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DEXTER RHODODENDRONS EXPERIENCES IN THE SOUTH
BY HERBERT RACOFF, DVM
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Rosebay Note: We think this article will surprise many of our readers. Somehow or other Columbia, South Carolina just does not sound like "Dexter Country". Herb Racoff is a member of the Southeastern Chapter, A.R.S. and chairs the chapter's Dexter Study Group. Among other things he is widely known as a Camellia grower and recognized as a pioneer in the use of Gibberellic Acid with Camellia blooms. We are happy to welcome Herb as a contributor to this issue.

COLUMBIA, South Carolina is located in the geographical center of South Carolina, elevation 300 feet. Approximate average annual minimum temperature is 10-20 degrees F. Temperatures below 15 degrees are unusual. Some fall seasons can be very mild. The first frost and freezing temperature of 26 degrees occurred on the night of December 10, 1978. Ordinarily this can be expected to happen about the middle of October.

My plants are grown on a one-half acre lot under the protection of tall pine trees, which allows for filtered sunshine. Some of the Rhododendrons are planted in the ground among 35-year-old Camellias and others are being grown in containers ranging in size from one quart to seven and one-half gallons. Frost rarely penetrates the overhead canopy provided by the pine trees. Average winter daytime temperatures are in the upper 40's to the upper 50's. The summers are very hot. Daytime temperatures in May are in the 80's and by the end of the month may get into the 90's. Temperatures in the mid to upper nineties are usual from June to mid September. Readings over 100 are unusual. Rainfall is generally adequate, about 52 inches per year, but dry periods and dry seasons are not infrequent. 1977 and 1978 summers were very dry. Nighttime summer readings are in the upper 60's to mid 70's with high humidity.

The soils in the Columbia area are mostly light and sandy, but red soils are common in the northwest parts of the city and suburbs. The soils can vary from almost pure sand to sandy loam to clay loam to clay. My plants are growing in a suburb located in the southeastern section known as Forest Acres. The soil is sandy, clay loam which is slightly on the heavy side. The pH is acid in reaction as is generally the case in this area.

Evergreen azaleas are seen in profusion in most all yards here. Rhododendrons are not commonly grown. There may be as many as 2000 rhododendron plants grown within a ten-mile area from where I live. Those which are grown are what most of us refer to as the old standard varieties. Unusual to see many deciduous azaleas, but some are grown, both the wild and cultivated forms. My experience has been that these are very susceptible to mildew in the late summer and early fall and this results in premature leaf drop.

My first experience with rhododendrons occurred in the late 1960's when a nurseryman friend in North Carolina gave me 5 one-year-old plants growing in one-gallon metal cans: 'English Roseum', 'Luciferum', 'Nova Zembla', 'Roseum elegans' and one plant the name of which has been forgotten. The four plants previously named survived and are now fine specimens. This is something of a miracle because I knew nothing about rhododendrons. A large hole was dug, about one-third peat moss (Canadian) was mixed with the soil and the plants were put in the ground. The exposure was southeast and there were only two or three hours of sunlight in the middle of the summer, and less in the fall and winter. Watering or fertilizing was rarely done. The plants are now fine specimens. These varieties were selected because the donor said they were easy to grow. He said if they were successful other varieties could be tried.

Upon retirement, in January 1972, from a Veterinary career, ample free time was available. Friends in North Carolina suggested it would be a real challenge to try growing rhododendrons in Columbia, especially varieties which were not being grown here, In the spring of 1972 four. three-year-old plants were locally purchased: 'Scintillation', 'Maryke', 'Faggetter's Favorite' and 'Mrs. E.G. Stirling'. These plants were grown from liners imported from Washington state. These were being grown in raised beds of 50% Canadian peat moss and 50% very sandy soil. Even though

properly planted, they succumbed to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* during the summer. The peat and sand mixture adjacent to the roots remained too wet. Also the spring of 1972 was characterized by frequent rains which did not help the situation. When it became apparent that the plants were dying, cuttings were taken and successfully rooted. During the early stages of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* infection, the roots are destroyed, but the tops are not infected. The plants wilt, but turgidity can be restored to the cuttings by putting the stems in water for an hour or two. Plants of 'Mrs. E.C. Stirling' and 'Scintillation' from these cuttings are nice shrubs now. 'Faggetter's Favorite' and 'Maryke' have poor heat tolerance and in my opinion are not satisfactory plants for this area.

In the fall of 1972 additional plants were purchased from various sources in North Carolina. These were container-grown. Many tried to bloom in the fall. This was very disappointing since all of the buds on some of the varieties were affected. Fall blooms are most unsatisfactory since one doesn't get a good truss. Usually from one to three florets develop and when freezing weather comes, the buds freeze and, come spring, there is no bloom.

At the urging of friends, longtime rhododendron growers from North Carolina and Long Island, I became interested in Dexters and was made a gift of several year-old plants. Fall bloom in Dexters is generally not a problem. To date fall bloom has occurred yearly with 'Wissahickon'. However some buds usually remain undamaged and will make nice trusses in the spring. Longtime Dexter growers in the Southeast tell me one can expect a few florets occasionally on 'Apple Blossom' and 'Harlequin'.

In the fall of 1973 I purchased several 3- and 4-year-old Dexters in New Jersey. Most of these were budded. They were 'Wissahickon', 'Powder Puff', 'Tom Everitt', 'Great Eastern', 'Ben Moseley', 'Todmorden' and the nurseryman gave me a rooted cutting of 'Parker's Pink'. In addition he named what he thought were some of the more desirable varieties, but was unable to furnish a source. Since that time many Dexters have been purchased from New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon and Washington, mostly as rooted cuttings and some 1- to 5-year-old plants. Many of these were mislabeled, i.e. 'Powder Puff' for 'David Gable', 'Powder Puff' for 'Ice Cube',

'Scintillation' for 'Horizon', 'Scintillation' for 'Champagne', 'Warwick' for 'Betty Hume', 'Anna Rose Whitney' for 'Ashes of Roses', and on it goes. This is especially disappointing for a novice who does not realize the mislabeling until he has grown the plant for several years.

In the meantime he may have distributed cuttings which will only cause further confusion. Some nurseries are real generous and include in each shipment, which has been paid for in advance, a few dead or dying plants (at \$5.50 or more each). Some were never rooted. One sometimes receives a piece of rhododendron, callused or not, just stuck in a ball of peat and perlite. These succumb shortly after arrival. Have experienced 30% to 80% mortality of rooted cuttings that arrived during May through July. Some of the problem is no doubt due to the fact that at this time of year the temperatures here are already high. I now try to get rooted cuttings delivered from late September through early November. These are generally sold as year-olds and cost more. However, survival of this group has been 90% to 100%. Cuttings rooted by me, or purchased, are potted in 4- to 6-inch plastic pots, depending on the size of the root ball. The potting mixture consists of 40% Canadian peat, 40% ground pine cones (WW shredder-grinder, passed through a 1/4" screen) and 20% coarse perlite to which is added one ounce of gypsum and one ounce of 20% superphosphate to each three gallons of the mixture. The ground pine cones sometimes include about one-third by volume of ground oak leaves.

Rooted cuttings are kept in the greenhouse, among the *Camellia* plants, during the first winter. Some choice varieties are often kept in the greenhouse over the second winter also. Electric heaters are set to come on when the temperature drops to 32 degrees and go off at 34. Every two months, from December through March, the rooted cuttings are foliar-fed with Peter's Rhododendron Special (15-45-5), half teaspoonful to each gallon of water. If any mildew appears, they are sprayed with Benlate: one teaspoonful to each two gallons of water. This can be mixed with the fertilizer solution. From April through August fertilization is by Peter's Rhododendron Special, foliar-fed at the rate of one teaspoonful to each gallon of water, sprayed on the plants every two weeks. The application is made heavy enough to allow a good bit of the solution to run down into the pot. To the fertilizer solution is added one tablespoonful of Ben-late and two tablespoonfuls of Cap-tan (50% wettable powder) to each two

gallons. From time to time I substitute two teaspoonfuls of Ferbam to each gallon instead of the Benlate-Captan mixture. Fungus diseases during the first summer on rooted cuttings have been a big problem for me resulting in 50% or more mortality. With the frequent use of fungicides the loss has been reduced to 10% or less.

During the last three years cuttings have been acquired from members of the Southeastern Chapter, arboreta and private gardens in the Northeast and from Camellia-growing friends on Long Island, who were also kind enough to get cuttings for me from their friends. I prefer to root cuttings from my own plants in June and July, from plants in the mountains of North Carolina in July August, October and November. Advantages of taking cuttings in June and July here are that bottom heat is not required and in addition another growth cycle will be obtained before cold weather arrives.

Cuttings are wounded on two sides soaked thirty minutes in Benlate solution (one tablespoonful to two gallons of water) and five minutes in a saturated sugar solution. Then they are dipped in indole-butyric acid powder: 0.8% to 1.6% in summer and 1.6% to 3% in fall, depending on the variety. Propagation is done in the greenhouse under intermittent mist: from 5 to 15 seconds every ten minutes depending on the outside temperatures. During the summer, misters are on from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. for from 10 to 15 seconds. During late fall and winter, misters are turned off on cloudy days. On sunny days, 5 seconds every 10 minutes from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. Rooting media is half Canadian peat and half coarse perlite. During the summer, even though the glass is shaded, greenhouse temperatures will reach 115 degrees or more. The shading material is Varishade applied to the inside surface of the glass. Varishade is opaque when dry. In the late fall and winter, when the greenhouse is tightly closed, moisture condenses and the glass becomes transparent, admitting more light. When the weather turns cool, usually by mid October, bottom heat of 72 degrees is applied to the rooting bed by means of a thermostatically controlled electric heating cable.

During the summer of 1978 Dexter cuttings were obtained from New York, Philadelphia, District of Columbia areas on July 19-21, and from Massachusetts on July 21 and August 1. As of December 1, 40% were rooted and potted. The rooting has been very erratic. 100% of some

varieties stuck were rooted, others varied from 0% to 75%. About 10% rotted soon after being stuck and were discarded. Many of the cuttings are still in excellent condition and will probably still root. Having been under mist for so long they are now being lightly fed with Peter's Rhododendron Special (15-45-5) half teaspoonful to a gallon of water. This is applied as a spray every two weeks. There is no question in my mind that, in addition to the condition of the wood, there are optimum times for taking cuttings, varying with the varieties. For several years I've tried to propagate Dexter 'Betty Arrington'. Cuttings taken from June through September usually rotted within a week or two. This year those stuck in late October were, as of December 10, growing roots.

All rhododendrons grown in this area must have afternoon shade. They do best with high shade and good air circulation. Too much shade results in open growth, few or no bloom buds, and serious problems with *Phytophthora cactorum*. Plants will tolerate more sun if misted almost every day for an hour or two and kept well-watered. The Dexters have excellent heat-tolerance. Many clones, because of the large foliage, require much shade to avoid foliage burn, This is especially true of 'Scintillation'. Heat tolerance should not be confused with sun tolerance.

High planting is essential. I plant about three inches above grade. The soil mixture is one-half sandy clay topsoil. The other half is made up of 40% Canadian peat, 40% ground-up pinecones and 20% coarse perlite. A generous handful of gypsum, one of 20% superphosphate, and one of chlordane is added and thoroughly mixed in. The sound is then heavily mulched with pine straw. In the spring, after new growth begins, I fertilize with Camellia-Azalea fertilizer (4-8-4), a small handful to a three-foot plant applied to the mulch and watered in. One tablespoonful of Disyston per three-foot plant is sprinkled in the mulch. Cygon, two teaspoonfuls per gallon of water is sprayed on the plants. The Disyston, Cygon applications will give good control, for about 6 weeks, of lacewing fly and peony scale. Until the new growth hardens off, the plants are sprayed every two weeks with 50% Malathion, 1 teaspoonful to each gallon of water, in order to control biting and sucking insects. Additionally, young plants are fed a small handful of ammonium sulphate per 5-foot plant in early August. Sequestrene or iron sulphate is used if signs of chlorosis appear. It has been my experience that fertilizers applied in April, as the plants begin to bloom, should be avoided. This

practice will cause new growth to come out. This will either push off the bloom buds or obscure the flowers.

Experience to date indicates we can probably grow all Dexters in Columbia. Those having cream, yellowish or apricot flowers, such as Dexter's Cream, Champagne and Sky-glow, are more difficult for us because of poor sun tolerance. Exposure to sun results in poor foliage and sunscald, requiring the plants to be grown under much shade. This starts the vicious cycle of poor bud set and increased fungus diseases.

A Dexter Study Group has been active in the Southeastern Chapter for the past two years. Interest is very high. Meetings are held most every month on a Sunday. There are 22 active members and, when some of the mates attend, as many as 55 people may be present. The goals are: (1) To evaluate the clones as grown in our area; (2) To attempt to clarify the nomenclature of the Dexters; (3) To make clones available to our members. Growing conditions among our members vary considerably. For example, Columbia, South Carolina is 160 miles south of Asheville, North Carolina. Average annual minimum temperatures vary from plus 10 degrees to minus 8 degrees. The elevation of the growing areas ranges from 2900 feet in the mountains of North Carolina to 300 feet at Columbia, South Carolina. The soils vary from sand to clay, etc.

In the mid 1920's Charles O. Dexter moved his Beacon Manufacturing Company textile plant from Massachusetts to Swannanoa, North Carolina. During the late 20's and 30's truckloads of plants were shipped by Mr. Dexter to the Swannanoa-Asheville area. Many were planted on a hillside behind the Beacon Manufacturing Company, others at the Biltmore Estate and in Charles Dexter Owen's garden (Mr. Dexter's nephew) at Biltmore, North Carolina. Others were given to plant employees and friends. It is believed that these were all seedlings, although it cannot be ruled out that some were propagations from clones that Mr. Dexter considered superior. There is now no identification on these plants except for three which have been identified as originating in truckload shipments. They bear old tags No. 431 (not Giant Red), 429 and 405. There is also another Dexter being grown in the Asheville area identified as Dexter No. 203. There is no information available as to the origin of this clone. In the early 1960's another truckload of rhododendrons was shipped from the Dexter Estate to Asheville, North Carolina.

When rhododendrons began to disappear from the hillside planting behind the Beacon Manufacturing Company, the plants were dug and moved. Many were moved to the Biltmore Estate and Charles Dexter Owen's garden. Some were given to plant employees and others. It is only in the last few years that cuttings have begun to be available to members of the Southeastern Chapter. Some of the clones obtained from different sources appear to be identical. The possibility exists that plants of the same varieties were shipped to North Carolina or sister seedlings that were almost identical could have been received. However, it is also known that the owners of some of the plants exchanged cuttings or layers.

An interview was recently held with William H. Garren of Travelers Rest, South Carolina. He was present when the ARS Dexter Study Group visited the Biltmore Estate and the Charles Dexter Owen garden. To the best of his recollection this was about May 1956 or May 1957. He was not sure of the dates. Mr. Garren was in the employ of the Biltmore Estate at that time. The Dexter Study Group did not request any cuttings. He recalls the rhododendrons were magnificent, in full bloom, and the local people were very disappointed when the group did not think any of the clones were good enough or different enough from those which they had already tagged at other places. This was the reason given for not taking any cuttings.

About a year later, Dr. John Wister sent some small plants to the Biltmore Estate. (Again he was not sure of the date). The plants were to be grown and evaluated. At that time the Biltmore Estate operated a rhododendron nursery and test garden. These plants were not named but were under numbers. Mr. Garren remembers one plant being tagged with a BPPM number. This identifies it as a Ben Moseley origination. About 1969 the Biltmore Estate Nursery went out of business, and the plants were sold. Included among those were Dexters that Dr. Wister had sent, some sent by Charles Dexter and rhododendrons obtained from other sources. These plants did not have any identifying names or numbers when they were disposed of. It is quite likely that cultivars growing in the Asheville area are (1) now named Dexters that had been sent to North Carolina by Dr. John Wister, (2) true named Dexters that had been sent by Charles Dexter (3) not Dexters at all, but plants obtained from other sources.

After growing Dexters for several years, from contacts with other growers, and seeing plants in bloom, I am convinced that there is confusion in the identification of clones in the channels of trade. Either the clones have somehow been mixed up, or named cultivars that are impossible to distinguish from each other were given different names by different growers. It is also possible that plants which were thought to be seedlings were propagations, not seedlings, and were distributed to more than one grower.

'Dexter Cherry Red' (Winterthur #11) seen in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, New Jersey and New York are all indistinguishable from 'Wissahickon', even having the same bad habit of fall blooming. 'Dexter Amethyst' seen in shows in North Carolina and New York appears to be identical with 'Dexter's Purple'. I have been told by long-time Dexter growers that the true clone of 'Amethyst' is much lighter in color than 'Dexter's Purple'. I have seen two clones in nurseries tagged 'Dexter Tan'. One is pink and the other is buff or apricot. The buff or apricot color fits the description of the clone registered with the ARS as 'Tan'. I have been told that Dexter/Vossberg's 'Pink #1', also known as SAE #1, is 'Dexter's Pink'. I do not have 'Dexter's Pink' and have not seen it in bloom. If SAE #1 and 'Dexter's Pink' are identical, why did Samuel Everitt number both clones differently? ('Dexter's Pink' was numbered SAE #12). All clones of 'Fordham' (New York Botanical Garden #201) seen to date are indistinguishable from 'Tom Everitt' (New York Botanical Garden #205). I do not believe the Dexter Study Group in 1949 would have tagged two identical cultivars with different numbers. Unfortunately, no plant identified as 'Fordham' could be located in the New York Botanical Garden in 1978.

The writer would be interested in any observations or comments from readers regarding these and other mixed-up Dexter clones that are currently in the channels of trade.

List of Dexters

Herbert Racoff
December 1, 1978

Acclaim - BC 1978*
Accomac - 4 yrs, budded
Accomplishment - 1 yr.
Adelphia - MC 1978
Alice Poore - 2 yrs.
Amethyst - 1 yr.
Arlequin - 2 yrs.
Aronimink - 2 yrs., budded
Ashes of Roses - 3 yrs.
Avondale - 1 yr.
Ben Moseley - 7 yrs., budded
Betty Arrington - 5 yrs.
Betty Hume - 7 yr., budded
Black Cherry - BC 1978
Brown Eyes - 7 yr., budded
Champagne - 5 yrs.
Charleston - 4 yr.
Chatham - 2 yr.
Cherry Red - 2 yrs.
C.O.D. -RC 1978
Dexter's Appleblossom - 3 yrs.
Dexter's Brandygreen - 3 yrs.
Dexter's Brick Red - RC 1978
Dexter's Cream - 3 yr., budded
Dexter's Favorite - 1 yr.
Dexter's Giant Red - 4 yr., budded
Dexter's Glow - 3 yr., budded
Dexter's Horizon - 4 yr., budded
Dexter's Orange - 2 yr.
Dexter's Orchid - 3 yr., budded
Dexter's Pink Glory - 3 yr.
Dexter's Purple - 4 yr.
Dexter's Red - 3 yr., budded
Dexter's Springtime - RC 1978
Dexter's Vanilla - RC 1978
Dexter's Victoria - 3 yrs.
Dorothy Russell - 4 yr., budded
Dot's Cherry Jubilee - 1 yr.

Elizabeth Poore - 3 yr.
Flaming Snow - 2 yr.
Fordham? - 4 yrs., budded
GiGi - 4 yrs. budded
Glenda Farrell - 1 yr.
Gloxineum - 2 yrs.
Great Eastern - 7 yr., budded
Halesite - 3 yrs., budded
Helen Everitt (Dexter?)-? yrs., budded
Honeydew - RC 1978
Hunting Hill - RC 1978
Katherine Slater - 1 yr.
Kelley - 1 yr.
Marshfield - RC 1978
Merley Cream - 2 yr.
Mr. W.R. Coe - 1 yr.
Mrs. W.R. Coe - 7 yrs., budded
Oh Joy - PC 1978
Parkers Pink - 6 yrs., budded
Pink Sparkler - 4 yr.
Powder Puff - 8 yrs, budded
Ramona - 4 yrs., budded
Red House - 6 yrs., budded
Red Velvet - 3 yrs., budded
Rona Pink - RC 1978
Sagamore Bayside - 5 yr., budded
Scintillation - 7 yr., budded
Shawee Lake - 3 yr.
Skyglow - 4 yrs., budded
Tan? - 3 yr., budded
Todmorden - 6 yr.
Tom Everitt - 7 yrs., budded
Tripoli - 2 yr.
Warwick - 7 yr., budded
Westbury - 5 yr., budded
Weston - 1 yr.
Willard - RC 1978
William Rogers Coe - RC 1978

Winneconnet - RC 1978
Wissahickon - 7 yr., budded
Wyandanch - 7 yr.
Beinecke #20 - RC 1978
Beinecke #43 - 2 yr., budded
Dexter Bow Street - RC 1978
Dexter Estate #501 - RC 1978
Dexter #13 - RC 1978
Dexter #44 - RC 1978 (Fairhaven)
Dwarf Pink Fragrant, H. Phipps #32-RC 1978
Everitt's Deep Pink (PF#130) - RC 1978
Everitt #2 - RC 1978
Everitt #10 - RC 1978
Evie Baalsrup (PF 69-55) - NC 1978
Pygmalion x Hematodes - PC 1978
Morris #4 - NC 1978
New York Botanical Garden #15 - RC 1978
Ross L - RC 1978
Salmon Pink (Weston) - RC 1978
SW12499-7 - RC 1978
SW12499-8 - RC 1978
SW12505-4 - RC 1978
Vossberg's Pink #1(SAE#1)-4 yrs, budded
Wisner #1 - 3 yrs.
Wisner #2 - 3 yr., budded
Wisner #4 - 1 yr.
Young 59-47 - 3 yr. budded

*RC 1978 refers to cuttings rooted during the Summer and Fall of 1978
Asheville, North Carolina area locally named or numbered plants are not
included in this list.

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Journal American Rhododendron Society

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Volume 33, Number 4
October 1979

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JOINT CHAPTER MEETINGS - TRY THEM H.F. Cantrell, Piedmont, S.C.

Recently, the Azalea (Atlanta area), Piedmont (Charlotte, N.C. area), Southeastern (Asheville, N.C. area) and William Bartram (Greenville, S.C. area) chapters held a joint meeting in Greenville, which is a somewhat central location. Joint meetings between two chapters are held at times, but this was our first attempt at a regional meeting. The program was planned to offer variety and to touch the interest of as many people as possible. The opening presentation was by Fred Galle, who discussed the native azaleas. Our geographical area abounds with many species of the natives. The next topic, Exbury azaleas, was presented by Bill Garren, an area nurseryman. He told us of the very interesting background of this group of azaleas, but emphasized that they have not yet come into widespread use. The evergreen azaleas were the next topic. Bruce Hancock told about the Pennington hybrids, George Beasley about the Robin Hills and Furman Cantrell about the Gables and the Beltsville hybrids.

Next, the topic turned to rhododendrons; and a panel consisting of Mrs. Velma Haag, Dr. Herbert Racoff, and Ted Van Veen discussed the Dexter hybrids and other recently introduced hybrids. The last topic of the afternoon was a presentation by Dr. Don Kellam on his recent trip to the Himalayas and the Rhododendron species in that area.

The evening session began with a social hour, then dinner and concluded with a presentation by Ted Van Veen on the role of the ARS at the national scene and then an interesting account of some of the more notable hybridizers and their hybrids.

The entire program was deemed to be successful and plans are already underway for another joint meeting for the coming year. This meeting provided us with the opportunity to meet fellow members and get acquainted, to learn more about the plants in their areas, to share ideas about rhododendron culture, flower shows and other chapter activities. We hope this will become an annual affair in our area and serve to unite our chapters as well as provide other benefits

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Volume 34, Number 4
October 1980

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SEE NOTE AT BOTTOM OF ARTICLE

THE STRANGE AFFAIR OF 'JANET BLAIR' AND JOHN WISTER

James S. Wells, Red Bank, N.J.

Most keen growers and collectors of rhododendrons will know that there are two plants, one a seedling produced and named by David Leach and the other a Dexter seedling, which for all practical purposes appear to be identical. One is called 'Janet Blair', the other John Wister.

Are these two plants the same? Is there any way of sorting things out, and if so what is the correct name for the plant. Is it 'Janet Blair' or is it John Wister?

Under the international rules of nomenclature the earliest recorded use of a name must take precedence, and if the plants are indeed the same, then the name 'Janet Blair' must prevail. But are they indeed the same plant which has somehow been named twice. I believe that they are not.

Let us trace what is known of these two plants and see where it leads. 'Janet Blair' is a seedling produced by David Leach. He stated in a letter written in 1972 that he had sent

"years ago a number of small plants of promising seedlings under number to the University of Washington" at Seattle, which I assume included the plant - although he does not say so - which he later named 'Janet Blair'. Apparently David Leach officially registered his plant as 'Janet Blair' in 1958, and continued to disseminate it as plants all vegetatively produced, from the original seedling, under that name. A number of nurseries, particularly in Ohio began to grow the plant and offer it under that name. We can with reason assume therefore that all the people who acquired plants under the name 'Janet Blair' at this time and began to grow it were growing the same plant which had originated and been introduced by David Leach.

Now we come to a second plant which appeared as Dexter #201, the original number given to it by C. O. Dexter. The first record of this plant being disseminated is in 1939. Brian Mulligan, Director Emeritus of the University of Washington Arboretum at Seattle reports that their records show that two plants - both grafts - were received by the arboretum direct from the Dexter estate under the number 201. One of these original plants is still alive and well in the arboretum. Brian Mulligan also says that all the Dexters which they have received over the years have come direct from the Dexter estate. Their records are accurate and well maintained and a close scrutiny of these records indicate that they did not receive any material under number from David Leach.

Following the death of C. O. Dexter, his estate was ultimately purchased by Col. Roy Brown, who moved some of the better plants from there to a nearby piece of land which he owned. In 1950 the Dexter Evaluation Committee visited Col. Brown and were impressed with one of his plants which they designated "Brown-Dexter #6". It was noted at the time that this plant was also tagged with what was presumed to be an original Dexter label showing the number 201. Col. Brown later sold the Dexter Estate, upon which still remained many fine specimen plants, a number of which were then dug and sold by the new owners to customers in nearby New England and New York. A number of these plants were purchased by Mr. Beinecke for his garden in Greenwich, Conn., and among them was a plant labeled #201 - it may well have been the original plant so numbered.

As always, the plant impressed people who saw it, and people visiting the Beinicke garden asked for cuttings which were willingly given. Most of these people, believing the plant to be still unnamed gave their stock a name. One called his "Smoky Pink" while another called his "Tony Manittell".

We now come to my part in the saga of Dexter #201. Soon after my arrival in this country in late 1946 I came to know John Wister. His help and advice was of great value to me in my task of rebuilding the Koster Nursery, at Bridgeton, New Jersey, and I made frequent visits to Swarthmore to see the plant material in the arboretum there. Learning of the Dexter hybrid group of rhododendrons from Mr. Wister we offered the propagation facilities at Koster Nursery to assist the Arthur Hoyt Scot Foundation and the Tyler Arboretum widen their collection of Dexter plants known to exist elsewhere, but which they did not have.

John Wister knew of the group of original Dexters growing at the University of Washington Arboretum, and he therefore requested scions from Brian Mulligan. The records show that a group of scions all under number, were shipped to Koster Nursery in January 1952. All the scions were grafted, and as complete a collection as possible was sent to John Wister, some being retained by ourselves as agreed. Among those retained

were two grafts of a plant numbered #201. I felt that many of these plants in this group would prove to be of value and would ultimately be named and introduced. In 1955 I was working for the Bobbink Nurseries at East Rutherford, and remembering the group of plants received in 1952 I now wished to obtain the group again and wrote to Mr. Mulligan asking if the shipment could be duplicated. This he very kindly consented to do, and a group of scions was duly received at Bobbinks and grafted. Among this group was again Number 201. In 1956 I commenced my own nursery at Red Bank, New Jersey, and Mr. George White of Bobbink Nursery very kindly and generously gave me the group of Dexter Hybrids which we had grafted earlier. This group became some of the first plants set out on the nursery, and a year or two later they were planted in a permanent position in the garden around my home where they still are. Two plants of the number 201 grafted from material received from Seattle are still alive and well.

As time passed the quality and sound commercial value of #201 as a really good plant became clear and I wrote to Mr. Mulligan suggesting that it be named, and that as the original material had come from him, that he name it. He suggested that if it was as good as we all seemed to think, how about naming it after John blister. I agreed. However, Mr. Mulligan is correct in saying that he did not name it. By this I presume he means that he did not register the name because he believed I would do so, and I must regretfully report that I did not do so either.

The name therefore was not registered. However, we began to propagate the plant in earnest and shortly thereafter it was offered by us in our wholesale catalog under the name John Wister and has been so listed for nearly 20 years. As time passed it became apparent that there were two plants, very similar to each other, one called 'Janet Blair' and the other John Wister. Which brings us to the present position and what to do about it.

David Leach assumes that his plant has somehow become confused at the Washington Arboretum with their Dexter group, and that propagation material sent out by them to me at both Kusters Nursery and Bobbink Nursery was in fact 'Janet Blair' and not Dexter #201. This suggestion is rather hard to accept because it is clear that the arboretum keeps very detailed and exact records. This is a possibility - because mistakes can and do happen - but I do not think that this properly and completely answers all the questions. If we look at the long and well documented history of the plant known as Dexter #201 there are three lines which this plant has taken.

First, to Seattle. Grafts were received directly from Dexter and an original plant whose history is well documented is still there. Scions from this plant came to me and through me to Swarthmore where plants known as Dexter #201 are still growing. Scions from Seattle also came to me again at Bobbinks - clearly the same plant - were grafted and are growing happily in my garden.

Second. A plant was removed direct from the Dexter estate to Col. Roy Brown where it was renumbered Brown-Dexter #6 (BD #6) and was so propagated. This plant had an original Dexter label #201.

Third. John Wister recognized a plant at the Beinicke garden which had also come direct from the Dexter estate which he now knew as BD #6. It seems reasonably clear therefore that all these plants are from the original source, namely #201 on the Dexter estate.

'Janet Blair' on the other hand has apparently always been grown under that name from material which originated in the beginning from David Leach's seedling. Although

this plant has been widely grown, both Seattle and Swarthmore report that they have no record of receiving a numbered plant from David Leach as a "Dexter" or in fact receiving any seedling from him under number. Seattle says "Our Dexters all came from the original source" and the Tyler Arboretum says that they have received numbered Nearing-Reid hybrids and also Bosley Dexter plants under number, but no numbered plants of Leach's own production.

To further confuse matters, as the apparent duplication became apparent a number of growers who had obtained plants from us under the name John Wister decided to change the name to 'Janet Blair'. However, we have never done this, and all plants produced and sold by us came from the original plants received from Seattle under the number 201.

It seems reasonably clear that there are indeed two plants very similar to each other. However, the history of Dexter #201 goes back along way and is clearly known and documented. I think that it can be assumed that Dexter #201, and or BD #6 all stem from the original source plant on the Dexter estate numbered by Mr. Dexter #201. This is the plant that we named John Wister. Although it may closely resemble 'Janet Blair' we do not think it can possibly be the same plant.

If these arguments seem reasonable then we can assume that all the plants grown and disseminated as John Wister - no matter what they may now be called - are the same plant, and that for various reasons the name has not yet been validated.

In an effort to clear up this matter I recently visited John Wister - who at well over 90 is still alert and actively engaged in horticulture - to find out what he would wish. He likes the plant known as Dexter #201 and would welcome a firm and legal attachment of his name to it. As this plant has never been officially registered it would seem to me that there is nothing to prevent the registration of the name John Wister for the plant previously known and grown under the Number Dexter #201 and this is what I propose to do. If this registration is accepted for this plant then the name will be officially recognised as correct for all plants vegetatively propagated from the various sources of #201.

Note: The Registrar, Ed Parker, reports that Herbert Racoff, D. V. M., with the Dexter Study Group of the Southeastern Chapter, A.R.S., has been collecting verified material of the clone(s) in question for some time. These plants will be grown side by side for eventual in bloom comparison by competent scientists. Their conclusions will be duly reported in the Quarterly.