

**A DAY AT EXBURY**  
**HOWARD C. BROWN**

*California Polytechnic State University*  
*San Luis Obispo, California 93401*

During the spring quarter this year I had a sabbatical leave from my teaching assignment at Cal Poly. My wife and I made a horticultural tour of the Southern United States and spent an enjoyable six weeks in Great Britain.

When we started planning the British junket over a year ago we contacted Richard Martyr, a member of IPPS, G.B. & I. Region, and Director of the Horticulture College in Pershore. Richard was most helpful in setting up a tour of British horticulture.

Two of our most worthwhile and interesting experiences in Britain were the IPPS Day at Exbury Estate and the Chelsea Flower Show. I want to tell you today about Exbury.

This famous estate, the home of the Rothschilds, is located a short distance from Southampton in Southern England. Our visit was on May 9 and we were hosted by the IPPS Region of Great Britain and Ireland. The estate consists of over a thousand acres. In addition to the home grounds there is an arboretum of over 250 acres devoted to rhododendrons and other exotic species, a game bird farm, a wholesale nursery, and a retail garden centre. The grounds are open to the public and during the spring are visited by many thousands of people. Attendance is especially high on weekends.

We had a guided tour of the nursery operation and found a variety of crops being propagated in the glasshouses and cold frames. In addition to rhododendrons and azaleas there were camellias, Japanese maples and conifers in profusion.

All the soil is purchased from an aggregate company and instead of being the traditional John Innes compost it is a U.C. type mix. Osmocote is incorporated in the blending operation at the rate of five pounds per yard.

The glasshouse structures were particularly interesting and I said to myself, "They don't build 'em like that today." Constructed in 1925 of teak wood, they are still in excellent condition. While they were built as show houses or hobby houses, they lend themselves reasonably well to commercial production. During the spring they are double-decked with newly-propagated plants.

Most cuttings are potted into clay pots in a light soil mix. When established, they are set onto level benches or plastic-lined ground beds with a layer of sand and watered by capillary

action. This appears to work well in the climate of Southern England.

Exbury is most famous for the Exbury azalea, many cultivars of which have been introduced to the nursery trade. We were told that one of the Rothschilds had introduced over 1000 cultivars.

One of the most impressive crops now being grown is the "Exbury Extra Heavy Standard Tree." Bare root two-year old trees are purchased from British or Dutch nurseries and lined out on 8' x 8' spacing. They are staked with sturdy poles and allowed to grow for 3 to 4 years at which time they are semi-balled for sale. This makes a tree of approximately 3-inch diameter with a height of from 12 to 15 feet. Most of these are sold to "local authority" (city or county agencies) and they produce a quick effect as street trees and shade trees. Drip irrigation was used experimentally and proved so effective that many acres of it are being installed.

While British nurseries are generally small by American standards, the Exbury tree program is not. By the end of this year they will have over 400 acres of these trees — approximately 50 percent of them in the Exbury area and the remainder at several other locations in Britain.

I brought home one strong impression of the British as a businessman. Whatever he does, he does with great pride. He wants to be the best in his class.

TOK FURUTA: Our next speaker is again not a stranger to those of us in California. Carl Zangger is vice-president of Perry's Plants, headquartered in La Puente, California, but they have growing grounds in several other places as well. Carl is a past president of the California Association of Nurserymen. I would now like to present Carl Zangger who will talk on greenhouse coverings. Carl: