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Comments on any aspect of this journal and future articles for consideration should be submitted in digital form to:
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Please put “Rhododendrons International” in the subject line.

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From the Editor

Dr. Glen Jamieson
Parksville, BC
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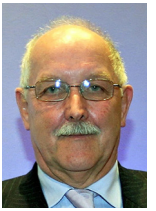
Rhododendrons International (RI) is an online journal distributed free to all the world's known rhododendron associations for their internal distribution. It can also be accessed without charge on the American Rhododendron Society website at https://www.rhododendron.org/ri-index.htm. This seventh issue of RI includes six articles, some modified slightly from those printed initially, that I have extracted from various rhododendron publications that I feel are worthy of wider world-wide distribution. Articles in this volume are from "Rhododendron Species 2020" the journal of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, WA; "Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias" 2020 and 2021, Royal Horticultural Society Group; and the "Journal American Rhododendron Society 76." I regularly search botanical publications for worthwhile rhododendron articles I deem to be of international significance for wider distribution through RI issues. I also welcome submissions from authors of such material that I might not be aware of, so please feel free to bring such material to my attention at rhodojournal@gmail.com, and please put "Rhododendrons International" in the subject line.

Finally, I would like to express my big appreciation to Sonja Nelson, the volunteer layout editor, for all her hard work in producing each issue of Rhododendrons International. Without her involvement and support, this journal would not exist!

Rhododendron Choices for Smaller Gardens

John Good
Conwy, Wales, UK



(Photos by the author)

(Reprinted with permission from Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias 2021, RHS)

There are several hundred dwarf rhododendrons that are suitable for the smaller garden. Those I have picked, all from my own garden, do not form a taxonomically representative selection. Rather, they are a group of horticulturally, and in some cases botanically interesting plants, small enough for most plots. None will grow to more than one m (40 in) high and wide in ten years.

As a plant ecologist, I am particularly interested in the natural range and growing conditions of plants, and how we may use that knowledge to grow them better. This does not necessarily mean trying to imitate the wild habitat in our gardens, for that is very difficult if not impossible in many instances, but using that knowledge to guide us when trying to do the best for our plants. Thus, I have given this information for the species described here; it is likely to be particularly useful when you try to grow the more difficult ones.

So, I shall not spend too much space on discussing cultivation, except when dealing with those trickier species. Suffice it to say that most dwarf rhododendrons, like almost all their kin, have an Achilles' heel, of which we are only too well aware if we garden on alkaline soil. They can, with some difficulty and attention to detail, be grown on limy soils, and given their size, are more easily catered for in small beds or containers than the larger species and hybrids. Indeed, I know of enthusiasts who grow all or most of their collection in troughs, tubs or other containers, watering their plants only with rainwater. Generally, the more organic matter that you provide, the better, and the soil should always be kept moist. While many, perhaps most rhododendrons are woodland plants, growing best in dappled shade, except in very sunless gardens, most dwarf species originate from open moorland, woodland edge, or even rocky scree habitats. These may grow well in shade, but flower best in full sun, except in very hot, dry locations.

Rhododendron 'Sarled' AGM.

Propagation

This is not an article on propagation, so I shall limit my remarks in this regard. Dwarf rhododendrons may be propagated by seed, and vegetatively by cuttings, and in some cases by detaching rooted pieces, sometimes called "Irishman's cuttings."

1. Seed

The best method for species, is to raise them from seed. Hybrids may also be grown this way, but of course will not generally look the same as their seed parent. Seed is generally freely set, date of ripening (as indicated by the splitting of the capsules) varies with species but is rarely before the end of October in the UK. I generally store the seed in paper envelopes in a cool place until sowing in February-March. Rhododendron seed is generally short-lived, and germination rates decline rapidly, so it is unwise to delay sowing. In my experience equal parts of granulated peat and silver sand (largely quartz particles that are not coated with iron oxides, which colour sand from yellow to rich brown) make as good a sowing medium as any, and as very little peat is needed for this purpose, I make an exception to my general rule to avoid its use. An alternative, which I have also used successfully, is milled live sphagnum moss. In either case I use approximately 2.5 cm (one inch) of the sowing medium over ericaceous compost, made from sieved (6 mm, quarter-inch) Irish moss peat (4 parts) and medium grade Perlite

(1 part). There is no added fertilizer.

The tiny seed is sown "very thinly" on the surface. The pot is then stood in water, the seed being drawn down into the sowing medium by capillary action when the pots are removed to drain. Cover with a pane of glass (turn daily) or plastic dome or plastic bag with supports, to maintain high air humidity, and place in a shaded frame until germination. A little heat will speed up germination and subsequent growth but is not necessary.

When still at the first true leaf stage, I prick out the seedlings in small batches in ericaceous compost and return the containers to the shaded frame. I routinely water them with a fungicide at this stage to reduce the likelihood of damping off and other fungal diseases that can quickly decimate the seedlings. I separate the batches of seedlings into individuals as soon as they are easy enough to handle. Provided they are grown on without a check, seedlings will sometimes flower in two years, often in three or four.

2. Cuttings

As a generalisation, cuttings of dwarf rhododendrons root more readily than those of their larger kin, and they flower sooner, generally two to three years. Unless you have a mist bench, or other specialised facilities, in my experience semi-hardwood cuttings are the easiest and quickest to root. I take these soon after the new growth has stopped expanding and while it is still pliable, but not soft. Like much else with propagation, experience is the best guide. You get to know when the new shoots are ready to take. I have not found that a heel of older wood makes any difference to success rates. Therefore, I use the new "wood" only. Cuttings are excised with a sharp knife, and any dead leaves and lower leaves that would otherwise be buried in the rooting compost are removed. I then "wound"the base of the cutting by removing a small (1-2 mm (0.04-0.1 in) wide) sliver of bark from opposite sides of the cutting. This definitely aids rooting in my experience.

The prepared cuttings are inserted closely together in rows in the same 50:50 peat (or substitute) and sand mix that I use for seed. I rarely use rooting hormones as I have not found them to make much difference to rooting percentages, but others find differently. After watering thoroughly, I cover the trays with Perspex lids and place them in a shaded cold frame. They are only watered again if the need is apparent, and this comes down to experience. As a guide, though, it is definitely better for the compost to be on the dry side than too wet.

Assuming that most cuttings will be taken in July-August in the Northern Hemisphere, most should be sufficiently well rooted to pot up before the onset of winter. Tardy rooters can be left through the winter and potted up as they show signs of renewed growth in early spring. Expect huge differences in rooting percentages between different species, hybrids and cultivars. That is par for the

course. I generally consider anything over 20% acceptable and greater than 50% good.

Colour Palette in Dwarf Rhododendrons

Dwarf rhododendrons come in a dazzling rainbow array of colours, unmatched by any other group of dwarf shrubs. From purest white, ranging through cream, palest yellows and pinks, stronger yellows and orange, dark pink and red, to true (and not so true) blues. You can obtain most of those I shall describe easily from specialist shrub and alpine nurseries. A few may be more difficult to obtain, but well worth the chase.

A. White

There are relatively few white species among the dwarf rhododendrons, but selection by gardeners and rhododendron breeders, over many years, have produced a good range to choose from. Quite a few have a pink tinge, but the flowers of those I have illustrated here are pure white when fully opened.

1. *Rhododendron leucaspis*

This entrancing species was introduced into cultivation in 1924 by the famed plant collector, Frank Kingdon Ward. He collected it in the Tsangpo Gorge, southeast Tibet, at altitudes from 2500-3600 m (8200-11,800 ft). It was "growing among rocks and beneath bamboos, at the foot of a lofty cliff called the Musi La, or the Sulphur Mountain—there was a sulphur spring here, and I think it watered the rhododendrons. The slope immediately below the cliff was almost precipitous, and there were regular thickets of *R. leucaspis* dotted about here. It was not in flower, but I collected seeds, and it first flowered in this country in 1928" (Kingdon Ward 1933).

For many people, including Kingdon Ward, this is their favourite dwarf rhododendron; it is certainly one of mine. Perhaps its most appealing feature is the chocolate coloured anthers, which contrast beautifully with the bright white petals. Its chief failing is that while the plant itself is hardy in all parts of the British Isles, the flowers are easily damaged by frost, which is not surprising as they are produced in early March. This is not, therefore, a plant for those who garden on frost-prone sites, unless protection can be provided. But it can be grown easily and well in a pot, or other container, where it can be protected from the

Rhododendron leucaspis.

vagaries of the late winter weather under glass.

There are some excellent hybrids of *R. leucaspis*. I have 'Snow Lady' (*R. leucaspis* × *R. ciliatum*?) and 'Ptarmigan' AGM (*R. orthocladum* var. *microleucum* × *R. leucaspis*). Both are as early flowering as *R. leucaspis*, with slightly more frost hardy flowers, and are generally more floriferous. However, the chocolate coloured anthers are neither as dark, nor as large and imposing as those of their illustrious parent.

Rhododendron sargentianum.

2. *Rhododendron sargentianum*

This delightful high altitude (3000-3600 m, 9850-11,800 ft)) species of the *Pogonanthum* (sometimes called daphne-flowered) section was introduced by Wilson in 1904 from West Sichuan, China. It grows on rocks or cliffs, or forms heaths. It has a very restricted range and sadly, its status in the wild is "near threatened." *R. sargentianum* is a compact, symmetrical plant, very slow growing, with abundant foliage, dark green above, copiously covered with brown scales below. It is one of the most aromatic of the lepidotes, and that is saying a lot. Just brushing past a plant can remind you of its presence when out of flower. The flowers, which are produced in late April-May, vary from a desirable canary yellow, through paler yellow and cream to brilliant white.

There are a few good hybrids of this species with other members of its series; the best of these in my garden has been 'Sarled' (see photo on p. 49), which is the result of a cross with *R. trichostomum* × *R. trichostomum* (previously *R. ledoides*). It is easy to grow, long-lived, and the flowers last longer than those of most dwarf rhododendrons; up to four weeks. They open palest pink, but soon age to a clear, bright white.

3. *Rhododendron* 'Egret' AGM (*R. campylogynum* (white form) X *R. racemosum* 'White Lace')

One of the series of first-rate dwarf rhododendron hybrids from Cox's nursery at Glendoick in Scotland that are named after birds. As the name implies, 'Egret' is pure white; its waxy bells, with their brownish anthers and protruding, clapper-like styles (female

Rhododendron 'Egret'.

reproductive organs), are inherited from the seed parent, *R. campylogynum*. This is an easy, reliable hybrid which covers itself with flowers every year in mid-May. But to do this it needs a reasonably sunny spot, but not too hot, so not near a south facing wall. I have a plant fifteen years old that is 40 cm (16 in) high x 60 cm (24 in) across.

B. Pink

There are probably more pink dwarf rhododendrons than those of any other colour. So, it's really a matter of seeing them in flower at a good nursery, or elsewhere, and choosing those you like best. They generally blend well with most other colours, including the 'blues', which mostly contain some pink pigment.

1. *Rhododendron* 'Kirin'

Rhododendron 'Kirin'.

I am not generally a "fan" of double flowers, but there are exceptions, and this is one of them. The double, pale-pink, so-called "hose-in-hose" flowers, reliably cover the evergreen bush in late April. It thrives in full sun or partial shade, but flowers more profusely in the open. This selection is more than a century old in cultivation. It is one of the best 50 evergreen azaleas selected by Ernest Wilson in Japan, known as "The Wilson 50." He introduced them to cultivation in 1918, when they took the horticultural world by storm.

2. *Rhododendron uniflorum* var. *imperator*

Rhododendron uniflorum var. *imperator.*

A long name for a short plant! And this is not the end of it, because various Kingdon Ward collections have been either separated as individual species (*R. uniflorum, R. imperator, R. patulum* and *R. pemakoense*), or amalgamated under one or other of them either as varieties, or as a single species. I am using *R. uniflorum* var. *imperator* KW6884 for the plant shown here. It was discovered by Kingdon Ward in 1926 in a small area in upper Burma (now Myanmar) near the source of the

Seinghku river, a feeder of the Irrawaddy River, between 3000-3350 m (9850-11,000 ft) and was introduced by him. His field note reads: "A flat thin mat plant, weaving itself over the surface of almost bare granite rocks in a well-shaded gully; thus it is out in the open, but hardly gets any sunshine. Flowers bright unblemished purple, with crimson style… . Leaves aromatic. Very showy."

R. uniflorum var. *imperator* KW6884 is among the first to flower here, generally at the end of March into early April. It is also one of the prettiest, with plentiful blooms that are large in relation to the size of the plant. The plant shown is some twenty years old but is still only 25 cm (10 in) high x 45 cm (18 in) across. As so often with alpine plants, I am astonished that it is happy to exchange that distant, and very different homeland, for a mild, coastal garden in Wales.

3. *Rhododendron campylogynum*

Rhododendron campylogynum is a firm favourite in all its colour forms. These range from very dark plum purple, through various shades of reddish pink, and clear pink, to white. *R. campylogynum* ranges throughout the rainiest part of the Sino-Himalayan region, from the Tali range and the Mekong-Salween divide in the east through upper Burma to the eastern Himalaya, at altitudes of 3300-4500 m (10,825-14,750 ft), rarely lower. It is therefore one of the most alpine of rhododendrons. It was discovered by the Abbé Delavay in 1884 in the Tali range, whence it was introduced by Forrest in 1912. In the wild it is chiefly found in open meadows and in cultivation should not be grown in too much shade. Plants are slow growing and very long-lived; thirty years is not exceptional.

Rhododendron campylogynum var. *charopeum.*

C. Yellow

1. *Rhododendron keiskei* var. *ozawae* 'Yaku Fairy' AGM, and *R.* 'Sleeping Beauty'

Rhododendron 'Yaku Fairy'.

Rhododendron 'Sleeping Beauty'.

These two little charmers are closely related, as *Rhododendron keiskei* var. *ozawae* 'Yaku Fairy' is one of the parents of 'Sleeping Beauty'. The other parent is *R. cinnabarinum* subsp. *xanthocodon*, a much taller, yellow-flowered species too large to be included in this article. The "mother-daughter" relationship is clear in the photos, the chief difference being that 'Sleeping Beauty' grows into a larger plant. It is also, as is often the case with hybrids, easier to grow than 'Yaku Fairy'. Both cover themselves in fulsome miniature trusses of pale-yellow blossoms from late April to early May. *R. keiskei* is a dwarf species from the island of Yakushima, Japan, where it grows in open situations at elevations from 600-1250 m (1975-4100 ft). This, the southernmost of the islands, has one of the highest rainfalls anywhere in the world. Surprisingly, therefore, it grows well even in quite dry situations in the garden. After twenty years, my largest plant of 'Yaku Fairy' is still only 25 cm (10 in) high x 40 cm (16 in) across, while 'Sleeping Beauty' has increased to almost twice those dimensions.

2. *Rhododendron* 'Wren' AGM

This easily available Glendoick hybrid is yet another wonderful offspring of *R. keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy', in this case crossed with *R. ludlowii*. Whereas the latter is rather tricky, 'Wren' has hybrid vigour aplenty and is one of the easiest, and most striking, yellow dwarf rhododendrons. Its flowers are larger and more cup shaped than those of 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Yaku Fairy'. It is seen here growing on top of a raised bed, which seems to suit it.

Rhododendron 'Wren'.

Rhododendron 'Wren', close up of flowers.

3. *Rhododendron lowndesii*

I cannot leave the "yellows" without showing you one of my favourites among all plants, not just dwarf rhododendrons. Be warned, *R. lowndesii* is not easy to obtain, or to grow. But if you can manage it, you will surely be utterly beguiled. Its elfin flowers, borne only 2 cm (0.8 in) above the dense, prostrate, creeping, evergreen foliage, are something to behold. There may not be many, and you may need to get down on hands and knees to fully appreciate them, but it is well worth

the effort. I grow the plant illustrated in permanently damp soil, in dappled shade, in a very rocky raised crevice bed. These are the nearest conditions I can provide to those in its homeland, on peaty banks and rock ledges, at around 4000 m (13,125 ft) altitude, in Nepal. It was named for Colonel Donald Lowndes (1899-1956), a retired Colonel in the Royal Garhwal Rifles and an eminent plant hunter. He collected it there on a 1950 expedition. It is quite easy to propagate vegetatively as it "roots as it goes", but the rooted pieces are not easy to keep and grow on.

Rhododendron lowndesii.

D. Blue and Mauve

No dwarf rhododendrons have pure blue flowers to rival those of, say, an alpine gentian. Most are some shade of mauve, or darker purplish blue, but they contribute greatly to the display. They look particularly well mixed with yellow and white varieties.

1. *Rhododendron* 'Augfast' (*R. augustinii* X *R. fastigiatum*)

This is one of the best blue dwarf rhododendrons in our garden, having grown

Rhododendron 'Augfast'.

to 75 cm (30 in) high x 100 cm (40 in) wide in twenty years. It is not surprising it is so good, as both its parents are first rate species. Indeed, *R. augustinii* (which is too tall to include here) in full flower provides one of the highlights of the rhododendron season in many of our great British gardens. The other parent, *R. fastigiatum,* is a true dwarf and probably in its best forms the nearest to a true blue. However, it is not as easy to grow as the hybrid, and in my experience is much more miserly in its flower production.

2. *Rhododendron calostrotum* subsp. *keleticum* (previously *R. keleticum*)

My plant was referred to as var. *radicans* (in botanical Latin = creeping), so strictly it should be even longer as *R. calostrotum* subsp. *keleticum* var. *radicans*! Of similar habit and stature to *R. lowndesii,* this is growing nearby in our garden. As you can see, it is certainly not "true blue", more a pinkish-mauve. This is a diminutive form, from high altitude, of a plant which in its "normal" type makes a flat-topped bush about 25 cm (10 in) high. The species has a limited range in the wild in Tibet and Yunnan, just reaching into Myanmar. It comes from rather more densely vegetated habitats in the mountains than *R. lowndesii*, including meadows and bamboo thickets, from 3000-4000 m (9850-13,125 ft). In the garden it is one of the last to flower, often being at its best in late June, or even early July.

Rhododendron calostrotum subsp. *keleticum* var. *radicans*.

E. Red

There are relatively few, good, red-flowered dwarf rhododendrons, but the best are outstanding. One piece of advice is to ensure that, particularly those with very dark red flowers, are placed in a situation that is well lit at the time of flowering. Otherwise they can look too dark and lose their impact.

1. ***Rhododendron* 'Scarlet Wonder' AGM**

This is a reliable, strong, bright red hybrid between *R.* 'Essex Scarlet' and *R. forrestii* subsp. *forrestii* (previously var. *repens*), that will eventually make a bush twice as wide as high. It is widely available. The pollen parent is even more desirable to my eyes

Rhododendron forrestii subsp. *forrestii.*

as it is a true alpine species, but slow and unlikely to produce more than a scattering of flowers.

2. *Rhododendron camtschaticum*

This is a rare, miniature, creeping rhododendron from the vast boglands (muskeg in North America) of the Kamchatka Peninsula, Japan and Alaska. That tells you that it must never be allowed to dry out at the root. It is unusual in being deciduous, even though it is not in the azalea section of rhododendron. It is a uniform plant in all but flower colour, which ranges from a rather wishy-washy, pale pink, to the strong, vibrant red Glendoick form illustrated. So, you need to know what you are buying. There is an even rarer, pure white albino in cultivation, but I have not managed to acquire it… yet!

Rhododendron camtschaticum.

3. *Rhododendron nakaharae* 'Mariko'

This is one of several selections of this creeping, evergreen species, which is only found on one Taiwanese mountain at elevations between 2000-2500 m (6560-8200 ft). It is particularly valuable in the garden for its dwarf, tidy habit, and because it does not produce its bright orange-red flowers until June-July, long after most other dwarf rhododendrons are finished. It is more tolerant of dry soils than many and grows well in fairly deep shade beneath trees.

Note: AGM = RHS Award of Garden Merit

References

Kingdon Ward, F. 1933. *Gardeners' Chronicle*, Vol. 94: 65.

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Rhododendron on Stamps

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(Reprinted from the *Journal American Rhododendron Society. Vol. 76*)

The genus *Rhododendron* is a diverse group of flowers and plants that comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours. There is a threat to its habitat destruction because of developmental activities and climate change. Philately, the collection and study of postage stamps, is a strong conservation tool and different countries have released stamps of *Rhododendron* which help increase awareness of rhododendrons and their protection. Postal departments of 65 countries have released to date 253 stamps depicting 88 species of *Rhododendron* from the 1920s to the 2020s with six from unknown years. Some countries show only "*Rhododendron"* on their stamps without giving the species or cultivar name. This paper showcases *Rhododendron* stamps, as well as *Rhododendron* bonsai stamps, *Rhododendron* pollinator stamps, and *Rhododendron* festival and conservation stamps that have been released by different countries worldwide.

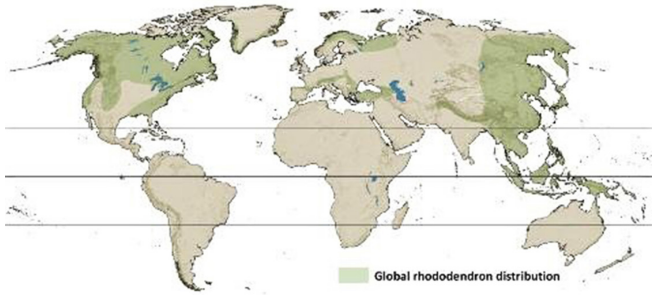
Rhododendrons generally have showy flower displays. In the wild they are abundant in the Himalaya and in South East Asia, with rhododendrons found in varied habitats from subtropical forest to the alpine. Rhododendrons range in size from dwarf shrubs to large trees. The smallest are *R. nivale* and *R. pumilum* at just 10 to 50 cm (4-20 in) high while the tallest species, *R. arboretum*, can reach up to 20 m (65 ft). In India, *Rhododendron* is the state tree of both Sikkim and Uttarakhand and is the state flower of both Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh. It is the national flower of Nepal, the state flower of the states of both Washington and West Virginia in the United States, and the provincial flower of Jiangxi in China.

Stamps can be miniature gateways to the world's fauna and flora, and every stamp tells a story. Collecting stamps is a way to explore the world in different countries, including their diverse history, their colourful cultures and their natural beauty. Postage stamps have always been symbolic tools, with nations honouring their priorities through stamps. The effectiveness of stamps as tools to engage the public is demonstrated by the enduring popularity of stamp collecting, which began the year after the first stamp's usage.

Many countries have issued rhododendron stamps to showcase through stamps the importance of *Rhododendron* and, in some cases, the destruction of its habitat and the need for its habitat protection and conservation. A rhododendron stamp's visual elements of bold printing, appealing coloration, and a charismatic flower can inspire positive responses, even by people who see it without buying it. Postage stamps and philatelic products can thus be both a powerful conservation

and advocacy tool, as they circulate widely in the world to create awareness of elements depicted among other people, and especially children. This increased awareness can help protect and conserve species' habitats from destruction for the benefit of future generations.

The genus *Rhododendron* ("rhodo" = red in Greek and "dendron" = tree) is the genus with the most species in the family *Ericaceae*, and was described by Carl Linnaeus in 1837 in "Genera Plantarum." Rhododendrons were first recorded in India by Captain Hardwick in Jammu and Kashmir (India) in 1776 where he saw *R. arboreum*. However, it was a visit by the British botanist Joseph D. Hooker to Sikkim between 1858 and 1850 that revealed the full rhododendron wealth of the region.



Global Rhododendron Distribution (Source: Red List of Rhododendrons 2011)

Switzerland and Austria

Globally, the genus is now represented by about 1025 species, which are mostly concentrated in the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere, especially in the Sino-Himalayas (Eastern Himalayas and Western China, Malayasia to Papua New Guinea), and Eastern North America). Chronologically and by country, many countries have released stamps of different species of rhododendrons, with the first rhododendron stamp (unidentified) released by Switzerland in 1927, which released another stamp in 1948 of an Alpenrose (*R. ferrugineum*). Also in 1948, Austria issued two stamps, one of *R. ferrugineum* and the other an unidentified rhododendron. Austria later released an unidentified rhododendron stamp in 2007 and a *R. luteum* stamp in 2018.

Rhododendron stamps of Switzerland 1927 and 1949, and four Austrian stamps, two in 1948 and one each in 2007 and 2018.

Romania

In other European countries, Romania has issued stamps depicting different species of rhododendron in different years: in 1952 *R. hirsutum*, in 1974 *R. kotschyi,* in 1995 *R. indicum* and in 2016 *R. japonicum.*

Romanian rhododendron stamps from 1952 to 2016.

Belgium

Belgium released two different unidentified rhododendron stamps in 1960, *R. simsii* in 1995 and a sticker stamp in 1997.

Belgian rhododendron stamps from 1960, 1995, and 1997.

Germany, Bulgaria, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Poland, Bosnia

Other releases were from Germany, *R. simsii* and two unidentified rhododendrons in 1966, and an unidentified rhododendron in 1975 on a Christmas stamp; an unidentified rhododendron from Bulgaria in 1960 and *R. ponticum* in 2006; *R. impetitum* from Denmark in 1973; *R. ferrugineum* from Yugoslavia in 1970; stamps of *R. japonicum* and *R. flavum* [= *R. luteum*] from Poland in 1973; *and R. hirsutum* from Bosnia in 2010.

Rhododendron stamps from Germany, Bulgaria, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Bosnia.

Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, Italy, Lichtenstein, Monaco

Other rhododendron stamps issued by European countries are: an unidentified rhododendron and *R. kotschyi* from Russia in 1977 and 1981 respectively, *R. lapponicum* and *R. simsii* from Sweden in 1987 and 1990 respectively, along with a Swedish stamp book (year unknown), *R. myrtifolium* from Ukraine in 2018, *R. cornisha* (unrecognised species name) from Italy in 1983, *R. hirsutum* from Liechtenstein in 2011, and an unidentified rhododendron from Monaco in 1996.

Rhododendron stamps from Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, Italy, Liechtenstein and Monaco, and a stamp book from Sweden.

United Kingdom, France, Belarus

The Royal UK mail in 1987 released a stamp book with motifs of a rhododendron on its cover ('Elizabeth'), France released a 1993 miniature sheet (has more than one stamp) showing an unidentified rhododendron and rhododendron flowering plants in a Parisian park, and Belarus issued both an "Academic Smolsky" stamp and an unidentified rhododendron in 2002, and a stamp book and maximum card. A maximum card (also known as a maxi-card, or maxicard) is a postcard with a postage stamp placed on the picture side of the card where the stamp and card match or are in maximum concordance (similarity). The cancellation or postmark is usually related to the image on the front of the card and the stamp.

Rhododendron on a 1987 stamp book from the UK and a rhododendron MS (miniature sheet) from France.

A Belarus maximum card with a stamp, stamp book with rhododendron stamps and a stamp.

Andorra

Andorra had a 1970 stamp of *R. ferrugineum* affixed on a maximum card.

Andorran maximum card with a rhododendron stamp and its pictorial cancellation.

Other European Stamps

Stamps of different rhododendrons with a barcode were also released by Germany's Biber post, and other countries have issued stamps (5) of rhododendrons. These include rhododendron stamps from Scotland, an unidentified rhododendron, one a perf (perforation stamps are separated by holes) and one imperf (imperforation stamps have no perforations as they have not been punched and have been cut by a sharp blade or scissors) of R. *javanicum* from Staffa Island, and a perf stamp from Bernera Island in 1982.

Both Greece and Hungary released stamps under an "Arboreta and Botanic Gardens" series on the occasion of the 9th European Botanical Gardens conference in 2002. Slovenia released one in 2016, and Georgia released one of *R. caucasicum* in 2005.

Rhododendron stamps from Germany's Biber post (year unknown), and from Scotland's Staffa Island and Bernera Island in 1982, Georgia 2005, Greece 2002, Slovenia 2016 and Hungary 2002.

Asia: Indo-Burma, South-central China

In Asia, Indo-Burma and South-central China are considered biodiversity hotspots, areas of high animal and plant diversity, and native to this region are many species of *Rhododendron*. China released its first rhododendron stamp, of *R. dauricum* in 1978, and in 1991 it released a set of eight stamps of different species: *R. molle*, *R. delavayi*, *R. simsii*, *R. fictolacteum*, *R. giganteum*, *R. fortunei*, *R. rex* and *R. agglutinatum*. China also released a maximum card of rhododendrons stamps with a horse image on attached stamps and a maximum card of *R. delavayi.*

China's first rhododendron stamp in 1978, and eight Chinese stamps released in 1991.



Chinese rhododendrons along with a 1991 miniature sheet (MS) with horse stamps and a maximum card. Stamps from Macau (1953), Taiwan (1997) and Hong Kong (2021).

Macau, Hong Kong, Nepal, India, Bhutan

Macau issued a stamp of *R. dauricum* in 1953, Taiwan of *R. mucronatum* in 1997, and Hong Kong of an unidentified rhododendron in 2021.

Nepal issued a 1969 stamp of an unidentified rhododendron, a 1989 stamp of its king and an unidentified rhododendron and four 2016 rhododendron stamps: *R. ciliatum, R. fulgens, R. glaucophyllum* and *R. dalhousiae*. India issued unidentified rhododendron stamps in 1977 and in 2013.

Nepalese 1969 and 1989 stamps and 2016 FDC (First Day Cover) with rhododendron stamps.

Indian rhododendron stamps of 1977 and 2013.

Different rhododendron species stamps have been released by Bhutan, with a miniature sheet in 1994 and with the first three stamps of rhododendron in 1965. Two more were released in 1967, another nine in 1976, two in 1994, one in 2014, and two in 2000, for a total of 19 rhododendron stamps.

1965 and 1967 Bhutan stamps

1976 Bhutan stamps

A miniature sheet and stamps from Bhutan in 1994, 2000 and 2014.

Butan's 2000 miniature sheet of stamps.

In 2000, another six Bhutanese stamps were released in a sheet: *R. niveum, R. arboreum, R. dalhousiae, R. glaucophyllum, R. barbatum,* and *R. grande.*

Malaysian stamps from 1979, 1983 and four stamps from 2005.

Malayasia

Malaysia released beautiful stamps of different rhododendrons: in 1979 an unidentified rhododendron, in 1983 *R. scortechinii* and in 2005, *R. stenophyllum, R. nervolosum, R. rugosum,* and *R. stapfianum.*

To create awareness for protection of biodiversity, Malaysia celebrated stamp week from October 9-15, 2000, with the release of a set of fourteen stamps of different vireya rhododendron species: *R. crassifolium, R. longiflorum, R. javanicum, R. variolosum, R. acuminatum, R. praetervisum, R. himantodes, R. maxwellii, R. erocoides, R. fallacinum, R. brookeanum, R. jasminiflorum, R. scortechinii,* and *R. pauciflorum.* There were also first day covers, one with eight stamps and another with four stamps, with pictorial stamp cancellations and a rhododendron flower cachet. A miniature sheet of *R. malayanum* was released in 2000 and of *R. lowii* in 2005.

Malaysian 2000 vireya rhododendron stamps.

First day covers of Malaysia 2000 stamps with a pictorial cancellation of the stamps, and a rhododendron flower cachet.

Malaysia rhododendron miniature sheets in 2000 and 2005.

Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Turkey

Mongolia issued an odd shaped triangular stamp of *R. dauricum* in 1973 and a stamp in 2018, and Sri Lanka released stamps of *R. zeylanicum* in 2018 and an unidentified rhododendron in 1976 and 2019 respectively. A 2004 stamp from Indonesia had the vireya *R. orbiculatum*, and in 1964 a of an unidentified rhododendron stamp from from Lebanon was released. Ras Al Khaimah [Ras Al Khaimah is the largest city and capital of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates] released an unidentified rhododendron stamp in 1972, and Turkey had a stamp of *R. ponticum* in 2018. Thailand released two stamps, 1990 (*R. arboreum*) and 1994 (*R. simsii*).

Mongolian rhododendron stamps of 1973 of 2018, and Sri Lankan stamps from 1976 and 2019.

Rhododendron stamps from Indonesia 2004, Lebanon 1964, Thailand 1990 and 1994, Ras Al Khaimah 1972 and Turkey 2018.

Vietnamese 1995 and 2009 rhododendron stamps.

Vietnam

Vietnam issued a set of six stamps in 1995: *R. fleuryi, R. sulphareum* [= *R. sulfureum*], *R. sinofalconeri, R. lyi, R. ovatum,* and *R. tanastylum;* and three stamps in 2009 of *R. fortunei, R. simsii*, and unidentified rhododendron.

Japan

Many rhododendron stamps have been issued by Japan over time. Japan released stamps from 1969 till 2014 that depicted the natural growing areas of rhododendrons in different parts of Japan, and one in Switzerland. The areas shown with rhododendrons on stamps are: Mt. Gomadan and Rhododendron (Koya-Ryujin Quasi National Park) in 1969; Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta* fario) and the Japanese azalea (*R. japonicum*) in 1998; 2001 National Reforestation Campaign Mt. Mizugaki and rhododendron; Lake Biwa, Biwa Masu Trout and rhododendron in 2001; Gunma-Azuma rhododendrons and the Tanigawa Mountain range in 2002; *Jōmon* Sugi Tree in Kagoshikma Prefecture and rhododendron in 2013, and *R. ferrugineum* blooming near Fluhalp Lodge (Zermatt, Switzerland)) in 2014.

Japanese stamps of 1969, 1998, 2001 (two stamps), 2002, 2013, and 2014.

Japan has further showcased its rhododendrons on stamps: in 1985 *R. aureum,* 1987 unidentified rhododendron, 1990 *R. fukushima* [= *R. brachycarpum*], 1990 unidentified rhododendron, 1994 *R. fauriei* var. *nemotoanum* [= *R. brachycarpum*], and in both 2005 and 2006 unidentified rhododendrons.

Japanese stamps from 1985, 1987, 1990 (two stamps), 1994, 2005 and 2006.

Rhododendrons stamps from different prefectures were issued by Japan in different years: in 2008 two stamps from Fukushima Prefecture, in 2009 two stamps from Tochigi Prefecture, in 2009 two stamps from Shiga Prefecture, and one stamp in 2011 from Shizuoka Prefecture.

Japanese stamps from different prefectures, 2008-2011.

Japan has also issued rhododendron species stamps in different years: stamps of *R. kiusianum* and an unidentified rhododendron in 2011; *R. molle* subsp. *japonicum* in 2013; *R. japonoheptamerum isahaya* [= *R. degronianum subsp. heptamerum*], *R. kiusianum unzen*, and *R. viscosum* in 2014; *R. dauricum* and *R. hymenanthes* [= *R. degronianum* subsp. *heptamerum*] in 2018; and an unidentified rhododendron in 2022.

Rhododendron stamps of Japan in 2011 (two), 2013, 2014 (three), 2018 (two) and 2022.

South Korea

South Korean stamps are: an unidentified rhododendron in 1965, two stamps in 1975 of unidentified rhododendrons, one unidentified rhododendron stamp in 1989 and *R. aureum* in 2001.

South Korean stamps in 1965, 1975 (two), 1989 and 2001.

North Korea

North Korean stamps are: 1960 *R. schlippenbachii*, 1966 *R. chrysanthum, 1974 R. redowskianum,* and 1991 unidentified rhododendron.

North Korean rhododendron stamps 1960, 1966, 1974, and 1991.

Other North Korean stamps after were in 1975, six different stamps of unidentified rhododendrons, *R. mucronulatum* in 1992 and in 2001 *R. yedoense*. Releases were also of a miniature sheet of *R. mucronulatum* in 2010 and a maximum sheet of Moron Hill depicting rhododendrons in 2008.

North Korean rhododendron stamps: 1975 (6), and one each in 2001 and 1992.

North Korean miniature sheet releases in 2010 and 2008.

The Americas

Grenada, St. Martin, Guyana

In the Caribbean, unidentified rhododendrons were on two stamps of Grenada in 2003, *R. arboreum* on a St. Martin stamp in 2011 and *R. ponticum* on a Guyana stamp in 2014.

Stamps of 2003 Grenada (2), 2011 St. Martin, and 2014 Guyana.

Surinam, Netherland Antilles

Surinam issued an miniature sheet of two unidentified rhododendrons in 2011 and the Netherland Antilles one in 2010.

Surinam 2011 miniature sheet and the Netherland Antilles 2010 stamp.

Canada, USA

From North America, Canada released stamps and a MS of *R.* [*degronianum* subsp.] *yakushimanum* 'Mist Maiden' and 'Minas Maid' in 2009. The USA issued a rhododendron image stamp in 1953 and two unidentified rhododendron stamps in 1982.

Canadian 2009 miniature sheet.

A 1953 USA stamp, and 1982 covers with rhododendron images and rhododendron stamps.

A 1940 American postal envelope from Olympia, Washington, showed a painting of rhododendron (western variety) cachet.

Two post cards depicted rhododendrons, one from the state of West Virginia (its state flower) and one of rhododendron at British Columbia's parliament buildings in Victoria, Canada.

Post cards from West Virginia, USA, and British Columbia, Canada.

Oceania

Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Micronesia, Marshall Islands

Australia issued a stamp of 'Midnight' in 1978, New Zealand of 'Charisma' in 2004, Tuvalu an unidentified rhododendron in 2003, Papua New Guinea an

Rhododendron stamps from Australia 1978, New Zealand 2004, Tuvalu 2003, Papua New Guinea 1966 (3) and Micronesia 2004 (2).

unidentified rhododendron in 1989 and *R. macgregoriae* and *R. konori* in 1966 and from Micronesia, two unidentified rhododendrons in 2004 under its "Flowers of Pacific series."

1989 Papua New Guinea FDC (First Day Cover) with four stamps.

Previously in 1989, Papua New Guinea issued four stamps, *R. zoelleri, R. cruttwellii, R. superbum, R. christianae,* and an unidentified rhododendron in 1989, and the Marshall Islands released a miniature sheet of nine unidentified rhododendrons.

Marshall Islands 1992 MS.

Africa

Sierra Leone, Uganda

Some African countries have also released rhododendron stamps. In 1991, Sierra Leone under its "Botanical Gardens of the World" series released "Munich Botanical Garden" and an unidentified rhododendron. In 2002 it issued the "Flowers of Sierra Leone" series with *R. nudiflorum* [= *R. periclymenoides*] on a miniature sheet, in 1995 an unidentified rhododendron stamp, and in 1988 under the "Explore Animals of China" series an unidentified rhododendron along with animals on a MS. Uganda released a *R. luteum* stamp in 1998.

Rhododendron stamps from Sierra Leone in 1988, 1991, 1995, and 2002, and from Uganda in 1998.

Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Republic Central Africa, Nederland Guinea, China

Equatorial Guinea released four rhododendron stamps in 1979: *R. smirnowii, R. catawbiense, R. yedoense,* and *R. schlippenbachii*; and Liberia released an unidentified stamp in 1973 and in the series "Flowers of World Mountains", *R. thomsonii* miniature sheet in 1999. *R. rustica* [unknown species] was depicted on a Republic Central Africa stamp in 2021 and a unidentified rhododendron on a Nederland Guinea stamp in 1959.

Stamps from Equatorial Guinea in 1979 (four), Liberia in 1973 and 1999, Republic Central Africa in 2021 and Nederland Guinea in 1959.

Rhododendron pollinators: Different species of rhododendrons display flowers of different shapes and sizes to attract certain pollinators, which transfer pollen grains in exchange for nectar. Birds, bumblebees and butterflies are the three dominant pollinators of rhododendrons. Rhododendron pollinator stamps were released by China, unidentified rhododendron and butterfly; 2018 Guinea Bissau, *R. ponticum* with butterfly (*Apatura iris,* the purple emperor); 2013 Burundi, *R. maximum* with honey bee (*Apis mellifera*); and 1999 Guyana, *R. nudiflorum* [= *R. periclymenoides*] with bee hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*).

Rhododendron pollinators: China, 2018 Guinea Bissau, 2013 Burundi, and 1999 Guyana.

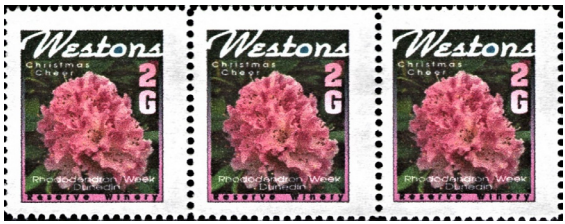
Rhododendron as Bonsai: Bonsai is the Japanese art of growing and creating "miniature trees" in pots that mimic the shapes of real trees. Satsuki rhododendron (*R. indicum*) and Kurume rhododendron (*R. kiusianum* and *R. kaempferi*) are commonly used to create bonsai. Rhododendron bonsais have been depicted on stamps of Angola 2000 *R. obtusum,* USA 2012 unidentified rhododendron (Azalea), 2019 North Korea *R. indicum,* and the Maldives 1991 *R. indicum* (Satsuki azalea).

Rhododendron Bonsai stamps of Angola 2000, North Korea 2019, Maldives 1991, and the USA 2012.

Rhododendron Festivals: To create awareness for protection and conservation of *Rhododendron*, some countries of the world celebrate a rhododendron festival. Some of the rhododendron festival cards and stamps released by organisers are: 1937 unidentified rhododendron from Washington State Rhododendron Festival USA, 1945 unidentified rhododendron from National Wildlife Federation, 1982 Australian unidentified rhododendron from the 30th anniversary of the Black Heath Rhododendron Festival (stamp and rhododendron cachet on the cover), and the New Zealand 1995 Wine Post Rhododendron Festival (strip of three stamps).

Portugal and Uganda have released stamps to support conservation, particularly

Rhododendron Festival, cards and stamps: 1937 Washington State Rhododendron Festival stamp USA; 1945 National Wildlife Federation Rhododendron stamp, Washington, DC, USA; Australia 30th anniversary of Rhododendron Festival Blackheath 1982.



New Zealand 1995 Wine Post Rhododendron Festival strip of stamps.

of rhododendrons. Portugal 1970 has depicted *R. ponticum* especia prottege (protected species) under "The Europe Conservation of Nature", and Uganda in 1991 released a MS of *R. thomsonii* under the series "Famous and historical plant collections at the Kew Royal Botanical Garden's Rare and Endangered Species."

Rhododendron conservation stamps of Portugal 1970 and Uganda 1991.

In summary, 65 countries have released 253 stamps depicting 88 species of *Rhododendron* from the 1920s to 2020s. Japan released the maximum number of rhododendron stamps (30), followed by Bhutan (24), Malaysia (22), China (13), North Korea (15), Vietnam and the Marshall Islands 9 each, Micronesia (7) and Nepal (6). Switzerland released the first stamp of rhododendron in 1927. Many countries have only released rhododendron stamps from the 1960s onwards. *R. simsii* is the most commonly depicted species, being depicted on stamps of Belgium, Germany, Sweden, China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Bulgaria, Turkey, Guyana, Guinea Bissau and Portugal have released stamps of *R. ponticum,* and *R. hirsutum* has been on stamps of Romania, Bosnia and Liechtenstein.

M. Lokeswara Rao is the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force (Retd) in India.

Table 1: Rhododendron stamps released by different countries over the last 100 years.

Country	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s	Total
Andorra						1						**1**
Angola									1			**1**
Austria			2						1	1		**4**
Australia						1	1					**2**
Belgium					2			2				**4**
Belarus									2			**2**
Bhutan					5	9		2	7	1		**24**
Bosnia										1		**1**
Bulgaria					1				1			**2**
Burundi										1		**1**
Canada									2			**2**
China				1		1		11				**13**
Denmark (1, year unknown)												**1**
Equatorial Guinea						4						**4**
France								1				**1**
Georgia									1			**1**
Germany **(5, years unknown)**					2	1						**8**
Greece					2				1			**3**
Grenada									2			**2**
Guinea Bissau										1		**1**
Guyana								1		1		**2**
Hungary											1	**1**
India						1				1		**2**
Indonesia									1			**1**
Japan					1		3	3	11	11	1	**30**
Italy							1					**1**
Lebanon					1							**1**
Liberia						1		1				**2**
Liechtenstein										1		**1**
Maldives								1				**1**
Micronesia					1		4		2			**7**
Malaysia						1	1		22			**24**
Marshall Islands								9				**9**
Monaco								1				**1**
Mongolia						1				1		**2**
Nepal					1		1			4		**6**
North Korea					2	7		2	2	2		**15**
Nederland Guinea				1								**1**
Nederland Antillen										1		**1**
New Zealand									1			**1**
Papua New Guinea					2		5					**7**
Poland						2						**2**
Portugal						1						**1**
Ras Al Khaima										1		**1**
Republic of Central Africa						1						**1**
Romania				1		1		1		1		**4**
Russia						1	1					**2**

Table 1 continued on next page

Country	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s	Total
Scotland, Bernera and Staffa Islands							3					**3**
Sierra Leona							1	2	1			**4**
Slovenia										1		**1**
South Korea					1	2	1		1			**5**
Sri Lanka						1				1		**2**
St Marten									1			**1**
Surinam									1			**1**
Switzerland	1		1									**2**
Sweden (1, year unknown)							1	1				**2**
Thailand (1, year unknown)								2				**3**
Turkey										1		**1**
Tuvalu									1			**1**
UK							1(stamp book)					**1**
Ukraine											1	**1**
Uganda								2				**2**
USA		1	1	1			2		1	1		**7**
Vietnam								6	3			**9**
Yugoslavia						1						**1**
Total (8, years unknown)	1	1	4	4	21	38	26	48	66	33	3	**253**

Table 2 Rhododendron species on stamps released by different countries.

R. acuminatum	*R. longiflorum*
R. agglutinatum	*R. lowii*
R. arboreum	*R. luteum*
R. aureum	*R. lyi*
R. barbatum	*R. macgregoriae*
R. brookeanum	*R. malayanum*
R. catawbiense	*R. maximum*
R. caucasicum	
R. christianae	*R. maxwellii*
R. chrysanthum	*R. molle* subsp *japonicum*
R. ciliatum	*R. molle*
R. cornisha (unrecognised)	*R. mucronatum*
R. crassifolium	*R. mucronulatum*
R. cruttwellii	*R. myrtifolium*
R. dalhousiae	*R. nervolosum*
R. dauricum	*R. niveum*
R. degronianum subsp. *yakushimanum*	*R. nudiflorun* [= *R. periclymenoides*]
R. delavayi	*R. obtusum*

Table 2 continued on next page

R. erocoides	*R. orbiculatum*
R. fallacinum	*R. ovatum*
R. fauriei var. *nemotoanum* [= *R. brachycarpum*]	*R. pauciflorum*
R. ferrugineum	*R. ponticum*
R. fictolacteum,	*R. praetervisum*
R. flavum [= *R. luteum*]	*R. redowskianum*
R. fleuryi	*R. rex*
R. fortune	*R. rugosum*
R. fukushima [= *R. brachycarpum*]	*R. rustica* (unrecognised)
R. fulgens	*R. schlippenbachii*
R. giganteum,	*R. scortechinii*
R. glaucophyllum	*R. simsii*
	R. sinofalconeri
R. grande	*R. smirnowii*
R. himantodes	*R. stapfianum*
R. hirsutum	*R. stenophyllum*
R. hymenanthes [= *R. degronianum* subsp. *heptamerum*]	*R. sulphareum* [= *R. sulfureum*]
R. impetitum	*R. superbum*
R. indicum	*R. tanastylum*
R. japonicum	*R. thomsonii*
R. japonoheptamerum isahaya [= *R. degronianum* subsp. *heptamerum*]	*R. variolosum*
R. jasminiflorum	*R. viscosum*
R. javanicum	*R. yedoense*
R. kiusianum	*R. zeylanicum*
R. kiusianum unzen	*R. zoelleri*
R. konori	unidentified rhododendron
R. kotschyi	
R. lapponicum	