

## THE WORLD OF MAGNOLIAS

**The World of Magnolias**, Dorothy J. Callaway, Timber Press, Portland, OR, 1994, 1999, 260 pp., hardcover, ISBN 0-88192-236-6, USD 49.95.

There is rarely more to any magnolia plant than just its gorgeous blossoms with a tendency to seize the limelight in nursery catalogues and in the minds of many breeders and gardeners. Beauty is always in the eye of both the breeder and the gardener, but magnolias are so diverse in their colours that there must surely be one to please everybody. Just for those reasons magnolias hold a proud reputation as landscape aristocrats among woody plants. A new Timber Press release comes in the time of ceaseless inquiry for these noble woody plants, to bridge a gap in the missing literature on all aspects magnolias may cover in everyday life and use. The book is clearly a labor of love and professional experience, and as such is the product over four years of focused effort by the author.

The text starts with the introductory chapter on romantic history of *Magnolia denudata* cultivation in China as early as A.D. 650, followed by integrated information on magnolia use in the wildlife landscaping, cut flower market and greenery, as well as how magnolia can serve as houseplants and a source for timber and medicinals. Chapters 2 to 4 provide a detailed view on floral biology, pollination, culture, pests, diseases and propagation methods, including tissue culture experiments. The substantial part of the monograph is organized within chapters 5 to 7 that contain the taxonomic treatment, keys to magnolia identification and full description to each entry. The only available book to encompass all the

magnolia species, it provides an encyclopedic listing of the more than 80 known species. In addition, it offers the most complete listing of cultivars yet published – a unique feature of the guide. Final chapters 8 to 10 are devoted to breeding programs, hybrids and *Magnolia* hybridizers. Having all information available on recently named hybrids in the special covering chapter and easily accessible makes this book the only comprehensive source of such knowledge. Four useful appendices close the book.

The author has shown attention to detail, and the result is well-written, high-quality product. The text is rich with details and references. The black and white figures and line drawings are produced very well and clearly described with legends. Last, but no means least, visually exciting feast upon the beauty of diverse magnolia blossoms is conveyed in 142 spectacular colour images taken by the author and her colleagues as well as from the slide library of the Magnolia Society.

*The World of Magnolias* is not only a work to stimulate the modern breeder and gardener but also a stunning luxurious contribution to pay a tribute to these top-prized landscape plants. More are being bred and introduced all round the world, suggesting the next generation of magnolia cultivars may yet have surprises in store for us.

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