

ARNOLD ARBORETUM

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



BULLETIN

OF

POPULAR INFORMATION

LIBRARY
NEW YORK
BOTANICAL
GARDEN

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

MAY 31, 1915

American Azaleas. No other plants add more to the beauty of mountain slopes and forest glades in eastern North America than Azaleas, which are more abundant and more varied in the color of their flowers in the Appalachian region than in any other part of the world. Of the ten species found in the eastern United States seven are established in the Arboretum, and the others from the extreme south, although in the Arboretum nurseries, are too young to show their ability to withstand the rigors of the New England climate. All Azaleas are now called Rhododendrons. The first species to bloom, *R. Vaseyi*, begins to flower the beginning of May, and the flowers of the last, *R. viscosum*, can be found as late as the middle of July. The Azalea season is therefore a long one. *R. Vaseyi* is a tall shrub with slender stems and of open irregular habit; in its home in a few isolated mountain valleys in South Carolina it sometimes grows to the height of fifteen feet. The flowers are produced before the leaves appear, in small compact clusters, and are pure pink in color, plants with white flowers occasionally appearing. With *R. Vaseyi* the Rhodora (*R. canadense*) blooms. This is a well known dwarf shrub often covering in the north large areas of swampy land with a sheet of bloom. The small flowers, however, are of a rather unattractive rose-purple color. Naturally the Rhodora grows from Newfoundland to Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The next to bloom are *R. canescens* and *R. nudiflorum*, and although the two sometimes grow together the former is a northern and the latter a more southern plant, and is especially common in the Gulf States from eastern Florida to eastern Texas. The rosy pink flowers of these plants open before or with the unfolding of the leaves, and in early spring fill the woods with their beauty and fragrance.

These plants can now be seen in flower on Azalea Path and there is a mass of *R. canescens* on the Meadow Road in front of the Linden Group. *R. calendulaceum* is the next species to flower, and a few plants have already opened their orange, yellow or reddish flowers which are not fragrant. This shrub is an inhabitant of the mountain regions from southern New York to Georgia, and is extremely abundant on the lower slopes of the high mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. In flower it is the most showy of the American Azaleas established in the Arboretum, and one of the most beautiful of all flowering shrubs. A large mass of this Azalea has been planted on the slope below Azalea Path, and occasionally large specimens can be seen on the border plantations along some of the roads. The next species to flower, *R. arborescens*, is also a native of the mountain region from Pennsylvania to Georgia where in sheltered valleys it sometimes grows from fifteen to eighteen feet tall. The flowers, which appear after the leaves are nearly fully grown, are white or faintly tinged with rose color, and are made conspicuous by the long bright red filaments of the stamens; they are very fragrant, and the young leaves have the odor of new mown grass. Less showy in the color of the flowers, perhaps, than the yellow-flowered Azalea, it is one of the most beautiful of all hardy Azaleas. The last species to flower, the Clammy Azalea or Swamp Honeysuckle, *R. viscosum*, is a common inhabitant of the swamps of the eastern states, especially of those in the neighborhood of the coast. The small flowers are pure white and covered with clammy hairs, and the leaves are often of a pale bluish color, especially on the lower surface. This plant is valuable for the lateness of its flowers which do not open before the flowers of most hardy shrubs have passed, and for their fragrance. These shrubs are all good garden plants although, like other Rhododendrons, they cannot be made to live in soil impregnated with lime. They are not often cultivated, however, because it is not easy to find them in nurseries, for few nurserymen in the United States care to take the time and trouble to raise such plants from seeds, the only successful way in which they can be propagated.

The new Chinese Cotoneasters. Of the shrubs introduced from western China by Wilson the most successful perhaps as garden plants belong to the Old World genus Cotoneaster. At least eighteen of these species are hardy in the Arboretum, and several of the plants have now grown large enough to show their habit, the beauty of their flowers and fruits, the brilliancy of their foliage and their ability to adapt themselves to the peculiarities of the New England climate. The most showy species now in flower are *C. multiflora* and its variety *calocarpa*, and *C. hupehensis*. *C. multiflora* is a tall shrub with slender, wide-spreading, gracefully arching, bright chestnut brown stems and branches, dull pale gray leaves, white flowers half an inch in diameter borne along the whole length of the branches in compact clusters on short lateral twigs, and black fruits. *C. multiflora* is a widely distributed and common plant in southern Siberia and northern and western China, and has been in cultivation for several years. The variety, which has larger fruits, was discovered by Wilson near Sung-pan Ting



1915. "American Azaleas." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 1(6), 21–22. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.320344>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/226132>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.320344>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/320344>

Holding Institution

New York Botanical Garden, LuEsther T. Mertz Library

Sponsored by

IMLS LG-70-15-0138-15

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.