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Kolkwitzia amabilis

BEAUTYBUSH is a deciduous shrub. Native to central China it has small, yellow-throated, pink flowers, and leaves that turn reddish in Autumn.

It is also known as American beauty bush, Chinese beauty bush, *Kolkwitzie* (German), *Kolkwitzie krásná* (Czech), and *Paradisbuske* (Swedish).

Amabilis is Latin (amiable, lovable) meaning ‘beautiful or lovely’.

Beautybush was initially discovered in the Chinese province of Hupeh (now Hubei) by an Italian missionary, Père Guiseppe Giraldi who was working in Shensi (now Shaanxi) from 1890-1895 – and shortly afterwards by Augustine Henry, an Irish doctor serving in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service, who sent either a dried specimen or seeds to Kew.

But it was not until ‘Chinese Wilson’ came on the scene that beautybush began to receive close attention. As a result authorities tend to give the credit for its introduction to Europe to Ernest Henry Wilson (1876-1930), the famous English-born American botanist and traveller. He was commissioned to collect plants from China on behalf of the English nursery, Veitch & Sons, and on his first trip sent home viable seeds of the beautybush in 1890. These are said to have flowered in Britain for the first time about ten years later.

Beautybush, so named by the Americans, was not introduced to North America until 1901 when it gained immediate popularity there.