

"Pink H in H". Alas, the tag was not attached to a plant when we found it. Only recently did we learn that "Gable" is a group of hybrids and not some potentially priceless cultivar wasting away in a tangle of ivy.

We may have an example of the elusive Glenn Dale 'Luna', a rarity recently found by Richard West in the Ten Oaks Nursery (see **THE AZALEAN** 15 No. 1 (1993): 12-16), but we don't know for sure.

When we mentioned Morrison's name to one of Armstrong's sons, who paid a surprise visit recently, he waved his arm across our half-acre and said, "Yeah, this is all his stock". Blockhead that I am, I didn't follow-up and ask, "What exactly do you mean by that?" So we don't know, yet. What we don't know could fill this garden, and has.

In a moment of panic a few months after we arrived, I posted a note on a computer bulletin board under the heading "Azalea Jungle", hoping for some guidance on how much pruning some of my ancient giants could withstand. By a lucky accident, my electronic message caught the eye of ASA member Nancy Swell of Richmond, VA. Nancy put me in touch with Bill Miller of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, who was then the Society's Vice President and co-chairman of the Membership Committee. After adroitly recruiting me to join the chapter, Bill suggested an article such as this to inform **THE AZALEAN** readers about the fate of the Armstrong garden.

I can report that the state of the Armstrong garden is improving slowly. The property consisted of three adjacent lots in Armstrong's time. One is not ours, and is losing a battle with pokeweed and honeysuckle. Our side, two of Armstrong's original three lots, is gradually revealing its secrets.

*William Poling is a journalist by profession. His new "hobby" was brought about by circumstance when he bought his current house. □*

## The Origin and Children of "Kermesina"

Tijs Huisman  
*The Netherlands*

Just by accident (?) I turned over the leaves of my "Azalea-bible"—as I call the book by Fred C. Galle.<sup>1</sup> On page 180 I read about 'Kermesina': "(old variety in Boskoop, parentage unknown): strong purplish red; very hardy. Also listed as a *R. kiusianum*."

Who am I to doubt what Mr. Galle writes? But this made me curious, and I looked at the beautiful book of Mr. Schmalscheidt.<sup>2</sup> He tells something different, as I will describe below.

"Kermesina" is probably a hybrid of Georg Arends. Mr. Ernst Stöckmann, who owns a nursery in Bad Zwischenahn-Rostrup told the following story:

About 1955 he bought a collection of evergreen azaleas from a garden-architect, Mr. Hermann Brumund in Oldenburg, who had laid out some beautiful gardens. He had also a garden-area in Blohenfelde, a part of Oldenburg. This Mr. Brumund had worked as garden help at the nursery of Mr. Arends and had taken these azaleas from his nursery. He called them "Kermesina rosea". When he got older (he died rather young) he asked Mr. Stöckmann to take over these about 100 Kermesinas.

And if this Mr. Stöckmann tells the truth, this must be the right story. Nevertheless it is still uncertain, what the parents of this azalea are.

After the introduction of 'Kermesina', many hybridizers made crosses with it as father or mother. Hans Hachmann for instance has had some fine results:

'Granada' = 'Rubinstern' x ('Red Pimpernel' x 'Kermesina')

'Gabriela' = 'Muttertag' x 'Kermesina'

'Rosalind' = 'Kermesina' x 'Jeanette'

'Schneeglanz' = ditto; how is it possible? 'Rosalind' clear pink; 'Schneeglanz' pure white with a small yellow blotch.

'Rubinetta' the same cross as 'Gabriela'

'Schneewittchen' = 'Kermesina' x 'John Cairns'

Also Mr. Urban Schumacher made the cross 'Kermesina' x 'Muttertag'. The result: 'Ruhrfeuer', a clear red low growing plant.

The last cross that I know of is from Mr. Heinrich Meyer in Uchte: 'Patricia Barmold' = 'Kermesina' x 'Blue Danube'

'Kermesina' has produced also some sports. In 1972 the nurseryman August Wemken found on the plant a sport with pink flowers but now white edged—called 'Kermesina Rose'. On this sport he found in 1978 a pure white sport and he called this descendant 'Kermesina Alba'.

The last note that I found is 'Diamant Weiss'. This hybrid does not belong to the other 'Diamant' plants which are from Mr. Carl Fleischmann. This 'Diamant Weiss' is a cross between 'Kermesina' and *Rh. prinophyllum* (*Rh. roseum*) and made by Mr. Stöckmann.

All these 'Kermesina' plants are rather compact, hardy to at least -10 degrees F and have flowers between 4 and 5 cm. Flowering is late to very late.

### Reference

1. Galle, Fred C. *Azaleas*. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 1985.
2. Walter Schmalscheidt, *Rhododendron—und Azaleenzucht in Deutschland*, Verlag Heinz Hansmann, Rinteln, Germany. □