

ARNOLDIA



A continuation of the
BULLETIN OF POPULAR INFORMATION
of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University

VOLUME 13

APRIL 24, 1953

NUMBER 5

TWO MONTHS OF AZALEA BLOOM

AZALEAS form a most colorful display of bloom in the springtime, and if care is taken in selecting certain species, it is possible to obtain a flowering sequence for a period of over two months. Many azaleas commonly grown in the south are not hardy in the northeastern United States, but all are valued for their bright flowers and some for their fragrance. The foliage of some deciduous azaleas turns yellow to red in the fall, and such forms certainly warrant more extensive use. The more plants of twofold interest that we can use in our gardens, the longer our gardens will be enjoyed.

Although there are a large number of excellent hybrid azaleas available in the trade today, it is the object of this Bulletin to discuss briefly only certain species and a few varieties which are known to bloom in sequence in the Arnold Arboretum, so that by selecting plants from this list it may be possible to have azalea flowers in the garden for eight or ten weeks.

ORDER OF BLOOM

Mid April

Rhododendron mucronulatum

Korean Rhododendron

Early May

R. mucronatum

Snow Azalea

Mid May

R. albrechti

Albrecht Azalea

R. canadense

Rhodora

R. obtusum amoenum

Amoena Azalea

R. obtusum arnoldianum

Arnold Azalea

R. obtusum "Hinodegiri"

Hinodegiri Azalea

R. obtusum kaempferi

Torch Azalea

R. schlippenbachi

Royal Azalea

R. vaseyi	Pinkshell Azalea
R. yedoense poukhanense	Korean Azalea
Late May	
R. atlanticum	Coast Azalea
R. gandavense	Ghent Hybrids
R. japonicum	Japanese Azalea
R. kosterianum	Mollis Hybrids
R. nudiflorum	Pinxterbloom
R. roseum	Downy Pinxterbloom
Early June	
R. calendulaceum	Flame Azalea
Mid June	
R. arborescens	Sweet Azalea
Late June	
R. viscosum	Swamp Azalea

Rhododendron mucronulatum: This was originally introduced into America by the Arnold Arboretum in 1882 and blooms before any of the azaleas. It is the only true rhododendron discussed in this Bulletin and is one of the two deciduous rhododendrons. The flowers are large and rosy purple. If the weather remains cool, it may hold its beautiful flowers for about two weeks. Sometimes late frosts kill the flowers after they have opened, but if it is planted in the shade and protected from the morning sun the chances are increased for its remaining in good condition for some time. Most of the early blooming shrubs have yellow flowers in the early spring, but here is one with a rosy purple color which makes it very conspicuous.

Rhododendron mucronatum (*Azalea mucronata*, *A. ledifolia alba*, *A. indica alba*): Unfortunately, this lovely white flowering azalea, although perfectly hardy from Long Island southward, is not completely hardy in New England gardens. Still it can be grown in shaded and protected situations, especially in gardens on Cape Cod. This lovely plant, so highly valued for its white flowers, has been in this country for almost one hundred years. It is one of the best azaleas for pure white flowers, it roots readily from cuttings, and forms a dense flat-topped mass of foliage that faces to the ground on all sides. Where it can be well grown, it is an excellent plant to use in combination with such bright colored sorts like *R. obtusum kaempferi*, for although it blooms slightly earlier, the flowers remain on the plant long enough to make a striking color combination with the later blooming torch azalea.

Rhododendron albrechti: This excellent azalea is as yet very difficult to find in American nurseries. The two inch flowers are a rose bengal shade (25/2 in the Royal Horticultural Color Chart)—a reddish or rose color without any of the purple that is common to some of the earlier blooming species. The foliage turns



PLATE VII

The Sweet Azalea (*Rhododendron arboreescens*) blooms in mid-June and is delightfully fragrant.

a yellow autumn color. The Arnold Arboretum is now trying to establish an English strain of this species that is outstanding for its color and is highly valued in England wherever azaleas are grown in that country. It is a native of Japan, first introduced into America by the Arnold Arboretum in 1892.

Rhododendron canadense (*Rhodora canadensis*): The rhodora grows all over New England and southeastern Canada where it covers large areas of many acres. The flowers are small, magenta rose to nearly white in color. In fact there is a white flowered variety. It likes moist swampy areas where it is perfectly at home. It grows about 1 to 3 feet tall and is perhaps the least ornamental of all North American azaleas.

Rhododendron obtusum: Neither *R. obtusum amoenum* (*Azalea amoena*) nor *R. obtusum* "Hinodegiri" (*A. Hinodegiri*) are completely hardy in Boston. The former is probably hardier than any other evergreen azalea, but its flowers are a very poor magenta color that is extremely hard to use in combination with any other color. On the other hand, *R. obtusum* "Hinodegiri" has decidedly better flowers and foliage, but it is not quite as hardy. The foliage of both of these plants is superior to that of *R. mucronatum*. In some places *R. obtusum amoenum* is used as a clipped hedge because of its very small leaves and also because it stands clipping very well. *Rhododendron obtusum arnoldianum* (var. *amoenum* × var. *kaempferi*) is similar to var. *amoenum*, except that it grows taller and is hardier, being hardy in the Arboretum, and the flowers are a deep rosy mauve to red. It originated in the Arboretum as a seedling in 1910, and can be substituted for var. *amoenum* where this is not hardy. *Rhododendron obtusum kaempferi*, the torch azalea, is the common mountain azalea of Japan. Although it had been known for a very long time, it first appeared in the United States when Professor Sargent brought seed to the Arnold Arboretum in 1892. Since that time it has grown splendidly and has proved to be the best bright red azalea for northern gardens. The Arnold Arboretum now has hundreds of these plants on its hillsides, and when they are in bloom they make a better display than any other azalea. In places the woods look almost as if they were afire, the color is so vivid. Because the flowers may be injured by the hot sun, it is advisable to plant them in shaded places. In the Arboretum some of the plants are considerably over 5 feet tall, and they may eventually attain a height of 10 to 12 feet, with a correspondingly broad spread.

The plants are partly deciduous in Massachusetts, but further south the leaves of *R. obtusum* varieties (except var. *kaempferi* which is wholly deciduous) are retained throughout the winter. The flowers of var. *kaempferi* range in color from salmon to a brick red. When the plants are massed together, as is often best in order to afford some protection to the roots, they make a dense mass of foliage and flowers and form one of the best displays of Japanese plants growing in the Arboretum.

Rhododendron schlippenbachi: This is another Korean plant much used in that country, introduced by the Arnold Arboretum from seed sent by Professor Jack. The flowers are very large, sometimes as much as 3 inches in diameter, and a pale



PLATE VIII

The "Yodogawa" azalea (*R. yedoensis*). This double-flowered azalea was found as a cultivated plant in Korea and named about twenty years before the single-flowered *R. yedoense poukhanense* was discovered. This results in the rather unique situation of the double-flowered plant bearing the specific name and the single-flowered form being the variety.

to rosy pink. Apparently perfectly hardy under New England conditions, this plant may grow to be 15 feet tall, but is usually under 8 feet in height. One of its valued characteristics is the fact that in the fall the leaves turn from yellow to orange crimson, thus enabling landscape gardeners to utilize it for autumn as well as spring color.

Rhododendron vaseyi: This is the second of the native azaleas to bloom in the spring. It is found in a few valleys of the southern Appalachian Mountains, chiefly in South Carolina where it grows to be 15 feet tall, but in New England is usually under 8 feet in height. The flowers appear before the leaves and are a good pink color. It is perfectly hardy in Boston and is highly valued for its delicate flowers, which are very conspicuous because they appear before the leaves.

Rhododendron yedoense poukhanense: Originally named by a French botanist from Mt. Poukhan in Korea, where the plant was discovered for the first time by a French missionary, this plant was introduced into this country by Professor J. G. Jack of the Arnold Arboretum in 1905. The flowers are a pale lilac-purple and are usually borne in great profusion. The plant itself rarely grows taller than about 3 feet and is thus well suited for rock gardens and small borders. The branches grow close to the ground making a dense mass. In using it in combination with other flowering plants, its color should always be kept in mind for this proves rather difficult to combine well with red. Strangely enough the double flowered form ("Yodogawa" in the trade) is the species.

Rhododendron atlanticum: This little azalea is native on the Coastal Plain from southern Pennsylvania to South Carolina. It seldom gets over 18 inches tall and can be considered the smallest of all the azaleas here mentioned. Its flowers normally are white (there are pink forms), fragrant and about the size of the flowers of *R. nudiflorum*. It is considered as hardy as *R. obtusum kaempferi*, does well in the Arboretum and is an excellent little plant to use, particularly in small scale plantings. It does equally well in both sun and shade, and is good for filling in around the bases of taller growing azaleas when this is necessary.

Rhododendron gandavense: The Ghent azaleas are very popular and many interesting forms are available. These result from crosses between the tender, fragrant, yellow-flowered *R. luteum* (*A. pontica*) the American *R. calendulaceum*, and *R. nudiflorum*. The colors in these hybrids are all shades and combinations of those of the parent plants. Some of the better outstanding varieties available from a few American nurseries are: (fls. single) "Coccinea speciosa" — saturn red, filaments red; "Daviesi" — white, blotched yellow; "General Trauff" — rose shaded orange; "Gloria Mundi" — fire-red, upper petal orpiment-orange; "Nancy Waterer" — yellow; "Pallas" — jasper-red with markings of Indian yellow on upper corolla; "Unique" — bronze: (fls. double) "Bijou de Gentbrugge" — white, flushed pink; "Narcissiflora" — sulfur-yellow; "Raphael de Smet" — white, flushed pink; "Souv. de Pres. Carnot" — cadmium-orange and brick-red.

Rhododendron japonicum: The large orange-red flowers of the Japanese azalea are particularly outstanding, but unfortunately they have a most disagreeable odor. The plant is valued for its large flowers and its hardiness. Because it is perfectly hardy under New England conditions, it is used considerably in breeding work. During late May, there are a large number of multi-colored azaleas that bloom in great profusion, and many of these are hybrids of this Japanese azalea.

Rhododendron kosterianum: The "Mollis" hybrids are the result of a cross between *R. molle*, which is tender here in the North, and *R. japonicum*. Mr. T. D. Hatfield's original hybrid named "Miss Louisa Hunnewell" is an outstanding example of this group. Some of the better outstanding varieties available from a few American nurseries are: "Hugo Koster" — poppy-red with orange markings; "Miss Louisa Hunnewell" — orange-yellow; "Otto Lilienthal" — ivory-white; "Phidias" — light pink and yellow, double; "Snowdrift" — white.

Rhododendron nudiflorum: All the azaleas blooming after June 1 are natives of this country. The common pinxterbloom is a familiar sight everywhere, for it is native over wide areas of the eastern United States.

Rhododendron roseum: Another New England plant, this is probably the best of the azaleas native to this general region. Its flowers are a deep rosy pink, and most fragrant.

Rhododendron calendulaceum: The flowers of the flame azalea are usually a brilliant orange, but lack the fragrance of the two preceding species. It occurs in the mountains from Pennsylvania south to Georgia, and is very abundant on the lower slopes of the high mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. It is the most showy of the American azaleas which have been established in the Arnold Arboretum. It is perfectly hardy and superior to most of the hybrids derived from it. One of its best features is the fact that its flowers remain in good condition for a considerably longer period than do those of the Asiatic azaleas, for they are not injured by excessive heat.

Rhododendron arborescens: Since the flowers of this azalea do not appear until after the leaves are fully grown, it is not as conspicuous as some of the others, but it is very fragrant. The white or slightly pink flowers are of interest because of their fragrance and also because of the long red stamens. At high elevations it only grows a few feet tall, while in valleys in the mountainous regions where it is at home it may grow to be 18 feet tall. It is another native of the Appalachian Mountains.

Rhododendron viscosum: This is a common plant in swampy regions in the northeastern United States and is valued because it is the last of all the azaleas to bloom. Its flowers are usually pure white and most fragrant. Strangely enough, in spite of its natural habitat, it does not require swampy conditions, as it will thrive in almost any fertile acid soil.

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