

PLANT PROPAGATORS' QUESTION BOX¹

FRANK WILLARD: Can I have comments from members on the quality of hardy hybrid rhododendrons when grown on their own roots? I understand that a well-known Dutch nursery has given up growing varieties of the 'Pink Pearl' type from cuttings because, though they root satisfactorily, they do not ball-up as well as grafted plants.

JIM WELLS: In the USA I gave up grafting on *R. ponticum* because of wilt disease. I would never go back to grafting. If a variety will not root from cuttings then we do not grow it. A few varieties do not produce satisfactory root systems.

A QUESTIONNER: Does *R. ponticum* rootstock produce a plant tolerant of a wide range of soil pH levels?

JIM WELLS: I do not think so.

BRIAN HUMPHREY: There is a tendency for varieties on their own roots to be less tolerant of poor drainage. Otherwise there are no ill effects as far as we can tell.

We find that quick-dip alone gives as good a result as wounding plus the use of hormone powder. If we get much callus forming we consider this to mean we have used too low a hormone concentration.

We use four strengths of IBA on rhododendrons: —

- (i) 0.25 gm IBA dissolved in 100 ml of 50% methylated spirits, for *R. cinnabarinum*, *R. griersonianum* and its hybrid progeny such as 'Elizabeth' and 'May Day'.
- (ii) 0.5 gm IBA similarly dissolved. For certain of the hardy hybrids such as 'Alice,' and *R. x morelianum* Fatuosum Flore Pleno.
- (iii) 1 gm IBA similarly dissolved for 'Pink Pearl', 'Hugh Koster' and 'Doncaster'.
- (iv) 2 gm IBA dissolved in 100 ml of 60% methylated spirits, the extra strength being necessary to keep the IBA crystals in solution. This is used for a variety like 'Britannia'.

FRANK WILLARD: Has anybody succeeded in rooting *Hydrangea petiolaris* from cuttings?

A. P. D. McMILLAN-BROWSE: It is not difficult to root the soft tips early in the season made into cuttings about 3 inches long. The difficulty lies in getting these rooted cuttings to grow.

¹Editor's note. An appreciable proportion of the time allocated to the "Question Box" was spent on discussion and questions concerning papers given earlier in the Conference and for which there was no time available for the purpose. For the convenience of readers this information has been included at the end of the appropriate papers.

S. W. BOND: These plants develop easily from layers. Lay the shoots on a sandy soil in the open.

A QUESTIONNER: Any ideas, please, on the best method of propagating *Carpenteria californica*?

D. KNUCKEY: Cuttings will root easily enough early in the year in pure sand.

A QUESTIONNER: How can you get *Ceanothus impressus* to root and develop without decay?

JOHN GAGGINI: Cuttings with trimmed heels rooted in sharp sand under mist in August. Pot on after rooting and leave under glass over winter.

A QUESTIONNER: Any recommendations for *Azalea* 'Exbury hybrids'.

D. KNUCKEY: It is advisable to grow the stock plants under glass. We take cuttings in June and use 1% Rhizopon A.