

M. denudata and liliiflora

by Elizabeth McClintock and Frederick C. Meyer

This note summarizes our conclusions regarding *Magnolia denudata* and *M. liliiflora* as the correct names for these two Chinese magnolias and our reasons for rejecting the names *Magnolia heptapeta* and *M. quinquepeta*, sometimes used for them. Articles telling the full story will appear in future issues of the journals, *MAGNOLIA* and *Taxon*.

Pierre Joseph Buchoz (sometimes spelled Buc'hoz), a French physician-naturalist, published the genus *Lassonia* in 1779 with two species, *L. heptapeta* and *L. quinquepeta*. The figures in color published by Buchoz in 1779 were adapted from earlier figures of Chinese origin published by Buchoz in 1776 but without botanical names or descriptions. Because Buchoz based his genus and species on the Chinese figures and not on actual specimens the figures accompanying his names and descriptions of 1779 become the basis for evaluating his two species. We have examined both the 1779 and 1776 figures. Superficially these figures resemble the Chinese magnolias known as Yulan and Mulan but the detailed structures shown in the flowers for each do not represent any known *Magnolia*. Because of their gross inaccuracies the drawings have no botanical validity whatsoever. The names *Lassonia heptapeta* and *L. quinquepeta*, therefore, cannot be applied to *Magnolia denudata* (Yulan) and *M. liliiflora* (Mulan).

The names in *Lassonia*, which were legitimately published, were transferred by J. E. Dandy in 1934 to *Magnolia*, as *M. heptapeta* and *M. quinquepeta*. Dandy, however, in 1950 and again in 1978, used as

correct names, *M. denudata* and *M. liliiflora*, with *M. heptapeta* and *M. quinquepeta* respectively, among their synonyms. Unfortunately, Dandy did not explain his reason for this change; perhaps he looked again at Buchoz's figures and saw their inaccuracies.

Based on our findings we conclude, first, that the Buchoz figures simply do not match the species of *Magnolia* to which some people apply his names and second, that the names *Magnolia denudata* and *M. liliiflora* both published by Desrousseaux in 1791 are the earliest valid names for these two magnolias so well known as ornamental trees.

Elizabeth McClintock is Research Associate, The Herbarium, Department of Botany University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Frederick G. Meyer is Supervisory Botanist, U.S. National Arboretum Washington, D.C.



Very dark purple flower from an old, unhealthy plant of *M. liliiflora nigra*, cultivar name if any unknown, growing on the mall side of the U.S. Capitol Building grounds in 1975. A year or so later there was no trace of it.