays *Magnolia* is distinct from the old *M. conspicua*, in fact, I told Wilson as much the last time he was here. His reply was that in English gardens we do not know the true wild *conspicua*, only the plant that has been developed by the Chinese during hundreds of year cultivation." (It should be remembered that the *conspicua* vs. *denudata* controversy among botanists was going on at that time, and is not really settled today.)

The above confusion appeared to present no problem to John Millais, an expert in the confusion game himself. Accordingly, in his book, he merely described the Caerhays tree as *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens* in one sub-chapter, and as *M. Diva* in another, and just to keep his readers on their toes, he made the descriptions different.





*Magnolia Sprengeri* 'Diva', from G. H. Johnstone,  
"Asiatic Magnolias in Cultivation"

From the standpoint of later Magnoliaphiles, the unfortunate thing about these misunderstandings is that the so-called *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens*, a name applied to two distinct species, was considered to be safely "in cultivation," and no further attempt was made to send home seed, or select outstanding forms of either the wild Magnolias in Hupeh, or the plant cultivated in Japan as *M. conspicua* var. *purpurascens*, with which they were confused. This latter form, whose actual existence has often been doubted, was introduced into America from Japan by the late Mr. Kosaku Sawada only within the last thirty years, and by Mr. K. Wada to England.

There are many characteristics of the genus *Magnolia* that must have dampened the enthusiasm of plant hunters. Birds quickly clean up ripe *Magnolia* fruits, and these are formed on the terminal twig tips of large, brittle-wooded mountain trees. What fruits are collected must be scoured of pulp quickly and the cleaned seed kept cool and moist until planted. When prolonged storage and ocean shipping were required, the prognosis of ultimate germination must have been no greater than five percent, if indeed that high. After all this, the few plants produced might take twenty-five years to flower. A plant collector could stock a large nursery with *Rhododendrons* at a fraction of the labor and cost required for ten of the tree-type Magnolias. Perhaps this explains why Wilson, in his two-volume edition of "A Naturalist in Western China," mentions Magnolias four times, in over four hundred pages, and each time only to say, "*Magnolia officinalis* grown hereabouts for its bark." *Spiraea* is mentioned fourteen times and *Lonicera* sixteen, in the two volumes. I can recall being outraged about this at age fourteen, when I received the books for a birthday present.

On Ernest Wilson's first two trips to China, in the interest of the Veitch firm, he appears to have followed almost step by step the progress of the great French Missionary-Zoologist, Père Armand David, thirty-two years before. David's correspondence and herbarium specimens, many of the latter still unclassified at that date, must have saved Wilson a great deal of time, and allowed him to go directly to such remaining forested areas as Changyang Hsien.

The classic highway on which plant collectors, zoologists, missionaries and explorers entered the interior of China, was up the broad and busy Yangtze to the first of its four famous limestone gorges. Here the treaty port of Ichang, with a cosmopolitan foreign community, offered facilities for transferring cargo from the big steamers of the lower river to shallow draft boats capable of navigating the rapids and whirlpools of the great gorges to the west. Here also rose the eastern foothills of the continuous mountain ranges that still farther west encircle the "redbasin" of Szechwan, even at that time one of the most densely populated and productive areas in the world.

Dr. Augustine Henry spent several years, from 1882 to 1889, in the neighborhood of Ichang, where he was stationed as an assistant medical officer to the European Community. He is credited with the discovery of twenty-three new genera, and over five hundred new species of plants. Most of his specimens went to Kew, although the Arnold Arboretum received a good number, including Magnolias, which Dr. Alfred Rehder later identified as *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens*. They are now annotated *M. Sprengeri*, I have been told.

Antwerp E. Pratt, a zoologist, arrived at Ichang in 1887 with his entire family. He met Augustine Henry, and spent the fall of that year trapping and observing around Changyang Hsien. The following spring and summer he worked in the same area, which gives an idea of its scientific interest, and he described the flora and fauna, in two chapters of his interesting book, "To The Snows Of Tibet Through China." Although Pratt goes into considerable detail of some flowering plants, I do not find any mention of Magnolias.

When Ernest Wilson arrived at Ichang in 1899, he had already visited with Augustine Henry in England, and received many pointers on the flora of that part of Hupeh. Wilson had been sent to China primarily to collect seeds, rather than herbarium specimens, though he also prepared his share of the latter for the firm of Veitch, and on two later trips for the Arnold Arboretum.

Twenty years later, in a letter to John Millais, Wilson wrote that the tree he called *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens*, "is the common *Magnolia* of western Hupeh and eastern Szechwan, and is fairly plentiful in moist woods and thickets between 1000-1800 m. altitude. The flowers are saucer-shaped, and vary from rose-red without to rose or pale pink within. The stamens and carpels are also rose red in color. In early April, this *Magnolia* with its handsome, fragrant flowers is a striking object in the Woodland landscape." He then adds the ominous note, "The bark, like that of allied species, is valued as a drug known as Mu Pi." Wilson mentioned that in addition to the white Yulan, the "variety with reddish pink flowers has been long cultivated in China, and also in Japan."

If Augustine Henry, Antwerp Pratt, Ernest Wilson and many others, in what must have been a thorough and scholarly sifting of the flora around Changyang Hsien, did not think the "sixty-five foot trees covered with reddish pink flowers," were sufficiently exciting to make any great hullabaloo about, even to the extent of one special letter to the Veitch firm, or to Kew, or one photograph to the Arnold Arboretum, then we are left with the even more tormenting thought that around the turn of the century such Magnolias were indeed common-place in Hupeh and Eastern



Szechwan, and everybody thought everybody knew about them.

It is perfectly true that *M. denudata* is a variable species. The form introduced to England by Sir Joseph Banks in 1779 appears to have been a long-domesticated strain of Yulan, cultivated for perhaps two thousand years and with its genes "fixed," to breed true, like the Fameuse Snow Apple. This particular form of Yulan is said to be growing in temple grounds all over China, even in Yunnan province where the even more spectacular *M. Campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata* abounds as a native. It appears there is a religious significance attached to that form of Yulan, not just any nice plant of wild *M. denudata*. As another example, there are many prettier *Viburnums* in China, but *V. fragrans* is the "temple" *Viburnum*.

Professor Alfred Rehder regarded the Kiu Ling mountains in Kiangsi as the center of distribution of the typical, or wild *M. denudata*. This is not far from the Lu Shan Botanic Gardens where fellow A.M.S. member Gus Krossa obtained his seed of *M. cylindrica* back in the thirties. The Lu Shan gardens are reported being enlarged and rebuilt after great destruction during and after World War II.

The mysterious *M. amoena* is described as having a pink flower, with nine tepals, the type being collected in N.W. Chekiang, in the range of *M. denudata*. It is difficult to believe it is distinct.

In "Asiatic Magnolias In Cultivation," the late Mr. G. H. Johnstone calls attention to herbarium specimens of *M. denudata* at Kew, collected in Southern Anhwei, having large "kite-shaped" leaves, with the apex emarginate, or notched, this last being considered a characteristic of *M. Sargentiana*, not var. *robusta*. Surely a variable species.

In personal correspondence of twenty years ago, the late Arthur Sowerby told me that, "We saw (circa 1914) trees of *M. conspicua* in bloom on the Hills two days' pony ride south of the rail terminus at Mien-Chih Hsien. (In Western Honan). This would be almost the exact area where the Belgian railroad expert and botanist, Joseph Hers, collected specimens of *Magnolia* in the early twenties, and sent them to the Arnold Arboretum, where they were identified as *M. denudata* var. *purpurascens*. Dr. Otto Stapf seems later to have regarded these Honan Magnolias as conspecific with the Changyang Hsien specimens of Henry and Wilson. If justified, this would extend the range of *M. Sprengeri* some two hundred and seventy-five miles to the northward, into a considerably colder, and a drier, climate zone.

Curiosity prompted me to write the Arnold Arboretum recently, to ask if the *Magnolia* specimens sent to them by Joseph Hers from the neighborhood of Sunghsien, in western Honan, show nine tepals or twelve. Dr. Gordon De-Wolf, Jr., was kind enough to inform me that: "We have no flowering material labeled either *M. denudata* or *M. Sprengeri* from Hers. All his collections are either sterile or fruiting." It may still be possible to count the tepals scars on the fruiting specimens at some late date.

The center of the area of Hers's *Magnolia* collections is at 34°0' N, 112°30' E. It is on or close to the 30 F. January isotherm, which would be very roughly equivalent to Zone V in the United States. Since Sunghsien is in an area of low to medium mountains (up to a maximum of 7874 ft.), it would be expected that *Magnolias* native to the section would have ample winter hardiness for Boston,

Mass., Rochester, N. Y., or let us just say, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. (The subjectiveness of my research is here embarrassingly apparent).

If Stapf was correct in assigning these Honan specimens to *M. Sprengeri*, then that species is, or was, native to a range, extending farther north than any other *Magnolia*, to my knowledge, belonging to the elite section *Yulania*. Although I would be delighted to learn this to be true, I am willing to hazard an uneducated guess that Hers's specimens are actually *M. denudata* in various color forms. This would help to explain the surprising hardiness of *M. denudata* cultivars, which a center of origin in sub-tropical Kiangsi does not.

The earliest true civilizations of China seem to have developed in the wide valley of the Hwang Ho. The geographical heartland of the Shang, Chou, and Ch'in empires, in northern Honan, is within fifty or sixty miles of the *Magnolias* observed by Sowerby and Hers. These three dynasties together are thought to have prospered for two thousand years, and under them great progress was made in the methods of farming and manufacturing, the domestication of animals and plants, and the religion of ancestor worship that has persisted in north China (itself named for the Ch'in dynasty), to the present day. It is inconceivable that this vigorous and artistic people, with their evident fascination for animals, plants and nature, should not have been delighted with their wild *Magnolia* trees, and have taken them into cultivation.

One of the factors that has muddled the waters for botanists attempting to outline the native ranges of various Asiatic *Magnolias* is the evident occurrence of feral populations of such long domesticated species as *liliflora*, and probably even *denudata*. Indeed, the bees may well have produced the *Soulangiana* hybrid both in China and Japan centuries before the Chevalier of Fromont produced it in his garden near Paris. Most travelers in China mention the patches of woodland that commonly surround temples. Many of these trees are non-native species having religious significance, and plant hunters had constantly to



*Magnolia Sprengeri* 'Diva' at the U. S. National Arboretum, Washington, D. C.  
Photo: Dr. John M. Fogg, Jr.



guard against such non-native seed and specimens in even the remote areas.

Although Ernest Wilson, writing many years after his final farewell to China, maintained that trees producing flowers of the type and color of the 'Diva' were the "common *Magnolia*" of western Hupeh and eastern Szechwan, there were many who took his statement "with a grain of salt." There was considerable support for these doubts.

First: No one, including Wilson himself, seems to have raved about, or in fact mentioned, beautiful, large, pink flowering *Magnolia* trees in Hupeh until after the Caerhays plant had bloomed.

Second: Five out of the six trees grown from seed number 688 had unexceptional white flowers.

Third: Pampanini's description of the type specimen of *M. Sprengeri*, noted with considerable charity by Stapf as "Discordant," would fit a *Magnolia* of section *Buergeria* such as *cylindrica* or perhaps *Biondii*, much better than the trees to which this was ultimately "force-fitted."

Fourth: Seed from the Caerhays tree has produced a large proportion of offspring having flowers inferior to, and in some cases little resembling, its own.

Fifth: Plants of the type of the Caerhays tree were not known in cultivation in Japan, or as far as can be determined, in China, and I have not found them figured or photographed by Chinese botanists.

Other than the flowers, there are many noticeable differences between *M. denudata* and *M. Sprengeri* 'Diva'. The stout first year twigs of the former are dark chocolate brown, while the more slender twigs of 'Diva' are a waxy apple green. Leaf buds differ in shape, color and pubescence, while the leaves themselves are very distinct. On uncrowded plants of *M. denudata*, the main branches typically leave the trunk at an acute angle, grow up, then out, then again up, in a double curve. 'Diva's' branches typically leave the trunk at nearly a right angle, and grow out and up in a single, even arc, like the arms of a candelabrum. Add to this the fact that 'Diva' grows at a considerably greater rate than any of the *denudata* forms, the original tree having reached forty feet in its first fifty years, and it is indeed difficult to see how an experienced field botanist could mistake the two.

I have two young plants of *M. Sargentiana* in tubs, and two very small plants of *M. Sprengeri* var. *elongata*. In feel and appearance of leaf, color of branchlets, and habit of growth, *M. Sargentiana* seems to me much closer to 'Diva', than the latter is to *M. Sprengeri* var. *elongata*. A photograph of a wild sapling of *M. Sargentiana* taken by E. H. Wilson on Mount Wa, in Szechwan, and reproduced as Fig. 11 in Johnstone's book, illustrates its branching habit very well. In number of tepals (12), and in color, the flowers of *M. Sargentiana* and *M. 'Diva'* must be very similar. Only in their poise on the twig tips, and in the substance of the tepals themselves, is there a radical difference.

Many, if not most, of the *Magnolias* in western Szechwan and Sikang have flowers that droop below the horizontal when fully open. Not only *M. Sargentiana*, but *Dawsoniana*, the puzzling var. *robusta*, *Wilsonii* and *sinensis* display this upside down posture. Even on the easternmost forms of *M. Campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata*, there is a tendency for the outer row of tepals to be flaccid and drooping.

Perhaps the constant downpour of rain, during the flowering season in those very wet areas has made it advantageous for a large flower to hang upside down, and thus protect its pollen with a rain-shedding roof of tepals. All of us can recall the soggy mess of rain-soaked pollen, and anthers, in the bottom of the Yulan's crisp, upright cups after a spring shower.

Is it not possible that *M. 'Diva'* represents an eastern form of *M. Sargentiana*, with the upright flowers and less lush growth to be expected in a drier habitat?

In a beautifully illustrated article in the July, 1966, Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, Mr. F. Julian Williams, owner of Caerhays, gives a possible clue to the variations in *M. 'Diva'* seedlings previously mentioned. Mr. Williams writes, in part: "The first seed distributed from here in 1931 from the *Sprengeri* 'Diva' did disappoint, and I suspect for two reasons:

(A) that the bees did a little bit of crossing on their

Indeed, it would appear that the 'Diva' of the garden at Caerhays is as much a nymph as a goddess. In "Asiatic *Magnolias* In Cultivation," Mr. George Johnstone wrote, in part: "Mr. J. C. Williams raised many seedlings from this unique plant, which, with his well-remembered generosity were widely distributed, but these so far proved disappointing in that the flowers have not inherited the lovely rose-pink color of the seed parent, some being stained with purple, while others are nearly white. The inference is that these seedling plants are of hybrid origin—perhaps with *M. × Soulangeana* 'Alba Superba', a plant of which used to be growing very near the parent tree. The hybridity of some of these seedlings is further confirmed by the flowers being composed of obviously distinct 'sepals' and 'petals,' mostly nine in number, but sometimes eleven."

As an indication that 'Diva' is not always so wanton, Mr. Michael Haworth Booth, in his fine book, "Effective Flowering Shrubs," mentions another offspring known as "Wakehurst Seedling," which he describes as having "deeper colored" flowers. In addition, on April 18, '63, the Royal Horticultural Society presented an Award of Merit to the late Lord Aberconway, and to Bodnant, "for *M. Sprengeri* 'Claret Cup', as a hardy flowering tree." A fine color photograph, reproduced in the Nov. 63 Journal, shows this handsome clone in its bright, rose pink color. Back in the March, 1940, Journal, Lord Aberconway wrote of *Magnolias* as "Features of My Garden," and mentioned: "A seedling plant of *M. Sprengeri* var. 'Diva', generously sent to Bodnant from Caerhays a foot high in 1928, has now grown to be a tree of a beautiful symmetrical shape, upright in habit. It is growing vigorously and has attained a height of over twenty feet, but has not yet flowered." When it did, *M. 'Claret Cup'* won an Award of Merit.

I have six plants of *M. Sprengeri* 'Diva' growing here in Michigan, where winter lows of minus 15° F. are commonly recorded, and open ground freezes to a depth of three feet. The plants range in age from two to ten years, and in height from two to nine feet. As it happens, three are own-root plants, three are grafted and the former are slightly the more vigorous. These plants came from four commercial sources, and two of them are noticeably different in leafage from the other four. Tiny appressed hairs give a "fine sandpaper" feel to the leaf surface of these two, like leaves of *M. denudata*, while the rest have the



smoothness of a bar of (dry) toilet soap. All have been hardy to fifteen below zero, but the sandpaper type breaks bud a week later than the other, and has been less damaged by the murderous, and freakish mid-May frosts of '67 and '68. One tree has bloomed, and that of the glabrous-leaved type, producing flowers of moderate size and dark pink color. I was disappointed in the fragrance, an undistinguished "baby talcum" scent, and wondered if the seldom-mentioned fragrance of *M. Sargentiana* was similar enough to offer another clue to close relationship. Bark and twigs of each of the above types are identical. Time will tell the true form.

I don't believe 'Diva' is quite hardy enough for general planting this far north, although it may prove to be. In this latitude it blooms around May 1, and has demonstrated a winter hardiness somewhat greater than that of *M. macrophylla*, a forty-year-old tree of which grows at Ann Arbor, Michigan, where it suffers far more from the gymnastic activities of college students than from winter cold. Very few trees ranging only south of the Yangtze, regardless of altitude, will grow here at all, and 'Diva's' toughness would indicate that Changyang Hsien is, or was, one of the southernmost stations of a generally more northern distribution, perhaps running along the Ta Pa mountain chain to the southern spurs of the Tsin Ling, or even "Tebbu Land" in the upper Min river drainage.

If real botanical differences between *M. Sargentiana* and *M. Sprengeri* 'Diva' rule out almost all possibilities of the latter being an eastern and northern form of *M. Sargentiana*, and if carefully selfed seedlings of the original Caerhays tree are uniform enough to quiet all thoughts of its being a natural hybrid, would it not be worth while for botanists to consider consigning the ghostly *M. Sprengeri* to the vague Limbo where it belongs? If the name *M. conspicua* was replaced on the Yulan, then *M. denudata*, (var. *elongata* or whatever), could be replaced on the white forms now called *Sprengeri*, and Dr. Stapf's appropriate name *M. 'Diva'* could again grace the lovely pink flowering tree saved for the gardening world by the Williams family of Caerhays.

I hope Mr. F. Julian Williams will be tolerant of my officiousness in writing about his beautiful tree (without ever having seen it), and since he is a member of this Society, perhaps he will give us some "inside" information in some future NEWSLETTER.

## Magnolia x 'Lennei'--- Research Into Origin

NEIL G. TRESEDER, N.D. Hort.  
Truro, Cornwall, England

IT SEEMS REMARKABLE that none of the *Soulangeana* hybrid Magnolias with purple flowers originated at Soulange-Bodin's establishment at Fromont, near Paris. There is evidence that he disposed of a great many different hybrid seedlings from various raisings over a period of some twenty years, but none of these was claimed to be purple.

If we ignore *M. Soulangeana* 'Nigra' as being of unknown Japanese origin (and better regarded as *M. liliflora* 'Nigra'), we are left with only two named hybrids of Continental origin with deeply colored flowers.

The best known of these is undoubtedly *M. × 'Lennei'* which appears to be an  $F_1$  *Soulangeana* hybrid, whilst the second, 'Rustica Rubra', is said to have originated many years later, in a Belgian nursery as a chance seedling of *M. × 'Lennei'*, which would make it an  $F_2$  *Soulangeana* hybrid. The flowers are almost identical to those of 'Lennei' except that they have less substantial petals and usually develop a little earlier.

*Magnolia × 'Lennei'* produces its large rosy-purple, tulip-shaped flowers just before coming into leaf in April and continuing into May, with occasional later flowers in September and October. They retain their goblet shape, the petals being of fleshy texture and white within. The depth of coloring seems to be richer in dull weather and occasionally the flowers have false calyces in the form of long, thin, bract-like sepals drooping from their base. It received the coveted F.C.C. (First Class Certificate) Award from the Royal Horticultural Society as long ago as 1863.

The leaves of *M. × 'Lennei'* are almost identical in shape to those of Wada's *M. × 'Picture'*, mostly being almost circular in outline with blunt tips, which seems to indicate that they are closely related. *M. × 'Lennei Alba'* is not a white sport of the original as one might suppose, but a distinct seedling. According to Dr. Dorsman, Director of the Horticultural Experimental Station of Nurseries at Boskoop, it was raised in Froebel's Nursery at Zurich in 1905 and was propagated and introduced by Messrs. Keesen of Aalsmeer, Holland, in 1930. It bears large, white goblet-shaped flowers which resemble those of *M. × 'Lennei'* in shape and substance, but the foliage resembles that of Soulange-Bodin's hybrids.

According to French botanist Charles Lemaire, who described *Magnolia Lennei* in "Illustration Horticole," Vol. 1 in 1854, this fine hybrid *Magnolia* "was raised in the beautiful garden of Joseph Salvi of Vicenza (Italy) who handed over the entire ownership of it to nurseryman Alfred Topf of Erfurt (Prussia) who named it after Lenné, a most distinguished contemporary German botanist." Peter Joseph Lenné (1789-1866) was at one time director of the Botanical Garden at Potsdam. "Illustration Horticole" was then being edited and published by Ambroise Verschaffelt following the death of his father André in 1850. They are better known in connection with their "Nouvelle Iconographie des Camellias" which Ambroise continued to edit and publish until 1860.

### MAGNOLIAS, EVERGREEN AND DECIDUOUS

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Magnolia  $\times$  'Lennei'  
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Photo: Neil G. Treseder

Lemaire stated that Topf had put *M. Lennei* on the market two or three years previously, which would make the date of introduction circa 1850. But he says he saw it flowering in the Verschaffelt garden in Paris in 1853, so it seems fairly certain that the transaction between Salvi and Topf took place several years prior to 1850 because a young grafted plant or layer of this hybrid would be unlikely to flower until it was four or five years of age. Millais gives 1850 as the year in which Topf procured it from Italy as does Henry in "Trees and Shrubs of Great Britain & Ireland" (Vol. 6 p. 1596).

One cannot help wondering on what terms such a fine acquisition changed hands and what price was charged for the earlier distribution by Topf. Lemaire wrote, "The fact that our plant is a hybrid surely cannot be in doubt. But is it the product of a cross pollination performed by a human hand, or by insects (or the wind)? We do not know, and whatever may be the case, it is, we readily repeat, a superb acquisition for our gardens, where it has nothing to dread from our winters. It survived the winter own, with the neighboring pure *Sargentiana*, and,

(B) because the flower of the 'Diva' is on the small side." of 1853-4 without suffering in the slightest from its excessive severity."

Professor Pampanini of Florence was a distinguished Italian botanist and a authority on Magnolias. He contributed a paper entitled "The Magnolia" in the Bulletin of the Royal Tuscany Horticultural Society Vol. XL-SLI (1816). Concerning *Magnolia*  $\times$  'Lennei' he wrote . . . "It is uncertain whether the origin of this hybrid is natural or artificial and not even its source is certain: from Vicenza or from Lombardy according to some, from Florence according to others. It was raised in 1850 or 1851 in the garden belonging to a Guiseppe Salvi, a professional horticulturist in Vicenza, (or otherwise to Count Guiseppe Salvi, a keen amateur horticulturist in Florence). Some specimens were distributed under the name *Magnolia Maometti* or *Mahoneti*. Anyway, Salvi sold the plant to Topf, horticulturist in

Erfurt, probably in 1859, who introduced it as his own novelty, with the name *Magnolia Yulan* var. *Lenne* in honour of Lenné, a famed horticulturist in Bonn and general superintendent of the Royal Prussian Gardens (b. 1789-d. 1866).

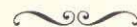
"It should be named *Magnolia Mahometi*, but I think it best to maintain the name *Magnolia Lennei*, which was the one regularly printed and is everywhere known."

Whilst Pampanini in 1816 was able to contribute several details unknown to Lemaire in 1854, his suggestion that *M.  $\times$  'Lennei'* was raised in 1850 or 1851 must be incorrect for the reasons already mentioned. The actual date of raising must have been at least ten years earlier. Also it seems most unlikely that this *Magnolia* was raised by Count Guiseppe Salvi of Florence since the contemporary report of Charles Lemaire definitely stated that it was raised by Salvi of Vicenza (Vicenza). It would be far more likely for a travelling Prussian nurseryman to locate such a find in a Italian nursery, which he might well have reason to visit in the normal course of business, than in a private garden in a foreign country to which he would not have normal access.

Under *Magnolia conspicua Soulangiana* Loudon reported in his "Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum" in 1838 (Vol. 1 p. 279) that, "The plants raised from seed of *M. c. Soulangiana* at Fromont may be productive of something new, as may those raised by Mr. Curtis at Glazenwod (near Coggeshall, in Essex), and by Mr. Ward at White Knights (near Reading). If Signor Manetti succeeds in raising plants from the seeds of *M. c. Soulangiana*, which have ripened at Monza, he also may introduce some new varieties."

In his notes on the "Trees and Shrubs of Italy" (p. 168) Loudon wrote, ". . . we are informed by Signor Manetti, the director of the Viceregal Garden at Monza . . ." In the List of Contributors (p. XIX) appears the name Guiseppe Manetti, C.M.G.S., Monaz.

Thus it was Loudon who supplied the long-sought clue to the origin of *Magnolia*  $\times$  'Lennei', which had been known in Italy prior to 1850 as 'Lombardy Hybrid', 'Mahomete', 'Mahoneti' and 'Maometto'. *M.  $\times$  'Lennei'* was still being listed as *M. Mahoneti* in the nursery catalogue of Fratelli Sgaravatti of Saonara near Padova, Italy, in 1884. There is very good reason to suppose that 'Mahoneti' and its synonyms originated as mis-spellings of 'Manette', and that it originated from seed off *M.  $\times$  Soulangiana* in the Viceregal Gardens at Monza in Lombardy, Italy, whilst under the direction of Guiseppe Manetti about 1839. How it came into the possession of one Salvi of Vicenza, who is reputed to have sold it to Topf, is a matter of conjecture.



## Errata

IN NEIL TRESEDER'S ARTICLE entitled "Early Introductions of *Magnolia Grandiflora* Into Europe" in Volume 6. No. 1 the following two errors have been noted:

Right-hand column, paragraph two, for "Bardon" read "Baron."

Same column, paragraph four, for "1959" read "1759."





# "A Grain of Sand . . ."

COL. WILLIAM R. DODD  
Semmes, Alabama

IN 1909 MR. PETER VEITCH was shipping *Magnolia Kobus* and *Magnolia obovata* (*M. hypoleuca*) from Japan to England and awaiting the first flowers of his *Magnolia* × *Veitchii*. Mr. J. G. Millais, noted horticulturist and author, had begun developing his *Magnolia* gardens in Worsham, England. *Magnolia nitida*, *rostrata* and others were yet to be discovered. Mr. E. H. Wilson was still looking for new species in China and sending seed of *M. Wilsonii*, *Dawsoniana* and others to his friend and associate, Mr. Charles S. Sargent, Director of Arnold Arboretum.

On the 13th day of April of that same year, Drury Todd Gresham was born in Eddyville, Kentucky, the second son of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Lee Gresham. Information concerning his earlier years is incomplete, however, it is believed that his preparatory work was completed at Columbia Military Academy in Columbia, Tennessee, and at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. Undergraduate studies were done at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. Dean Emeritus Frank J. Gilliam, an esteemed horticulturist, Magnoliaphile and member of the American Magnolia Society, remembers Todd as a student there from 1927-1931.

Subsequent studies include figure and portrait painting, illustration and design at the National Academy of Design in New York City, Phoenix Art Institute and the Famous Art School of Westport, Connecticut. It was at this time Todd began writing articles with accompanying hand drawn illustrations on horticultural subjects for leading magazines and other publications, leading to his fervent interest in Magnolias. The years 1935-1942 were spent in employment by R. H. Macy Company of New York.

During World War II Todd served in the U. S. Army from 1942-1945. After completion of his military duty he moved to Santa Cruz, California, where he was associated with Vetterle & Reinelt Hybridizing Gardens of nearby Capitola, California, until 1964. By this time he had developed an insight into the vast possibilities of hybridizing Magnolias, a field that had scarcely been touched when compared with other such genera as *Rhododendron*, *Camellia*, *Ilex*, etc., which have hundreds of named hybrids and cultivars.

Todd Gresham's life was by no means a "bed of roses." Tragedy struck his family several times; first in 1931 when his father was killed in an accident and later when his older brother became seriously ill and his mother disabled, Todd devoted all of his time, sacrificing his own personal ambitions and aspirations, to caring for them until their deaths. Meanwhile, during the spare moments available to him, Todd determinedly and methodically continued his work on hybridizing Magnolias, moving from the theoretical field into actual practice.

From available records it appears that Todd made his first three successful crosses in 1955. A detailed description of the results with accompanying photographs of the named selections appear in the Morris Arboretum Bulletin, Vol. 13, 1962. These beautiful hybrids with such fascinating names were registered with the Morris Arboretum in 1962

and are also described in the American Magnolia Society NEWSLETTER, Vol. 2, Number 1. From 1960-1964 some 360 crosses were made, resulting in more than 12,000 individual plants. Mr. Gresham's delightful and imaginative article, "Trial by the Royal Family of Magnoliaceae," in the Society's NEWSLETTER, Vol. 4, Number 2, provides an interesting account of these hybrids and some other Magnolias.

It was at this time I met and became closely associated with Todd Gresham. While stationed near Santa Cruz, I visited him many times at the "Hill of Doves," his lovely home overlooking Santa Cruz Bay and the Monterey Peninsula. Although I was an amateur horticulturist and interested in all types of plants, I knew little of the Magnolia family with its many fascinating and interesting members. During this period of military duty in California, subsequent visits and correspondence, Todd's interest in the Magnolias, his knowledge of the subject and ceaseless drive to create and develop new and exciting progeny were contagious. I find myself unalterably addicted to the Magnoliaceae.

His knowledge and competence in this field, yet unassuming and sacrificial qualities, were a paradox. I am convinced that success in a creative area meant much more to him than the glory, honor and wealth normally gained by such accomplishments.

During the period 1965-1968 Todd made some 220 additional crosses, frequently using some of his earlier hybrids as a parent. His last recorded cross was made on the 31st day of March, 1968, a few days after the Memphis meeting of the Society, an organization which he served faithfully as Secretary-Treasurer and frequent literary contributor from its inception until his declining health precluded further active service.

When later medical diagnosis indicated the terminal phase of his illness, Todd faced this new tragedy as he had the others. His primary concern during the final days of his life was for the care and perpetuation of his collection of hybrids. During my final visit with Todd in the latter part of March, 1969, to arrange for the shipment of the remaining hybrids, though feeble and racked with pain, clinging to my arms and shoulders for support, and in spite of my anxiety and concern, he ignored my objections and walked completely around the "Hill of Doves" to show me each and every plant or groups of seedlings, patiently describing the merits and weaknesses as well as the cultural requirements. Later when all of the plants were loaded and on their way to Alabama, a smile crossed his face and it seemed to portend a sense of relief and joy that a loving parent shows in the knowledge that his children are safe and secure from harm.

While discussing the inevitable which he faced with unusual calm, tranquility and dignity, Todd was resigned to his fate. I asked the unanswerable question, "Why does it have to happen to one with such rare traits and enormous potential?" He told me softly and quietly that he was but "a grain of sand in the passing sands of time" and that his accomplishments, if any, were of much greater importance, particularly if they provided a means of happiness or beauty to someone.

Todd Gresham passed away on the 18th of April, 1969. He departed this world as he had lived on it; quietly and peacefully although under constant burden and pain. Time



only will tell of Todd's accomplishments in the Magnolia world but the "grain of sand" already appears as a monument to man's devotion to nature and love of beauty.

Appreciation is expressed for information provided to the writer of this article by Mrs. Mary Botti, Santa Cruz, California, a close friend of the Gresham family, and to Dean Emeritus Frank J. Gilliam and Mr. Farris P. Hotchkiss, Director of University Development of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. Mr. Gresham bequeathed his estate to his Alma Mater and the university has agreed to a D. Todd Gresham memorial Magnolia planting in the Court of Magnolias on the university campus.

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