

# Breeding Evergreen Azaleas at Glendoick

Kenneth Cox — Glendoick Gardens, Glencarse, Perthshire, Scotland

Glendoick Gardens was founded by Euan and Peter Cox in 1953. Euan had already established the garden at Glendoick in the 1920s on his return from plant hunting with Reginald Farrer in Burma. The nursery has expanded gradually over the years and is now the largest retail rhododendron and azalea specialist nursery in Europe. Bucking the current trend where everything is grown in containers, we still grow more than 80 percent of our stock outside in nursery beds where they form large and vigorous root systems and good plant habit. We export as far away as Japan, the United States, and all over Europe.

Peter Cox began hybridising dwarf rhododendrons (the birds such as 'Chikor', 'Ptarmigan' and 'Curlew') in 1959 and in the late 1960s turned his hand to evergreen azaleas. The problem he faced was that most evergreen azaleas we tried in Scotland struggled or died. It was soon apparent that lack of summer heat was the main cause of death, since the wood did not ripen for the winter. He tried Kurumes, Satsuki, Glenn Dales, and lots of others, but most survived only a short time. The few good ones such as *Rhododendron kiusianum* and its hybrids such as 'Kermesina' and 'Diamant' were small-flowered and not very evergreen. Using *R. kiusianum* and some new forms of *R. nakaharae* from Polly Hill and others, he began making crosses. He had immediate success with his first few crosses, and 'Panda' is now probably the best selling white azalea in the United Kingdom.

When I joined in the hybridising game in the early 1980s, I used the first batch of mammals ('Squirrel', 'Lemur', 'Wombat') to make further crosses, often using Hachmann azaleas from Germany to augment the palette. Later on we found that Hans Hachmann was using our azaleas for the same reason. I wanted to create hose-in-hose and double-flowered azaleas with good foliage retention in all the color shades; we find 'Johanna' and 'Marushka' are very good for this. I also wanted to get the colour of 'Red Red', which we can't grow, into something suitable for Scotland; we managed this by crossing it with 'Johanna'. What I'd like to do next is to get some Satsuki blood into our hardy azaleas to see if there is any potential there for multi-colors, none of which we can currently grow, perhaps using Glenn Dales and Robin Hills as a bridge. We have now started using the trademark "Glendoick" to protect our new hybrids, as a cheaper alternative to patenting. We have now also started breeding deciduous azaleas, too. Watch this space.

Some of the Glendoick azaleas are grown in the Pacific Northwest. I doubt that there is any need for them in



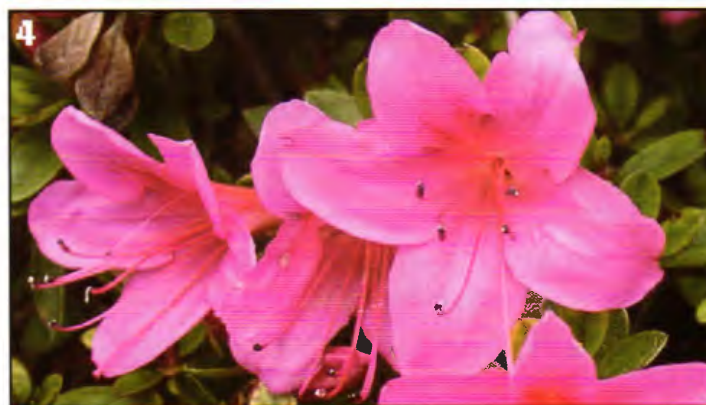
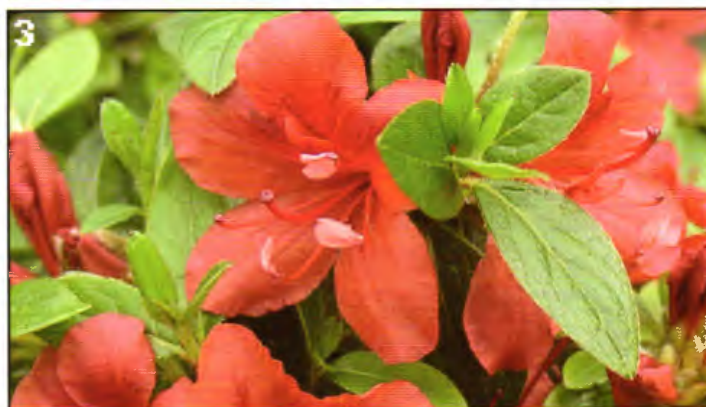
1. GLENDOICK®  
DREAM

2. GLENDOICK®  
GLACIER

3. 'Raccoon'

4. 'Wombat'

(All photos supplied by  
Kenneth Cox)



most of eastern North America, though John Weagle is trialing them in Nova Scotia.

The Glendoick evergreen azaleas named so far are:

**'Arctic Fox'** ('Panda' x 'Mucronatum')—Large pure white flowers.

**'Chinchilla'** ('Vida Brown' x 'Vuyk's Scarlet')—Hose-in-hose vivid red flowers.

**'Chipmunk'** ('Vida Brown' x 'Lemur')—Hose-in-hose bright pink flowers, very compact.

**GLENDIOICK® CRIMSON** ('Red Red' x 'Johanna')—Vivid, very dark red flowers in May.

**GLENDIOICK® DREAM** ('Panda' x 'Rokoko')—Double, or semi-double, some flowers having a few petaloid stamens, strong purplish red flowers in May.

**GLENDIOICK® ERMINE** ('Panda' x 'Mucronatum')—Large pure white flowers.

**GLENDIOICK® GARNET** ('Red Red' x 'Johanna')—Deep red flowers in May.

**GLENDIOICK® GLACIER** ('Red Red' x 'Rokoko')—Double white flowers with greenish flushing and spotting.

**GLENDIOICK® GOBLIN** ('Red Red' x 'Johanna')—Semi-double petaloid stamens, strong red flowers (color similar to 'Red Red').

**'Lemur'** (*R. nakaharae* 'Mariko' x 'Vuyk's Scarlet')—Single deep pink flowers, low growing.

**'Marmot'** ('Vida Brown' x 'Vuyk's Scarlet')—Deep purplish pink.

**'Panda'** ('Everest' x *R. kiusianum* white form)—White flowers. Our best seller.

**'Raccoon'** (Second generation *R. nakaharae* cross)—Bright red flowers, vivid red in June-July, compact, spreading.

**'Squirrel'** ('Galathea' x *R. nakaharae* 'Mariko')—Vivid reddish orange flowers in June.

**'Stoat'** ('Kermesina' x 'Lemur')—Deep purplish pink flower.

**'Wombat'** (*R. nakaharae* 'Mariko' x 'Gaiety')—Deep purplish pink flowers, spreading ground cover.

#### Note

The Trademark "GLENDIOICK" is a registered trademark in the United Kingdom and covers most European countries.

*Peter and Kenneth Cox are authors of many books on Rhododendrons including the definitive color guide to rhododendron and azalea species, The Encyclopaedia of Rhododendron Species. For more information, visit: [www.glendoick.com](http://www.glendoick.com).*

#### Climate note

Glendoick is on the east coast of Scotland, a few miles from the Tay estuary. The coldest winters recorded have reached -18°C (-0.4°F), but this happens only a few times a century. A cold winter is usually more like -12°C (10°F). Summers have few days over 27°C (81°F). Rainfall is 600-760mm (23.6-29.9") annually. Our greatest problem is late spring frosts after periods of mild weather: flowers and growth are often frosted, and bark-split can result.

## Society News Chapter News

*[Thanks to the Louisiana and Vaseyi Chapter newsletter editors who sent in their chapter newsletters by e-mail, and to Northern Virginia, which supplied theirs as a pdf, Ed.]*

### Ben Morrison Chapter

Bob Hobbs and Carol Flowers, Newsletter Co-editors

At the December 4th Christmas party meeting the chapter also announced the winners of their digital photography contest:

Category I—Close-up of azalea or truss: Barry Sperling (1st), Bob McWhorter (2nd), and Bob Hobbs (3rd).

Category II—Scenery, with azaleas in the landscape: Bob McWhorter (1st and 2nd), and Barry Sperling (3rd).

Category III—Critters with azaleas: Bob McWhorter (1st)

First prizes were \$25 gift certificates from Timber Press and other prizes were poinsettias.

The spring meeting was held March 5, with Dr. Francis Gouin, professor emeritus of the Agriculture and Natural

Resources Department of the University of Maryland, giving the talk, "What a Gardener Needs to Do to Help Azalea and Rhododendron Plants Transition from Winter to Spring."

### Louisiana Chapter

Bill Bode, Reporting

The December 4th meeting was held at the home of Mrs. B.Y. (Margie) Jenkins, with 18 members attending. Two of these were first-time attendees. The members discussed several issues, with the following results:

- The chapter will contribute \$400 to the ASA to help with projected shortfall
- Newly elected officers are: