



A view of the house through plantings of azaleas at Gwavas (New Zealand – see pages 188 -190), a garden and arboretum to which the IDS awarded a plaque in 2009. The IDS also awarded a plaque to Trelinnoe (New Zealand) in 2009 and to The Hunnewell Arboretum (USA) in 2010.

Gwavas Garden

During the 2009 IDS tour of New Zealand the Chairman of Council, Sir Richard Storey, presented a plaque to Gwavas Garden. The following citation was given at the presentation and for a further description of the garden see pages 203 - 206.



photograph © Gail Church

Michael and Carola Hudson in their garden at Gwavas on the day the IDS Plaque was awarded to them.

The property was bought by Major George Gwavas Carlyon of Tregrehan in Par, Cornwall. The 9 hectare or 22 acre garden was originally laid out in the 1880s by A. S. G. Carlyon. The current owner Michael Hudson is his grandson. Michael and his wife Carola have created a woody plant Mecca beneath this canopy of mature trees. This has been a labour of love over the last five decades.

Michael has an absolute passion for plants and in the days before import restrictions was regularly buying plants from Hilliers and other nurseries in England. The Gwavas garden can be likened to Hillier's *Manual* in the flesh as virtually every plant in the Manual can be found here.

The garden is constantly updated with new and exciting material. In the 1980s and 1990s New Zealand had a mini Renaissance with lots of people exploring the world and introducing new plants. Michael Hudson was at the forefront of this and any new plants were soon established at Gwavas. Government restrictions have since stopped all plant imports thus making the Gwavas collection even more important.

Michael's son, Tom Hudson of the Tregrehan estate in Cornwall is following in his father's footsteps. Tom who is a modern day collector has brought back a wealth of new plants from China, Vietnam and South America. Many of these are now thriving in the Gwavas garden.



Rhododendron 'Irene Stead' x 'Gill's Gloriosa'.

Mike with *Rhododendron* 'Lord Aberconway' which will flower like this if religiously dead-headed!



In short, it's hard to imagine a private garden with a greater wealth of woody plant material.

Michael is generosity personified and if any nurseryman or enthusiast wishes to propagate a plant, they only have to ask. His complete knowledge of plants and of his soils on the property comes into play. When *Franklinia alatamaha* was first introduced, he read about it growing along the banks of the Altamaha River and he promptly planted his beside a drain and it thrived. Seed were then distributed from this plant.

All the plants in the garden are labelled. There is a scheme to record all of the plants there, starting with the rhododendrons. Graham Smith, retired Director of the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, a world expert on rhododendrons and other woody plants is about to begin cataloguing the plants. Many of the rhodos are numbered clones collected by George Forrest, Kingdon Ward, the Cox's and others. Michael was a founding member of the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, founded in 1951.

The Gwavas property also includes a fine native forest remnant. As I understand it the block was preserved from the very beginning and is now one of the few examples of unmodified podocarp forest in the inland Hawkes Bay area. Each generation has fought hard to preserve this forest from governments, keen to see it turned into farmland. Michael has now put a



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Top

left, *Magnolia cathcartii* is a lovely plant and seems quite hardy out here, where we do have frosts and very occasional snow! The flowers have an unusual deep tropical scent.

right, the pink flowered magnolia was one collected by Tom Hudson in Yunnan. This has grown like a ram-rod, slim and tight, and is 40 feet already.

Above

left, The *Magnolia dealbata* must be 50 feet now, relishing its head in the sun and shady root-run.

right, *Disanthus cercidifolius* var. *longipes*. The seed came from the Shanghai Botanical Gardens. Its autumn colour is sort of luminous, and lasts for weeks.

protection covenant on the forest, thus preserving it for all time. The garden is open to the public on a daily basis.

Michael and Carola's daughter Phyllida and her husband Stuart are now living in the main house on the property and so a gradual transition of generations is taking place as they learn from Michael and Carola. They intend to maintain and enhance the garden, and to increase public awareness and appreciation of such a fine collection.

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