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DAVID ADAMS· Well, that is just a taste of what you might see at the Western Region Meeting next year There are quite a few things to see and, of course, it's all new to us.

Our next speaker is Mr. Eichelser. He is from the Melrose Nursery near Olympia, Washington. He primarily grows rhododendrons and kalmia; he also has a few slides here showing some very beautiful kalmia. Mr. Eichelser:

## PROPAGATION OF KALMIA LATIFOLIA

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The *Kalmia latifolia* I am talking about today is the Dexter strain and the red form of this strain, which is known as 'Ostbo Red'. Perhaps not all are familiar with this red clone or with the Dexter strain so I would like to show a few slides at this time to

familiarize you with the kalmia that I am talking about. As you can see from these pictures, Dexter strain is quite a different thing from the wild native kalmia. The pinks are much brighter, the foliage is thicker and heavier and the brilliant red is never found in the wild state.

I became interested in kalmia about 18 years ago when I first saw this red strain which is now known as 'Ostbo Red'. In the past it has been variously known as 'Dexter No. 5', 'Ostbo No. 5', 'Red Bud Kalmia', and 'Westcoast Kalmia'. The first time I saw it was while visiting the nursery of the late Endre Ostbo in Seattle, Washington. I acquired a plant of 'Ostbo Red' at this time and was told by Mr. Ostbo that it was useless to try to root it as it had been tried and could not be done. The only way to propagate it was from grafts, I was told.

The first few years we put in cuttings with little or no success. We tried all of the different available hormone mixes, plus mixing our own indolebutyric acid. We tried taking cuttings in each month of the year from June through January. We tried many different media including pumice, peat and pumice, sand, peat and sand, peat and perlite and both fresh sawdust and rotted sawdust. We found we could root some from soft wood material, especially from plants held in the greenhouse. We found we could root some summer cuttings, we could root fall cuttings, but over the years our best take was always from cuttings taken in January. Our take has always been extremely variable and for reasons that we could not determine. We have now settled on a more or less standard way of propagating kalmia. This is the method which consistently has given us the best take and is the method I shall talk about at this time.

We take our cuttings as close to January 15th as possible. The cuttings all come from young plants, two to three years old. These seem to root better than from older stock plants. We are careful to take them on a day when the plants are not frozen.

By this time of year the plants have all had some frost and probably several nights of real hard freezing. We like cuttings between 2½ and 3 inches long. Longer wood is shortened down to this length. We use a double wound after submerging the cuttings in a Benlate solution and allowing them to drain for a short time. Immediately after making the wound the cuttings are dipped in a solution of 5,000 parts per million of Jiffy Grow. The cuttings are then placed in plastic bags and allowed to remain for a few hours or sometimes over night before being stuck in the bench. Our benches are six inches deep, heated by electric cables. We use a polyethylene house, not heated. The rooting medium is approximately ½ peat moss and ½ perlite. We use an automatic mist system. We hold the temperature at 73° to 75° F. We find these kalmia extremely slow to root. The cuttings are left in the bench till late May or early June. At this time the greenhouse has to be cleaned out and made ready

for a new crop. We transplant at this time and find that about 25 to 30% have rooted. We, of course, remove any dead material, bad leaves, etc. The rest of the cuttings that have callused and look clean are restuck, but this time into flats containing peat and perlite, 1:1. These flats are moved out into a shaded house and again intermittent mist is put over them, but no bottom heat. The mist is allowed to run over them throughout the summer until fall, then it is turned off. The cuttings are left in the flats throughout the winter.

We find, by spring, many of these restuck cuttings are rooted. Our total take after this method, both from the original transplants and the restuck cuttings, was 53% last year. This was on 4,500 cuttings. This is the method we use to propagate 'Ostbo Red' kalmia. The Dexter strain is much easier to produce since they are raised from seed sown in January. This strain will range in color from medium pink to dark pink with an occasional red. We are in the process of selecting two or three of the choicest pinks to propagate as clones. Over the years we have looked for a red which would be as good as 'Ostbo Red' but which would hopefully propagate a little easier. We have yet to find such a plant.

In summary, I would like to say that we really have no deep, dark secrets to disclose in regard to rooting kalmia cuttings. It amounts mainly to patience over a period longer than is required for most plant material to root, and close attention to details.

DAVID ADAMS: Thank you very much, Mr. Eichelser. Our last speaker of the day is Mr. J. D. Vertrees, Maplewood Nursery, Roseburg, Oregon. He has been growing Asiatic maple species for quite a long time. He's another one of these people that had a hobby that outgrew him and he found himself working at his hobby instead of at his regular job. He, like myself, was an Agricultural Extension Agent for many, many years. Now he will talk to us about the production of the Asiatic maples. Mr. Vertrees.

## **OBSERVATIONS ON PROPAGATION OF ASIATIC MAPLES**

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In studying Asiatic maples for the past nine years, we have been able to collect much information from commercial nurseries, Arboreta, propagators, and collectors from all over the U.S. as well as Europe and Japan. We offer here some procedures and variations we have observed, or carried out ourselves. We emphasize that