



## WALK OF THE WEEK

As the woodland canopy fills and creates shade, late-flowering shrubs burst into bloom, bringing a fresh wave of colour and a vital nectar source for foraging pollinators.

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.

This is a 45-minute walk at an average pace, with a couple of short inclines along the way.

### 1. **Cornus × rutgersensis Ruth Ellen ('Rutlan') (Stellar Series)**

On entering the Woodland Garden, you will see on the right-hand side three outstanding Cornus plants, which we planted in 1997. Ruth Ellen is a hybrid flowering dogwood, a cross between *Cornus florida*, found in South-Eastern United States, and *Cornus kousa*, from China. It was developed as one of the 'Stellar' dogwoods bred at Rutgers University in New Jersey. It is a large shrub growing up to 6m in height, with an upright habit and green foliage, turning to shades of plum-purple in the autumn. Masses of slightly overlapping, rounded, petal-like bracts open to pure white with a green centre, appearing now.

### 2. **Azalea viscosum**

Swamp Azalea also known as Swamp Honeysuckle is a late flowering bushy deciduous shrub which can grow to 2.5m tall, with dark leaves which are glaucous beneath. It has very fragrant, narrowly funnel-shaped white flowers, up to 4cm wide, flushed deep pink on the tube. Its species distribution ranges from Maine to Vermont and southwards to SE Texas and Florida in the USA.

### 3. **Rhododendron degronianum subsp. degronianum**

This plant is a compact, evergreen shrub native to Japan (Honshu), typically growing 0.5–2.5m tall. It is valued for its funnel-shaped pink to white flowers and leaves, which can be 6–14cm with a dense, white-to-brownish felt-like underside (indumentum).

### 4. **Rhododendron 'Mrs Charles E Pearson'**

This pretty and useful plant has mauve-pink buds that fade to near white in flower with brown spots. It has good dark foliage. It is vigorous and has an upright and dense habit. It is often used for hedging and screening. Vigorous and able to tolerate sun and heat, this plant can grow to 150–180 cm in 10 years. Part of the hardy hybrid group with parentage Coombe Royal Group (s) X 'Catawbiense Grandiflorum'. Possibly hybridised c. 1909 by nurserymen M. Koster & Sons of Boskoop, Holland.

### 5. **Rhododendron 'Fabia Tangerine'**

This shrub has loose trusses of stunning orange coloured funnel-shaped flowers. Leaves are lanceolate, dark green with light fawn indumentum. *Rhododendron 'Fabia'* was bred at Bodnant in 1927 by Lord Aberconway. The parentage was *dichroanthum* x *griersonianum*. 'Tangerine' is one of a number of clones that form the Fabia group; others include 'Tower Court' and 'High Beeches'.

### 6. **Rhododendron 'Lady Decies'**

This plant flowers up to 20 in a dense truss. The corolla is widely spreading, almost flat, and nearly 10cm across with lilac-mauve shading to white in the centre, with a flare of bright yellow. It was bred by the Waterers at Bagshot pre-1922.

### 7. **Rhododendron 'Marchioness of Lansdowne'**

This elepidote rhododendron flowers about 14 in a compact truss. The corolla is broadly funnel-shaped with pale magenta-pink colours with a dense almost black flare on the central lobe, appearing to have been burnt on with a poker, and with some speckling on the adjacent lobes. The leaves are about 7.5cm long. It was bred by the Waterers at Bagshot pre-1879 and named after the then 5th Marchioness of Lansdowne.

### 8. **Rhododendron griersonianum**

The flowers of this evergreen shrub open in June. They are loosely arranged in trusses of five to twelve flowers. The calyx is small like the flower stalk. The corolla is rosy scarlet, trumpet-shaped, narrowed to a fluted cylindrical tube at the base. Leaves are oblong-lanceolate and tapered at the base. The plant was discovered in 1917 in W. Yunnan, near the then Burma border by George Forrest.

Forrest named the plant after a friend called R.G. Grierson, a Chinese Maritime Customs official at Tengyuh. No other species of *Rhododendron* has been so much used in hybridising. The R.H.S handbook lists about 150 hybrids.

**9. Rhododendron 'Duke of York'**

This is a wide shrub, with dense branching and relatively compact. It can grow to over 1.8m in 10 years. The flower buds are deep pink red, on opening dark pink with a yellow-brown macula. Flowers are funnel shaped, fragrant and held in loose trusses of about 12 flowers. Its leaves are oblong-ovate and dark green, bronze when new. Its parentage is fortunei ssp fortune x Scipio.

**10. Western Hemlock**

*Tsuga heterophylla* is a large evergreen conifer growing to 50-70m tall. It is the largest species of Hemlock. Its bark is brown and furrowed (outwardly appearing similar to that of Douglas Fir). The crown is narrow with a drooping leader and foliage that appears delicate and feathery. The species name, heterophylla, means 'variable leaves,' specifying that the needles vary in length. Short, flat, round-tipped, and twisted at the base, they are irregularly spaced. Their colour also varies from yellowish-green on the upper sides to a lighter green underneath. It is native to the northwest coast of North America. These group of trees were planted in the 1960's by the then Head Groundsman, George Harrison.

**11. Azalea Narcissiflorum**

This compact deciduous Ghent azalea can grow to 2.5m tall, with foliage turning bronze-purple in autumn. Its flowers are funnel-shaped, fragrant, hose-in-hose, soft pale yellow, darker outside and in the throat. It is an unusual and sought after plant. Its parentage is unknown, but it is believed to have been hybridised in 1855 and bred by J. Rinz in Germany.

**12. Rhododendron 'Award'**

With fragrant pinky white flowers that have a light-yellow flare which open to almost pure white with green spots this plant forms a wide ball shaped truss. Leaves are narrowly oblong, with an apiculate apex and rounded base. In 2009 the plant proved very popular at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. A hybrid bred in the USA in 1969 by Delbert W. James with parentage 'Anna' x 'Margaret Dunn'.

**13. Dicksonia antarctica**

This evergreen soft tree fern, deciduous in colder areas, grows slowly up to 4m in height, with a stout reddish-brown stem and a terminal rosette of arching, deeply divided, glossy dark green fronds to 3m in length. It originated in E Australia. Every autumn we wrap our tree ferns in fleece to protect them from the frost. It is always an anxious moment in the spring, after removing the fleece to discover whether they have survived the winter. They have!

**14. Acer palmatum 'Katsura'**

Japanese maple 'Katsura' is an upright, deciduous shrub with attractive lobed leaves. In spring, each leaf bears a pale green shade, before taking on a yellow-green hue in summer, then rounding off the year with a striking display of red in autumn. This shrub was given to Lord Lansdowne in 2006 by Douglas 'Doug' Harris of Penwood Nurseries.

**15. Calycanthus x raulstonii 'Hartlage Wine'**

This is a rare hybrid between *Calycanthus* and *Sinocalycanthus*. It is a multi-stemmed shrub with upright to arching branches, oval leaves carried in pairs and aromatic bark. The flowers are wine-red touched with cream in the centre. They are lightly scented. This plant was a gift from Lord Arran of Castle Hill in Devon.

**16. Eucryphia x intermedia 'Rostrevor'**

This is a stunning, fast-growing hybrid. The leaves are variable, both simple and trifoliolate, glaucous beneath. It has small pure white, slightly scented flowers, that crowd the branches. This hybrid first occurred at Rostrevor in Northern Ireland, the notable garden of Sir John Ross of Blandenburg.

**17. Liriodendron x sinoamericanum 'Chapel Hill'**

The North American tulip tree was considered monotypic until, at the beginning of the 20th century, a second and very similar species was discovered in China. Hybridisation occurred in China in 1963 and in the USA in the 1970s by Professor Clifford Parks at the University of North Carolina. He named his variety 'Chapel Hill' after the location of the University's campus, around which both the North Carolina Botanic Garden and the Coker Arboretum are located. The flowers are greenish coppery colour and have the benefit of being borne from a very young age.

**18. Rhododendron 'Saturne'**

This shrub with attractive red to white centre flowers can grow to about 2m. It was hybridised by the Waterer family at their Bagshot nursery circa 1930.