

Robin Notes

Excerpted by Harry Heineman

From David Clulow (England), on *M. stellata* 'F.V.' and 'Jane Platt'—We have *stellata* 'Jane Platt' from Roger Gossler and also *stellata* 'F.V.' ("fine variety") from Eisenhut. The Eisenhut plant was from Sir Peter Smithers who obtained it from Wada in Japan. I wonder if Jane Platt also imported her *stellata* from Wada as the two plants are completely identical. This is quite the best *stellata rosea*, and I took some to Committee B [RHS] where it received a unanimous Award of Merit on 20th April, 1993. It just missed a First Class Certificate. Incidentally, we have changed the names on our *stellata* 'F.V.' to 'Jane Platt.'

From Larry Langford (Tennessee), on *M. stellata* 'Jane Platt'—I am more and more impressed with *M. stellata* 'Jane Platt.' I have a number of *stellatas* of all persuasions from white to dark purple/pink, and 'Jane Platt' is undoubtedly the best. The blooms are small, but they never flop and are usually relatively frost proof. It is growing quite vigorously and has reached 10-12 feet in a very upright fashion. A cultivar introduced by Tom Todd Nursery, 'Pink Stardust,' is nearly as good but is much more shrubby growing with larger but floppy flowers. The color is not quite as dark as 'Jane Platt.'

From Larry Langford (Tennessee), on *M. 'Super Star'*—Another magnolia in the *stellata* line that is growing on me is 'Super Star.' This was introduced by Ray Bracken of 'Bracken's Brown Beauty' fame. Dorothy [Callaway] lists it in her book as a *M. x loebneri* cultivar, but it appears to me to be a *M. stellata* x *M. salicifolia* cross. The leaves look much like most cultivars of *stellata*, but the stems most closely resemble 'Wada's Memory' or the *salicifolia* cultivar, 'Miss Jack.' The flowers are like 'Wada's Memory' in bud but have more tepals and do not get so large or floppy. The tepals have a narrow but dark red streak from base to tip. The tree is very vigorous. It already has 6-8 inches of new growth [written on May 5] and generally makes two to three feet a year. The original tree is 30 feet or more and quite globe shaped. Surprisingly, it is a seed propagated cultivar (as distinguished from clone) that comes

remarkably true. Fields of them at Ray Bracken's nursery appear identical in shape, color of leaf and size. I have not seen any other specimens in bloom. Ray said he obtained the original in a shipment of stellatas from a Mobile nursery. He planted it at his house since it obviously did not "match" any of the other plants he was using in landscaping projects.

From Philippe de Spoelberch (Belgium), on a recording system for magnolia collections—(1) Recording should be a pleasure. (2) Get hold of some ordinary, long lasting labels numbered from 1 to 999 (9,999 if you are very hungry), absolutely nothing else. (3) Hang number 1 on the first plant you receive. (4) Go on, do it immediately on receipt of the plant. (5) Record in a strong notebook when and where it came from, what is its parentage, supplier and history. (6) Use plastic coated copper wire or stainless steel. (7) Make a photocopy of your accession book. (8) If you don't enjoy this, stop planting, [or] (9) someone around the corner might enjoy doing it for you.

If you have a name, record it, but do not bother to put more on that label. Do not bother to put all this in a computer data base; it can be done much later. Do not bother to produce a list of your accessions. Do not bother to have a great map of your garden. Hang your accession number today!

From Mark Haimen (Colorado), on M. 'Marillyn' and 'Forrest's Pink'—M. 'Marillyn' [*M. liliiflora* 'Nigra' x *M. kobus*] survived two winters with lows of -20°F, and bloomed for the first time after a -10°F winter. It was the star of my garden. 'Marillyn' bloomed for 2 months with 8 inch wide and 5 inch tall, weather resistant blooms. The color was somewhat different from that on page 13 of Issue 47, Fall 1989, MAGNOLIA. The color was more of a mauve on the outside and definitely inside white tinted mauve with light mauve vertical stripes. There were always a few open blooms, but very little fragrance. The plant is 5-6 feet tall and bloomed as a 3 year old plant (2 1/3 feet tall at planting). Although I have only one flower on 'Forrest's Pink' to compare it with, I like the color of 'Marillyn' better. It also fared better after a 70 mph windstorm. None of the buds on 'Marillyn' failed to open (2 out of 3 failed on 'Forrest's Pink'). Note that 'Forrest's Pink' survived its first winter with lows down to -25°F with only very mild dieback; so it is not tender to cold.

From Frank Galyon (Tennessee), in praise of 'Little Gem'—I would like to sing the praises of *M. grandiflora* 'Little Gem.' While the usual blooming time for ordinary *grandiflora* here [Knoxville area] is from late May to July 1st at which time they are

essentially through blooming for the season, 'Little Gem' blooms repeatedly all summer and fall. There was not a single day in August that we didn't have a flower from 'Little Gem.' Here in October it is still blooming. When I first saw the original plant in Warren Steed's nursery in Candor, NC, in November it was covered with flowers and buds. It is unfortunately one of the less-hardy clones of *grandiflora*. Here is occasionally has tip damage from freezing weather, but I still wouldn't be with a plant of it.

From August Kehr (North Carolina), on the double *M. sieboldii* 'Harold Epstein'—A graft, made last winter [1993] of the *sieboldii* from Harold Epstein flowered this fall. The two flowers were both fully double with 36 tepals. The flower form was unique, unlike any I have ever seen in a magnolia—hard to describe. Of course fall flowers may not be typical, so I am awaiting spring flowers, for it is budded. The plant is very vigorous and was grafted on rootstock of *M. macrophylla*. Mr. Kalleberg of Norway asked me to register it under the name 'Harold Epstein,' which I have done. Harold Epstein, now 92 years old, obtained his plant 50 years ago from a subsidiary of Princeton Nurseries (F and F Nursery) through the recommendation of an English gardener named Don Richardson, who was in charge of the Whitney Estate.

From August Kehr (North Carolina), on rooting *M. sieboldii*—I have found that forms of *sieboldii* root readily as cuttings (if misted). The difficult-to-propagate clones, such as 'Ursula Grau' and 'Harold Epstein' both strike from very young growth as cuttings.

From August Kehr (North Carolina), on frost damage to flower buds—Magnolia buds that have started to swell are highly sensitive to 6-8 degrees of frost. However there were exceptions, in spring 1994, and perhaps it was an excellent year for determining which cultivars had a level of frost tolerance.

I took very careful notes on flower damage, rating them from 0-10, with 0 meaning no damage and 10 meaning 100% killed. I hope to assemble these data and analyse them when time permits. There are a few general observations that can be made. Hybrids with *M. stellata* genes tended to have quite frost tolerant flowers. For example some of the Little Girls, *M. liliiflora* x *M. stellata*, rated about 4-5 which means the flowers were quite tolerant—damaged but not 100% killed. There were exceptions because not all *stellata* hybrids were undamaged. For example, 'Jane' was rated 10 in a few locations, while 'Ricki' rated 4. One hybrid, 'Lennei' x 'Norman Gould' ranked 1, which means the flowers withstood 4 freezes with very little damage, a rather

remarkable and unexpected finding. In fact, I plant to increase (propagate) this hybrid for that reason even though the color is a light lilac—not one of my favorites. ♣

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