



(12) **United States Plant Patent**  
**Harris**

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(54) **AZALEA PLANT NAMED ‘MNIHAR015’**

(50) Latin Name: ***Rhododendron* sp.**  
Varietal Denomination: **MNIHAR015**

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patent is extended or adjusted under 35  
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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A new and distinct variety of Azalea plant with spring and fall  
blooming, attractive, showy, semi-double dark pink flowers,  
easily propagated by semi-hardwood cuttings in late spring  
through summer, moderate growth rate under normal fertili-  
zation and moisture conditions; broadly-rounded and freely-  
branching in habit, grows well in containers, thrives in shade  
or sun and is hardy in Zone 6, is disclosed.

**2 Drawing Sheets**

**1**

Genus and species: *Rhododendron* sp.  
Variety denomination: ‘MNIHAR015’.

**BACKGROUND OF THE NEW PLANT**

The present invention is a new and distinct variety of ever-  
green Azalea of the genus *Rhododendron*. This new Azalea,  
hereinafter referred to as ‘MNIHAR015’, was discovered in  
2004 in Lawrenceville, Ga. ‘MNIHAR015’ originated from a  
planned cross hybridization in 1998 between the female aza-  
lea plant ‘Conleb’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 10,581) and the male  
azalea plant ‘Helen Close’ (unpatented) in a controlled envi-  
ronment in Lawrenceville, Ga. The present invention has a  
unique combination of blooming period, growth habit, and  
cold hardiness.

The new plant was first propagated via semi-hardwood  
cuttings in 2004 in Dearing, Ga. and has been asexually  
reproduced repeatedly by semi-hardwood cuttings in Dear-  
ing, Ga. for over six years. The new plant retains its distinctive  
characteristics and reproduces true to type in successive  
asexual propagations by semi-hardwood cuttings.

Plant Breeder’s Rights for ‘MNIHAE015’ have not been  
applied for. ‘MNIHAR015’ has not been made publicly avail-  
able or sold more than one year prior to the filing date of this  
application.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The following are the most outstanding and distinguishing  
characteristics of this new plant when grown under normal  
horticultural practices in Dearing, Ga.

1. Spring and fall blooming;
2. Attractive, showy, dark pink colored flowers;
3. Numerous semi-double flowers;
4. Easily propagated by semi-hardwood cuttings in late  
spring through summer;
5. Moderate growth rate under normal fertilization and  
moisture conditions;

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6. Rounded, compact in nature;
7. Grows well in containers;
8. Thrives in shade or sun; and
9. Hardy in Zone 6.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS**

This new Azalea plant is illustrated by the accompanying  
photographs which show buds, flowers, immature foliage and  
mature foliage. The colors shown are as true as can be rea-  
sonably obtained by conventional photographic means. The  
photographs are of 4-year old plants grown in filtered shade in  
September in 2009 in Dearing, Ga.

FIG. 1 is a close-up showing the stems and mature foliage.

FIG. 2 shows the mature foliage and growth habit of a  
5-year old plant.

FIG. 3 is a close-up showing flower buds and immature  
foliage.

FIG. 4 is a close-up showing flower size, form, and color.

**DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE  
NEW PLANT**

The following is a detailed description of the new Azalea  
plant based on observations made of 4-year-old plants grown  
in a three-gallon containers according to wholesale commer-  
cial production conditions under full-sun and in an evaluation  
bed under semi-shade conditions in Dearing, Ga. in spring,  
summer, and fall in 2009. The colors of the various plant parts  
are detailed with reference to The Royal Horticultural Society  
Colour Chart (2001).

Classification:

*Family*.—Ericaceae.

*Species*.—*Rhododendron* sp.

*Common name*.—Azalea.

*Commercial name*.—‘MNIHAR015’.



## Parentage:

*Female parent.*—The azalea plant ‘Conleb’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 10,581).

*Male parent.*—The azalea plant ‘Helen Close’ (unpatented).

## Growth:

*Form.*—Rounded, compact in nature.

*Texture.*—Medium.

*Height.*—76.2 cm to 106.68 cm.

*Width.*—106.68 cm to 121.92 cm.

*Growth habit.*—Rounded and freely-branching.

*Growth rate.*—Moderate growth rate under normal fertilization and moisture conditions. In a period of five years from a rooted cutting the plant reaches a height of 40.64 cm and a spread of 71.12 cm. The growth rate normally averages about 3.6 cm per year; the plant reaches a height of 76.2 cm to 106.68 cm at maturity while maintaining a dense habit due to the abundant branch development.

*Spring growth.*—The date of initial spring growth is March 20, followed by continuous growth through fall.

*Life cycle.*—Perennial and evergreen.

## Leaves:

*Arrangement.*—Alternate, simple, pubescent, and evergreen.

*Shape.*—Elliptic.

*Apex.*—Mucronate.

*Base.*—Acuminate.

*Margin.*—Entire.

*Length.*—3.5 cm.

*Width.*—1.5 cm.

*Venation pattern.*—Pinnate; the mid-veins and laterals are impressed on the upper surface and the prominent on the lower surface.

*Venation color (both surfaces).*—RHS 144A (yellow-green).

*Immature leaf.*—Upper surface: Color: Matte, RHS 144A (yellow-green). Pubescence: Strigose, low to moderate amount; color is RHS N155A (white) to RHS 159B (orange-white). Lower surface: Color: Matte, RHS 146C (yellow-green). Pubescence: Strigose, moderate amount mainly along mid-vein; color is RHS 155C (white).

*Mature leaf.*—Upper surface: Color: Matte to Semi-glossy, RHS 147A (yellow-green). Pubescence: Villous; color is RHS 164D (grey-orange). Lower surface: Color: Matte, RHS 146A (yellow-green). Pubescence: Villous; color is RHS 164B (greyed-orange).

*Petiole.*—Length: 0.4 cm to 0.6 cm. Diameter: 0.15 cm by 0.1 cm. Pubescence: Villous and hirsute becoming strigose, length is 0.15 cm to 0.3 cm and color is RHS N155A (white) and RHS 159A (orange-white) and maturing to RHS 161C (greyed-yellow). Color: Begins as RHS 142B (green) and matures to RHS 144A (yellow-green).

## Stems:

*Form.*—Densely branched at buds.

*Young stems (1-year old and younger).*—Color: RHS N144D (yellow-green) maturing to RHS N199C (grey-brown). Pubescence: Strigose RHS 164C (greyed-orange) to RHS 165A (greyed-orange).

*Second-year stems.*—Stem and pubescence color: RHS 197B (greyed-green) with strigose pubescence RHS

197B (greyed-green) present. Length: 10 cm on average. Diameter: 0.3 cm. Pith: Solid and uniform. Internode length: Average 1.7 cm.

## Flower buds:

*Arrangement and form.*—Tight; borne in groups of one or two with some in groups of four and five sheathed by a pair of modified leaf bracts which are 1.3 cm in length, 1.0 cm in width, persistent and RHS 144A (green) in color.

*Shape.*—Ovate.

*Apex.*—Acuminate.

*Base.*—Rounded.

*Length (at tight bud).*—1.3 cm.

*Diameter (at tight bud).*—0.3 cm.

*Bud scales.*—Length: 1.2 cm. Width: 0.4 cm.

*Color (of scales).*—Immature scales are RHS 142C (green) and mature to RHS 145A (yellow-green).

*Texture.*—Scabrous; strigose pubescence RHS 164A (greyed-orange).

*Pedicel.*—Length: 0.8 cm. Diameter: 0.15 cm. Texture: Strigose pubescence that is RHS N155A (white). Color: RHS 182A (greyed-red).

*Calyx.*—Form and arrangement: Composed of 5 sepals in a cup-shape. Length: 0.65 cm. Width: 0.65 cm. Color: RHS 144A (yellow-green). Pubescence: Strigose; RHS N155A (white) in color with a RHS 58A (red-purple) apex. Sepals: Shape: Broadly elliptical. Apex: Cuspidate to Obtuse. Base: Fused; joined at base to form a cup. Margin: Entire with some lobulate. Color: Upper surface: RHS 144A (yellow-green). Lower surface: RHS 143C (green). Length: 0.8 cm. Width: 0.35 cm.

## Flowers:

*Type.*—Perfect, Semi-double flowers.

*Shape.*—Open funnel-shaped.

*Flowering habit and period.*—Borne on the current season's growth; two weeks beginning in late March in Dearing, Ga.; flowering resumes in late August and continues until frost which can be as late as November or December.

*Lastingness of flowers on the plant.*—4 to 6 days in the sun; 4 to 7 days in the shade; flowers are self cleaning.

*Fragrance.*—Absent.

*Diameter.*—5.0 cm.

*Depth.*—3.2 cm.

*Petals.*—Quantity per flower and arrangement: 5 or 6 imbricate petals of the corolla tube that are fused at the base and remain fused up to 1.5 cm from the base and 1.9 cm from the base for the three petals with spots. Shape: Obovate. Apex: Rounded. Base: Fused. Margin: Entire to undulate. Texture (both upper and lower surfaces): Glabrous. Length (of petals without spots): 3.2 cm. Width (of petals without spots): 2.0 cm. Length (petals with spots): 1.8 cm. Width (petals with spots): 3.0 cm. Color: upper surfaces are RHS 64D (red-purple); lower surfaces are RHS 62B (red-purple); the upper surface of the spots are RHS 71A (red-purple) and lower surface of spots are not visible.

*Petaloids.*—Length: 1.5 cm. Width: 0.9 cm. Shape: Slightly obovate, apex irregularly rounded, lobed and notched. Color: RHS 64D (red-purple).

## Reproductive parts:

*Pistil.*—Quantity and form: Single, non-petaloid. Length: 3.8 cm. Diameter: 0.1 cm. Stigma: Color: RHS N167B (greyed-orange). Diameter: 0.15 cm.

Style color: RHS 47D (red). Ovary: Pubescent, Strigose RHS N155A (white), with 5 locules.

*Stamens*.—Number: 5 to 7 per flower; petaloid. Length: 1.6 cm. Color: RHS 51B (red). Filament: RHS 51B (red); 1.6 cm in length. Anther: RHS 167C (greyed-orange); 0.2 cm in length by 0.1 cm in width. Pollen: Abundant; RHS 155D (white).

Fruit:

*Maturity*.—The capsule matures in about 6 months in Dearing, Ga. and the fruit set is low and contains about 100 to 300 non-winged seeds.

*Length*.—0.6 cm.

*Width*.—0.5 cm.

*Color*.—RHS 147B (yellow-green).

CULTURE

‘MNIHAR015’ grows well in a wide range of conditions and tolerates sun to shade. ‘MNIHAR015’ prefers moist, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter and responds well to mulching and medium applications of fertilizer. ‘MNIHAR015’ does best in soil with a pH of 5.0 to 5.5 and is propagated with semi-hardwood cuttings in late spring through the summer. Azaleas root in five to six weeks with high 80% plus percentage of rooting, tissue culture is also an effective means of propagation for azaleas.

DISEASES AND INSECTS

Lace bugs, root weevils, and spider mites can be a problem. Fungal and bacterial pathogens have not been observed, but no resistance testing has been performed and no claim to abnormal resistance to pathogens can be made.

COMPARISON WITH PARENTAL AND COMMERCIAL VARIETIES

In Table 1, ‘MNIHAR015’ is compared to parental varieties ‘Conleb’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 10,581) and ‘Helen Close’ (unpatented) and lists the differences between the varieties.

TABLE 1

Characteristic	‘MNIHAR015’	‘Conleb’	‘Helen Close’
Plant Height (Mature)	76.2 cm to 106.68 cm	121.92 cm to 152.4 cm	121.92 cm
Flower Diameter	5 cm	6.5 cm	7.62 cm
Flower Form	Semi-double	Single to semi-double	Single
Flower Color	Dark Pink	Red	White with pale yellow blotch
Bloom Period	Late-March to April and late August until frost	April and late July until frost	Mid April to May
Hardy Zone	6	7	6
Stamen Number	5 to 7	0 to 9	3 to 8
Stamen Type	Petaloid	Petaloid and Non-petaloid	Non-petaloid

When ‘MNIHAR015’ is compared to the commercial variety ‘Roblen’ (U.S. Plant Pat. No. 16,248), ‘MNIHAR015’ has a broader and slower growth habit (40.64 cm and a spread of 71.12 cm in five years) than ‘Roblen’ which has a height of 91.44 cm and a spread of 60.96 cm in six years. Additionally, ‘MNIHAR015’ produces dark pink flowers, while ‘Roblen’ has bright red flowers.

I claim:

1. A new variety of Azalea plant named ‘MNIHAR015’ as herein shown and described.

\* \* \* \* \*





**FIG. 1**

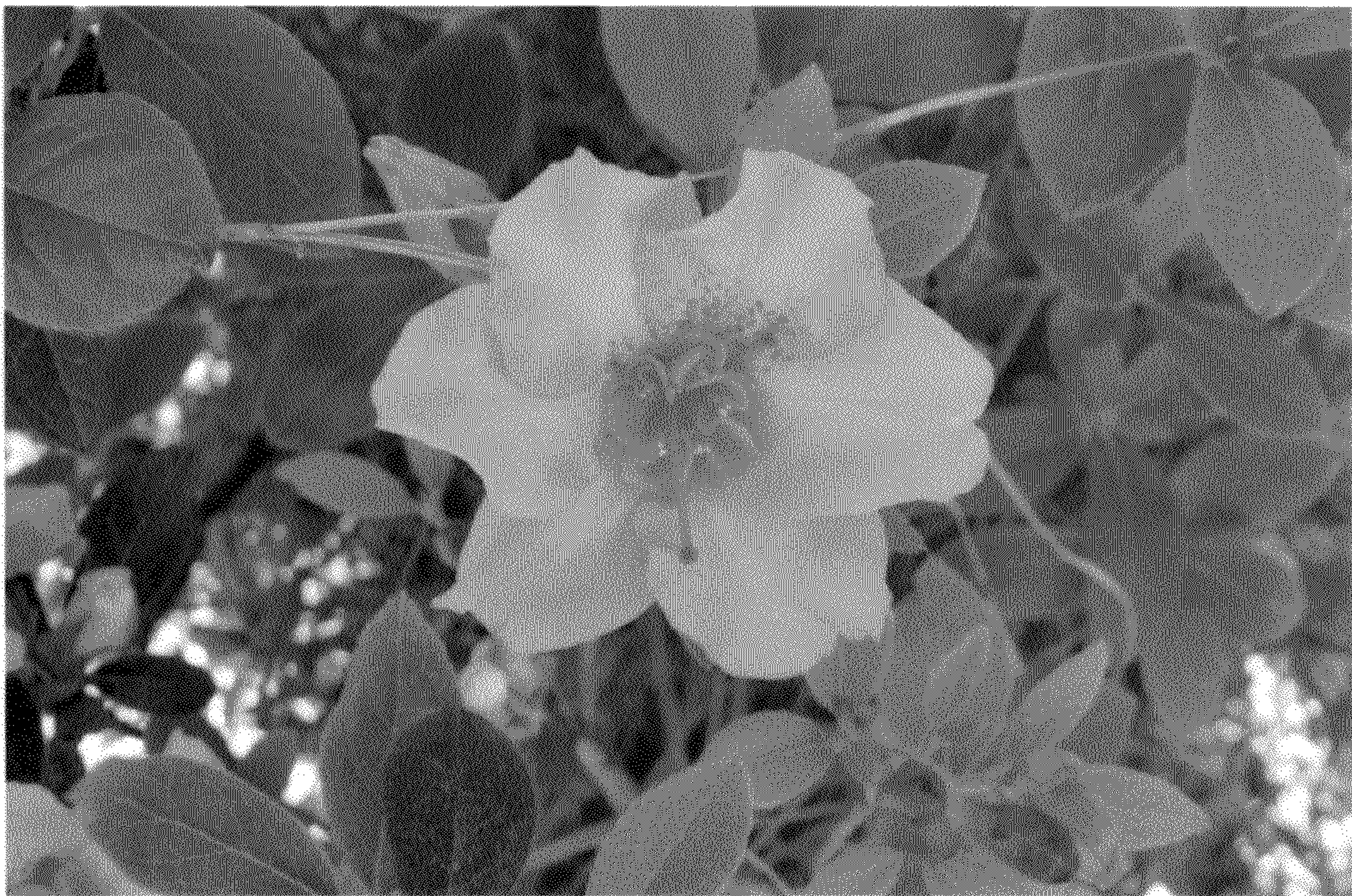


**FIG. 2**





**FIG. 3**



**FIG. 4**