

Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group

Registered Charity number 1161254

ANNUAL REPORT OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 2020

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 2 Trustees must be present at any Management 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

Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group

Registered Charity number 1161254

ANNUAL REPORT OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 2020

2019-2020 REVIEW

Due to the various regulations in place as a result of Covid-19 this was a very different year to normal.

We delayed the AGM in the hope that we would be able to hold it in a face-to-face format but eventually had to admit defeat so the AGM was held virtually via Skype 19th September. Graham Mills was elected as Chairman. Barry Cooke and David Millais were elected as Vice Chairmen.

Due to the Pandemic the Management Committee held all of their meetings virtually this year at approximately monthly intervals via Skype. Day to day running of the Group falls on the hard work and dedication of a small number of volunteers.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Bursaries sub-committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr John Marston made a small award to help Lee Behegan with a visit to gardens in New Zealand to investigate hybrid Rhododendrons raised in that country and attend the Rhododendron Conference. Unfortunately, due to Covid that visit was cancelled. No other awards could be made due to travel restrictions.

The Plant Committee continued to expand its various Group Collections.

During the year, the Group Collection of Cinnabarina Rhododendrons at Minterne was formally established with eleven species and hybrids initially and propagation organised for many others. Three more rhododendron hybrids were added to the Hardy Hybrid Collection at Ramster. One new camellia species was propagated for the Group Collection at Ness Botanic Garden and one more magnolia for the Amos Pickard Collection at Canterbury Cathedral. The Group's concerns about the two collections at RHS Wisley were addressed with a series of productive meetings and conversations. Appraisals took place of the other Group Collections.

The Plant Committee continued its work in developing a database of extant taxa in the three genera and began to circulate the data to its members once enough data had been collected to render it useful. Several previously unrecorded and known to be threatened hybrids were identified and sent for propagation.

Another site for micropropagation of rare species and hybrids was identified for trialling. The Group was involved in the conservation through micropropagation of a subspecies of Rhododendron ponticum unique to a threatened valley in Portugal now undergoing restoration. Once weaned and established, plants will be re-introduced.

Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group

Registered Charity number 1161254

ANNUAL REPORT OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 2020

Public facing events: The Group supported and helped to organize the RHS Early Camellia show and the South West Branch early competitions at Rosemoor on 14th March 2020. All further shows that year were cancelled.

To compensate we held a virtual Photographic Competition for the Centenary Cup which was very well received with over a thousand entries. We were particular pleased with the international entries we received that would not normally occur at face-to-face shows.

Towards the end of the year it was agreed that a re-vamp of our existing web site should be made to give it a brighter, crisper look with the capability of providing more information on the plants in our three genera. We also wanted non-technical people to be able to make upgrades. An organisation was selected and contracted to do this and work started in August and continued into the next financial year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Group is very grateful to Jenny Fly who maintains our accounts most efficiently. She has been instrumental in helping the Trustees to prepare our annual return as a charity, recovered Gift Aid on donations made, and has ensured the smooth running of all financial operations.

As at the 31st October 2020 our total reserves improved by £1693 to £52,333.

During the previous year we invested a small amount (£3,000) in the M&G Charifund in order to get some return on our funds. Unfortunately, the fund lost value as the pandemic affected markets and is now valued at £2,607. The Trustees have decided to leave the money where it is and wait for it to regain its value.

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

Member, and retired Chartered Accountant, Russell Beeson has carried out an independent examination of the Financial Statements of the Group relating to the 2019-2020 accounts as required by the Charity Commission. The Trustees are most grateful for his expert & diligent help.

Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group

Registered Charity number 1161254

ANNUAL REPORT OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 2020

APPROVAL

Approved by the Trustees on 23rd February 2021 and signed on their behalf by the Chairman, Graham Mills.

Signed:

Graham Mills

Date: 23rd February 2021