

**The Oleander in Montpellier and in the Southern
Regions: A Report on the Nerium Collection of
Mr. Sahut...**

Presented to

The Horticulture and Natural History Society of Herault

in the name of the Floral Commission

by

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Translated from the French by James Nicholas

The Oleander in Montpellier

and the Southern Regions

The torrential rain which fell last June 22, and which led to such terrible and tragic disasters in our neighboring provinces to the southwest, did not allow us to respond to the invitation of our colleague Mr. Felix Sahut.

The following Tuesday, the Floral Commission of our Horticultural Society gathered at 7 AM at no. 7 Rue du Manege in order to visit the collection of **Neriums** which it had been assigned to evaluate.

In attendance were: Messrs. **Planchon**, **Bravy**, Alexandre **Roux**, **Grasidou**, Charles **Cavallier**, and **Zochowski**.

The horticultural establishment of our colleague Mr. Sahut, which your commission had been fortunate to explore since its inception, is distinguished by its perfect maintenance. The outdoor plants are grouped with particular care by genus and species. They are represented by very vigorous specimens and are in perfect health, to such a degree that from the first look, one remains convinced of the special aptitude of the one who has graced our city with such an important garden.

Horticulture enthusiasts can obtain whatever they might wish there with regard to trees, shrubs, and outdoor plants, which Mr. Sahut cultivates almost exclusively in his nursery at Lattes as well as in his garden in Montpellier.

Among the number of noteworthy collections which Mr. Sahut possesses, we must place in the first rank that of the **Neriums** or **oleanders**, his favorites.

This collection, which is probably the richest of all in existence, is composed firstly of all the old varieties available commercially, but primarily of those which he has obtained and assembled with the greatest care from the numerous seedlings which he has raised for more than twenty years with a perseverance which shows no signs of flagging.

It is only fair in this regard to also praise Mr. Claude Blanc, his director of cultivation of Montpellier.

The passing years have not at all slowed down his original enthusiasm, and we have no doubt that, thanks to his perseverance and tenacity, Mr. Sahut's collection will only continue to be enriched with more and more remarkable specimens.

In carefully examining the numerous varieties of **Neriums** obtained by Mr. Sahut, it quickly becomes apparent that he has only allowed in his collection varieties which are

robust and worthy of preservation. He has mercilessly eliminated sickly or weak subjects of little value. In this regard, he is without pity.

This will perhaps surprise you, gentlemen, as you know his gentle and gracious character so well.

However, it is true; Mr. Sahut does not like mediocrity; you realized this just as we did on the day of our visit.

Since then, Mr. Sahut has very much wanted to survey his oleander collection together with us. We have studied it together, with the most careful attention, for several days and for long hours, which nevertheless seemed quite short as this study was so pleasant.

He has again eliminated those varieties whose worth seemed doubtful, noted these with great care by comparison to others in order to separate them again in turn, if there is room, so that his collection of Neriums, of which I have been given the mission of maintaining for you, is and remains an *elite* collection, according to all reports.

In order to bring a bit of order and method to this work, it seemed convenient to first group these varieties by color and shade:

The pinks and lavenders – the dark reds and scarlets – the whites and flesh-colored – the yellows, salmons, and copper-colored

We will further divide them into singles, hose-in-hose (superimposed corollas), and doubles.

We will also try as much as possible to assign them to the group into which they seem to fit best, *Nerium oleander* and *Nerium odorum (indicum)*. In other words: Neriums with non-fragrant flowers, and Neriums with fragrant flowers.

This characteristic is indicated by the following abbreviations: Ol. and Od., in the descriptions of each of the varieties raised by Mr. Sahut from seed.

Several oleander varieties with single flowers appear at first glance to be identical on the basis of their flower color, but can be perfectly differentiated by the particular characteristic of the bud, which is inflated in some and not in others.

Having established these preliminaries, gentlemen, let us study these Neriums together according to the method which we have recommended.

Here is the list of the varieties which comprise this collection. We have taken care to indicate in a particular manner which ones seemed to us to be the most remarkable and outstanding.

PINK AND LAVENDER SHADES

Single

Old Varieties

Rose tendre [soft pink] – **Roseum simplex** – **Lilacinum** – **Bicolor** – **Speciosum**

New Varieties, raised from seed by Mr. Sahut

Monsieur Balaguier (Ol) Very large flower, buds extremely inflated, petals very wide, delicate pink bordered with bright pink, throat striped dark-pink, appendages very long and finely cut. Vigorous and very floriferous plant, **very outstanding and very interesting**, particularly suitable for container culture outdoors.

Valmagne (Ol) Small flower, carmine buds, narrow petals recurved inwards, soft pink washed and lightly bordered by a darker pink; throat light carmine, striped with dark carmine.

Le Peyrou (Ol) Very large flower, wide petals, light pink bordered with darker pink, throat bright pink, Vigorous plant.

Cardinal Fleury (Ol) Medium-sized flower, narrow petals, soft pink shaded with bright pink and bordered with a carminish dark pink, crowned with long and finely-cut appendages.

Edouard Adam (Ol) Medium-sized flower, petals narrow and elongated, light pink washed with carmine-pink, throat striped with carmine. Floriferous plant.

Sefton Park (Ol) Large flower, inflated buds, petals wide, uniform soft pink, throat striped with carmine, plant vigorous and very floriferous. Corymbs very elongated.

Richer de Belleval (Od) Large flower, *fragrant*, inflated buds, wide petals, beautiful pink, lightly bordered with bright pink, throat striped with carmine.

Frederic Guibert (Od) Very large flower, *fragrant*, buds carmine, petals quite rounded, shaded with lavender and bordered light carmine, throat pink, lightly striped with light carmine.

Concours Regional (Ol) Medium-sized flower, buds dark pink/carminish, medium-sized petals recurved inward, lavenderish light pink, shaded with dark pink and lightly bordered with carmine; throat bright carmine, dotted and heavily striped with light carmine.

Emile Sahut (Od) Large flower, *fragrant*, buds carmine, petals very broad. Chinese pink, lightly wine-colored, darker throat striped carmine. Vigorous and very floriferous plant; **outstanding variety**, suitable for growing in containers outdoors.

Virginie (Od) Very large and *very fragrant* flower, buds light carmine, wide petals, well-separated; brilliant pink; the left side bordered light lavender; throat soft pink, very lightly striped with light carmine, crowned with wide and very long appendages. Vigorous plant, robust and very floriferous, **very outstanding variety**, suitable for growing in containers outdoors.

Docteur Golfin (Od) Very large flower, lightly fragrant, bud carmine, wide petals, lavender/dark wine red shaded with light magenta – throat pink with white base, striped with dark magenta and crowned with long, finely-cut appendages. Floriferous and **very outstanding variety**, suitable for growing in containers outdoors.

Chaptal (Ol) Small flower, carmine bud, sometimes inflated; wide petals, light pink, bordered by a dark carminish pink, throat very large, intense dark pink, **Perfect form**.

Barthez (Ol) Medium-sized flower, buds light carmine, medium-wide petals, bright pink, heavily bordered with light carmine, throat striped with carmine

Paulin Gregoire (Od) Very large flower, **fragrant**, elongated petals of medium width, dark lavender, lightly bordered with light carmine, throat pink, lightly striped with carmine, crowned with long and finely-cut appendages. Vigorous and very floriferous plant. **Very outstanding variety** on account of the exceptional dimensions of its flowers and suitable for growing in containers outdoors.

Agnes Darac (Ol) Large flower, *buds light carmine, inflated*, petals medium-wide, light pink with a dark=–pink wash, throat bright pink, striped with light carmine and crowned with long and finely-cut appendages. Vigorous and very floriferous plant.

No. 154. Unnamed (Od) Huge flowers, brilliant pink, lightly salmon-shaded, dotted with carmine, corona striped magenta and fringes very long, corolla tube bright yellow. **Extra-special**.

No. 117. Unnamed (Ol) Inflated buds, pink flowers, of very unusual proportions, corymb very large, resembles the flower cluster of the *Rhododendron*. **Quite beautiful variety**.

No. 114. Unnamed (Ol) Bright pink, very floriferous, well-developed corymb. **Pretty variety**.

No. 158. Unnamed (Ol) Large flower, carminish-pink, interior of the crown the same shade, very developed corymb, very floriferous.

No. 141. Unnamed (Ol) Flowers a transparent flesh-pink, bordered bright pink, striped, petals with dentate folds, throat salmon-pink.

PINK AND LAVENDER SHADES

With superimposed corollas

Old Varieties

Radianum

New varieties, raised from seed by Mr. Sahut

Pierre Roudier (Od) Medium-sized flower, often with a triple corolla, each of the corollas remains well-differentiated from the others, petals very wide, buds dark carminish-pink, upper corolla soft pink, washed with pink and bordered with bright pink, sometimes streaked with white; middle corolla the same; the lowest corolla has narrower petals; the three throats are pink, the base yellowish-white, heavily striped with dark pink. **Very outstanding variety.**

Madame Charles Baltet (Od) Large flower, in a very elongated corymb, *lightly fragrant*, wide petals, upper corolla soft pink, lightly bordered with light carmine, lower corolla similar, but with narrower petals, throats flesh-colored with yellowish base, heavily striped with carmine, crowned with numerous very finely-cut appendages.

Jean Peyre (Ol) Large flower, bud light carmine, very wide petals, upper corolla sometimes doubled, soft pink overlaid and sometimes streaked with white, lightly bordered with pink; lower corolla with narrow petals and sometimes deeply cut, pink bordered with very bright pink.

Souvenir de Felix Dunal (Od) Medium-sized flower, lightly fragrant, carmine bud, very large petals, upper corolla pink lightly washed and sometimes streaked with white, widely bordered bright carminish-pink; lower corolla dark pink, lightly bordered with light carmine, throat light pink striped with dark pink. **Very outstanding variety.**

Souvenir de Claude Sahut (Ol) Medium-sized flower, buds light carmine, petals very wide, upper corolla light pink, lightly bordered with dark pink. lower corolla similar, throats darker, striped with carmine. Vigorous and very floriferous plant. **Very outstanding variety**, suitable for growing in containers outdoors.

Henri Mares, (Od) Medium-sized flower, *emitting a pleasant fragrance recalling that of the Magnolia*, buds dark carmine, petals very wide, upper corolla often has free petals, soft pink lightly bordered with a carminish bright pink, lower corolla with narrow petals of the same shade, the two throats are soft pink, the base yellowish-white, lightly striped with light carmine. Vigorous and floriferous plant; **outstanding variety.**

Edouard Andre (Od) Medium-sized flower, **fragrant**, buds light carmine, petals very wide, upper corolla a very soft pink, sometimes streaked with white; lower corolla a bit darker in color, the two throats yellowish-white, striped with carmine. Vigorous plant.

Pauline Lucas (Od) Small flower, generally with a double corolla, but often semi-double and occasionally single. Buds light carmine, wide petals, upper corolla soft pink, lightly bordered with light carmine, lower corolla similar and occasionally streaked with white; throats yellowish-white, very heavily striped with magenta. **Outstanding variety.**

No. 91. Unnamed (Ol) Flowers bright pink, tending toward soft pink, wine-colored; buds carmine, throat yellow, sometimes very bright, stripped with dark carmine; irregular corolla, very numerous corymbs, narrow leaves. **Extra special.**

No. 115. Unnamed (Od) *Fragrant*, differs from the variety **Pierre Boudier** by the breadth of its corymbs, the length of the peduncles and the slightly darker color of its flowers.

No. 135. Unnamed (Ol) Dark wine-pink flowers, often variegated, corymb very developed. **Beautiful variety.**

No. 150. Unnamed (Ol) Flowers soft pink and transparent; lower corolla darker than the upper one.

PINK AND LAVENDER SHADES

with double flowers, Splendens section

Old Varieties

Splendens ordinaire - Splendens giganteum - Splendens with variegated leaves - Splendens roseum plenum

New Varieties, raised from seed by M. Sahut

Paul Sahut (Od) Large flower, *lightly fragrant*, buds light carmine, wide petals, upper corolla flesh-colored, lightly shaded with lavender, bordered with light pink; lower corolla more heavily shaded with lavender, bordered pink; throat straw-yellow, striped with light carmine. *Outstanding variety.*

No. 93. Unnamed (Ol) Medium-sized flowers, soft pink, quite straightforward. Petals flat. Very floriferous.

No. 194. Unnamed (Od) Double soft-pink flower, fragrant. The first flowers resemble the “Oeillet flamand” rose in shape. *Odd variety*.

WHITE AND FLESH SHADES

Single

Old Varieties

Album – Carneum – Violet-scented

New Varieties, raised from seed by M. Sahut

Buties Chaumont (Od) Large flower, fragrant, *buds inflated*, wide petals, soft pink lightly wine-colored, occasionally streaked with white, throat striped with bright-pink.

Rabelais (Od) very large flower, *fragrant*, buds inflated, wide petals, brilliant soft pink, throat striped with light carmine, Vigorous and *very floriferous* plant.

Lapeyronie (Od) Medium-sized flower, wide petals, light lavender, very lightly bordered with pink; throat bright pink

Marguerite (Od) Large flower, *lightly fragrant*; buds straw-yellow, medium-wide petals, transparent pure white; throat yellowish-white, tinted pink and with bright pink stripes, *Very floriferous variety*.

Le Chalet (Ol) Large flowers, buds inflated, wide petals, light pink bordered with a dark wine-pink, almost always variegated with white streaks.

Palavas (Od) Large flower, *fragrant*; buds yellow, petals slightly recurved inwards, transparent white; throat yellowish-white, tinted pink and striped with bright pink.

Madame Dubois (Ol) Medium-sized flower; petals of medium width, lightly turned inward, very pure white, very straightforward color, throat crowned by long white appendages. *The most beautiful of all the white Neriums.*

Mademoiselle Celestine (Od) Large flower, *very fragrant*; buds lemon yellow and inflated, wide petals, transparent milk-white; throat straw-yellow, not striped; crowned with numerous long appendages.

Angele Darac (Ol) Medium-sized flower; buds light carmine, petals medium-sized, flesh-salmon color, shaded pink, the right side bordered with light carmine, often variegated and streaked with yellowish-white; the reverse side of the petals widely bordered on the right side, carmine; throat heavily striped with magenta.

Emilie (Ol) Medium-sized flower; buds soft pink, slightly inflated, petals of medium width, lightly turned back inwards, of a quite clear flesh color, outwardly veined with soft pink. Throat the same shade, heavily striped with light magenta. Vigorous and floriferous plant, suitable for growing in containers outdoors. **Outstanding variety.**

Soeur Agnes (Od) Large flower, lightly fragrant; bud yellowish-white, wide petals, transparent snow-white, very beautiful. Throat milk-white, base yellowish-white, without any stripes. Vigorous, robust, and very floriferous plant. **Remarkably beautiful variety**, the best of this color for container culture outdoors.

No. 101. Unnamed (Od) Very close to the Indicum type, but the flowers are quite a bit larger.

No. 106. Unnamed (Ol) Flowers flesh-salmon, very lightly bordered with lavender-pink; throat straw-yellow, very floriferous. **Beautiful variety.**

No. 123. Unnamed (Ol) Flesh-colored, with large flowers. Corymb quite full.

No. 144. Unnamed (Od) Flesh-colored flowers, large; throat cream-white, bud carmine; violet-scented.

WHITE AND FLESH SHADES

With Superimposed Corollas

Old Varieties

Album plenum or Fonscolumbianum – Madoni grandiflorum

New Varieties, raised from seed by M. Sahut

Madame Peyre (Ol) Medium-sized flower, upright, buds straw-yellow, petals wide and rounded, upper corolla pure white, lower corolla pure white with the reverse bordered straw-yellow; the two throats straw-yellow, Floriferous variety, very outstanding and very vigorous. **Extra special.**

Exposition Universelle (Od) Small flower, lightly fragrant, sometimes with a triple corolla and at other times exhibiting the normal double type; bud dark pink, petals medium-wide, upper corolla flesh-colored, lightly bordered with pink; lower corolla similar; flesh-colored throat with yellow base, striped with carmine and crowned with very long appendages.

Souvenir d'Auguste Royer (Od) Medium-sized flower, lightly fragrant; buds pink, petals wide; upper corolla soft flesh-colored, overlaid with white, shaded pink and very lightly bordered with lavender; lower corolla similar, with narrower petals; throats yellowish white, striped with light carmine.

No. 130. Unnamed (Ol) White, with superimposed corollas

No. 131. Unnamed (Ol) Base flesh-colored, widely shaded and bordered with lavender-pink

WHITE AND FLESH SHADES

with double flowers, Splendens section

Old Variety

Carneum plenum, Costecalde.

DARK RED AND SCARLET SHADES

Single

Old Varieties

Atropurpureum – Geant des Batailles

New Varieties, raised from seed by M. Sahut

Souvenir de Cazalis Allut (Od) Medium-sized flower, *fragrant*; petals wide, beautiful crimson, velvety and with darker shading, bordered a darker velvety purple, almost black; color scheme hitherto unknown among Neriums; throat light wine-magenta, striped with dark-purple, almost black, and crowned with short, darker-colored appendages. **Extremely remarkable variety.**

Constance Cezelli (Od) Medium-sized flower, **very fragrant**; buds dark purple, *inflated*; petals lightly turned back inwards, light violet-shaded carmine; throat darker, almost no striping.

Louis Bourguet (Od). Small flower, fragrant, medium-side petals, turned back inwards; brilliant dark carmine, lightly bordered and shaded darker; reverse side of petals lighter, throat darker and crowned with finely-cut appendages; **very pleasant fragrance**. Vigorous and very floriferous plant; outstanding variety, suitable for container culture outdoors.

Claude Blanc (Ol) Very large flower, buds dark carmine, elongated petals, very brilliant light carmine, shaded and lightly bordered with magenta; throat dark pink. lightly striped with carmine and crowned with very finely-cut appendages. Vigorous and very floriferous plant; **very outstanding variety**, suitable for container culture outdoors.

Delphine (Od) Large flower, *fragrant*; buds carmine, petals very wide, light carmine, lightly bordered with dark carmine, throat striped carmine. Vigorous and very floriferous plant; **very outstanding variety**, suitable for container culture outdoors.

Augustine (Ol). Medium-sized flower; buds dark carmine, petals medium-side, brilliant carmine, overlaid and shaded with light carmine. Widely bordered with very dark carmine; throat crimson, not striped. **Outstanding variety.**

Lattes (Od) Small flower, very fragrant; buds dark carmine, wide petals, dark carmine, shaded and bordered with dark purple; new color scheme; throat lighter, almost no striping.

Professeur Martins (Ol) Large flower; buds very dark carmine, wide petals, light wine-carmine, lightly bordered with a brilliant dark carmine; *very rich coloration*; throat a bit darker carmine, striped with dark purple. Vigorous and very floriferous plant; **very outstanding variety**, suitable for container culture outdoors.

Tom-Pouce [*Tom Thumb*] (Ol) Dwarf plant, small flower, rounded petals, dark wine-pink bordered with light purple, throat pink, heavily striped with purple.

No. 125. Unnamed (Ol) Wine-carmine.

No. 121. Unnamed (Ol) Velvety dark carmine-magenta; extremities of the petals with very dark stripes; buds inflated.

No. 94. Unnamed (Ol) Brilliant bright carmine; crown the same shade; very well-developed corymb.

No. 140. Unnamed (Ol) Magenta washed with yellow; very large flowers; wide petals **Very beautiful variety**.

DARK RED AND SCARLET SHADES

With Double Flowers, Splendens section

Old Varieties

Ragonot - Rubrum plenum

New Varieties, raised from seed by M. Sahut

No. 111. Unnamed (OL) Medium-sized flowers, light carmine washed with dark carmine, often variegated; corymb very well-developed; very floriferous.

No. 116. Unnamed (Ol) Wine-magenta; medium-sized flowers.

YELLOW, SALMON, AND COPPER SHADES

Single

Old Varieties

Nankin – Yellow with Large Flowers, or *Luteum grandiflorum*. - Straw-yellow with Small Flowers, or *Luteum parviflorum*. - Aurantiacum – Cupreum

New Varieties, raised from seed by Mr. Sahut

Felix Bourguet (Od) Medium-sized flower, fragrant, narrow petals, light salmon, bordered on the left side and shaded with a salmonish light magenta; new color scheme; yellow throat striped with carmine and crowned with very long appendages. **Very outstanding variety.**

Maguelone (Ol) Small flower, flesh-colored buds; petals of medium width, milk-white, lightly bordered with soft pink; throat sulfur-yellow, striped with dark pink, crowned with long, deeply-cut appendages.

Cambaceres (Ol) Medium-sized flower; buds carmine, elongated petals, flesh-salmon, lightly bordered with light carmine; throat pink, base yellow, broadly striped with carmine and crowned with very long appendages.

YELLOW, SALMON, AND COPPER SHADES

With Superimposed Corollas

New Varieties, raised from seed by Mr. Sahut

Professeur Durand (Ol) Medium-sized flower; bud sulfur-yellow, wide petals, upper corolla straw-yellow, with sulfur-yellow throat, crowned with very long and finely-cut appendages; lower corolla widely separated from the upper one and of the same color; throat lemon-yellow, crowned by spread-out appendages. *Very outstanding variety.* **Extra special.**

This variety, raised by Mr. Sahut in 1868, was introduced by him to the trade in 1872.

In visiting certain horticultural establishments in various regions, we have been especially surprised to encounter this remarkable variety under the name *Flavum Duplex*. It had

been supplied to them under this name by a nursery with which Mr. Sahut had furnished a number of specimens. THIS IS DEPLORABLE! Who can confirm that similar maneuvers have not occurred with other varieties from Mr. Sahut's collection?

Professeur Planchon (Od) Large flower, *lightly fragrant*, occasionally with a triple corolla; buds light carmine, the upper corolla has wide petals, burnt flesh-colored, shaded and lightly bordered with dark pink. sometimes streaked with yellow; new color scheme; the lower corolla has narrower petals with the same coloration; throats dark canary-yellow, striped with bright carmine. *Very outstanding variety.* **Extra-special.**

Henri Sahut (Ol) Medium-sized flower; wide petals, upper corolla white shaded with flesh-color, washed with wine-pink, bordered on the right-hand side with dark lavender; lower corolla light pink bordered with dark lavender; throat light yellow, heavily striped with dark pink, Very beautiful.

Madame Planchon (Od) Very large flower, *lightly fragrant*; buds light carmine, wide petals; upper corolla occasionally doubled, soft pink shaded with lavender, bordered with dark lavender, and from time to time streaked with white; lower corolla darker in color; throat straw-yellow, lightly striped with light carmine, and crowned with finely-cut pink appendages. **Very outstanding variety.**

Madame Martins (Od) Large flower, very fragrant; buds light carmine, very wide petals; upper corolla a salmonish soft pink, very lightly bordered with light lavender; lower corolla, petals narrower and a bit darker; the two throats straw-yellow striped with carmine. **Very outstanding variety.**

In dedicating the new varieties of Neriums which he has successively raised, Mr. Sahut has not proceeded arbitrarily, as is so often the case. He wished to bear witness to his adoration of the memories of, and his affection for, his family, to pay tribute to friendships, to recall the names of illustrious locals who are no more, to thank our professors of botany and forestry for their collegiality, to not forget lovers of the oleander, and finally to recognize the services of his directors of cultivation, whose intelligence, zeal and devotion you all know, and who, for more than forty years, have not slowed down.

There still remain some gaps to fill, some forgotten ones to make amends for; but this will be easy, for there are in the collection a good number of very deserving varieties which have not yet been dedicated.

Mr. Sahut will have the opportunity to perpetuate the name of Mr. Radier, one of our city's most distinguished oleander enthusiasts. He propagated the variety known by the name **Radianum**, which is of the superimposed-corolla type.

Sixty-five years ago, oleander collections were quite modest; they were comprised solely of two varieties: the **common oleander**, *Nerium oleander*, and the **fragrant oleander**, *Nerium odoratum*, to which were added an oleander with variegated leaves and another with flowers variegated in pink and white, which was probably nothing more than a fleeting accident.

Meanwhile, the attraction which the oleander inspires has become so powerful since then that several horticulturalists, by continually and persistently sowing seeds under the most unfavorable climatic conditions, have little by little enriched this collection of more or less worthy varieties, whose preservation is essential.

Here, gentlemen, is the most complete list possible of these varieties, attached to the section to which each of them belongs, along with the name of the breeder.

You know that oleanders are classified as European – *Nerium oleander*, and Indian – *Nerium indicum*. The particular characteristics which serve as the basis for this distinction are the result of the shape of the corona, according to certain authors. In the European ones, the five divisions of the flower's corona end in short projections. In the Indian ones, the five divisions end in long filaments.

The oleander varieties most widely distributed in the trade are:

N. o. Atropurpureum, with a dark magenta flower.

N. o. with white flowers.

N.o. Radicans, with flowers of a more beautiful white and with wider divisions. –*Lemon*.

No. o. Carne Double, double flesh-colored flowers, very pretty.

The principal varieties of *Nerium indicum* are:

N. Oxiacantholens, with the fragrance of hawthorn. This variety is said to have come from the botanical garden of Angers and was introduced to the trade by Mr. Savart, Sr. of Montreuil.

N. Ochroleucum, with white flowers and pale yellow coronas striped with magenta lines –*Lemon*.

N. Aurantiacum, orangish-yellow flower, coppery-salmon – *Lemon*.

N. Luteum, small flowers, a very pronounced pale yellow, with narrow lobes, –*Noisette*.

N. Odorum with the fragrance of violets. Flesh-colored flowers, corona tube bright yellow, marked with pink lines. –*Noisette*.

Nerium Splendens, with large, pink, very double flowers. –*Bicquelin*.

N. s. Hacvillii is very similar to *Splendens*; its leaves are wider. This variety also appears under the name **Splendens giganteum**,

N. Ragonot, semi-double dark-red flowers, broadly streaked with white.

N. Mabirii, also known by the name **Jeanne d'Arc Oleander**, has white flowers arranged in a pyramid.

N. Jaune [yellow] **Nankin**.

N. Luteum Grandiflorum, with large yellow flowers; very beautiful variety.

N. Cupreum, with copper-colored flowers.

N. Geant des Batailles, variety with very dark magenta flowers.

N. Foliis variegatis: *Splendens* with variegated leaves.

N. Album plenum, an very old white variety with double corollas, the base of the tube sulfur-yellow. This **Nerium** is often listed in catalogues under the name *Fonscolumbianum*.

N. Splendens carneum plenum, very beautiful variety with large, flesh-colored flowers, raised by Mr. Costecalde, former gardener in Montpellier.

N. Radianum, variety with bright pink flowers, double corollas, very floriferous, introduced by Mr. Radier, a great oleander enthusiast in Montpellier.

N. Madoni, *Grandiflorum*, very beautiful variety with semi-double white flowers, with superimposed corollas, raised by Mr. Madon, horticulturalist in Aix, Provence, in 1867; released to the trade in 1869 **Nerium Madoni** is a perfected form of *Nerium Fonscolumbianum*, and represents very definite progress toward the goal of a white-flowered *Splendens*, which is so desired.

It seemed appropriate to me to list these old varieties of **Neriums**, so that you can suitably appreciate the special merit of Mr. Sahut's collection.

This collection is without a doubt the most beautiful and the most important one known.

The number of additions which he has successively attained has become considerable. His oleanders are all planted in the ground and in the open air. Moreover, the oleander is a shrub which must necessarily be cultivated in the ground and in full sun if it is to achieve its full potential.

Its flowers are not suitable for making bouquets, as they wither quite quickly once cut from the branch; this is a characteristic which is good to point out.

Single-flowered Neriums and those with superimposed corollas drop their spent flowers naturally. They fall by themselves, and the shrub maintains the same brilliant appearance through to the end of the flowering season.

This is a great advantage which does not occur with the double varieties called Splendens, These varieties are in any case not very numerous, and their spent flowers must be removed with care as they wither, so that they don't create an unattractive appearance.

Those who are familiar with the brilliant effect that oleanders impart to our gardens wonder why they generally play such a small role in them.

It is quite simple: they are no longer in fashion.

You know as well as I that fashion, both in the present and in the past, continues to impose its tyrannical empire on all things.

In the North, a feature of garden decoration has been adopted from which one cannot get away.

The square has triumphed to such an extent that we don't find any other forms, whether in our public places, or in private. The verse by Boileau, so well-known, truly applies in this case:

“Boredom was born on a day of uniformity”

Why should we not give our gardens a special character by making oleanders a large part of them?

Why wouldn't it be suitable, for example, to use them in strips, along ivy-covered walls, or in massed beds?

Imagine the effect produced by all the hues of the magnificent varieties which we have just described, if they were to be placed artistically?

Would it be possible to compose a more ravishing tableau of flowers, for such a long period, beginning in the month of June and lasting all the way to November?

Is it not a matter of putting routine aside and propagating these precious shrubs on a large scale? They grow so beautifully here in our South, although they flower with difficulty in the North. This is probably the explanation for their neglect by landscape designers in those cold and cloudy regions.

We have the bad habit of calling them too often to design our gardens, instead of consulting with our colleagues who have proven themselves in this regard and who cannot be too strongly encouraged.

I invite you at this time, gentlemen, to walk along the grand alley of our beautiful promenade of Peyrou. The oleanders there are in full bloom, and you will appreciate the benefits to be gained by cultivating this seductive plant.

Those of you who have seen them recently illuminated by fireworks will say that it is impossible to get an precise idea of the effect produced by the artificial light on this double curtain of flowers; it was truly a magical spectacle.

The oleander should be the principal ornament of our gardens on the coast of the Mediterranean. It grows admirably planted in the ground; cultivated in this way, it easily tolerates eight to ten degrees of frost, and does not succumb except in exceedingly harsh winters, but the trunk withstands these and the shrub regenerates easily.

Cultivating these therefore presents the greatest benefits, and one cannot encourage or spread this enough.

However, it is essential to instruct our little children quite earnestly not to chew the flowers or leaves, and to take the greatest care that the branches are never used to prepare foods, and especially never used to heat our ovens or bakeries. We will therefore avoid reliving the misfortune to which too large a number of our soldiers fell victim in Africa because of their recklessness.

The oleander's botanical name, *Nerium*, comes from the Greek word **neros**, meaning "moist", which seems to indicate that this shrub cannot thrive except in soils of that type.

In its native habitat, it is indeed encountered in terrains of that particular nature, however, it would be a mistake to think that it cannot succeed except in that type of soil. In fact, the oleander is very easy to grow, and although it prefers deep soil and abundant watering, it adapts to all soils, on the condition that the hotter the temperature, the more it is watered.

Its presence creates a bright effect wherever it is found, from the modest workshop to the most exalted noblemen's parks.

When the climate and the soil suit it, the oleander, left to its own devices, grows with an incomparable vigor. It can reach heights of eight meters, it almost becomes a tree, of which the trunk can surpass twenty centimeters in diameter.

One is occasionally surprised to encounter in this condition in regions where it would not seem that it should thrive.

It is thus that I found it in Crau d'Arles, in the Mas d'Olivier, at the home of one of my best friends. Grown as a single-trunked tree, it was taller than the roof on the first story of

the guardhouse; the crown was more than ten meters in circumference, and when this *Splendens* was in bloom, it was truly magnificent.

It did not withstand the hard winter of 1870; however, after being cut down, it grew back vigorous branches which have already attained a height of three meters and are covered with blossoms at present.

It has often been repeated that the oleander is the rhododendron of the South.

This comparison, while correct in certain aspects, does not diminish the merits of the former so much as to elevate it over the latter by virtue of its great number of invaluable qualities.

It adapts, in fact, to all types of soil, blooms much more abundantly, and its flowering season, instead of being almost ephemeral, lasts for a period of at least four consecutive months.

You all know how extremely easy it is to propagate: by layering, by cuttings placed in water, in a clear glass vase exposed to the most blazing rays of the sun; the roots of these cuttings grow with amazing ease, especially if one has taken care to make an incision in the lower part of the twig placed in the water.

I will not attempt further to present the merits of this shrub, favored above all, as I would be appearing to plead a bad cause.

However, permit me, gentlemen, to add one more word.

Every being in the Universe, whatever the realm of nature to which it belongs, has received its own particular destiny according to the providential plan of creation, which one cannot fail to recognize.

That of the Nerium, this absolutely outstanding shrub of the family Apocynaceae, indigenous to the south of Europe, the north of Africa, and to southern Asia, is characterized perfectly.

It adorns the banks of ravines and watercourses in an incomparable fashion.

Its presence on the banks of the Eurotas contributed powerfully to the fame of this river in Laconia, which was praised by the poets. Finally, those who have traveled in Corsica or in our Algerian colony will tell you what incomparable charm this unrivalled shrub confers upon the various bodies of water.

In fact, when one looks at them from a distance, these streams and rivers flowing across the plains resemble immense garlands of roses, which one could never cease to admire.

This is why, gentlemen, if it were granted to us, as it was to the son of Priam, to confer the Golden Apple upon the most beautiful shrub to adorn the gardens of our southern regions, our choice would be unanimous, and we would gladly award the Palm of Beauty to the oleander, without having to fear either the anger or the fury of Juno.

As the conclusion of this report, the interest in which would be quite different if our teachers had accepted the editing thereof, it only remains for me to propose, gentlemen, to issue a high proclamation regarding the exceptional merit of this most rich collection of Neriums which you have admired with ever-increasing attraction, and to confer upon Mr Sahut an extraordinary award of the first order.

This new honor, together with those which he has received several times, grants us the opportunity to demonstrate, in the most visible way, our regard for our colleague, whose knowledge and extreme modesty you have known for a long time.

Ch. C.

Translator's note: The French terms "lilas" (lilac) and "pourpre" (purple) do not really apply to known colors of oleander flowers. Some pinks appear to have a lavender cast or overlay, depending upon the lighting; in this case I have translated the word "lilas" as "lavender". In most cases, the word "pourpre" in the context of oleander flower color would be "magenta" in our parlance. In a very few cases, for example, to describe the very dark (almost black) edging of some dark red flowers, I have used the word "purple". Similarly, in this context the word "cramoisi" is best translated as "crimson", not "scarlet".

Interestingly, the description of "Emile Sahut" given on page 5 does not at all match the variety currently known as "Emile Sahut" in Europe and as "Scarlet Beauty" in the USA. According to Pagen, the variety "Emile Sahut" was first listed in Sahut's catalogue in 1873. The cultivar universally known today as "Emile Sahut" is the most widespread and popular dark-red variety; the darkest red, in fact, of all oleander cultivars. On Cavallier's list, the cultivar most closely matching it in description would be 'Souvenir de Cazalis Allut' on page 11. It is possible that Felix Sahut reassigned the name "Emile Sahut" to the dark-red cultivar before publishing it in his catalogue.

I have often speculated that the old, well-known, very widespread hose-in-hose white cultivar known today in Europe as “Mont Blanc”, in Galveston as “Magnolia Willis Sealy”, and sold by the over-100-year-old Logee’s Greenhouses of Danielson, Connecticut as “Album” might be a Sahut variety, given Sahut’s predilection for this unusual flower form. Cavallier mentions ‘Fonscolumbianum’ as a very old variety and ‘Madoni Grandiflorum’ as an improved version of it; it is very possible that either one of these varieties, already identified in 1875 as very old, may be the same as the current standard hose-in-hose white of today. See descriptions of ‘N. Album Plenum’ and ‘N. Madoni Grandiflorum’, page 16.