

RCMG Outstanding Gardens Scheme

Criteria

These criteria have been developed from the International Camellia Society's Gardens of Excellence scheme, with permission, and kept close to those criteria as it is likely that many gardens will wish to participate in both schemes.

These criteria should be read in conjunction with the Guide for Applicants, which gives more insight into what is expected for each of these criteria and what will be assessed.

1. The garden is well established, and the ownership and management structures are stable and perpetual as far as can be reasonably assessed.
2. The garden is open regularly to the public, especially during the flowering season. (Admission may be free, by donation or by set fee as the garden determines for its needs.)
3. The garden need not be devoted completely to Rhododendrons and/or Magnolias (as appropriate), but must feature them prominently. There must be a sufficiently broad and extensive collection, with the plants mostly well established.
 - For Rhododendrons, a minimum of 250 cultivars or species is required.
 - For Magnolias, a minimum of 50 cultivars or species is required.
4. The collection must be maintained to a high standard, in a manner suitable to the garden and its climate.
5. The garden has some method of making cultural information available to visiting members of the public.
6. The garden (or owner, or significant permanent member of staff) must be a member of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group and agree to display information about the Group, so that it is available for prospective members.
7. The garden maintains a register of its Rhododendrons and/or Magnolias and their location in the garden. This register should be accessible to visitors in some form.
8. Cultivars and species should have identifying labels, where known.
9. Non-obligatory, but desirable, features are:
 - a. A programme of propagation (using suitable methods to ensure the integrity/purity of the plants) to bring on future generations of the species/hybrids on the garden's register. This may be in-house or use external services
 - b. Research programmes on Rhododendron and/or Magnolia culture, heat or cold tolerance, pest or disease control, or other subjects adding to the overall knowledge of the genus.
 - c. Shows or displays during flowering times.
 - d. Demonstrations of good growing practices such as pruning, at appropriate times.
 - e. The stocking of Rhododendron and/or Magnolia literature for sale and/or publication of such literature by the garden itself.
 - f. Any other initiative by the garden which promotes enthusiasm for and better cultivation of Rhododendrons and/or Magnolias.