

A blooming hill in Michigan

The Magnolia Society's annual meeting convened in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, on Friday May 6, with Phil Savage, host. For many members attending, the late date insured a "second spring" and, with it, another chance to enjoy our chosen genus in bloom.

After a rather extensive tour of the suburban Detroit area on the drive from the airport, during which we eagerly spotted blooming magnolias mixed with still lingering forsythia, we arrived at the Kingsley Inn, headquarters for the convention. Phil was on hand to greet us at the registration table which, throughout the afternoon, served as the focal point of an ever growing crowd of Society friends.

A buffet supper followed by slide presentations completed the first evening. Among the presentations were "Cornish Garden Highlights" with slides shown by Joe Hickman and Dick Figlar; "Cornwall Plus—Windsor Great Park and gardens in other countries" by Frank Mossman, Frank Galyon, Karl Flinck, and Larry Langford; "Vegetative Propagation and Handling of Magnolias" by Charles Tubesing; and "Magnolia Stirrings—far above Cayugas Waters" by Dorothy Johnson of Cornell University. At a late hour, the members and guests adjourned for informal visits and preparations for the coming visit to Phil's garden. Not so the Board of Directors....

The Board Meeting

Fourteen directors were present

when Society president Dick Figlar called the Board to order at 10:45 PM. Issues raised and action taken by the Board are as follows:

- Discussion was held regarding the establishment of an endowment fund for educational projects relating to *Magnolia*.

- A second reprint of the Vol. I-VIII journals was approved. Dick Figlar will also investigate the possibility of reprinting a second group of journals roughly corresponding to the "Savage Years".

- A scion exchange was discussed (again) and action was directed toward an investigative committee to report to next year's board.

- Jess Quintana presented a proposed Magnolia Society brochure to be used for publicity and membership purposes. A committee will also make definite proposals to the 1989 board.

- San Francisco, with "Magnolias by the Bay", was chosen as the site for the 1989 convention slated to be held February 24-26.

- An invitation from J.C. Raulston and North Carolina State University Arboretum, Raleigh, North Carolina, was accepted for the 1990 convention. Dates and details to be announced.

- Ray Tessmer, Roy Klehm, Phillipe de Spoelberch, John Gallagher, and Kim Kunso were nominated as prospective board members to be presented to the general membership for election. They were duly elected at the general membership meeting held the following day.

- Officers elected for the next two

years were President, Lola Koerting and Vice President, Dennis Ledvina.

It then being well into Saturday, the meeting was adjourned. Copies of the complete Minutes are available, upon application, from the Secretary.

The Savage garden

For members and other readers of the journal, Phil Savage is legend. During the course of the existence of the Magnolia Society, Phil has held all offices including editor. His knowledge of *Magnolia* and his willingness and erudition in sharing this knowledge tend to overshadow his contributions to hybridization — hybridization that has led to the introduction of such cultivars as *M. × gossleri* 'Marjory Gossler', *M. × 'Butterflies'*, and *M. × 'Yellow Lantern'*. Yet these are only a few of the many worthy plants that greeted us when we arrived at Phil's garden just a short distance from the Kingsley Inn. Set on several acres in the midst of prime commercial office sprawl, the Savage garden is an oasis of beauty. For once timed to perfection, the many trees were filled with bloom. At the head of the drive was a large plant of *M. × 'Orchid'* literally covered in flower (see Issue 21, p 23 for more on this plant). Coupled with the wonderful sight and scent of a nearby *Viburnum × juddii*, the garden tour was off to an auspicious start. Several specimens of *M. × soulangiana* 'Alexandrina' (Gulf Coast or Sawada's form) were in magnificent bloom. One specimen, close by the swimming pool, amply demonstrated why any of us grow magnolias. Clothed in bloom from the ground to a height of twenty of more feet and broader than tall, the plant was perfection.

But it was primarily hybrids that we came to see, and see them we did! Phil has undertaken a program of hybridization in an attempt to procure late blooming, cold hardy magnolias of good color and form. Please bear in mind that all the *M.*

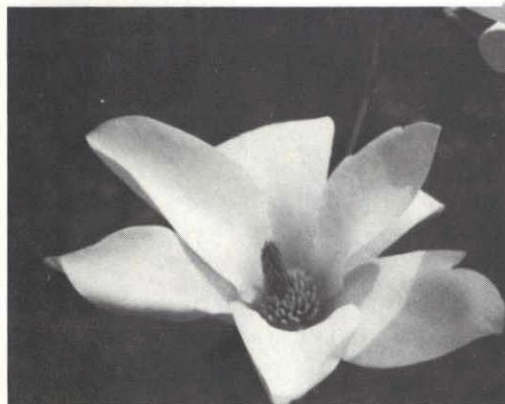
stellata and *M. × loebneri* plants were out of bloom by the time of our visit and that such late blooming plants as *M. × 'Galaxy'* and *M. × soulangiana* 'Lennei' were just reaching their peak of bloom.

Principal among the hybrids were the various yellow clones based on *M. acuminata*, frequently from a plant referred to by Phil as "Fertile Myrtle". *Magnolia acuminata* var. *cordata* 'Miss Honeybee' figures prominently as well. These clones varied from pale cream to deep yellow and, in bloom shape, from spiky to one beautifully reflexed almost to the horizontal (a cross of 'Miss Honeybee and *M. denudata*' 'Sawada's Cream'). Indeed, the latter so delighted me that I rushed back on Sunday to take a few more photographs only to find that it had partially closed to a vase or near-bowl shape. Later in the day, with heat and greater light, it reflexed to the horizontal again. A beautiful presentation. Of deeper yellow color and with more tepals was *M. × 'Butterflies'*. This was probably the most admired magnolia in the garden. Indeed, in a sizable collection of yellow clones, it stands out with a much more intense yellow coloring.





Host Phil Savage above left and opposite, center; Left—Ken and Belle Durio, D Todd Gresham Award holders; Above right—M. × 'Butterflies'; Below—M. cordata 'Miss Honeybee' × M. denudata 'Sawada's Cream'.



Of the non-yellows, *M. × 'Big Dude'* lived up to its naming in every respect. A cross of *M. sprengeri* var *diva* and *M. × 'Picture'*, it had dinner plate sized blooms of beautiful rich pink, shading to a paler pink towards the outer edge of the tepals.

Apparently from the "White Period" was a cross of *M. denudata* (Wada's form) and *M. cylindrica*. A six tepalled flower of good size and shape, it was beautifully presented. Other crosses included one of *M. acuminata* 'Miss Honeybee' \times *M. stellata* 'Rubra'.

Banquet and speakers

Following a leisurely day touring Phil's garden which included a box lunch midst the magnolias, the conventioners returned to the hotel to make preparations for the banquet held at the Fox and Hounds Restaurant. After dinner speakers included Roy Klehm, of Charles Klehm & Son Nursery, who spoke on what is necessary to make magnolias a profitable commercial crop for professional nurserymen; Philippe de Spoelberch, who showed slides of *M. campbellii* var. *alba* in Bhutan (see also article elsewhere this issue); C. Ferris Miller, who gave the group an update on Chollipo Arboretum in this Olympic Games year; and August Kehr shared his experiences with a new method of colchicine application (see elsewhere this issue for details of method) and the practical uses for polyploid magnolias in breeding.

Harold Hopkins, chairman of the awards committee, made the presentation of the D. Todd Gresham Award to Ken Durio and his family for their contributions to furthering the growth and health of the Society under Ken's presidency. Ken was joined by his wife, Belle, outgoing president Dick Figlar, and Phelan Bright, the donor of the *M. grandiflora* wood on which the award is mounted.

The plant auction was ably conducted by Bon Hartline and Joe Hickman, raising much needed funds for the Society's coffers.

Sunday found many of the members who remained in the area once again at Phil's garden renewing acquaintance with old blooms and greeting new ones. An unexpected treat was finding Dennis Ledvina busily at work making additional crosses on the receptive flowers remaining on the trees. He was soon assured of a few eager "helpers" and in no time had several of us gingerly unrolling flowers for the hybridizer's invasive pollen-laden brush. By mid-afternoon Phil's trees looked like a parade had passed by leaving streamers of colored labels waving from nearly every limb.

Members and guests attending were Phelan Bright, Robert and Donna Adams, Ron Allensen, Gary Conrow, Donald Conrow, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Daubert, Philippe de Spoelberch, Ken and Belle Durio, Harry and Irene Elkins, David Ellis, Richard and Anita Figlar, Richard and Rosalie Fitzwater, Karl and Birgitta Flinck, Alice Foster, Frank Galyon, Philip and Justine Savage, Sara Gladney, Marjory Gossler, Roger Gossler, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Halas, Curt Hanson, Bon and Ferry Hartline, Harry Heineman, Joseph and Ruth Hickman, Harold and Linda Hopkins, Jayme Irvin, Dorothy Johnson, Dennis Jones, Jerry and Marie Karwowski, August Kehr, Roy and Sarah Klehm, Roy Krug, Larry Langford, Dennis Ledvina, Richard Marsh, L. Dean McCoy, Mary Nell McDaniel, C. Ferris Miller, Frank Mossman, Perry Narten, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Pavelek, Richard Punnet, Jess Quintana, Alex Rossac, William Secunda, William Seidl, Philip Seitner, John Allen Smith, Ray Sutton, Robert and Mary Taylor, Ray Tessmer, Robert and Marian Tomayer, Charles Tubesing, Donald Wieland, and Richard Wiser.