

Isabella Plantation in May

The peak flowering season for Rhododendrons and Azaleas



RHODODENDRONS: On the lawn above Thomson's Pond are two beds planted with the Japanese species, *Rhododendron yakushimanum*, amongst a group of its hybrids named after the Seven Dwarfs: Sneezy, Grumpy etc. These plants are compact and very floriferous (12). Also, seek out the tall 'Loderi' hybrid 'King George', with its large soft pink flowers which are sweetly fragrant. It grows in a number of places in the garden but most notably set back above the Still Pond. Follow the Small Stream down from the Still Pond to discover *Rhododendron williamsianum*, a compact species with attractive bronze young shoots, distinctive heart shaped leaves and bell-shaped, shell-pink flowers. Look out for *Rhododendron* 'Bibiani' growing in a number of areas in the garden. This shrub produces compact trusses of rich crimson funnel shaped flowers with maroon spots.

EVERGREEN AZALEAS: Easy to identify are:

'Orange Beauty' the most orange of all
'Rosebud' opening buds resemble tiny roses
'Vuyk's Scarlet' large flowers of a deep silky red
'Kirin' a pale pink "hose in hose" (flower within a flower)

'Amoena' small bright magenta flowers
'Palestrina' white with a faint ray of green
'Hinode Giri' bright crimson, around the Still Pond

DECIDUOUS AZALEAS: These flower slightly later and often have a rich spicy smell, particularly *Azalea pontica*, (*Rhododendron luteum*), which is yellow and to be found by the gate to Broomfield Hill (1).

THE BOG GARDEN: Look out for *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Fireglow', growing in the bed by the middle pond. It bares orange-red flowers and has a reddish tinge to the emerging young shoots. The clusters of white or pale pink flowers borne on white-haired stems spreading throughout this bed are those of the "Umbrella Plant," *Peltiphyllum peltata*. Also present are the young fronds of the "Shuttlecock Fern," *Matteuccia struthiopteris* which show an attractive fresh green.

The native tree the "Whitebeam," *Sorbus aria* grows near the Broomfield Hill gate and looks particularly attractive at this time of the year with its silvery-white young leaves. *Skimmia japonica* can also be found growing near this gate along the path that leads onto Camellia Walk and the Still Pond

The "Foxglove Tree", *Paulownia tomentosa* (22) stands in the glade between the Still Pond and Old Nursery Glade. This large leaved tree bares sprays of fragrant foxglove-like pinkish-lilac flowers in Spring.

The "Pocket Handkerchief Tree," *Davidia involucrata*, set back from the Camellia Walk, (18) has intriguing white hanging bracts. Another specimen may be found in a secluded lawn to the southeast of Thomson's Pond.

The "Snowdrop Tree," *Halesia carolina*, with dangling white bell flowers, stands by the path above Thomson's Pond.

Cornus nuttallii, whose white bracts appear like flowers, can be found set back in the newly planted Magnolia Glade near the Ham Gate entrance. Also look out for the pale lemon yellow fragrant flowers of *Magnolia wilsonii* 'Yellow Fever' and the wonderful deep purple flowers of *Magnolia liliiflora* 'Nigra'.

Bluebells carpet the wilder fringes of the Garden. PLEASE KEEP TO THE PATHS TO AVOID TRAMPLING THEM.

Congratulations go to the Isabella team on their success at the recent RHS Spring Show.

(Numbers in brackets) relate to the self guided walk in the colourful leaflet, *Guide to the Isabella Plantation*, priced 50 pence, available from Holly Lodge and the Park Warden within the Garden.