



WALK OF THE WEEK

This week it is the turn of the Loderi plants to take the spotlight. There are over forty varieties of Loderi, many to be found in this garden. They all originate from Sir Edmund Loder's breeding, in 1901, between the species 'griffithianum' and 'fortunei'. Within six years his first crosses flowered and have gone on to be regarded as some of the most important ever created.

If you would like to follow the Walk of the Week, can we suggest you take a photograph of the numbers and descriptions on this board and refer to your photo at each of the marked shrubs. They are marked with a post and numbered blue disc. Please remember that most woodland plants are poisonous to animals and humans if ingested.

1. *Rhododendron* (Loderi Group) 'Loderi Game Chick'

'Loderi Game Chick' is a large evergreen shrub with relatively large leaves and trusses of very large, funnel-shaped, richly fragrant pure white flowers, pink at the edges of the lobes, lightly blotched green in the throat with reddish spots, opening from pink buds. It was bred by Sir Edmund Loder at Leonardslee, and it is a sight to behold.

2. *Rhododendron* 'Currieanum'

This superb shrub is an old Waterer Nursery hybrid pre-1851. It was re-discovered in 2005 by the then Chairman of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Society. He thought it no longer existed. A vigorous evergreen shrub, that can reach up to 3.5m high at maturity, with an upright, branching habit and narrowly elliptic, leathery green leaves up to 15cm long. It produces rounded clusters of purple-pink flowers, with wavy edges and dense, very dark red speckles on the upper petals, from now until early summer. We are fortunate to have five of these plants in the collection.

3. *Pieris japonica* / lily-of-the-valley shrub

This is a stunning example of a slow-growing evergreen shrub 4m high, with a bushy habit and narrowly ovate, slightly toothed, glossy green leaves that are sometimes tinted copper when young. Pendant clusters of small, scented, urn-shaped white flowers are borne at the tips of the stems in spring. The flower panicles are formed in autumn, and those with red-tinged buds are attractive throughout winter.

4. *Rhododendron* (Loderi Group) 'Loderi White Diamond'

This is a fast-growing, bushy, upright evergreen shrub with long, ovate glossy dark green leaves. It has trusses of strongly fragrant rose pink flowers, fading to almost white within a few days of opening.

5. Bluebell – *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*

Enchanting and iconic, bluebells are a favourite with the fairies and a sure sign spring is in full swing. Native bluebells are unmistakable bell-shaped perennial herbs. They spend much of their time underground as bulbs, emerging, often in droves, to flower. Pointed tip leaves are narrow, around 7mm to 25mm wide and 45cm in length. Bell-shaped with six petals the flowers are violet blue in colour. These sweet-smelling flowers droop to one side of the flowering stem (known as an inflorescence). Up to 20 flowers can grow on one inflorescence. This year the bluebells are early and prolific. They thrive with an overhead canopy of beech or oak in mildly acidic soil.

6. *Rhododendron* 'Michael Waterer'

This is an old hybrid with a very compact habit and narrow mid green leaves. It has magenta red flowers in ball type trusses, It thrives in cold gardens.

7. Hybrid Azalea 'Mollis'

Extraordinarily eye catching, Rhododendron Mollis are hybrid deciduous Azaleas with lush and large clusters of flowers in striking shades of pink, yellow, orange or white. They can withstand cold temperatures. Originally developed in Belgium and Holland their leaves provide attractive colour in the autumn.

8. *Rhododendron* 'Campanulatum Pictum'

This rhododendron species is known for its bell-shaped flowers (hence 'campanulatum'), mauve-lilac in colour, with glossy leaves. These leaves have a dark fawn indumentum on the underside. It has a RHS hardiness rating H6, meaning it is hardy to temperatures of -20°C to -15°C and is native to areas in Kashmir,

Punjab, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. This hybrid was commercialised by John Waterer in 1838. Its parentage is *R. campanulatum* and *R. maximum*.

9. *Rhododendron* (Loderi Group) 'Loderi King George'

'Loderi King George' is a large evergreen shrub growing to 4m tall, with long, rather pale leaves, and richly scented, white, lily-like flowers up to 15cm wide, opening in tall trusses from bright pink buds in late spring and early summer. It is arguably the best of the Loderi group. A recipient of the prestigious Award of Garden Merit of the Royal Horticultural Society.

10. *Rhododendron* Kewense Group

Large shrubs with oblong-ovate leaves, mid-green above, hairless. Flowers in loose trusses, broadly funnel-shaped, 5-7 lobed, rich rose in bud, opening white, edged pale rose with a few greenish brown markings. These are recorded as *R. fortunei* x *R. griffithianum*, but no one is certain. It is believed that these were raised c.1875 by William Binder at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The collection at Bowood is particularly impressive.

11. *Rhododendron* 'Hummingbird'

Attractive bright cherry-red half nodding, widely bell-shaped flowers, which fade to a deep shade of rose, in a lax truss of about 4cm. Good dark rounded foliage, with a slight brown indumentum on the underside. It forms a mound shaped plant with a compact habit. It can grow to a height of 50-75cm over 10 years. Its parentage is *haematodes* (s) X *williamsianum*. It was bred by J C Williams in 1933.

12. *Rhododendron* 'Aucklandii'

The plant is a 19th-century hybrid commonly related to *Rhododendron griffithianum*. It produces large, showy, and often pink-to-white, scented flowers. This historical, large-leaved rhododendron is often considered a collector's item or heritage plant. It requires specific, sheltered, and partly shaded conditions to protect its foliage and flowers.

13. *Rhododendron* 'Russellianum'

This shrub grows from 2-10 metres in height, with leathery leaves. The leaves are elliptic-lanceolate, 15cm long, medium green above, and brown indumentum below. It is a very early hybrid (1831), a cross between *R. catawbiense* and *R. arboreum*.

14. *Rhododendron* 'Loder's White'

Despite the name this shrub was unrelated to Sir Edmund Loder. It was bred by James Henry Mangles in 1884 at Valewood, Haslemere, Surrey. This fine old hybrid has superb mauve-pink buds opening to pure white flowers edged pink at first. With slightly scented large flower trusses, it is a super dome-shaped vigorous plant with bold dark foliage. It can grow to a height of 150-180cm over 10 years. Parentage is possibly *R. arboreum* subsp. *cinnamomeum* var. *album* x *R. griffithianum*).

15. *Rhododendron* 'Mrs Lionel de Rothschild'

Named after the wife of the original purchaser of Exbury Estate in 1918, Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, from where so many hybrids have originated. This plant has shiny green 35cm leaves with a stunning brown indumentum on the underside. It can grow to 150cm in height over 10 years. It has fantastic large creamy white to pale yellow flowers with a crimson blotch.

16. Hybrid *Azalea* 'Blaauw's Pink'

A small evergreen stunning azalea of low, spreading growth, with small mid-green leaves and vibrant salmon pink hose-in-hose double flowers with paler shading up to 30mm wide. The shrub was hybridised in Holland in 1953.

17. *Rhododendron* 'Dawn's Delight'

This unusual hybrid of medium size has unsurpassed pastel colours of vermilion red, shading to pink. The flowers sit in a loose truss of about 10. The leaves are oblanceolate from 19x6cm. As with 'Loder's White' this was crossed by James Henry Mangles. It was taken to Littleworth Cross after Mangles death in 1884 and received an Award of Merit when shown from there by his sister Miss Clara Mangles, in 1911. Parentage is *R. griffithianum*) x unknown.