

A Plea for Registration

by John M. Fogg, Jr.

Although the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature had been adopted before the end of the 19th century, it was not until 1958 that the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants was endorsed. The reasons necessitating the latter code derived from the multitudinous nomenclatural problems unique to plants in cultivation.

Even before the second code became official it was obvious that some mechanism should be established for the registration of cultivar names of plants. By this time the term "cultivar" had been widely accepted to designate a plant which had originated or been maintained in cultivation (in brief, a "cultivated variety"), rather than a botanical variety, which was known in the wild. It was agreed that the cultivar name should be a "fancy" one, rather than a Latin adjective, that it should be enclosed in single quotation marks, for example 'Royal Star,' and should usually be preceded by the abbreviation cv.

As evidence of this need it should be noted that in July, 1956, there took place in Los

Angeles a joint meeting between representatives of the American Association of Nurserymen and the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta. At this conference it was decided to submit the problem of registering plants to the member organizations.

At the meeting of the A.A.B.G.A., held in Philadelphia in August, 1957, it was proposed that the organization should accept the sponsorship of an agency to accomplish the registration of new cultivar names of woody plants, and two years later (1959), at its annual meeting held in Rochester, New York, the A.A.B.G.A. adopted a resolution that the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University be designated as a National Registration Center for ornamental woody plants for a two-year period, beginning October 10, 1959.

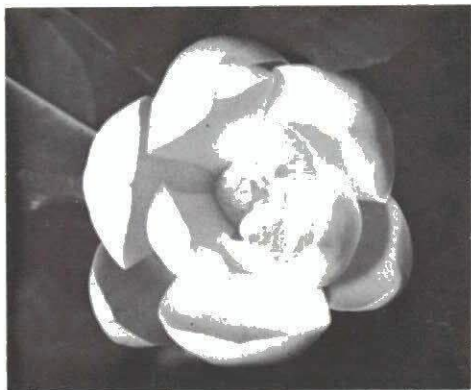
Since responsibility for registration of new cultivar names is vested in an institution, rather than an individual, the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, or which I was then director, was charged with the task of certifying the validity of new cultivar names in *Magnolia* and I was designated registrar.

At the same time, registrars were appointed in such important woody genera as *Taxus*, *Clematis*, *Hydrangea*, *Chaenomeles*, *Cornus*, *Syringa* and *Viburnum*.

In August, 1962, the International Horticultural Congress convened in Brussels and at this conference the registration of new cultivars of woody ornamental plants was expanded from a national to an international basis. Responsibility for new cultivars in the genus *Magnolia* was assigned to the newly formed American Magnolia Society and, since I happened to be one of the founders of that organization, I was asked to serve as registrar.

Several years later, when I retired from the Morris Arboretum to become director of the Arboretum of the Barnes Foundation, it was requested that I continue in this capacity.

This somewhat tedious recounting is offered here primarily to inform members that registration in one of their favorite groups of plants is not something which suddenly sprang into existence overnight, but is the result of several years of careful and serious



Why don't the flowers of *Magnolia coco* open completely? Well, they do, really. You just have to be there at the right time. To be there at the right time Bill Dodd, superintendent of parks at Mobile, loaded his camera and sat up one night with a *M. coco* bud that looked promising. Several hours later his wait was rewarded. The bud did open for a minute or so and Bill shot this picture to prove that *M. coco* does things no differently than any other *Magnolia*—it just does them faster.

consideration by the botanists and horticulturists of many countries.

When our *Checklist of the Cultivated Magnolias* appeared in 1975 it represented the dedicated efforts of many persons, especially our president, Professor J.C. McDaniel of the University of Illinois.

Despite a couple of editorial bloopers, such as my *Foreword* being spelt *Forward* (perhaps not a bad idea!) and the alphabetic list and bibliographic listings being reversed, we feel that this is a valuable contribution to *Magnolia* literature.

There are several reasons why it is to the advantage of anyone who wishes to propose a new cultivar name to submit it to the registration authority, if one exists, for his particular genus of woody plants.

First and foremost it is the job of the registrar to determine whether the proposed name is in cultivar form, that is, whether it is a "fancy" name rather than a latinized adjective. Now it is a fact that many cultivars of *Magnolia* bear such conventional Latin epithets as *alba*, *argentea*, *lanceolata*, and *rosea*. But these names were applied *prior* to

the adoption of the present rules in 1959, and it was wisely determined at that time not to invalidate them by making the rules retroactive.

Beginning in 1959, however, only such new names as conformed to the code were to be accepted for registration. I well recall that in the early days of my incumbency as registrar I received a proposal from a very distinguished American horticulturist for six new cultivar names in *M. grandiflora*. It was my sad duty to inform him that I could not accept these names which were in Latinized form. I implored him to "dream up" "fancy" names for them instead. He cursed me roundly, but in the end graciously agreed to submit to the regulations of the code. As a result, his 'Undulata' became 'Ocean Wave'; his 'Variegata' was changed to 'Sunset,' etc.

Then a member of our society proposed to register a cultivar of the cucumber magnolia as *M. acuminata* 'Aurea.' I pointed out that not only was 'Aurea' not a cultivar name, but that it had already been applied as a sub-specific epithet in this species. He then substituted the name, 'Golden Glow' which



Our far flung correspondent Jack Fogg takes *Magnolia grandiflora* wherever he finds it, this time (January 1980) against the front of the Royal Crescent Hotel at Bath, England, in an espaliered form that's almost vinelike. The English have found that planting this evergreen against a wall of some kind helps insure its survival.

was eminently acceptable.

The foregoing example demonstrates another advantage accruing from the registration process—which is to determine whether a proposed name has been pre-empted. If such regulation had existed in the past we would not be burdened today with the confusing duplication of names which exists in such genera as *Rosa*, *Ilex*, *Rhododendron*, etc. The code allows only one use of a given name in the same genus.

In all this it should be clearly understood that it is not the function of the registrar to decide whether a proposed new cultivar is in any way different from others which have been recognized in a particular species. This must be left to the judgement of the grower, who has every right to give a name to a new plant if he considers it appropriate.

In our Checklist 160 entries for cultivars are given under *M. grandiflora* and 103 under *M. × soulangiana*. Obviously, only a few of these are in cultivation today, but the inescapable fact is that these are names that have been published (perhaps only in a nursery catalogue) and constitute a legitimate listing in the literature of these two taxa. Additional proposals will doubtless be submitted; indeed, 13 new names in *M. × soulangiana* have recently been received from a British firm and have been accorded registration status.

No procedure could be simpler than the registration of a new cultivar name in *Magnolia*. All the registrant needs to do is write to International Registrar of Magnolia Cultivars, Box 128, Merion, Pa. 19066, requesting registration forms. These will be sent without cost, in duplicate. The registrant should fill them out, retain one copy for his or her records and return the other to us to check as to the correct form of the proposed name and to ascertain whether or not it has been used before. Once accepted the name is in a sense "copy-righted" and no one else will be granted the right to use it. Although not required for registration, the inclusion of a color photographic print of the flower of the proposed cultivar is welcomed and will be filed with the registration record.

In the light of the above considerations it should be obvious that it is to the great advantage of anyone who has a new cultivar of *Magnolia* to insure its proper registration.

Gresham Chapter

A second regional group of the society, the Gresham Chapter, was organized February 23 at Gloster, Mississippi, as a number of southern AMS members got together for a tour of the Gloster Arboretum. The chapter is named in honor of the late D. Todd Gresham, who bred the thousands of hybrids moved from California in 1969 and planted at Gloster for selection of the best ones.

Although the members are mainly southerners, the geographical boundaries of the new chapter's membership are pretty loosely defined and the Gresham chapter even includes two members from Illinois, who happened to be on the Gloster tour and were carried away by the impetuosity of the moment. Generally, however, the chapter expects most of its members to be handy enough to meet at some central location once or twice a year.

Dues are \$3.00 a year and a prerequisite to chapter membership is membership in the AMS. The charter members are the John James Audubon Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Johnson, Mrs. Frank Gladney, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Marek, John Giordano, Carl R. Amason, Kenneth Durio, Joe McDaniel, and Joe Hickman. President is John Giordano, vice president, Kenneth Durio, and secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Frances Marek, 16501 Mockingbird, Magnolia, Texas, 77355. To join the chapter or get further information write Mrs. Marek.

A Committee of One

• For the seed distribution, it was either a very good year or a very bad year depending on your viewpoint: members vs. Seed Chairman (where do they get that title? It implies there is a group working on it! And a chair is something one never sees at that work!). This year there were some 95 requests and some 1450 packets. An interesting sidelight is that when a contributor adds a comment such as "good germination from seed," the demand soars. As for suggestions that such things as peat or Turface be added to seed for storage and shipment: the handling problem is immense when you are trying to count out equal numbers of seed dispersed in a pile of rock/peat fragments. It is also a dirty business and drives away any help I can round up from the family.

—Perry Narten, Round Robin Letters