

# Swedish magnolia growing

by Karl E. Flinck

In *MAGNOLIA* (Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 1982) Lennarth Jonsson published an article under the heading "Wills and won'ts in Sweden." He wrote:

"... To us who are trying to develop magnolia cultivation almost from scratch (there are no domestic magnolias hence no traditional cultivation)...."

I feel that the statement by Lennarth Jonsson is less than fair to those who in the past have tried to grow magnolias in Sweden. In the following, therefore, I give my viewpoints on this subject.

Jonsson's indication about the absence of domestic magnolias and its effects on magnolia cultivation is probably not valid for western Europe. Magnolias are grown in all places where cultivation is easy, even though Europe has no native magnolias.

The first magnolias were planted in Sweden nearly 100 years ago. With the exception of the periods of the two world wars, continuous planting has been going on ever since the time of that start.

Why is it that one finds a very limited number of older magnolias in Sweden? The most important factor is that the climate in Sweden is basically unsuitable for magnolia growing. The precipitation is low and unsatisfactorily distributed. The growing period is short and the summer temperature low. Autumn frosts frequently occur early. Modern magnolia growers, however, have learned how to at least partially compensate for these negative factors.

Amongst magnolias in Sweden that are over 50 years old, there are about 10 species and inter-specific hybrids represented.

After World War II, when it once again became possible to import magnolias, the diversity of magnolias cultivated has become quite pronounced. I myself have seen about 20 magnolia species of which, as far as I can learn, at least around 15 have flowered. Also about 30 hybrids, including some three-way hybrids, and about 75 named cultivars have been grown.

Selection work also has been carried out, above all by our member T. Nitzelius, who has reintroduced all Japanese taxa and selected geographic forms that he believes will be more



*This photo from Joe Hickman of Benton, Illinois, shows a Magnolia macrophylla from 1980 seed planted in a bucket in spring 1981 and set out in spring 1982 near his office. The fence is 6 feet high. The magnolia had one bloom in 1985. Joe says his several hundred feet of beds, 8 feet wide, built in the fall of 1981, are full of rich, deep soil, peat moss, sand, manure, and a heavy wood chip mulch.*

optimal for Swedish conditions.

All the wild taxa in the United States have been obtained from their northernmost sites and are being grown in Sweden for evaluation.

Mr. Nitzelius also has made hybridizations, using magnolias from the Oyama Section as one parent.

In Jonsson's description of T. Widenfalk's garden, there are a couple of questionable statements. He lists *M. hypoleuca* × *M. tripetala* from there. The plant originates from me and I have stated only that it *looks* like the hybrid mentioned.

Jonsson's mention of *M.* 'Bloomfield' being grown in the Widenfalk garden is wrong. I do not know of anybody but myself who is growing this cultivar in Sweden. All other Swedish plants are progeny of *M.* 'Bloomfield'.

In his list of plants in Widenfalk's garden, Jonsson omitted *M. wilsonii*, which is about 2 m. high and has flowered. This magnolia came from me and has the same origin as the *M. wilsonii* seed that I have supplied several times for our seed counter.

Jonsson finally claims that the *M. sieboldii* grown in Sweden comes from Japan. It is a fact, however, that every magnolia of this species grown in Sweden and in most other parts of the Western World comes from Korea.

Young plants of *M. sieboldii* originating from wild Japanese material are at present being tested in Sweden but have not yet flowered. The north Chinese *M. sieboldii* plants up to now have not been hardy when tested in Sweden.

## Jack Fogg Memorial

The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is establishing a botany classroom/laboratory as a memorial to John M. Fogg, Jr., a founder and officer of the Magnolia Society. Dr. Fogg died October 12, 1982.

The university has set up an organization called the First Century Campaign to fund a \$7 million program to carry out various

improvements. It estimates that the construction, cabinetwork, furniture, and scientific equipment necessary for completing the John M. Fogg Botany Laboratory, to be located in the Widener Education Center, will cost \$25,000 to \$30,000. Commitments of \$11,500 had already been received for the project as of last February 26.

Contributions for the Fogg Laboratory should be made or pledged to the First Century Campaign, Morris Arboretum, 9414 Meadowbrook Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. The contribution should specify that it be used for the John M. Fogg Botany Laboratory. Arrangements can be made to pay in installments.

Contributions will be matched by a gift from Dr. and Mrs. F. Otto Haas and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For 41 years Jack Fogg served the University of Pennsylvania as instructor, professor, vice provost and director of the Morris Arboretum (1954-66). He also taught, beginning in 1940, at the Barnes Arboretum School of Horticulture and was its director from 1966 to 1979.

Jack Fogg was a prime mover in the founding of the Magnolia Society between 1961 and 1962, served as its first president (pro tem) and also served as the editor of this journal for the first few years. Also in 1962 he became the first International Registrar for Magnolia Cultivars and served in that post until his death.



Gresham award is presented to Harold Hopkins (right) by L. Dean McCoy.