Of all evergreen shrubs, the stately rhododendron is the most useful to the garden builder; and its companion, smaller and more spirituelle, is the useful, fragrant azalea. But so strongly are they both endowed with beauty that their usefulness is not always appreciated to its utmost in the planting of home grounds and gardens. In truly artistic fashion, these shrubs hide their service to mankind, while subtly flattering, with their bloom, the senses and delighting the eyes of the world. Among plant creations, however, usefulness in horticulture and great beauty are not always combined, and for this reason shrubs holding in the balance both of these virtues are apt to make an appeal which increases in force with the advancement of knowledge.

Indeed, as a growing comprehension of Nature has spread over the country, her intimacy has been sought, and the desire manifested to live closely to her, to pursue and capture her, and to so control her wild moods that she will dwell contentedly by our doorstep instead of retreating farther into her native haunts before the tread of civilization. In her subjugation, many of her eccentricities have disappeared, and when they have been found altogether difficult to control, they have been wisely overlooked. Much has been demanded of her, and hence much forgiven.

No wild growth has shown a greater friendliness to man than the rhododendrons and azaleas, originally designed by Nature to cover her mountain slopes, to mark paths through her forests, and to adorn her woodland and swamp borders with incomparable grace. Under Nature’s guidance, these shrubs attain a quality of beauty which challenges both heart and mind, and man, the explorer, has happily visited and brought away from the wild these wonderful plants, finding that with proper skill in their care and development they will thrive as well under cultivation as in their native haunts.

Comparatively a few years ago, the men who built houses in
BRINGING THE WOODS TO THE GARDEN

America, whether large or small, expended the money on the house proper and the outbuildings, and trusted to a later day and some unusual inspiration to put them into the humor of improving their immediate landscape. Today, a higher and more serious conception of the garden has developed. Even the builder of the most modest country place sets aside, if under wise guidance, at least ten per cent. of the proposed total outlay for embellishment of the surface of the earth by which he is intimately surrounded. Often the landscape plans are prepared before those of the house, and the adaptability of the ground to architectural treatment is a point in its purchase.

Each year an increasing number of people are longing for country life, and with fulfilment of the wish comes also the desire to keep the earth, which they must look upon in the winter, from losing all beauty and friendliness. Broad-leaved evergreens as well as conifers, without which the landscape is shorn of its most exalted characteristic, have come, in line with these considerations, to hold an undisputed place in the winter kingdom. The rhododendrons, evergreen throughout the year, might also inspire in their season of bloom the words once applied to the lily that “Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.”

The native rhododendrons, gems in the crown of America’s flora, are the well-known maximum and the catawbiense; the former is white, and, as it grows wild and untrammeled in the mountainous regions of the Alleghenies, it appears to blend with the cool, crisp atmosphere of the mountain tops and to develop there a chaste and radiant spirit.

THESE BLOSSOMS OF THE AZALEA ARE AS DELICATE IN COLORING AS THEY ARE IN FORM.
BRINGING THE WOODS TO THE GARDEN

The *catawbiense* which unfolds, a month earlier in the season, a lilac-purple bloom turns as it fades to a peculiar shade of roan, which fact has given name to the Roan Mountain, where it spreads in veritable jungles along the high summits following the ridges. *Rhododendron maximum*, which attains of itself a greater height, grows at a lower altitude; where these shrubs turn the mountains into vast bouquets, the *maximum* attains a height of thirty-five or forty feet. In general cultivation, however, it rarely stands higher than six feet, contributing, nevertheless, as no other shrub, to the richness and stateliness of the landscape. Planted in a strip of woodland near the home, the *maximum* has the power to cheer with its broad-leaved evergreenness, and to compel wonder with its glorious bloom.

BESIDES the native species of rhododendrons, the English hybrids have come to play a conspicuous part in all landscape and garden work, many believing them to be the best for regular planting, lawn groups and borders near the house. The native species are set apart for naturalistic work. In general, the English hybrids produce globelike, remarkable trusses of bloom, opening at different times from May to June, and ranging in color from white to crimson. Choice in selecting them is purely a matter of individual taste. Among the named varieties, hybrids of *Rhododendron ponticum* and the *catawbiense* are the *everestianum, delicatissimum, caractacus, C. S. Sargent, Charles Dickens, gloriosa, album elegans, roseum superbum* and others enchanting in their respective ways. In a group of rhododendrons showing different varieties of these hybrids, the bloom of certain ones will be found to succeed that of others over a considerable time. Very generally have they been accepted in landscape work as background plants, their chosen companions, the azaleas being placed immediately in the foreground.

Rhododendrons are not altogether easy to transplant, nor will they thrive in places lacking in shade, a somewhat moist atmosphere, and a bed deeply and richly made. Furthermore they like an open and well-drained soil, supplemented largely with peat and leaf mold. Much lime in the soil is distinctly to their disadvantage. The fatality that frequently overtakes rhododendrons and their piquant companions, the azaleas, is that their fibrous roots are allowed to dry out during either the summer heat or the process of transplanting. In cases where water cannot be supplied readily, a mulch of leaves or grass cuttings from the lawn helps to keep them moist during the danger period of summer, likewise to counteract the evil effects of alternate thawing and freezing which takes place in winter. The heath tribe, to which both rhododendrons and azaleas belong, is as
MRS. MILNER, AS THIS ONE OF THE HYBRID RHODODENDRONS IS CALLED, PRODUCES FULL, IMPRESSIVE BUNCHES OF STAR-SHAPED FLOWERS, LOVELY IN COLOR AND SHADING.

RHODODENDRON EVERESTIANUM, THE BEST KNOWN OF THE HYBRIDS: EXQUISITE ROSE LILAC IN COLOR AND WITH PETALS NOTICEABLY SPOTTED AND FLUTED.

AZALEA MOLLIS, THE JAPANESE THAT HAS BECOME THE MOST CONSPICUOUS OF ALL SPRING FLOWERING SHRUBS, ITS LARGE FLOWERS SHOWING EVERY VIVID TINT FOUND IN A MOUNTING FLAME.

Photographs by Nathan N. Graves.
A NEARER VIEW OF THE AZALEA PLANTED SO AS TO CLOSELY COVER THE EARTH AND FORM A GLOWING FRINGE FOR THE TALL TREES; SUGGESTING THE WILDNESS OF THE WOODS SO DESIRED IN MOUNTAINOUS GARDENS.

THE PICTURE ABOVE SHOWS A FULL AND SOMEWHAT NATURALISTIC PLANTING OF AZALEA VISCOPHALA, WHEREIN ITS DESIRABILITY AS A COMPANION TO THE RHODODENDRON CAN CLEARLY BE SEEN: THE EFFECT OF NATURE’S OWN PLANTING OF HER MOUNTAIN-SIDES IS CLEVERLY SUSTAINED HERE, THE EMPTY SPACES OF CLEAR GREEN LAWN FURNISHING RICH CONTRAST.
RHOODENDRONS PLANTED MASSIVELY, FOLLOWING THE GREEN CURVES IN A SLOPING LAWN, THE INTERVENING SPACE WINDING BETWEEN LIKE A GENTLE STREAM: IN ALL PLANTING OF HILLSIDES WITH MASSES OF FLOWERY SHRUBS, A STRETCH OF UNADORNED LAWN IN CLOSE PROXIMITY NOT ONLY GIVES CONTRAST BUT TOUCHES THE IMAGINATION.

PERISTYLE AND PERGOLA BOXES THAT ARE BROUGHT DOWN TO THE GROUND BY RHOODENDRONS WHICH RETAIN FOR THIS DWELLING THE CHEER OF GREENNESS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR: THIS MASSING OF SHRUBS NOT ONLY GIVES BEAUTY TO THE GARDEN OUTLINE BUT FURNISHES SECLUSION FOR THE PERGOLA SITTING ROOM.

Photographs by Nathan R. Graves.
THE RHODODENDRON PICTURE AT THE RIGHT IS THE BOULE DE NEIGE; AS ITS NAME IMPLIES, IT IS A HYBRID WITH HEADS OF BLOOM AS ROUND AND WHITE AS SNOWBALLS.

RHODODENDRON CARACTACUS SHOWN ABOVE IS VALUABLE TO GIVE THE ACCENT OF DARK, PURPLE CRIMSON WHERE THE GENERAL PLANTING IS MOSTLY FLOWERS OF LIGHTER SHADES.

A LOVELY HYBRID SHOWING MANY DISTINCT AND WORTHY CHARACTERISTICS; ONE HOWEVER, LIKE MANY OTHER OF THE ENGLISH IMPORTATIONS, STILL TO BE GIVEN AN APPROPRIATE NAME.
BRINGING THE WOODS TO THE GARDEN

dependent upon careful mulching as are its relatives, the roses. In the lee of tall trees where these shrubs grow naturally, their foliage is protected from the winter sun, and their roots are kept snug and warm. In planting them about the foundations of houses, Nature's hint should be taken to set them where some neighbor can cast over them a certain amount of shade.

Strikingly beautiful as are the rhododendrons, they should not be planted haphazard just for the pleasure of having them. As lawn features, background plants and garden groups, they have a distinct use, also in the rock garden, provided it is shielded from the wind by conifers or other trees. Here often they act as intermediate growth between the trees and the smaller plants. Again rhododendrons are unexcelled for informal evergreen hedges. But in or near water gardens, they are usually a mistake; neither do they look well in small, set-apart places like islands. Their need is rather to be planted so that they will appear to be in the natural scheme of the landscape, not to be set like single plants with pretty flowers to be picked.

From Nature, the lesson has been learned of using azaleas as foreground plants for rhododendrons; for these powerful shrubs grow high, branching from the main stem outward into a rounded crown, but leaving the earth showing at the base. The condition is one that needs to be remedied therefore by the planting of smaller growth which carries out the effect of a mass of green extending from the tops of the rhododendrons downward to the earth.

THE azaleas are not, as is often thought, evergreens, and for this reason they sometimes give place to the lovely laurel, another of America's choicest productions. Nevertheless, with the exception only of lack of winter foliage, everything works well in planting rhododendrons and azaleas together; not only because the azaleas, being smaller, help to shade off the others' rugged outlines, and to carry them downward; but because of the harmonious effect of their respective blooms. The rhododendron flowers, large, complex and very striking are in truth perfected by the presence of the azaleas' offerings, delicate, simple and brilliantly hued. The smaller plants are also the more hardy, and must provide the entire bloom for the oncoming season should their strong-looking companions succumb to climatic changes or the scorching of the winter sun. The harmony existing between these plants is, in truth, largely responsible for their popularity.

Mostly they look best when in a place where the eye looks either down upon them or else upward. When on a level, they lose somewhat in effect. No matter where employed, they are not suitable for
light and careless treatment; but rather to form strong characteristic groups producing architectural effects about the home grounds. Many foundations of houses are softened in outline by a judicious use of these shrubs, and such other evergreens as laurels, mahonias and *Daphne cneorum* are set in among them. The latter serves as a border plant as does *Azalea amâna*, the smallest member of its family and the only one that is evergreen.

The great value of this little shrub is not perhaps generally known. For a low, compact border, it is as adaptable as box, and in its period of bloom it is so crowded with masses of claret-colored flowers that its foliage cannot be seen. In the late autumn as well, its foliage glows with many winelike tones of red, intermingled with those of bronze and green. Among dwarf border plants, none other is so alive with color. It is strong in tone, however, and cannot be used with plants of antagonistic hues.

One planting of rhododendrons and azaleas that has proved particularly attractive shows the English hybrid rhododendrons in the background well up against the stone foundation of a house; in front of them are azaleas in variety, the remarkable little *amâna* being used as the border plant. *Then interspersed wherever possible are numbers of begonias bearing large, single flowers colored in maize, and looking as if made of wax. This bit of foundation planting is thus enlivened with bloom from early summer until late in the autumn, and during the rest of the year it furnishes a bank of green foliage indicative of vigor and life. The bare twigs and branches of the large azaleas have not here an unseemly air when with the first touch of frost they shed their leaves; simply they give point to the Japanese idea of presenting bare twigs or those that are dead with the most sumptuous of floral arrangements, the thought being that the fulness of life is accentuated by the contrast. The native azaleas, *nudiflora* and *viscosa*, the former opening in May, the latter in July, have about them all the charm of the open country, and are therefore greatly to be desired for naturalistic planting. The *viscosa* with its white flowers is also to be remembered as doing well near water.

**THE Ghent,** of hybrid American azaleas, is probably more generally known than the native species, and has lent itself to infinite variety and many decorative purposes both for the interior of the house and the garden. It is, however, *Azalea mollis*, the Japanese, that now gives in cultivation the most startling beauty of the early spring. In appearance, it is very similar to *Azalea lutea*, a native of the southern mountains, and, like it, sends forth large
BRINGING THE WOODS TO THE GARDEN

flowers with an extraordinary range of color, beginning with lemon yellow and reaching, as the climax, flame color and crimson. Indeed no planting ground fully lends a hand to the endeavors of spring unless it includes this fiery, vivacious shrub.

The Carolina azalea, _Azalea vaseyi_ with its flowers an inch and a half across, and of purest pink, is another variety not to be passed by, since it is very beautiful, although not in such an undeniable and striking way as the Japanese introduction.

The amateur in planting the home grounds is often prone to think too little about the differences in characteristics which exist between plants of the same family. He buys rhododendrons just because they are rhododendrons, without thought to the individual color of their bloom, the length of its duration or whether or no it will harmonize well with its permanent surroundings. It may be that he has fallen under the spell of the _Rhododendron maximum_, the rose bay and its wonderful white flowers delicately tinted and spotted. He buys, through lack of knowledge, the _catawbiense_, and succumbs to regret when its flowers unfold in lilac-purple a month earlier than he had expected them. The principles underlying his purchase should have been color, worth, desirability of time and duration of bloom; furthermore, he must work for permanency, that the plants may secure to the landscape pictures that will no more pass away than the trees and the hillsides.

For only through knowledge and applied skill has the earth been drawn nearer each year to the home, and made a place of healthful living. Like the Roman of old, the aspiring American has found that many of the home comforts pursued so widely and assiduously are really sweetly embodied in the practical scheme of living in the midst of a garden.