



MINNESOTA STATE FLORISTS'

Bulletin



Agricultural Extension Service
University of Minnesota
Editor, Richard E. Widmer

Institute of Agriculture
St. Paul 1
April 1, 1960

The following articles by Leon C. Snyder, Neil W. Stuart, and John G. Seeley are summaries of their talks at the Florists' Short Course held in Minneapolis in February.

HARDY AZALEAS FOR GREENHOUSE FORCING

Leon C. Snyder

Head, Department of Horticulture, University of Minnesota

Outdoor tests with several species of *Rhododendron* (Azalea) and with the Mollis Hybrids indicate that certain ones are hardy enough to survive and bloom out of doors and unprotected in the Twin Cities area. This fact naturally leads one to ask whether these species and varieties might not be grown in containers and forced into bloom for Mother's Day or Memorial Day sales and then planted out in the garden to give years of bloom and beauty.

Thus far, experiments in Minnesota have not included greenhouse culture. Experiments in Holland and elsewhere have indicated that by using supplemental lights many of these species and varieties can be brought into bloom from seeds in two years or less. Perhaps a combination of lathhouse culture and greenhouse forcing may prove more practical than growing the plants continuously in the greenhouse.

The species and hybrids that show promise for outdoor culture include *Rhododendron canadense* (Rhodora), *R. mollis* (Mollis Hybrid Azalea) *R. mucronulatum* (Korean Rhododendron), *R. roseum* (Roseshell Azalea), *R. vaseyi* (Pinkshell Azalea) and *R. yedoense poukhanense* (Korean Yadogawa Azalea). Perhaps the Cornell Pink variety of this last species may prove better than the variety *poukhanense*.

As with any new plant materials, we suggest that you try a few in a limited way. No plants are available locally and no seed is available from the University at present. If interest warrants we could save some seed this fall. We plan to initiate some greenhouse studies to determine the best methods of growing these plants.

It should be kept in mind in recommending these azaleas for outdoor culture that, like the greenhouse azaleas, these hardy types require an acid soil and do best in partial shade. Acid peat moss or compost from oak leaves should be mixed with the soil before planting and the same material used for a summer mulch in place of cultivation for weed control. Azaleas should be planted shallow and never cultivated. Keep the soil continuously moist. No winter protection should be required once the plants are well established.