

Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group

Registered Charity number 1161254

ANNUAL REPORT OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 2025

CONSTITUTION

The Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group (the Group) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is a partner group of the Royal Horticultural Society. It is independent of the RHS but the Partnership Agreement encourages close cooperation between the two charities. The Constitution and Rules which govern the Group are published on the Group's website <http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/information/constitution>

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Group is to advance the education of the public in the plant genera rhododendron, camellia and magnolia and in the conservation and protection thereof by, but not by way of limitation:

- a) ensuring continuity in the care of collections of the genera in public gardens by supporting professional gardeners and taxonomists through travel sponsorship and other appropriate means
- b) operating a website
- c) organising shows
- d) producing literature
- e) acting as an advisor by providing assistance in identification, conservation and reproduction of unusual or rare species or cultivars.

Having regard to the Group's aims and objectives, the Trustees believe these meet the public benefit requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

TRUSTEES AND MANAGEMENT

The charity trustees manage the affairs of the Group and may for that purpose exercise all its powers. The Trustees may delegate their powers and functions to the Management Committee. At least one Trustee must be present at any Management Committee Meeting.

The Trustees are required to provide an Annual Report and independently examined accounts to the Charity Commission every year.

The Trustees who served during the year were:

Barry Cooke
Dr. John Marston
Graham Mills (Chairman)
Alastair Stevenson

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2024-2025 REVIEW

Public facing events.

The normal cycle of events & shows occurred.

The AGM took place on 31st May 2025 at Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens in Sussex along with the Centenary Cup Competition.

John Marston was re-elected as a Trustee.

The following officers of the Management Committee were re-elected

Secretary: Robbie Sampson.

Treasurer: Philip Eastell.

Webmaster: Graham Mills.

Communications Officer: Mark Bobin.

Advertising Officer: Philip Eastell.

Recommended Garden scheme: Nick Butler

The following new officers of the Management Committee were elected;

Chairman: Philip Eastell.

Vice Chairs: Mark Bobin and Sian Thomas.

Plant Committee Chairman: Jack Aldridge.

Event co-ordinator: Alan Robertson.

Archivist: Vacancy.

Video Editor: Laura Williamson.

Yearbook Editor: Vacancy

Bulletin Editor: Vacancy

Our Management Committee meetings continued to be held using Zoom. Day to day running of the Group falls on the hard work and dedication of a decreasingly small number of volunteers.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Bursaries

Bursaries are offered to applicants based in the UK who wish to study our three genera in order to further their knowledge or pursue a more scientific goal and publish their conclusions for the benefit of the RCMG.

The Bursary Committee members were:

John Marston (Chair) Mark Bobin, Thomas Clarke and Rama Lopez-Rivera

Bursaries were awarded as follows;

1. Ned Lomax – £500 funding support was requested towards his trip to Sichuan to observe flora in its natural habitat and to gain further knowledge of their cultural needs.
2. Aurora Prehn – £500 to support a trip to Northern Ireland to further her studies for her doctorate on tea growing in the UK
3. Rama Lopez-Rivera - £500 towards a trip to Taiwan to study very rarely visited habitats of *Rhododendron pseudochrysanthum* and *Rhododendron pachysanthum*.
4. Martin Ammann - £500 towards a trip to Nepal

The Plant Committee

a) November 2024 – end of May 2025

Over the period of the year for which Pam Hayward was Chairman of the Plant Committee, work continued apace to enhance our Group Collections with additional taxa as they were identified and became available either commercially or through our micropropagation efforts. Additions were made to Ness Botanic Gardens, Minterne and Ramster, financed through the Group's Centenary Fund and made possible through the continuing donations to this fund.

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Plant Committee members and Collection Guardians undertook the usual annual review of the Collections and reported back to the Plant Committee Chairman.

Sally Hayward continued her independent work on the Extant Plant Database during the relevant period of the year, extending her contacts and making additional connections with external associations to include more data and grow the resource still further, rendering it even more valuable. Her reports were circulated to members and posted on the Group website, ensuring that information was shared. This work enabled focussed identification of threatened taxa and a greater understanding of our extant rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias so that propagation could be targeted more effectively. In addition, these connections were further built upon when the Plant Committee gave significant identification assistance to properties held by the National Trust and English Heritage.

Regular day-to-day contact with the Group website from members of the public with a single plant query or managers of large collections, led to extensive identification work being carried out by Plant Committee members and other specialist advisors throughout the seven month period. Help to locate plants for sale was regularly given as was pest, disease or cultivational advice.

During the period, the structured demise of the Duchy Micropropagation Unit – the Group has supported for many years to its benefit – led to the paced development of a strategy to safeguard the plants in the process of propagation. This also ensured the Group's investment was still being put to its intended purpose. As micropropagated plants became available for sharing over the period, dedicated safe sites offering the chance to return for material in the future continued to receive them along with the Group's Collections previously mentioned.

The work conducted throughout this seven month period ensured the Group's reputation as a conservation-based force for good was retained and lends confidence to the assertion that its charitable objectives were being achieved.

As outgoing chairman from this period, Pam Hayward would like to express her thanks to her fellow Plant Committee members and specialist advisors without whom the seven month's achievements would have been significantly less and the work undertaken by her significantly harder.

The Group extend their heartfelt thanks to Pam for her dedication and outstanding work as Chair of the Plant Committee for many years.

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b) June 2025 – October 2025

The Group is grateful to Lucy Bidgood who stepped in to co-ordinate the work of the Plant Committee, shortly after Jack Aldridge stood down following the last AGM. We also now have a new strong plant committee, as all members of the previous Plant Committee stood down at the 2025 AGM. Further details can be found on our website. The main achievement of the Plant Committee has been to set up a Plant Propagation Working Group, which will focus on the ongoing need to support the conservation and preservation of our genera.

Yearbook and Bulletins

Pam Hayward oversaw the editing and production of the two yearbooks which were published during the Membership Year 2024-2025; the 2024 edition being delayed by unforeseen circumstances. A long-standing tradition has been maintained and this highly-regarded publication continues to thrive.

As is customary, two bulletins were published and circulated in the first seven months of the membership year, under the editorship of Dr Peter Furneaux, who had served in the role for 10 years and produced 32 editions by the time of his resignation. The Group extend their heartfelt thanks to Peter for his dedication and outstanding publications over this time.

Whilst the positions of Bulletin and Yearbook editor remain vacant, we are very grateful to Sian Thomas who has covered both these positions post AGM in June 2025, and in addition has introduced a monthly newsletter that has been warmly welcomed by the general membership.

Plant Directory

2024-2025 saw the continuation, improvement and expansion of the exemplary Plant Directory offered on the Group Website. New images were sought, descriptions refined and updated, and additional entries contributed. Many thanks to Polly and Barry Cooke for managing this major exercise so expertly; their efforts are much appreciated.

Seed List

June 2025 saw the sad demise of the Seed List, which had been a service offered to members since 1998, brought to an end when no replacement could be found for the

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retiring Seed List Convenor. The Group extends its thanks to Tim Atkinson who held the role for many years.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Group is grateful to Philip Eastell who maintains our accounts.

As of the 31st of October 2025, our total reserves stood at £42,774, a decrease on 2024 which stood at £52,746. However, this is slightly misleading, as due to the late publication of the 2024 yearbook, the associated costs for both 2024 and 2025 yearbooks are both accounted and paid for in this accounting year.

Our investment of £3,000 in the M&G Charifund had a value of £3001 on the 31st of October 2025, and had produced dividends during the year totalling £333.66

This report and the accounts will be posted on the Charity Commission website, www.charitycommission.gov.uk and at <http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org>

This year our accounts have been independently examined and approved.

APPROVAL

Approved by the Trustees on 9th May 2026 and signed on their behalf by Graham Mills.

Signed:

Graham Mills - Trustee

Date: 9th May 2026