

Something rhododendron

The film of Bill Bryson's book A Walk in the Woods was on British TV last week and prompted me to read my husband's copy. I was interested to read him writing about the rhododendrons of the Appalachian Mountains. We have rhododendrons in English forests but many conservationists consider them to be pests which are smothering native species and are to be contained. These plants came originally from the Himalayas collected by the Victorians for ornamental gardens. I have always rather admired them, but the one I planted in Dagenham over 30 years ago disliked either the soil or the industrial atmosphere from the Ford Works which was still very active then, and it didn't thrive.

But the place I visited recently contained many specimen blooming at their best.

