

TREE OF THE MONTH – March 2012

Tree Rhododendron (*Rhododendron calophytum* var. *calophytum*)

With a maximum height of around 12 m, *Rhododendron calophytum* is one of several *Rhododendron* species that grow large enough to qualify as a small tree. Specimens can be identified by their size, foot-long leaves and flowers, pale pink with a large dark pink spot inside, which bloom in late winter. Hardy to - 20 °C, their leaves will sometimes curl up during a very cold, hard frost.

Rhododendron calophytum is native to China, a dominant tree in the forests of Mt. Emei, Sichuan. The species was first described in 1886 by French botanist Adrien René Franchet. It is one of many plants introduced to cultivation by the famous Ernest H. Wilson, who made four collecting trips to China between 1899 and 1911.



