

Book Review

Donald H. Voss — Vienna, Virginia

Schmalscheidt, Walter. 2000. *Handbuch der Knap Hill-Azaleen*. Rinteln, Germany: Gartenbildverlag Heinz Hansmann. ISBN 3-928521-17-2.

This remarkable book on Knap Hill azalea hybrids has been a pleasure to examine. Available for the past two years, the book was shown—and loaned—to me by azalea savant William C. Miller III. Herr Schmalscheidt is an expert who has managed one of the largest collections of rhododendrons on the European continent, and the book reflects his experience with Knap Hill cultivars. It also draws on information provided by other experts such as Hans Hachmann and Harold E. Greer.

The term “Knap Hill” is used broadly, including not only cultivars from the Knap Hill Nursery but also Exbury, Solent, Royal Horticultural Society, Windsor, Ilam, Australian, and American introductions. Among the latter are featured introductions by Arneson, Bovees, Carlson, Beneschon Gardens, Childers, Kern, Greer, Pride, Girard, Slonecker, Bailey, S.E. Sorenson, A.W. Smith, Henny & Wennekamp, and others.

Each group is prefaced with a text section introducing the plant breeder(s) and a general characterization of the breeding program. The plant lists include 830 cultivars, detailing cultivar epithets (and synonyms in some cases), flower color, parentage, the years of origination and introduction, and descriptive notes on flower

size and growth habit. The flower-size and growth-habit data are an especially important and welcome contribution (standard references such as the Lee and Galle azalea books show only the flower color of these plants). A prime attraction of the book is its rich array of 270 magnificent color photographs of the better-known cultivars. Although the text portions and data are in German, one can navigate most of the cultivar descriptions with an understanding of a small number of terms describing color, flower parts, and growth habit (see following table).

The author introduces a section on the planting and care of Knap Hill azaleas by noting that in selecting the name “Azalea,” Linnaeus latinized a Greek word meaning dry or barren! This may have been appropriate for Linnaeus’ *Azalea procumbens* [*Loiseleuria procumbens* (L.) Desv.] growing in Lapland, but it hardly fits the habitat requirements of other azaleas. Schmalscheidt describes the conditions under which the plants thrive, including recommendations for problems with drainage and pH. Topics from soil preparation to disease control are covered in turn. The pesticides mentioned are, of course, those available in Germany.

A caveat is in order: the reader must understand that while I have been thoroughly impressed by this book, I am not an expert on the deciduous azalea hybrids. That said, it is hard to imagine anyone with a serious inter-

est in this group of hybrids being disappointed with the book.

To assist the reader in exploiting the data provided in the plant lists, the English equivalents of certain terms are provided in the accompanying table. Relying on my high-school German teacher’s dictum (English comes from German), one can make out a fair amount of information. Some of the terms may look strange—and some are. Thus, in the description of Exbury ‘Amber Rain’, we find the color “hahnenfussgelb”: rooster’s-foot yellow? No, this is but-tercup yellow!

“Züchter” is a plant breeder. “Jahr der Entstehung [entstanden]” refers to year of origination; “oder Einführung [eingeführt],” year of introduction. “Abstammung” is parentage; “unbekannt” is unknown; and “benannt” is named. Some terms encountered in the columns for “Blütenfarbe” (flower color), and “Bemerkungen” (comments) are listed in the table under the headings “Color Terms” and “Plant Description.”

Donald H. Voss is an economist by training, and an active gardener with a scholarly interest in azaleas and rhododendrons. He is an expert on the azaleas of Robert Gartrell (Robin Hill hybrids) and is a former chairman of the Society’s Board of Directors and former keeper of the Society’s database. Don currently volunteers at the herbarium of the US National Arboretum.

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Table 1.
German-English Equivalents

Color Terms—Hues

aprikosenfarben—apricot color
 cremefarbenweiss—creamy white
 gelb—yellow
 karminrot—carmine red
 lachsrosa—salmon pink
 lila—mauve, purple
 mauverosa—mauve pink
 orangeroth—orange red
 orange-zinnober—orange vermilion
 orange—orange
 orangegelb—orange yellow
 purpur—crimson
 purpurrosa—purplish pink
 rot—red
 rosarot—deep pink
 rosa—pink
 scharlachrot—scarlet
 schwefelgelb—sulfur yellow
 weiss—white
 ziegelrot—brick red
 zinnoberrot—vermilion
 zitronengelb—lemon yellow

Color Terms—Modifiers

blass—pale
 bunt—bright
 dunkel—dark
 feurig—fiery
 hell—light
 intensiv—intense, vivid
 kräftig—strong
 leuchtend—brilliant
 rein—pure
 schwach—weak
 verblassen [in der Sonne]—faded [in sunlight]

Plant Descriptions—Plant Parts

O overstruck /—symbol for diameter
 laub [belaubung]—leaf (foliage)
 in Austrieb—emerging
 im Herbst—in autumn
 blüten—flower
 blütenstand—inflorescence
 einzelblüte—individual flower, floret
 blütenblatt—petal
 oberen—upper
 unteren—lower
 blütenaussenseite—outside of corolla

blüteninnenseite—inside of corolla

blütensaum—edge of corolla
 gefranst—fringed
 gekrauselt—ruffled
 blütenabschnitt—flower segment, sector
 blütenrohre—corolla tube
 duften—emit fragrance
 fleck—spot, patch
 knospe—bud
 kugelig—ball-shaped
 schlund—throat of flower
 vollaufgeblüht—in full bloom, fully open

Plant Descriptions—Habit

aufrecht—upright, fastigiate
 breit—wide
 breit aufrecht—broadly upright
 buschig—bushy
 geschlossen—dense
 im alter—in age, at maturity
 rund, rundlich—round, rounded
 stark—strong
 Wuchs—growth

Mastering Azaleas

Part 1: Don't Plant That Azalea in That Hole

Joseph Schild, Jr. — Hixson, Tennessee

When my wife and I purchased our new home in November 1966, the landscape was a pitiful excuse of one columnar juniper at each end, three January Jasmine, three *Ilex crenata* 'Rotunda', and one holly of unknown background. To call our lawn turf would have been an insult to grass, for it was hit-or-miss 'Kentucky 31 Tall Fescue', something even a goat will not eat.

I wanted something with some color and shrubs I could be proud of so I began looking at a number of

homes in the area, and I noticed azaleas in bloom the spring of 1967. That was what I wanted, with all the bright colors and nice shrub habit.

After talking with several co-workers, one suggested Perry Nursery on Signal Mountain as a source of azaleas. My first visit to Scotty Perry's nursery was rewarding, and I later developed a gardening relationship with him. I purchased a number of one-gallon azaleas: two 'Hinodegiri', two 'Christmas Cheer', two 'Coral Bells', two 'Fashion', and two 'Snow'.

On my return home I purchased a bale of peat moss.

The story takes a sorry turn here, for the one thing I did not get from Scotty was the proper method of planting my new azaleas. I dug nice holes in the sticky, yellow clay, sat the azaleas in the holes, promptly back-filled with a mixture of peat moss and woodland soil, and then watered them in until the excess water ran out.

I did have enough gardening knowledge to understand that newly plant-