



Book Reviews (Margaret Hodgson)

Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons

by Peter & Kenneth Cox

176 pages, 163 colour plates, Lists (covering Classification, Glossary, Further information Rhododendron Nurseries) and Index

Hardcover, Copyright Peter and Kenneth Cox 1990, First Published in North America in 1990 by Timber Press Inc., Portland, Oregon

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Peter (father) and Kenneth (son) Cox are jointly, and individually, the authors of many books on Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Glendoick Gardens evolved after Euan Cox, Peter's father, returned from a trip to Burma in 1919. Three generations have contributed to seed collections and hybridizing of rhododendrons to develop the Glendoick Gardens which opened in

1953, and the Glendoick Garden Centre, opening in 1973, followed by the Glendoick Café and Foodhall. The books written by Peter and Kenneth Cox are considered internationally as offering the most comprehensive lists of rhododendrons available to gardeners.

In the Introduction of **Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons**, the authors point out that they are often asked whether to concentrate on species or hybrids and quickly answer – grow some of both, and for very good reason. Without a doubt, as we know, the species rhododendrons provide some of the most interesting foliage that one is going to see in a rhododendron garden and often the comment is heard “Why even worry about the flower when the foliage is so beautiful”. The Introduction discusses in brief form, planting and cultivation, buying rhododendrons, cuttings, seed, Species from seed, grafting, micro-propagation and layering.

The bulk of the book is divided into very useful alphabetical listings of the rhododendrons by a) Species and b) Hybrids c) Deciduous Azaleas d) Evergreen Azaleas The many colour plates accompanying the descriptions are excellent, as is the detail itself. Each rhododendron (or azalea) is clearly identified, having separate species or hybrid listings, assigned a hardiness rating which indicate its suitability for various areas, height and size, growth habit given and those rhododendrons which have received awards, which would indicate a reasonable guide to quality, are also indicated. The authors do mention that many species and hybrids have not received awards and are very worthy of consideration for our gardens. The Lists and Index are especially useful. This book is in **our library**.