

Royal Horticultural Society honors Gresham hybrid

by JOHN T. GALLAGHER

On the 13th March, 1990, Floral Committee B of the Royal Horticultural Society voted in favor of an Award of Merit for *Magnolia* 'Sayonara' bred by the late Dr. Todd Gresham. The Committee meets on show days at Vincent Square in London. A vase of the plant is submitted for their consideration and the plant is judged as it appears before the Committee. It was the first time we had exhibited a magnolia, although in past years we have been very successful in exhibiting camellias.

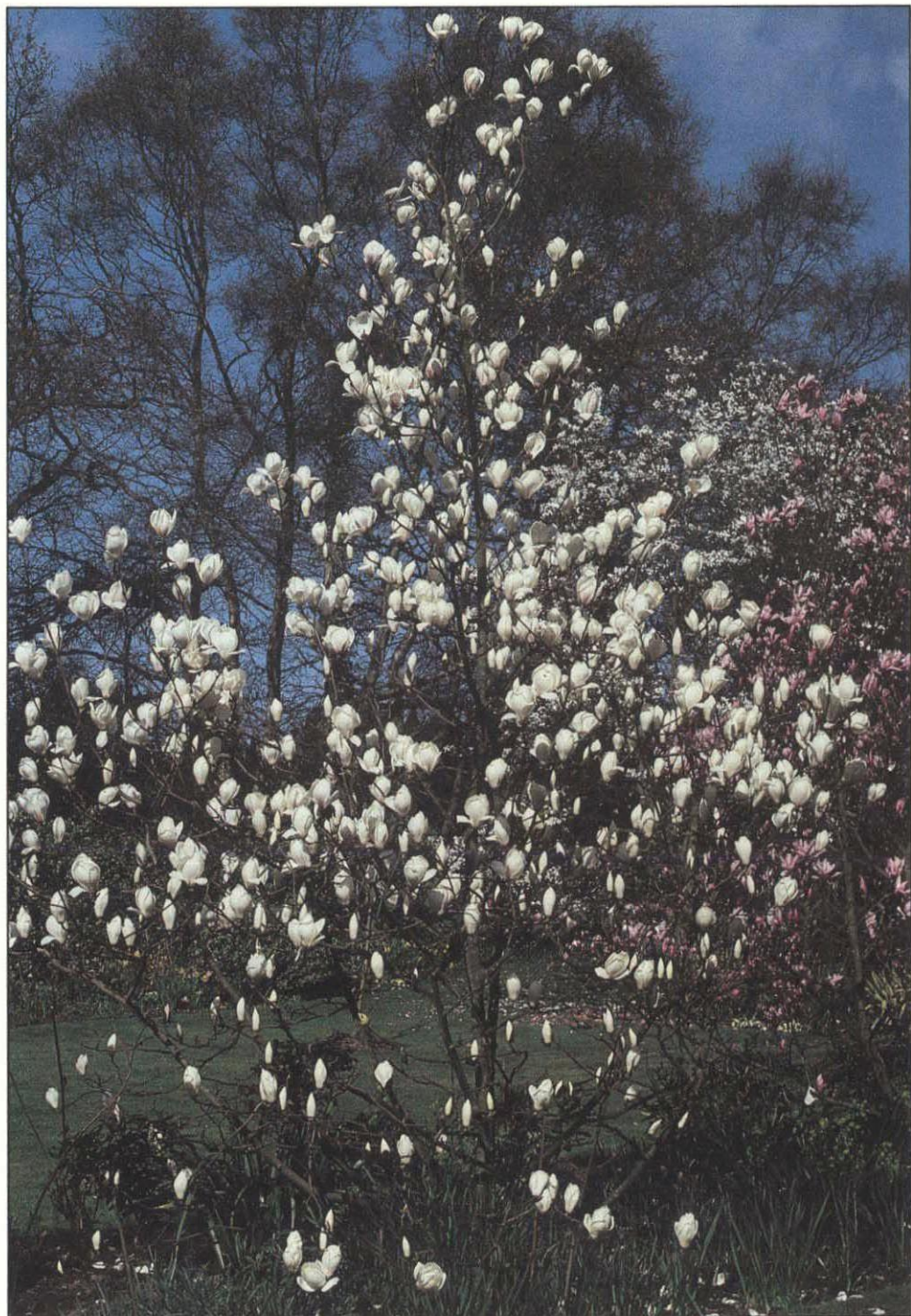
The trip to London is about 80 miles, so it is important to pack the flowers carefully. Two big sprays of *M.* 'Sayonara' and *M.* 'Burgundy' were picked the previous day. Our Korean friend Kihun Song wrapped each bud up carefully in dry toilet tissue and the end of each stem with damp tissue. We drove up to London in the evening and placed the sprays in vases of water overnight.

Next morning we took the vases up to the Committee room, completed the

documentation and took off the tissue. The buds slowly opened up to show the beautifully shaped flowers.

The original plant was given to me by the late Sir Harold Hillier after one of our late night telephone conversations. Harold loved to talk on the telephone about plants quite late into the night. These were fascinating calls as Harold would recall all sorts of stories about plant lovers all over the world. On one occasion I had said that I thought that *M.* 'Manchu Fan' was the most beautiful Gresham hybrid, but Harold would have none of it. He was so convinced that *M.* 'Sayonara' was the best, that very shortly afterwards a grafted plant arrived with Harold's compliments. Needless to say — he was right!

I thought that the vase of *M.* 'Burgundy' was very lovely, but I was surprised how many people disliked the name in relation to the actual color of the flowers. It is not the first time that a plant has suffered from a stupid name! ■



Magnolia *'Sayonara' A.M.*