

Letters

I would like to thank Richard Figlar for the two articles printed in the Fall/Winter 2002 issue [of *Magnolia*] about Magnolia fruits.

As he stated in "Those Amazing Magnolia Fruits," "those who cultivate magnolias are mainly interested in the flowers, not the fruits." While I am not a cultivator, I am a Society member and joined because of my fascination and fondness for those amazing fruits and their seeds.

Unlike most members, I am not a horticulturalist. I am an artist with strong personal interests in botany and entomology. Those two topics are major sources of inspiration and provide the subject matter for my eccentric jewelry and small sculptural objects.

Last year I completed my MFA at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. The focus of my thesis was how and why seeds have come to be one of my recurring motifs.

Being an Ohio native, magnolia trees were new to me. I can still remember the first time I found a *M. grandiflora* fruit while walking through the sculpture garden on campus. As I wrote in my thesis:

I found one that reminded me of some weird alien creature. It had a stick-like body similar to tan velveteen on the lower half separated from the polka-dotted maroon torso by a highly textural band. Out of its fuzzy yellow conical head popped a bright and leathery smooth red-orange tongue, which I realized was the seed. I began to collect the ones I considered to be ideal specimens, those that weren't dirty or broken, thus allowing me to relish all the sumptuous details. Some of them had heads that were more developed than my little alien's. These were much larger and had multiple orifices similar to the little alien mouth. Protruding from a number of the [oddly] shaped mouths were the plump red-orange seed-tongues. I wanted to know why some had bigger heads than others. I longed to learn the biological function behind the funky physiognomy. I needed to know more.

I became obsessed, did some research, answered some of my own questions, and made a couple pieces with the fruit and seed references. A short time later, while attending a workshop at Penland School for

Crafts, I met member Phelan Bright who informed me about the Magnolia Society. I joined, not only because of my appreciation for the plant and all of its parts, but also in hopes of learning more about my special interest.

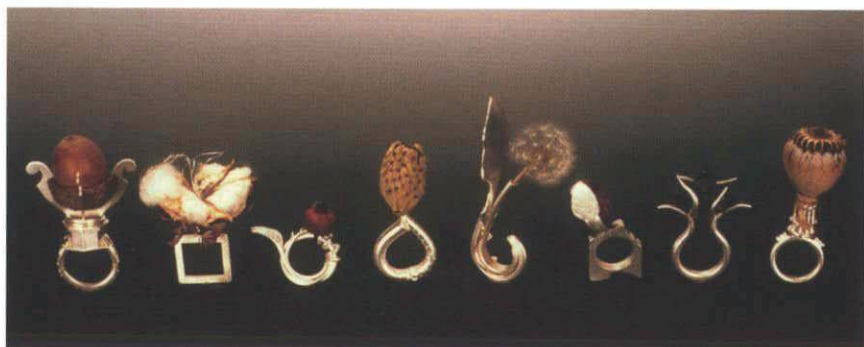
So, thank you, Richard Figlar, for continuing my education about the fruits and seeds. I especially enjoyed learning the anatomical terms and physiology, as well as the presence of the Fibonacci series, which is used commonly in design, in the phyllotaxis of the carpels.

Fondly,

Kristi Kloss

Columbus OH

ksquaredmetals@yahoo.com



Kristi sent a photograph of a series of rings she designed using seeds as a motif. From left to right, the rings are named: Integrity (acorn), Warmth (cotton), Well-being (rosehip), Admirations (magnolia), Wishes (dandelion), Home (buckeye), Protection (ling), and Dreams (poppy).



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Richard B. Figlar
651 Newton Road
Pickens SC 29671
Phone/Fax: 864.868.6439

Vice President

Susan Treadway
1509 Monk Road
Gladwyne, PA 19035
Res. Phone: 610.642.8050

Secretary

Roberta Hagen
6616 81st St
Cabin John, MD 20818

Treasurer

Larry Langford
518 Parker Street
Gibson, TN 38338

Editor

Prudence Holliger
PO Box 2043
Issaquah, WA 98027-0091

Webmaster

Donald E. King
dking4@gte.net

Standing Committee Chairs

Registered Corporate Agent

Karen Vallowe

Research

Richard B. Figlar

International Registrar of Magnolia Cultivars

Dr. Stephen A. Spongberg
steve@pollyhillarboretum.org

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