SHRUB HONEYSUCKLES WITH PINK TO RED FLOWERS

WALKING through the shrub collection in the Arnold Arboretum during mid-May of this year, many visitors noticed a very deep-red-flowered bush honeysuckle named 'Arnold Red.' This was the deepest-red-flowered one of the entire group. Past correspondence with plantsmen has repeatedly brought up the question concerning just which is the deepest-red-flowered form. At one time, it was considered to be Lonicera tatarica sibirica, later L. korolkovii zabelii; but now with these and others growing side-by-side in the same soil and exposure here at the Arboretum, it seems that, under our conditions at least, Lonicera 'Arnold Red' has the deepest red flowers.

An interesting review is made here of some of the better bush honeysuckles with pale pink to red flowers in the spring. Those with pure white flowers are always valued; the vines with red or yellow flowers are outstanding ornamentals; and some of the shrubs like L. syringantha and L. thibetica with lilac flowers are also much used. Here is a brief discussion of the bush honeysuckles with pink to red flowers growing in the Arnold Arboretum, listed in the order of deepening color from very pale pink to strong purplish red as measured with the Nickerson Color Fan.

Very Pale Pink

*Lonicera bella rosea* is listed in the catalogues and it is undoubtedly mixed with others of this hybrid species. The true variety *rosea* has flowers which open a very pale pink, almost white; unfortunately, they have the poor habit of fading quickly to yellowish in a day or two, before the rest of the pink flower buds on the same branchlet have opened. The flowers are small, being only about one-half inch in diameter; consequently, this does not merit wide use.

*Lonicera notha* is not much better although the flowers are slightly larger.

*Lonicera tatarica*, being grown widely from seed and hybridizing a great deal, will vary considerably but can be considered as having good, very pale pink to white flowers.
Both *L. korolkowii* and its variety are probably mixed in the trade but both apparently have very pale pink flowers and do not make the display that the deeper pink variety *aurora* does.

**Pale Pink (2.5 R 9/3 Nickerson Color Fan)**

Varieties in this group include *L. tatarica rosea* and *punicea*. We obtained the latter from E. H. Hillier & Sons in England in 1939. Both are good varieties, the flowers of *rosea* being $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter and those of *punicea* being one inch in diameter. The color is more or less uniform through the flowers. There is a third variety of *L. tatarica* named *elegans* which we obtained years ago from the Morton Arboretum, which has flowers identical in size and color with those of *punicea*. This was named nearly a century ago and was listed by some German nurseries in the 1890's.

Two others in this group should be mentioned: *L. amoena* and its variety *arnoldiana*. Both have flower buds a pale pink. As they open, the flowers of the variety *arnoldiana* turn almost white. These are large, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter, and the leaves of the plant are very narrow and grayish-green. The flower buds of *L. amoena* are the same color, but the flowers open to a very pale pink and are only $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. The leaves are wider (up to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch) but are also a grayish-green color. The species is the more vigorous; the Arnold honeysuckle is much more delicate and of a finer texture.

**Petals Striped Deep Pink and White**

The over-all effect of the flowers in this group is deep pink, but on close examination the white on the petal margin is seen. *Lonicera tatarica angustifolia* is one variety, but the flowers are only about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, so this might be overlooked. *Lonicera tatarica lutea*, on the other hand, has slightly larger flowers and, of course, bright yellow fruits, hence it has more ornamental value.

*Lonicera tatarica sibirica* has flowers $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter with a tinge of white on the margin of the petals, so that actually, nearly one half of the petal surface is white to light pink. This lightens up the flowers considerably, and although the actual color of the stripes in the petals is a strong purplish red, the effect of the flowers over-all is only a deep pink. Hence, for landscape use, the flower color is much lighter than that of either *L. korolkowii zabelii* or 'Arnold Red.'

In 1941, Mr. E. C. Hilborn of the Northwest Nursery Company, Valley City, North Dakota, sent a hybrid (*morroreii × tatarica*) with flowers about the same color but larger. It is of interest to note that the true *L. morrowii* (flowers white to yellow) with a densely-rounded habit is very difficult to locate because it was hybridized so freely with *L. tatarica* and has been grown consistently from seed.

*L. tatarica leroyana* has flowers $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, striped a moderate purplish pink (2.5 RP 7/8) with white petal margins, but blooms sparingly and so can be overlooked as far as flowers are concerned.
Lonicera ‘Arnold Red’ in the Arnold Arboretum grows rapidly and makes a densely-branched shrub full of deep purplish red flowers every spring, followed by bright red fruits in the summer and fall.
Moderate Purplish Pink (2.5 RP 6/10)

*Lonicera korolkowii aurora* is better than either the species or the variety *floribunda*, for it has deeper pink and slightly larger flowers (up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter).

Deep Purplish Pink (7.5 RP 6/12)

*Lonicera bella atrorosea* is the clone of this hybrid species to use for its deep pink flower color. Without a question, it is mixed in the trade with *L. bella rosea*, but *rosea* is the lighter of the two, so light that one sometimes does not notice the pink color.

‘Sheridan Red’ originated in the Sheridan Nurseries of Ontario, Canada, a few years ago, but was discontinued later because it was not as dark as *L. tatarica sibirica*. ‘Hack’s Red’ originating in the Hack Nursery near Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, is slightly darker (7.5 RP 5/12) but is not the darkest red.

Still another in this deep purplish pink group (5 RP 6/10) is *L. amoena rosea*. It is a well-rounded shrub, dense in habit, with deep pink flowers, making this a good shrub for its habit, but the flowers quickly fade yellowish.

Strong Purplish Red (7.5 RP 4/11)

*Lonicera korolkowii zabelii* has flowers a darker red than any mentioned so far, these flowers being $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter with narrow petals. It is widely grown now in nurseries and gives a darker effect in full flower because the color is uniformly distributed over all the petals.

*Lonicera maximoviczii* and its variety *sachalinensis* also have strong purplish red flowers, but they are so small ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) that ornamentally they have no value.

Deep Purplish Red (10 RP 3/10)

‘Arnold Red’ is without question the darkest red of all the shrub honeysuckles that are growing together on our soil. This originated as a chance seedling at the Arnold Arboretum, first blooming in 1947 at the Case Estates. (*Arnoldia* 16: 44–45, 1956) It was distributed to commercial growers in October 1954. The flowers are one inch in diameter and the dark red fruits are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. When in full bloom, it is a handsome plant. Like other varieties of the Tatarian honeysuckle, pruning of older plants is often necessary in order to maintain a neat appearance.

Summary

So, after checking all these shrubs in flower, the best of the *Loniceras* for pink to red color as they bloomed in the Arnold Arboretum this year, were:

- *L. tatarica* varieties *rosea, punicea, elegans* Pale pink
- *L. amoena* and variety *arnoldiana* Pale pink
- *L. tatarica* varieties *lutea, sibirica* Petals striped pink and white
- *L. korolkowii aurora* Moderate purplish pink
- *L. bella atrorosea* Deep purplish pink
- *L. korolkowii zabelii* Strong purplish red
- *L. tatarica* ‘Arnold Red’ Deep purplish red—darkest of all

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