

# THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB GLASGOW SHOW 29 4 23 Rhododendron 'Dora Amateis' Shown by David Millward



## **TREMENDOUS. Another Forrest for Dave**

This magnificently floriferous rhododendron scooped the Forrest for David Millward. As you can tell it almost needed a whole bench for itself. Not surprisingly it also won the trophy for Best Rhododendron. It certainly meets the requirements of a dwarf Rhodie but nowhere is breadth mentioned! Despite winning the Cox trophy for Best Rhododendron at Perth last week it was still in tip top condition at Glasgow. In gardening terms it is a compact Rhododendron. Its delicate pink tinged buds open into deliciously spicily perfumed white flowers. "Azalea" 'Dora Amateis' used to be listed as an Azalea and was cultivated as an azalea hybrid and named after the cultivator's mother. It has won multiple awards for its abundance of beautiful blooms, dark green foliage, and extremely reliable growth and care.



Rh. 'Dora Amateis' is a good garden plant which does well in Scotland. It is a dependable flowerer. Its attractive leaves are small [1½" to 2½" long] recurved, dull, dark green. But if grown in full sun the leaves become bronze tinged. The American Rhododendron Society says it prefers some shade for best performance. As seen in Dave's plant they write that it "Grows twice as wide as tall". The Americans state that Rh. 'Dora Amateis' is a cross of *Rh. minus* var. *minus* and *Rh. ciliatum* by Edmond Amateis which was registered in 1955. When I read that it was named after the breeder's mother I wondered who that breeder was. I found out that there was famous American Sculptor named Edmond Amateis whose Garden sculptures are renowned but I don't know if this is the same man. Is our Edmond the same Edmond as the sculptor? I think he is. Wikipedia includes in its article on Edmond Amateis the sculptor, a reference to a paper he wrote in the journal of the American Rhododendron Society. **HARDY RHODODENDRONS FOR COLDER CLIMATES BY Edmund Amateis, Clermont, Florida**

He was an amateur breeder of rhodies and made a large number of crosses. He must have been a patient and meticulous man. Here is some of what he wrote in his pursuit of **flower hardy** Rhododendrons with or without snowcover. He made primary crosses with known hardy parents, of which he recalled there being few in number available to him. He was looking for hardy reds and yellows. The latter he felt was a recessive characteristic and difficult to breed easily. He had no great hopes for the primary crosses and went on to make secondary crosses. His cross carolinianum x ciliatum produced Dora Amateis which is hardier than either parent. The plant is definitely hardy but it is sterile so preventing further development. He states that in 30 years of gardening his greatest pleasure came with breeding. 'The average nurseryman is much too busy to breed, so new and better varieties must come from the amateur breeder'. His advice is not to be afraid to discard plants in they are not up to standard. 'Don't be afraid of mistakes. They are made by the best. Everyone makes mistakes!. Listen to what Aristotle says: *'The sex of sheep depends on the direction the parents are facing at the time of mating. If they face north the offspring will be male. If they face south the offspring will be female'*. He doesn't say what would happen in they faced east or west.'