

The 1986 meeting at Mobile

Those who incline to take their chances with Asian Magnolias know about the unpredictable low temperatures that can confound the best laid plans, so for the most part those who came to the Magnolia Society's Mobile meeting March 7-9 managed to enjoy the entire program, even though the flowers had been blasted by two overnight freezes the week before.

What remained to be seen and done was considerable, and three full and pleasant days of meetings, tours, fellowship, and hospitality, and the sight of some undamaged Magnolias here and there about the city made the meeting a success.

It was the largest Society meeting ever, over 70 people attending, with good omens for even larger in the future. The most significant is that the Society appears to be meeting success in infusing its membership, both in the United States and abroad, with younger participants drawn by that same attraction

toward these primitive and spectacular flowering trees as those who decided to found the Society 27 years ago. The tree people may never reach the numbers of those who favor roses, rhododendrons, peonies, irises, and the like, but they are going to be around awhile. And it looks like they'll be enjoying more and improved Magnolia cultivars as garden ornaments in the temperate climates.

The Society and some outstanding individuals are making it possible for gardeners to collect and grow the Magnolias they want without having to overcome the difficulty and uncertainty of the past in identifying and obtaining superior plants. There's enough for everybody to do in spreading knowledge to the gardening public about Magnolia variety and versatility, and our younger members are going to make the difference is seeing that the work gets done.

The Mobile meeting was a good



Tree planting ceremony with (l-r) Bill Dodd, Pat Ryan, and Ken Durio. Photo Joe Hickman.



Dick Figlar does shovelwork; behind him, Ken Durio; across, Pat Ryan. Photo Joe Hickman.



Those attending tree ceremony being welcomed by Chamber of Commerce Hospitality Maids.



Japanese members at tree ceremony were Dr. Shuichi Hirao (r) and nurseryman Takashi Nakamura.

mix of information exchange, ceremony, visiting, viewing, renewing or beginning of friendships, purchasing, swapping, and general enjoyment of the outdoors.

It got under way Friday afternoon, March 7, with a ceremonial planting of the first tree on the site of a new Magnolia Arboretum being established by the South Alabama Botanical and Horticultural Society. The plant, Magnolia 'Porcelain Dove,' was bred by the late D. Todd Gresham in 1965 at his home, Hill of Doves, in Santa Cruz, California.

M. 'Porcelain Dove' is a hybrid between the Himalayan *Magnolia globosa* and the U.S. native, *Magnolia virginiana*. The tree was grown from one of several rooted cuttings sent by Todd Gresham to the Tom Dodd Nurseries at Semmes, Alabama, and was contributed by the descendants of Tom Dodd, Sr. It was planted in memory of the pioneer nurseryman and founder of the Tom

Dodd Nurseries.

The ceremony was conducted by Pat Ryan, horticultural director of Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile, and participants included members of the Magnolia Society, South Alabama Botanical and Horticultural Society, Mobile Parks Department, Mobile Tree Commission, and Streetscapes of Mobile.

In the evening the members were welcomed to Mobile by City Councilman John Peavy. At a Friday evening meeting of members, slides were shown and talks given by Frank Mossman, Ray Tessmer, Dick Figlar, Howard Reynolds, and Ferris Miller. Coffee and a cake decorated with a Magnolia motif were served by Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scott of the South Alabama Botanical and Horticultural Society. David Ellis of the Magnolia Nursery at Chunchula showed videotaped scenes featuring flowers of Gresham hybrid Magnolias at the Magnolia Nursery in



Charles Tubesing, Dennis Ledvina, and Larry Langford (l-r) at Magnolia Nursery. Photo Joe Hickman.



C. Ferris Miller (l) of Chollipo Arboretum, Korea, and Dr. Frank Mossman of Vancouver, WA.



Dr. John Giordano, Larry McNair and Bob Adams (l-r) at Tom Dodd Nurseries.



Tour of John Allen Smith's Magnolia Nursery begins. Bon and Ferry Hartline nearest camera.

Churchula and Tom Dodd Nurseries at Semmes. These had been photographed the previous week, just prior to the late freeze that ruined the flowers at these two sites.

At the board meeting Friday evening, the directors expressed thanks to Dennis Ledvina for his operation of the Society's Seed Counter since 1982. Ray Tessmer has volunteered to operate the Seed Counter and will take over after the spring distribution of seed. Harry Heineman becomes chairman of the Round Robin Committee (see separate story on Round Robin). Dalton Durio will head the revived Pollen Counter.

Nominated to 3-year terms on the board and later confirmed at the general membership meeting were Phelan Bright (re-elected), August Kehr, Bon Hartline, Jess Quintana, and Charles Tubesing (re-elected). Roger Gossler was nominated to complete the term of Mary Nell

McDaniel, who had asked to be relieved from this responsibility. The following day, after confirmation, the board elected Vice President Dick Figlar to be the new president, succeeding Kenneth Durio, and Lola Koerting to be vice president. Phelan Bright becomes secretary succeeding Charles Tubesing, who was thanked for his service in that post since 1983.

Under a new bylaw past presidents become permanent members of the board and the consequent addition of Phil Savage and Ken Durio to the board raises the current membership from 15 to 17. The Society agreed to hold the 1988 meeting at Bloomfield Hills, Mich., on April 29-May 1, home of Phil Savage. Phil's garden, with many of his own hybrids, has been discussed often in these pages but only a relatively few members have ever visited it.

At the Saturday morning meeting, August Kehr reported on the



Plant sale at Magnolia Nursery was brisk. All purchases were later hauled to hotel by truck.



Lola Koerting and Harry Heineman during the tour of Tom Dodd Nurseries at Semmes.



Mary Nell McDaniel and tri-hybrid holly bred by her late husband, Joe, and named for her by Dodd Nurseries.

introduction of *Magnolia biondii* from China to the western world in 1977 (see separate story); Dr. Jackie Mullen, extension program associate and plant pathologist at Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, spoke on leafspot diseases on *Magnolia grandiflora* and their control (see her two separate articles); and Mrs. Donna Fare, horticultural research associate, Auburn, discussed shade tree tests at Auburn involving *Magnolia grandiflora* and deciduous magnolias.

August Kehr outlined the offerings at next year's meeting to be held April 24-26 at Hendersonville, N.C. John Gallagher showed slides of the beautiful Asian Magnolias in the gardens of Cornwall and other parts of southern and southwest England. He will be host for the Society-sponsored tour of Magnolia specialty gardens in that part of England in mid-March 1987.

At noon, members traveled by bus to the Botanical Center at Mobile's



Nurserymen Don Shadow of Winchester, Tenn., and Bon Hartline of Anna, Ill., touring Dodd Nurseries.

Langan Park, where a box lunch was served, then reboarded for Semmes and the Tom Dodd Nurseries. After an hour or so of visiting and viewing, the bus tour continued to Chunchula, Alabama, and the Magnolia Nursery owned by John Allen Smith. The Magnolia Nursery is combined with Dr. Smith's private country residence and arboretum. There are extensive plantings of Magnolias, largely Gresham hybrids, and deciduous azalea species and hybrids.

At the annual dinner Saturday evening, Sir Peter Smithers was guest speaker, and showed a large selection of color slides of favorite Magnolias and a few other special plants, largely from the garden of his retirement home on Lake Lugano, Vico Morcote, Switzerland.

Sir Peter introduced two Japanese members attending a Society meeting for the first time: Shuichi Hirao, prominent biochemist and amateur gardener who has corresponded and



At Magnolia Nursery (l-r): Ray Sutton, John Gallagher, Bob Adams, Phil Savage, Roger Klehm. Photo Joe Hickman.



John Allen Smith, owner of Magnolia Nursery, with C. Ferris Miller in Langan Park. Photograph by Joe Hickman.



At head table: Bill Dodd at podium, Ken Durio (l), and Sir Peter Smithers, dinner speaker (r).

swapped plants with many Society members for years, and Takashi Nakamura, a nurseryman of Saitama, Japan, who has introduced several Magnolia cultivars, including forms of the American *M. acuminata*. The two showed slides of several cultivar selections of Magnolias in Japan.

Individual recipients of the Society's D. Todd Gresham award were brothers Tom Dodd Jr., and Col. William R. Dodd, for their contributions to Magnolia culture and particularly in appreciation for their respective roles in the late 1960s in assisting D. Todd Gresham to transport the thousands of hybrid Magnolias he had bred between 1955-67 to Mississippi and Alabama after he became unable to care for them prior to his death in 1969.

After these events an auction was held of plants and related objects contributed for the sale. It was the first full-fledged auction the Society had ever scheduled for a meeting, and members responded with enthusiasm. The auction, conducted



Tom Dodd (l) and Bill Dodd, after receiving D. Todd Gresham award plaques, at annual dinner.

by Bon Hartline, resulted in the addition of \$1,566 in revenues to the Society's treasury. Such additional revenue sources help to keep down increases in membership fees, as one board member, C. Ferris Miller, noted.

On Sunday morning two tours were conducted. Tour No. 1 took the participants to look at several specimens of mature *Magnolia grandifloras* planted in various locations around Mobile, and to visit Bellingrath Gardens, a longtime favorite stop for visitors and tourists who come to the Mobile area.

Tour No. 2 included visits by bus and cars to two sites in the DeSoto National Forest in southeast Mississippi, first to a wooded location in Perry County near New Augusta, to see colonies of five *Magnolia* species thriving together with many companion plants, and another location in George County near Benndale, to see Mississippi's "State Champion" *Magnolia grandiflora*, a specimen with a trunk



View of audience during annual dinner of Magnolia Society in Mobile.



Bon Hartline, who ran plant-artifact auction, offers Magnolia painting.

16 feet in girth and about 112 feet high.

Those attending the Mobile meeting:

Robert Adams, Shelbyville, Ind.; Carl R. Amason, Calion, Ark.; Phelan Bright, Hammond, La.; Charlotte Carlton, Bayou La Batre, Ala.; Gladys M. Caughron, Gainsboro, Tenn.; Gene and Margarita Cline, Canton, Ga.;

David Clulow, Tilgates, Bletchingley, Surrey, England; Mr. and Mrs. Tom Dodd, Jr., Semmes, Ala.; William R. and Mary Dodd, Mobile, Ala.; Ken and Belle Durio, Opelousas, La.;

Dalton Durio, Opelousas, La.; David Ellis, Chunchula, Ala.; Richard B. Figlar, Pomona, N.Y.; Richard E. Fitzwater, Indianapolis, Ind.; Claudia (Mrs. S.L.) Ford, Jonesville, La.; Glenda (Mrs. Henry V.) Ford, Monterey, La.;

John Gallagher, The Pharmacy, Verwood, Dorset, England; Frank B. Galyon, M.D., Knoxville, Tenn.; John M. Giordano, Jr., M.D., Eight Mile, Ala.; Mrs. Sara Gladney, Baton Rouge, La.; Roger Gossler, Springfield, Ore.;

Archalie (Mrs. S.R.) Harman, El Dorado, Ark.; J. Bon and Ferry Hartline, Anna, Ill.; Dr. William R. Havender, Berkeley, Calif.; Harry Heineman, Scituate, Mass.; Joseph W. Hickman, Benton, Ill.;



Lola Koerting stands near Magnolia painting donated by C. Ferris Miller at auction.



Sign points to Mississippi's "state champion" Magnolia grandiflora, one of our sites.

Dr. Shuichi Hirao, Yamanone, Zushi, Kanagawa, Japan; Harold and Linda Hopkins, Mobile, Ala.; Edward J. and Mae Horder, Mobile, Ala.; August and Mary Louise Kehr, Hendersonville, N.C.;

Roy and Sarah Klehm, Barrington, Ill.; Lola Koerting, Ossining, N.Y.; Roy G. Krug, Denver, Colo.; Larry Langford, Gibson, Tenn.; Dennis Ledvina, Green Bay, Wis.; L. Dean McCoy, Webster Groves, Mo.;

Mary Nell McDaniel, Urbana, Ill.; Larry and Deyerle McNair, Birmingham, Ala.; Wade and Harriet Mahlke, Pinson, Ala.; Carol (Mrs. Lynn) Massa, Denham Springs, La.; C. Ferris Miller, Seoul, Korea;

Frank D. Mossman, Vancouver, Wash.; Takashi Nakamura, Saitama, Japan; Jess V. Quintana, Denver, Colo.; Dr. Howard C. Reynolds, Hays, Kan.; Tom Ridley, Tilgates, Bletchingley, Surrey, England;

Jerry L. Rogers, Wakefield, Va.; Philip J. Savage, Jr., Bloomfield Hills, Mich.; Don Shadow, Winchester, Tenn.; Jonathan and Eugenie Shaw, Lake Wales, Fla.; John Allen Smith, Mobile, Ala.;

Ralph H. Smith, North St. Petersburg, Fla.; Sir Peter Smithers, Vico Morcote, Switzerland; Raymond Sutton, Jr., Williamsburg, Ky.; Ray and Lorie Tessmer, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Charles Tubising, Richmond, B.C., Canada.