

Mr. George A. Pfaffman

Dear Mr. Pfaffman:

Upon my return from meetings in Hawaii, I had copies of your recent exchange of correspondence with Harold C. Hopkins. Tom Dodd, Jr. of Semmes, Alabama, had previously told me of your interest in Mexican plants. I hope you may be able to locate *Magnolia dealbata* near Chapalhuacan on your October trip, and map it for future collection.

If you are lucky enough to find young seedlings of the Mexican big-leaved *Magnolia*, they probably would be the most likely material to bring back alive at this time of year, mostly defoliated and with the roots wrapped in damp moss. You might also try to bring cuttings of mature wood (leaves removed) for me or someone else to try grafting in fall or winter on *M. macrophylla* stocks. For either material, I suggest dipping soon after collection in a captan or zineb fungicide solution.

I have some one-year potted seedlings of *M. macrophylla* which I could try grafting in a greenhouse this fall. For larger diameter cuttings, I would try to keep them stored for spring grafting on branches of larger trees outdoors. If Lynn Lowrey has suitable stocks, he might try grafting some *M. dealbata* in his nursery near Conroe, Texas.

With related species, I have grafted or chip-budded both *M. macrophylla* and *M. ashei* here on *M. macrophylla* seedlings. Trials of *macrophylla* buds on *M. tripetala* stocks were unsuccessful. I have not tried either of these on *M. grandiflora* stocks, which worked all right for *M. guatemalensis* and two Mexican evergreen species.

Good plant hunting in Mexico. I wish I could go with you.

Sincerely,

J. C. McDaniel

Assistant Professor of Horticulture

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

A trip to see the rare Mexican magnolia tree species *Magnolia dealbata*

by Mr. George A. Pfaffman

During the past twenty years, I have made numerous trips into Mexico primarily for the purpose of collecting forest tree seeds in the higher altitudes of that country. While making preparations for my October 1975 Mexican tour, I was contacted by some members of the American Magnolia Society for the purpose of asking me, if I could include in my Mexican itinerary an attempt to visit one of the areas where the Mexican deciduous *Magnolia dealbata* occurs

and collect some propagating material of that species. Also, some details about the environment in which that species occurs would be appreciated, I agreed to include such an assignment in my tour through Mexico.

After having made several stops in other parts of Mexico, I departed from Jacala, State of Hidalgo, on Saturday, October 18, 1975, en route to Chapulhuacan, Hgo., a small town nearest to where the magnolias that I was to look for were to be found. The Mexican highway number 85 led through a very mountainous region with many curves. In less than two hours I arrived at the outskirts of Chapulhuacan and about the first thing that caught my eye there was a highway patrol car parked under a small tree. I thought a highway patrolman might give me some valuable information with regard to my endeavor. Soon I found one in a nearby bar and pool hall called "MI RECREO." On approaching him, he immediately recognized me, for he had talked to me about a week before when I was involved in a highway accident. He was most friendly and after a few words concerning the accident, I told him what I wanted to do. He seemed somewhat familiar with the magnolia, but for further information he referred me to the local police chief who was playing at the pool table. I produced a photo of a flower of *Magnolia ashei* and said the flower in the picture is said to be very similar to the flower borne on the tree



George A. Pfaffman (left) with Sr. Adolfo Weise at Santa Cruz, Bolivia, April 25, 1975.



Guide, Sr. Agapito Pelcastre Oviedo, and his son holding leafy branches of *Magnolia dealbata* on Cerro El Jarro, October, 1975.

holding some magnolia twigs with green foliage. Some of the others are too dark to be of much value.*

Names and addresses of persons who had some part in the project of collecting propagating material of *Magnolia dealbata*:

Prof. Joseph C. McDaniel, 705 Busey Ave., Urbana, Illinois 61801
President of American Magnolia Society. He was especially interested in obtaining some propagating material of *Magnolia dealbata*.

Mr. Harold Hopkins, 6517 Lone Oak Drive, Bethesda, Md., 20034, an amateur horticulturist, in his own words. He was the first one to contact me to see if I would include in my next Mexico trip an attempt to collect some propagating material of *Magnolia dealbata*, as it is not known to be cultivated anywhere at the present time.

Sr. R. Mena Rivers, Mexican Federal Highway Policeman, whom I first contacted at Chapulhuacan in my endeavor to obtain some information about

*Dried flowers of Talauma and Magnolia species have been valued in Mexico (as in China) since ancient times for their medical properties. In both parts of the world, Epilepsy is mentioned as one of the afflictions treated. The artist Helen O'Gorman, in her beautiful book, "Mexican Flowering Trees and Plants", writes; "The Talauma is still used in domestic medicine. Dried flowers can be bought today in any market place." Since they are undoubtedly too short-lived for decoration a sizeable pharmaceutical demand must exist to cause the thorough harvesting of *M. dealbata* flowers here indicated. (Ed.)

the occurrence of *Magnolia dealbata*.

Sr. Cidronio Serrano, Chapulhuacan, Hgo., Chief of Police in Chapulhuacan, Hgo. He told me he was familiar with the tree that I was looking for and knew where they could be seen.

Sr. Agapito Pelcastre Cviado, Calle Hidalgo No. 18, Chapulhuacan, Hgo., Mexico, my guide who was a well informed person. He had known about the magnolia in the vicinity of Chapulhuacan for many years. Also he gave me information about various trees.

Felipe Pelcastre Lopez, Calle Hidalgo No. 18, Chapulhuacan, Hgo., Mexico, son of my guide. He was about twelve years old. His father probably wished for the boy to go along for companionship.

George A. Pfaffman, Route 1 Box 301, Citronelle, Alabama 36522. It was I who made the tour through Mexico in October 1975. Included in the tour was a trip up a mountain to collect some propagating material of *Magnolia dealbata*.

AN EPILOGUE FROM HAROLD HOPKINS

Prof. J. C. McDaniel

Dear Joe:

I called Mr. George A. Pfaffman last night at his home in Citronelle, Ala., to thank him and get further information about his successful collection of and shipment to you of scions of *Magnolia dealbata* Zucc., the close relative of *M. macrophylla*, from near Chapulhuacan. I told Mr. Pfaffman that we of the A.M.S. and horticulture in general are in his debt for his efforts. He said he was glad to do it and also had a personal interest and curiosity in the matter, and would not accept any additional reimbursement for the costs to him of making the collection.

Mr. Pfaffman is a timber grower, does some farming, and also has an arboretum on his property on which he establishes the various trees and other plants he has collected in the past from Mexico and germinates seed received from various other sources, including overseas. He said his *Magnolia* collection so far includes *M. acuminata*, *grandiflora*, *macrophylla*, and *pyramidata*.

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