
ARNOLD ARBORETUM
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



BULLETIN
OF
POPULAR INFORMATION

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

JUNE 11, 1925

Laurels. The flowering of the Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) is the last of the great flower shows of the year in the Arboretum, and none of those which precede it are more beautiful, for the Mountain Laurel, or Calico Bush, as it is often called, is for many persons the most beautiful of all North American shrubs or small trees. It is certainly the most satisfactory of the broad-leaved evergreen plants which can be grown in this climate, for it is perfectly hardy, flowers freely every year, and the leaves are not injured by the lace-wing fly which is so destructive to those of most Rhododendrons. It is not perhaps strange that so little attention has been paid to this plant by American gardeners for those of earlier generations at least derived their inspiration almost entirely from England and usually despised American plants as too common for their attention. For some reason which is not easy to explain *K. latifolia* has not been a popular plant in England where it is still not often seen and where it certainly grows less freely than many species and hybrids of Rhododendrons. For this reason, perhaps, no distinct forms of the Laurel and no hybrids have been developed by cultivators, and the few recognized variations in the flowers and leaves have all been found on wild plants. Of these there are forms with pure white flowers, and a form with deep pink, nearly red flowers and rather darker leaves; and between these extremes there are others with flowers of all shades of pink, and one form with flowers distinctly marked by a chocolate band. There is a dwarf form with small leaves and small clusters of minute flowers, and there is one in which the corolla is deeply divided into narrow lobes. A form with broad handsome Rhododendron-like leaves, which rarely flowers, was

found a few years ago near Pomfret, Connecticut. These forms are all established in the general Kalmia Collection which is planted on both sides of Hemlock Hill Road at the northern base of Hemlock Hill. On the right hand side of this road are groups of the dwarf *Kalmia angustifolia*, the well-known Sheep Laurel of northern pastures with bright red flowers, and of *K. carolina* from southern swamps and woods from Virginia to South Carolina, with flowers very similar to those of the Sheep Laurel but with leaves pale pubescent on the lower surface. *K. polifolia*, a straggling shrub with leaves white glaucous beneath and rose-purple flowers, is also growing in the Arboretum but it is not a particularly satisfactory plant in cultivation.

Cornus kousa is a small tree which enlivens the forests of eastern Asia as *C. florida* enlivens those of eastern North America and *C. Nuttallii* those of western North America. The three species have the large white or creamy white bracts under the flower clusters which make the inflorescence so conspicuous but the Asiatic tree differs from the American trees by the union of the fruit into a globose fleshy head, while the fruits of the American trees are not united together. *C. kousa* is a small tree rarely exceeding twenty feet in height, and the floral bracts are narrower, more pointed and not as pure white as those of the American trees. It is valuable, however, because it flowers three or four weeks later than *C. florida*. *C. kousa* is a native of central Japan. It is now in flower on the right hand side of the Centre Street Path where the tree, raised from seeds produced in Mr. H. S. Hunnewell's garden in Wellesley, is now the best specimen in the Arboretum. A handsomer tree is the form var. *chinensis*, discovered by Wilson on the mountains of Hupeh in western China. The bracts under the flower clusters are broader than those of the Japanese form and overlap below the middle so that they form, like those of the American species, a cup at the end of a branch. The Chinese Flowering Dogwood is rare in cultivation, and the specimen among the Chinese plants on the southern base of Bussey Hill is probably the only large one in this country. For several years it has ripened a few seeds and it is not improbable that this year the seeds may be more numerous. It is an interesting fact that here in Massachusetts the Chinese and Japanese Flowering Dogwoods are hardier than the native species as *C. florida* loses many of its flower-bracts in severe winters and is often killed or severely injured here by the extreme cold.

Late-flowering Magnolias. The Sweet Bay, *Magnolia virginiana*, or as it is more often called *M. glauca*, opened its fragrant cup-shaped flowers several days ago and will continue to open them until midsummer. A plant for every garden, great or small, how often is the Sweet Bay found in those of modern construction? *M. macrophylla* flowers a few days later than *M. virginiana* and is the last of the American species to open its flowers here. It is a handsome tree with leaves silvery white on the lower surface and often thirty inches long and ten inches wide, and flowers a foot in diameter. A southern tree with its northern stations in the Piedmont region of North Carolina and in Kentucky, it is perfectly hardy in eastern Massachusetts, although here as elsewhere the leaves are often torn by the wind unless a sheltered



1925. "Laurels." *Bulletin of popular information - Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University* 11(10), 37–38. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.321589>.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.321589>

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