

Can We Operate a "Seed and Pollen Counter"?

Have you ever given a puppy to a friend? In general, my advice is - don't. It is all too sure to die of neglect, distemper, parasites or Goodyear. Did you ever give a young magnolia to a friend as an ornament for his lawn? I have, and doubt if ten percent still survive in luxuriant quack grass behind a storage shed. I don't mean your friends won't appreciate the puppy or the magnolia, just that they won't value it. They have no stake in it and are out nothing if it dies. What a wonderful difference if you *sell* them the pup or plant, for money. The pup gets distemper shots and plenty of food, and the magnolia gets a well-tended spot on the front lawn. This works out better for everyone.

Let us resolve then, first of all, to *sell* magnolia seeds and pollen. Everyone will appreciate it more, and the Lord knows we can use the money.

Next question: Who can we get to run the store? The equipment required is quite simple. The two vegetable compartments of a well regulated "fridge", can hold an enormous amount of cleaned seed in tightly tied plastic bags. A couple of two pound glass coffee jars in the same refrigerator, ¼ full of "Flower-Dri", a silica gel product, keeps the small paper envelopes of pollen viable for several months. For shipping, plastic sandwich bags tightly tied with string should suffice for small amounts and Harold Hopkins has used, and recommended plastic "Petri" jars which are strong and have a tight-fitting top.

Both Harold C. Hopkins, of 6517 Lone Oak Drive, Bethesda, Md. 20034, and Carl R. Amason, of P.O. Box 164, Calion, Arkansas 71724 have volunteered for the job of storekeeper, but have problems in that Harold has other horticultural duties and is quite pressed for refrigerator room, and Carl must be away from home for considerably periods of time in his work.

If you would like to get involved in this (international) seed program, write to our President, J. C. McDaniel, whose address is on our masthead. Perhaps it will take several people to share the work at the outset, but really the fewer the better. Don't forget, a camel is a horse designed by a committee.

Anyone should be willing to pay a dollar a dozen for seed of well known species, or perhaps five dollars a hundred in larger quantities. Hand pollinated hybrid seeds could be offered at double or triple that figure and still be cheap, depending on how desirable or unusual the cross might be.

I'm sure the birds and squirrels ate five thousand seeds from my multi-*tepala* *M. tripetala* 'Bloomfield' last fall, and two trees of *M. kobus* var. *borealis* could be ten times that in "seed years." We should have no lack of "product." I'll be happy to furnish bagfulls of cleaned seed to whoever is handling the action, but I won't pretend to be able to help beyond that point.

I probably couldn't land the job if I asked for it. At the rate I get out Newsletters the seed might be partially fossilized by the time it reached the customer!

*** P.J.S.