

ARNOLDIA



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SPRING has come to the Arboretum this year a trifle earlier than usual. Unusually warm weather started the forsythia blossoms into bloom a full two weeks earlier than they normally appear, but colder weather of mid-April slowed them up again so that at the time this is being written it is safe to say that the season is advanced by about one week.

The Arboretum has not looked so clean for a long time. A trip through it at this time shows most plants in splendid condition. A comparatively mild winter, with not too much snow, did no damage to any of the plants. Heavy snow storms and high winds of late February and March failed to materialize so that no damage has been encountered on this score. Sometimes, a heavy wet snow or ice storm in March can create terrific damage which may take the entire Arboretum force weeks to clean up. Nothing like this has happened this year, so that it is possible to spend considerable time in some of the collections that are somewhat removed from the view of the general public, but nevertheless are important.

The mulching material (hops) which we have been using for the past few years is apparent now throughout all the collections. Its use has saved much money and time in weeding, and in fact, has actually prevented injury to some of the plants from fire. Some collections like the dwarf conifers received one application a few years ago and since that time the mulch has been worked into the soil. Now this collection is receiving its second application of the same mulch. No method has been found to prevent the potent odors of this material when it is newly applied, but this apparently lasts for a few short weeks only, and then disappears. In early spring it is not freshly applied to the most outstanding of the spring flowering collections, but rather kept on those collections in the hinterland where it will not be too offensive.

The winter was a rather dry one, but fortunately early spring rains have been ample so that regular planting has gone along uninterrupted. Final touches are



PLATE III

***Malus halliana spontanea*.** A rare Japanese crab apple which is unusually beautiful in flower. The flowers are pure white and the profuse, but small, fruits are dark red. The dense, somewhat vase-shaped form is unusual among crab apples. Unheralded and unsung, this has been growing in the Arnold Arboretum since 1919 when it was brought from Japan by E. H. Wilson. This is just another of countless plants growing in the Arnold Arboretum which have not received the attention they really merit. It should be in full bloom the first part of May.

about to be given to some of the trees on the far side of Peters Hill, these being the best of a miscellaneous planting which has not been given the attention it deserves.

A new mist blower (Bean's "Rotomist") was put in operation for the first time this spring. This necessitates the changing over of our rather complicated spraying program from hydraulic methods to mist methods, causing considerable study on our part of the many new (and too often untried) materials for insect and disease control. However, we feel that mist-spraying is a technique which is very definitely going to be used more and more as new materials become available. In our case, the savings from the standpoint of labor are worth the change-over. We are willing, and in fact, anxious, to do what we can in experimenting with this new method, and many new materials, if it is possible to obtain better control of insect and disease troubles, at a reduction of total application costs.

Magnolia loebneri. Among the many interesting plants which have bloomed in the Arboretum already this spring, perhaps none is so interesting as a *Magnolia loebneri* which is growing on former Arboretum property in Weston. This is a cross between *M. stellata* and *M. kobus* (originating before 1910). The tendency is too often to overlook some hybrid crosses after the flowers have been first observed. However, I have had an excellent opportunity of observing this hybrid planted at the Case Estates of the Arboretum several years ago. What is even more important, it is growing within a stone's throw of some *M. stellata* seedlings which are almost as old.

The interesting thing is that this is one of the hybrids in which hybrid vigor has resulted in unusually good growth. The seedlings of *M. stellata* were planted in 1942 and are at present about three feet tall. Of nearly 100 plants only about one or two have flowers this season, about two to three each. This *M. loebneri* was grown from seed sown about 1939, two of the plants are twelve feet high (another is slightly smaller) and are covered with hundreds of flowers. The trees are pyramidal in habit, apparently are going to be tree-like and not shrub-like, and have a spread of about twelve feet. They have bloomed conspicuously for several years. E. H. Wilson used to say of *M. kobus* that it seldom bloomed profusely, certainly not while it was young.

Here, then, is a hybrid which has been with us for some time, but the vigor of which has not been appreciated. The flowers are as large as those of *M. stellata* and have eight to twelve petals—usually about eleven. The petals are twice the width of those of *M. stellata*, and shaped somewhat like those of *M. kobus*. The flowers are fragrant—a rather important feature. The tree blooms at the same time as does *M. stellata* and *M. kobus*, but is meritorious for its vigor and profuse bloom. This early-flowering white magnolia of tree habit might well be propagated. Whether or not it will be as vigorous, or as floriferous when grafted on other understock, remains to be seen. Also it is important to state that since it is a hybrid, there may be several clones, and it is inherent upon all plantmen

to be certain to propagate from the better clones only. One of the clones in the Arboretum is decidedly inferior, having only six to eight petals. Another (discussed above) grown from seed by the Arnold Arboretum, has eight to twelve petals, mostly eleven and so is a much more desirable clone to grow.

DONALD WYMAN

NOTES

Field Class. Once more the **Field Class** to study the flowering trees and shrubs of the Arnold Arboretum meets Saturday mornings throughout May. Meetings will be out-of-doors, beginning promptly at ten o'clock at the Forest Hills Gate. In case of rain the class will meet on the next fair week day. Instruction will be given informally in talks as the different plant groups are watched from week to week. No technical knowledge or special preparation is required.

The fee for the course is \$1.00 payable in advance by mail, with members of the "Friends of the Arnold Arboretum" entitled to attend all classes without charge.

Applications and further inquiries may be addressed **at once** to Dr. Donald Wyman, at the Arboretum. Checks should be made payable to Harvard University.

Through the Arnold Arboretum. The first copies of our new forty-six page guide book to the Arnold Arboretum have just been received. This is an up-to-date description of the Arboretum as it is now, with much of interest concerning its past history. Well illustrated with fifteen half-tones and five full-color plates, this should make an excellent gift for any one who is not familiar with this world-famous garden. Included is an up-to-date map showing where all the main collections are at the present time, and valuable information concerning meritorious plants which the Arboretum has been responsible for introducing. This should make an excellent gift for an out-of-town friend, or a reference to have available for friends who might wish to visit this famous institution. Copies are available postpaid for fifty five cents (stamps accepted).

Correction. The legend under the picture in the last issue of *Arnoldia* (Vol. 9, No. 2) should read: "Torch Azalea (*Rhododendron obtusum kaempferi*)."



Wyman, Donald. 1949. "Spring 1949." *Arnoldia* 9(3), 9–12.

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