FLOWER COLORS OF HARDY HYBRID RHODODENDRONS

The hybrid broad-leaved evergreen rhododendrons are most conspicuous during early June. If grown in fertile, acid soil, mulched properly and pruned properly (see ARNOLDIA, Vol. 8, No. 8, September, 1948) they should produce a bright display of flowers annually. The collection in the Arnold Arboretum is over fifty years old and has been added to continually from year to year. Rhododendron enthusiasts are continually studying this collection, noting the differences between the many varieties now being grown. Not all that are available in the eastern United States nurseries are here, but many are, and it serves a valuable purpose, at the same time making a splendid display.

It is most difficult to properly identify the many hardy rhododendron hybrids. The species are of course keyed out in standard botanical keys, but there is little easily available information about the identification of hybrids grown in the East. There are no colored pictures or paintings sufficiently accurate for this purpose, nor are there suitable descriptions of the flower colors. Articles for popular periodicals are numerous, but color descriptions in these are entirely too general. The term "crimson flowers" may cover a dozen or more varieties, each one of which does differ slightly from the others. Size of truss, of flower, markings on corolla and even the color of the stamens and pistils are all aides in identification.

Consequently, we have started an attempt at the proper description of hybrid varieties, growing in our collection, by the careful comparison of colors of the flowers as they bloomed this year, with the colors of the Royal Horticultural Society's Colour Chart. This has its drawbacks, as anyone familiar with plants is quick to point out. In the first place, the color of the flowers varies slightly depending on whether they open in shade or full sun. The size of the flower varies according to the amount of nourishment the roots are able to receive. Flowers quickly fade in full sunlight—this and many other criticisms can be justly leveled at any such comparison.
However, an attempt is here made to enumerate the respective characteristics of the rhododendron hybrids as they performed with us this year, all growing in the same soil together, under the same conditions. Readings and comparisons were made from a representative flower truss in full bloom. Even with the weaknesses of this method, the resulting information is valuable. It aids materially in pointing out the fact that there are many varieties being grown, several of which will give the same landscape effect. True, there may be slight differences in color or size of corolla or flower truss, or the markings or the colors of the pistil and stamens may differ slightly, affording reason for different varietal names, but when some 50 named varieties are brought together in a single room for comparison, similarities are striking and should be emphasized.

Judging them from the viewpoint of their serviceability in the landscape, there are many which are practically identical. This is important. There is a slight variation in time of bloom; some come earlier than others, and the trusses of some are more dense and larger than others—reasons why certain growers prefer some rather than others. The following list, it is hoped, is only a start at the time-consuming task of comparing all the varieties grown in the East. Whether or not this means of identification has merit can best be judged by each individual rhododendron enthusiast. Comments on this method of approach and the measurements given for these varieties will be greatly appreciated.

### Flower Colors of Hardy Hybrid Rhododendrons

**Group I White** (General landscape effect)

**Rhododendron caucasicum coriaceum**
- Truss: 3½" high and 5" wide; loose, rounded
- 12 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½"
- Markings inside corolla: Chartreuse green (663/1)
- Style and stigma reddish;* base of corolla outside pale reddish; blooms early
- Plant: pure white

**Rhododendron "Boule de Neige"**
- Truss: 4" high and 6" wide; compact, rounded
- 14 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½"
- Markings inside corolla: Chartreuse green (668/1)
- Edge of petals slightly frilled;** plant blooms early.
- Plant: pure white

**Rhododendron "Baroness Henry Schroeder"**
- Truss: 3½" high and 5½" wide; loose, rounded
- 14 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½"
- Markings inside corolla: Cyclamen purple (30/1)
- Plant blooms early.

*Pistils and stamens are whitish unless otherwise noted.
**Petal margins not frilled unless otherwise indicated.
Group II Pale Blush Pink to Whitish

*Rhododendron* "Album elegans" Dawn pink (323/3) fading white in center
Truss: 5” high and 6” wide; dense, pyramidal
18 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½”
Markings inside corolla: Primrose yellow (601/2)
Stigma red, style pink.

*Rhododendron* "Sultana" Dawn pink (323/3) fading to white
Truss: 4½” high and 6½” wide; dense, pyramidal
12 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2¾”
Markings inside corolla: Majolica yellow (09/1) pronounced
Anthers purplish; blooms last of all those listed here.

*Rhododendron* catawbiense album Neyron rose (623/3) to whitish
Truss: 4½” high and 6½” wide; dense, pyramidal
20 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½”
Markings inside corolla: Primrose yellow (601/1) very faint and few.

*Rhododendron* "Album grandiflorum" Neyron rose (628/3) to whitish
Truss: 4½” high and 5½” wide; dense, pyramidal
18 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2¾”
Markings inside corolla: greenish yellow (64/2) few and inconspicuous
Stigma red, margins of petals slightly frilled.

*Rhododendron* "Delicatissimum" Rose madder (23/3) fading to white at center
Truss: 4½” high and 5½” wide; loose-dense, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flowers 2¾” diameter
Markings inside corolla: Greenish yellow (64/1) pronounced
Stigma red. This truss is similar to but not as good as "Album grandiflorum."

*Rhododendron* "Albert" Rose madder (23/3) center whitish
Truss: 3½” high and 6½” wide; dense, round
16 flowers in truss; flower diameter 3½”
Markings inside corolla: brownish

*Rhododendron* "Candidissimum" Rose madder (23/3)
Truss: 4½” high and 6½” wide; dense, rounded
12 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½”
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763/3) few and inconspicuous

*Rhododendron* waterei Rose pink (427/1)
Truss: 5½” high and 6½” wide; dense, pyramidal
20 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½”
Markings inside corolla: brownish

Group III Pale Pink (General landscape effect)

*Rhododendron* "Anton" Roseine purple (629/2) fairly uniform
Truss: 4½” high and 6½” wide; dense, pyramidal
18 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½”
Markings inside corolla: greenish to brownish
Stamens and pistil pinkish; petals slightly frilled.

*Rhododendron* "Bella" Amaranth rose (530/2) uniform
Truss: 3" high and 5" wide; dense, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½"
Markings inside corolla: Yellow ochre (07)
Stamens and pistils pinkish; petal margins frilled.

*Rhododendron* "Duke of York" Amaranth rose (530/1) to whitish
Truss: 5½" high and 7" wide; loose, rounded
12 flowers in truss; flower diameter 3½"
Markings inside corolla: Uranium green (63/2)
7 petals in corolla; color at tip of petals only.

*Rhododendron* "President Lincoln" Phlox purple (632/3) uniform
Truss: 4½" high and 5" wide; dense, rounded
26 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½"
Markings inside corolla: brownish
Stamens and pistil pinkish.

*Rhododendron* "Arno" Rose purple (533/1) to white in center
Truss: 4" high and 6" wide; dense, pyramidal
26 flowers in cluster; flower diameter 2½"
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931) prominent

**Pink to Deep Pink (General landscape effect)**

*Rhododendron* "Lady Armstrong" Solferino purple (26/2)
Truss: 5" high and 5½" wide; dense, pyramidal
24 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Ruby red (827/3) few
Stigma red; style and stamens pinkish near tip.

*Rhododendron* "Henrietta Sargent" Fuchsine pink (627/1)
Truss: 4" high and 6" wide; dense, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: brown to greenish
Stigma red; styles and stamens pink.

*Rhododendron* "James Bateman" Fuchsine pink (627/1)
Truss: 4" high and 6" wide; dense, rounded
18 flowers in cluster; flowers 3¼" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)
Stigma red; Style and stamens Fuchsine pink

*Rhododendron* "Flushing" Magenta (27/1)
Truss: 4" high and 6" wide; dense, rounded
18 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)
Stigma and style red; stamens purplish
Rhododendron "Daisy"

Magenta (27/1)

Truss: 3″ high and 4½” wide; dense, rounded
16 flowers in truss; flowers 2½” diameter
Markings inside corolla: Barium yellow (503)
Stigma red; style and stamens pinkish. Blooms early. Petals slightly frilled.

Rhododendron "Ignatius Sargent"

Tyrian purple (727/2)

Truss: 3½” high and 5” wide; dense, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flowers 3″ diameter
Markings inside corolla: brownish, pronounced
Stigma nearly black, styles red, stamens pale pink, petals slightly frilled on margin.

Rhododendron "Desiderius"

Persian rose (628/1)

Flowers 2¼” diameter
Markings inside corolla: Uranium green (6-3/2)
Stigma red; style and stamens pink; blooms early.

Rhododendron "Alarich"

Fuschia purple (28/1)

Truss: 3½” high and 5” wide; dense, rounded
20 flowers in truss; flowers 2½” diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931) few, pronounced
Stigma nearly black; style and stamens purplish.

Rhododendron "Caractacus"

Fuschia purple (28/1)

Truss: 4″ high and 5” wide; dense, rounded
18 flowers in truss; flowers 3″ diameter
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763) not conspicuous
Pistil and stamens red.

Rhododendron "General Grant"

Fuschia purple (28/1)

Truss: 3″ high and 4½” wide; dense, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flowers 2½” diameter
Markings inside corolla: Garnet lake (828) few
Stigma nearly black; stamens Fuchsia purple; style lighter.

Rhododendron "Kettledrum"

Roseine purple (629)

Truss: 3″ high and 4½” wide; dense, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flowers 3″ diameter
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763)
Pistil and stamens reddish.

Rhododendron "Adelbert"

Roseine purple (629) uniform

Truss: 4″ high and 5½” wide; dense, rounded
22 flowers in truss; flowers 3″ diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931) pronounced
Pistil and stamens pinkish; margin of petals slightly frilled; almost identical with "Echse" except for color of stamens and pistil.
Rhododendron "Echse" Roseine purple (629) uniform
Truss: 5" high and 3½" wide; dense, pyramidal
18 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931) pronounced
Stigma deep red, style and stamens white; margins of petals slightly frilled.

Rhododendron "Hannah Felix" Roseine purple (629)
Truss: 3½" high and 4½" wide; dense, rounded
20 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Beetroot purple (830/1) pronounced
Stigma red; style and stamens reddish; blooms early; color of flowers almost uniform except under corolla markings, where it is whitish.

Rhododendron "Bicolor" Roseine purple (629/1)
Truss: 4½" high and 3½" wide; dense, rounded
22 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Pansy purple (928/3)
Stamens and pistil pink.

Rhododendron "Mrs. C. S. Sargent" Roseine purple (629/1)
Truss: 4½" high and 6" wide; dense, rounded
17 flowers in truss; flowers 3½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Greenish
Pistil and stamens Roseine purple; petal margins frilled.

Rhododendron "Eva" Roseine purple (629/2)
Truss: 4½" high and 5½" wide; dense, rounded
22 flowers in truss; flower diameter 3½"
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763)
Stigma red; style and stamens pink; edge of petals frilled.

Rhododendron "Everstianum" Roseine purple (629/2)
Truss: 4½" high and 6½" wide; dense, pyramidal
18 flowers in cluster; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Greenish to brown
Pistil and stamens pinkish; petal margins slightly frilled.

Rhododendron "Mrs. Milner" Rhodamine purple (29/1)
Truss: 4½" high and 5½" wide; dense, pyramidal
16 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" wide
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)
Stigma black; style and stamens Rhodamine purple.

Rhododendron "Parson Gofe" Rhodamine purple (29/2)
Truss: 5½" high and 5½" wide; dense, pyramidal
25 flowers in truss; flowers 2½" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Chartreuse green (663) few
Stigma black; style red; stamens Rhodamine purple.
Rhododendron Collection in flower at the base of Hemlock Hill.
Rhododendron "Roseum elegans"  Rhodamine purple (29/2)
Truss: 4" high and 5\(\frac{1}{2}\)" wide; dense, slightly pyramidal
20 flowers in truss; flower diameter 3"
Markings inside corolla; Chartreuse green (663) few
Markings not pronounced; center of flower white.

Rhododendron "Fee"  Cyclamen purple (30/2)
Truss: 3\(\frac{1}{2}\)" high and 4\(\frac{1}{2}\)" wide; dense, rounded
20 flowers to truss; flower diameter 2\(\frac{1}{2}\)"
Markings inside corolla: Pansy purple (928) pronounced
Stamens and pistil reddish.

Group V Red to Reddish (General landscape effect)

Rhododendron "Charles Dickens"  Spiraea red (025)
Truss: 4" high and 5" wide; loose-dense, rounded
16 flowers in truss; flowers 2\(\frac{1}{4}\)" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)
Pistils and stamens Spiraea red.

Rhododendron "Charles Bagley"  Fuchsine pink (627)
Truss: 5" high and 5\(\frac{1}{2}\)" wide; dense, pyramidal
18 flowers in truss; flowers 3" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763)
Stamens and pistil Fuchsine pink.

Rhododendron "Norma"  Fuchsia purple (28)
Truss: 4" high and 5" wide; dense, rounded
18 flowers in truss; flowers 2\(\frac{3}{4}\)" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Greenish
Stamens and pistil purplish; blooms early.

Rhododendron "Daisy Rand"  Rhodamine purple (29/1)
Truss: 3" high and 4\(\frac{1}{2}\)" wide; dense, rounded
15 flowers in truss; flowers 2\(\frac{1}{2}\)" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931) few
Stigma black; style whitish; stamens purplish.

Rhododendron "James MacIntosh"  Rhodamine purple (29/1)
Truss: 4" high and 5" wide; semi-dense, rounded
17 flowers in truss; flower 2\(\frac{3}{4}\)" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)
Stamens and pistil Rhodamine purple.

Rhododendron "Atrosanguineum"  Peony purple (729/2)
Truss: 2\(\frac{1}{2}\)" high and 4\(\frac{1}{2}\)" wide; loose, rounded
14 flowers in truss; flowers 2\(\frac{3}{4}\)" diameter
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)
Stamens and pistil Peony purple; blooms early.

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**Rhododendron “H. W. Sargent”**  
Peony purple (729/2)  
Truss: 3" high and 4½" wide  
14 flowers in truss; flowers 24" diameter  
Markings inside corolla: Dahlia purple (931)  
Stamens and pistil Peony purple.

**Group VI Purple** (General landscape effect)  

**Rhododendron “Lee’s Purple”**  
Imperial purple (83/1)  
Truss: 4½" high and 6" wide; dense, rounded  
18 flowers in cluster; flower diameter 2¾"  
Markings inside corolla: Brownish, conspicuous  
Darkest purple of any varieties in this list.  
Pistil and stamens red.

**Rhododendron “Purpureum grandiflorum”**  
Imperial purple (83/2)  
Truss: 4" high and 7" wide; dense, rounded  
16 flowers in cluster; flower diameter 3"  
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763)  
Stamens and pistil reddish.

**Rhododendron “Purpureum elegans”**  
Amethyst violet (83/2)  
Truss: 4" high and 6" wide; dense, rounded  
16 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2¾"  
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763) prominent  
Pistil reddish; stamens purplish.

**Rhododendron “Melton”**  
Lilac purple (031/1)  
Truss: 3½" high and 5" wide; dense, rounded  
14 flowers in truss; flower diameter 3¼"  
Markings inside corolla: Maroon (1030)  
Stigma black; stamens and style whitish.

**Rhododendron “Mrs. Harry Ingersoll”**  
Lilac purple (031/1)  
Truss: 4" high and 5" wide; dense, pyramidal  
14 flowers in truss; flower diameter 2½"  
Markings inside corolla: Citron green (763)  
Stigma whitish, stamens purplish. A whitish condition of petal underneath  
markings gives a unique color.

It will be noted that no varieties in this group are starred for being “the best.”  
E. H. Wilson and many others have made such lists which may or may not be  
serviceable today. This issue of ARNOLDIA will have served its purpose well  
if it brings to the attention of all rhododendron enthusiasts the very important  
fact that there is a striking similarity among the colors of many of these rhodo-  
dendrons. Only a comparatively few varieties need be grown for general land-  
scape purposes.

Donald Wyman