

The Tarrytown meeting

Since some Society meetings these days spread into more than one place, and they can't all go into a headline, we'll settle for the above designation and add here in smaller type that the spring 1985 meeting started in Tarrytown, New York, spread to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in Brooklyn, and wound up at BBG's Kitchawan Research Station at Ossining, New York.

All told, these two-plus days, April 26th - 28th, appeared to have more positives than any society meeting so far: fair, mild, shirtsleeve weather; a good show of the astonishing yellow-hued Magnolias bred by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in recent years; a fine attendance with many new and old friends to talk to and things to see between scheduled events; an enjoyable and informative program of events that for the most part went as advertised;

and, probably most significant of all, board and membership meetings that set in motion some long overdue objectives that augur well for our future as a society.

The meeting seems to have left no important things undone, and it gave the society a little push in the direction of growth, scope, and maturity. It's to be hoped the impetus will not slow down. A look at the meetings scheduled for Mobile next year and at Hendersonville, North Carolina, in 1987 — and a planned mid-March tour in 1987 of gardens in southwest England that specialize in some of the spectacular Chinese-Himalayan magnolias so little known in this country except at a relatively few locations on the West Coast — suggests that the society is moving at a faster pace than before. All of this seems promising.

What happened at the board meeting



Vista at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Photo: Joe Hickman



M. 'Elizabeth' at Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

was more than happenstance. President Ken Durio and the other officers and the board members had done their homework and the various items of business were discussed and disposed of without hangups. Lola Koerting as host and Vice President Dick Figlar as co-host had planned for and then executed a full program that went off well. The presentations were all worth hearing and seeing.

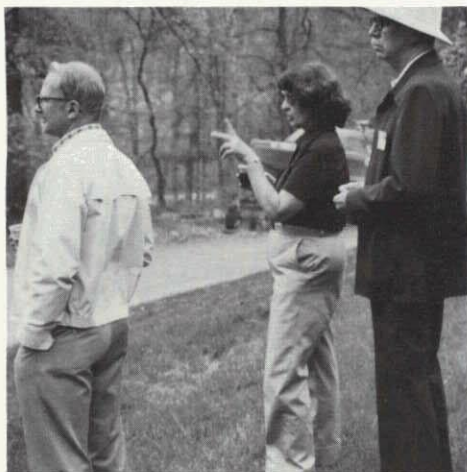
The only thing one might have asked for was a view of some of those bold, lush, Asiatic magnolias that thrive in Cornwall and other southwest England gardens. This need too was accommodated, in a sense, by a visiting English member, John Gallagher, who made a special trip to the meeting to show phototransparencies (slides) of some of these magnolias as they appear in gardens in southwest England, including his own, and to invite the members to come to England to tour some of these gardens in 1987. A sample of what to expect on this tour may be gathered from the article, "A flying visit to Cornwall," by Lennarth Jonsson in this issue. More on the 1987 tour as plans progress.

The board meeting Friday night (April 26) was remarkable for dispatch and candor and for climbing over or plowing through obstacles that had arrested or deterred action in the past. The board:

- Established a new membership fee of \$15 for overseas members, effective January 1, 1986, to help offset the

added cost of sending *MAGNOLIA* and other materials and correspondence to them by air mail. All U.S. mail that goes any distance is routinely transported by air, but mail going overseas (to other countries) by air costs a minimum of four times as much by weight. The alternative, lower cost surface mail (transported by ships and other surface carriers), can take several weeks to several months. Canadian members should pay \$17 in Canadian funds because of a recent change in the exchange rate. The membership fee in the U.S. remains at \$12.

- Established a salary of \$750 per year for the editor of the *Journal*.
- Agreed to amend Article 7 of the by-laws in a way that will permit changes to the by-laws to take effect immediately rather than waiting 1 year.
- Renamed the AMS The Magnolia Society (dropping "American" from the name). This, it was agreed, not only simplifies the name but also takes cognizance of the international character of the organization, 20 percent of whose current members live in other countries. Ever since the society was formed, many overseas members have been active in its work and aims and some have traveled great



Lola Koerting shows Kitchawan plantings to Dr. Frank Galyon (right) and Ray Tessmer (left).

distances to participate in meetings. At the 1985 meeting, for instance, members attended from Japan, England, and Switzerland. Members and horticulture in the world's temperate zones all benefit from the exchange of information and plant materials facilitated by the society's existence.

- Limited the number of consecutive one-year terms any person may serve as president or vice president to two such terms, but such a person could serve again in the same office after skipping a year. This is intended to encourage more members to offer their services in running the society.

- Expanded the number and functions of committees, appointed members to them, and charged each committee with examining and redefining its scope where needed, and with listing and making recommendations on its projects to the board by the time of the 1986 meeting. A list of the committees appears elsewhere.

- Heard a report by Perry Narten on a poll he conducted which indicates that interest is only lukewarm among the majority of members in forming a society-sponsored magnolia scion exchange or bank. A similar poor showing of interest caused the pollen bank to be discontinued a couple of years ago. Individual members wanting to exchange scions or pollen of desirable magnolias therefore should make their own arrangements. Meanwhile, the society's long-popular seed counter scheme for distribution of magnolia seed continues to expand here and overseas, supported wholly by contributions of seed from members and friends of the society.

At the Saturday meeting, Vice President Dick Figlar introduced those making presentations.

Dr. August Kehr described the principles and advantages of inducing polyploidy in magnolias through the use of colchicine, a substance derived from *Colchicum autumnale*, the fall-



Dr. August E. Kehr

blooming crocus, and dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO), a byproduct of processing wood. Doubling of the ploidy (chromosome counts) of magnolias causes certain changes in floral and vegetative characters and also can make possible new combinations in hybridizing for those who breed magnolias. Photographs helped make the presentation easier to understand. The talk elaborated on Dr. Kehr's two articles on this subject in the last issue of *MAGNOLIA* (Vol. XX, No. 2 — Winter 1984-1985).

Dick Figlar presented a report, illustrated by photographs and charts, of his experiences with intergeneric grafting of scions of *Magnolia* on its relative in *Magnoliaceae*, *Liriodendron tulipifera* (*MAGNOLIA*, Vol. XX, No. 2 — Winter 1984-85). He also presented another in a series of papers on the *Magnoliaceae* of tropical America with a description of *Dugandiodendron*, a new genus with ten species in



Peter Del Tredici



Magnolias 'Yellow Bird' (left) and 'Evamaria' at Kitchawan.

Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, published by Gustavo Lozano-Contreras of the Department of Biology, National University of Colombia: *Flora de Colombia*, 1. Magnoliaceae. 1983. The new genus includes several species formerly included in *Magnolia*.

Harry Heineman delivered a talk on and showed pictures in his garden of *Magnolia* 'Forrest's Pink,' a highly regarded cultivar that appears to have been introduced to the nursery trade by Neil Treseder from a plant growing at Caerhays Castle. The plant is believed to have been introduced from China by the early 20th century plant explorer George Forrest. Sir Peter Smithers, who received the magnolia from Treseder's Nursery in 1976, feels with Mr. Treseder that it is perhaps a rare rich pink form of *M. denudata* (*heptapeta*), though others have opined that it could be a seedling of *M. sprengeri* 'Diva.'



*Kitchawan seedling No. 853, sibling of *M. 'Elizabeth'* (acuminata × *denudata*).*

In midmorning the members traveled by bus to Brooklyn for a tour of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, where a luncheon was served in the BBG's cafeteria and the society was welcomed by Donald Moore, president of the Garden, and Ms. Elizabeth Scholtz, vice president. The tour was split up into two walking groups, who promptly got separated from each other and were further fragmented by stragglers who lingered to take pictures of *M. 'Elizabeth'*, 'Hattie Carthan,' and other BBG-bred hybrids, many at the peak of flowering, along with other spring bloomers.

Despite the large population it serves, the 50 acres of garden accommodates all visitors and still manages to maintain the elegance of a bygone age, with a well planned disposition of trees, shrubs, and vistas. The bus driver did have to back and forth a bit to squeeze his big vehicle into the parking lot through a gate no doubt originally meant for horse-drawn carriages. The Garden attracts large and small groups, plant lovers, romantic lovers, strollers and sunbathers. The five weddings reportedly held at the park during the balmy spring morning neither upset nor surprised the staff. The BBG is well known as a publisher of horticultural treatises and many members finished off the tour with a browse through the bookstore to select a book or booklet, a souvenir, a horticultural postcard. Among featured drawings in an art show in the main building were a couple of magnolias.

At the Saturday evening dinner meeting back in Tarrytown, John Gallagher showed colorphotos of Asian magnolias that are grown in southwest England in Cornwall, Devon, and Dorset, and some at Windsor Great Park in Buckenhamshire, south England. He showed his own tree of Windsor Great Park's *M. 'Eric Savill'*, the seedling of *M. sprengeri* 'Diva' that rivals its parent in beauty. Not all of the members of *Magnolia's* Yulania



M. 'Yellow Bird'

Section do as well throughout the southwest region as they do in Cornwall, but most do thrive in others of these gardens. Mr. Gallagher expressed concern that some nurseries in the area are selling seedlings of named cultivars and calling them by the cultivar names (also see "On getting Magnolia names right," by Sir Peter Smithers in this issue). Although the staffs of some of the Cornwall gardens are unable to handle all visitors each year, Mr. Gallagher suggested that the way will be well paved for the Magnolia Society's projected tour of these gardens in mid-March 1987.

Phil Savage, whose talk followed John Gallagher's, expressed regret that many of the big Asiatics will not endure the cold of Michigan, but then when he reeled off the list of Magnolias that are occupants of his garden it seemed evident that he was being immoderately modest, that a great many species and cultivars thrive very well in many colder parts of the



M. 'Hattie Carthan'

United States. He showed pictures of some of the favorites in his garden as well as a number of hybrids he has made that were firsts of their kind, so far as has been reported, including some intergeneric hybrids between Magnolia and Michelia species.

Kenneth Durio displayed photos of recent Magnolia selections, including some of the latest selections from the hybrids bred by the late Todd Gresham 15 or more years ago. An award in Mr. Gresham's name, for furthering the aims of the Society, has been given at most annual meetings for the past few years. This year's D. Todd Gresham award went to Harold Hopkins, for serving as editor of this publication.

On Sunday morning the members were transported to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's Kitchawan Research Center at Ossining. The day's activity opened with a business meeting.

Dr. Dan Wright, a staff scientist at Kitchawan, reported on the techniques used and the progress made in characterizing magnolias, including



M. 'Evamaria'



M. 'Elizabeth'



Dick Figlar (striped shirt) shows a group magnolias in his yard.

hybrids, through quantitation of the pigment makeup of flower tepals by means of high pressure liquid chromatography, an analytical chemistry technique for identifying chemical substances. A more detailed report on this project is promised for a future issue.

Peter Del Tredici, International Registrar for Magnolia Cultivars, described the purposes and objectives he sees as needed to improve the system of registering magnolia cultivars. These include a continuing project to register all names that have been given to magnolias in plant literature and nursery catalogs, and more detailed information in registrations, including sources, photos that will render the truest color possible, and more exact color descriptions that utilize recognized color charts to identify shades of color.

A discussion was held on whether the Society should undertake to revise, augment and republish the 1975 Checklist of Magnolia Cultivars.

In his seed counter report Dennis Ledvina indicated that demand for seed of *Magnolia acuminata* and *fraseri* exceeded supply last year.

Later this year Dick Figlar will make available reprints of the early AMS Newsletters in a single bound edition (Volume 1, No. 1 through Volume 8,

No. 2) now out of print. Later it was determined that photocopies of the checklist are available for \$12 from the American Horticulture Society, Plant Sciences Data Center, Mt. Vernon, Va. 22121.

After lunch, prepared by staff members in their homes and served in the Kitchawan administration building, courtesy of the staff, Lola Koerting and others conducted a tour of the BBG Magnolia tree nursery and members also examined display specimens of Magnolia 'Evamaria' (*M. × brooklynensis*) and of *M. 'Elizabeth,'* 'Yellow Bird,' and 'Hattie Carthen,' all bred at Kitchawan. The rest of the staff taking part in the Kitchawan program included Charlotte Pretat, office administrator; Ilse Biedermann, tissue culture expert; Mary Anderson, horticulturist; and Dr. Craig Hibben, plant pathologist.

The Kitchawan program ended the 1985 meeting, but several of those scheduled for late departures accepted Dick Figlar's invitation to tour his garden at Pomona, not far away.

An incomplete list of those attending this year's meeting, including spouses:

Robert Adams, Phelan Bright, Fay Bright, David Eric Clulow, Peter Del Tredici, Ken Durio, Belle Durio, Harry Elkins, Dick Figlar, Karl Flinck, Dr. Frank Galyon, John Gallagher, Dr. and Mrs. Ray Goldsby, Roger Gossler.

Sara Gladney, Bon Hartline, Dr. William Havender, Joseph Hickman, Richard Hesselein, Harry Heineman, Willard Hunnewell, Harold Hopkins, August Kehr, Ray Klehm, Sarah Klehm, Nancy Klehm, Lola Koerting, Roy Krug.

Larry Langford, Dennis Ledvina, Lyle Littlefield, Edward Losely, Roger Luce, Bob MacKellar, L. Dean McCoy, Perry Narten, Jess Quintana, Tom Ridley, Phil Savage, William Seidl, John Silver, Michael Scott, Ralph Smith, Evamaria Sperber, Ray Tessmer, Charles Tubesing, Pat Walton, Rob Nicholson, Kim un Cho.