



Rhododendron



One of the early summer flowers I enjoy in western North Carolina is the Rosebay rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*). With that common name, you might expect its flowers to be a pink or rose color. However, they are actually mostly white with a hint of pink.

Another beautiful Rhododendron in this region grows in the mountains at elevations above 3500 feet. This is the Catawba rhododendron (*R. catawbiense*). Its flowers are purple or deep rose. I witnessed the first blooms of this flower last week.



According to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center site, Catawba rhododendron "has been hybridized with the less hardy Himalayan species to produce some of our most spectacular showy rhododendrons" which are the ornamental rhododendrons you can find in home landscapes.



Other species in the Rhododendron genus include the various azaleas: flame, pinxterbloom, pinkshell, sweet white. All the members of this genus have flowers with the same shape. They simply have different colors and sizes to their inflorescences.

Spores and Pollen



I was reading a brief description of a stamen and its parts, when I wondered "What is the relationship, if any, between spores and pollen?" Opening my favorite glossary ([Plant Identification Terminology](#) by James G. and Melinda Woolf Harris), I looked up the definitions.

spore = a reproductive cell resulting from meiotic cell division in a sporangium, representing the first cell of the gametophyte generation.

pollen = the mature microspores or developing male gametophytes of a seed plant, produced in the microsporangium of a gymnosperm or in the anther of an angiosperm.

That led to a new question: "What's a gymnosperm and what's an angiosperm?"

gymnosperm = plants producing seeds which are not borne in an ovary (fruit), the seeds usually borne in cones.

angiosperm = a plant producing flowers and bearing ovules (seeds) in an ovary (fruit).

And then. . . "What is a microspore?"

microspore = a male spore which will give rise to the male gametophyte.

So what is the female spore called? What would be the opposite of "micro?" Could it be "macro?" I looked up "macrospore" and the glossary referred me to "megaspore."

megaspore = a female spore which will give rise to the female gametophyte.



Let me summarize my understanding and how I might answer my initial query. Pollen comes from gymnosperms (like scrub pine) and angiosperms (like daylily, or corn). Pollen is actually a spore -- a "microspore" -- in that it's a reproductive cell which is specifically a "male spore."



All those definitions, of course, lead me to wondering what is a gametophyte? And then, what is a sporophyte? I'll leave those two terms for you to look up for yourself.

Mystery Plant Confirmed



Andrew correctly identified [Mystery Plant 073](#) as Fairy wand (*Chamaelirium luteum*). Two of its common names seem in direct contrast to each other: "Fairy wand" and "Devil's bit."

Mystery Plant

What is the name of this plant? ([There are more images on the website.](#))





When you can identify this plant, provide your response at [IdentifyThatPlant.com](https://www.identifythatplant.com) as

a comment for the blog entry called [Mystery Plant 074](#). Please identify the plant by both its common name and its scientific name. The answer will be confirmed in the next newsletter.

Confidently master the skill of correct plant identification

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