

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

A Publication of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American  
Rhododendron Society

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February 2016

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

April 20-24, 2016

ARS ASA Convention, Williamsburg,  
Virginia

### Rhododendron website addresses:

American Rhododendron Society	<a href="http://www.rhododendron.org/">http://www.rhododendron.org/</a>
ARS Store Order from Amazon thru this site	<a href="http://arsstore.org/">http://arsstore.org/</a>
MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)	<a href="http://www.macars.org/">http://www.macars.org/</a>
UVA Special Collections	<a href="http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/">http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/</a>
Old Quarterly Bulletins & JARS	<a href="http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/">http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/</a>
Rhododendron Blog	<a href="http://www.rhododendron.org/blog/">www.rhododendron.org/blog/</a>
Friends of the National Arboretum	<a href="http://savetheazaleas.org/">http://savetheazaleas.org/</a>
FONA's Save the Azaleas and Boxwood site	
Our 2016 Convention site (NEW)	<a href="http://www.arsasaconvention2016.org">www.arsasaconvention2016.org</a>

### APRIL 20-24, 2016: WILLIAMSBURG CONVENTION

A MAC General Meeting and election will be held at the Convention in Williamsburg. Our meeting will be at 9a.m. on Sunday, April 24, probably in the banquet room. (See agenda handout at meeting to verify location.)

Instead of a regular Spring Meeting this year MAC, as part of District 9 of ARS, will be one of the hosts of a joint convention of the American Rhododendron Society and the Azalea Society of America in Williamsburg, Virginia. Visit the link below to see the details and register for the meeting, tours and events. [www.arsasaconvention2016.org](http://www.arsasaconvention2016.org)

An article and registration form for the meeting is in the Winter 2016 issue of the *Journal*, as well as in the online edition of it. Register early since rooms are already filling up.

Don Hyatt, Rick Bauer, and the rest of the committee have worked very hard to organize a really special meeting. There are gardens and tours that even many MAC members have not had the opportunity to visit before!

There will be tours to Richmond, Norfolk (and Carrollton), Gloucester, Colonial Williamsburg and Historic Jamestown.

Speakers include John Bartram (Kirk Brown), Steve Hootman (Rhododendron Species

Foundation), Rick Lewandowski, and Mike Stewart (former ARS President).

### CAN YOU HELP IN WILLIAMSBURG? PLEASE VOLUNTEER.

 by Don Hyatt

We will need many to people to help stage the 2016 Convention in Williamsburg. Here are some of the key activities. If you can assist, please let Don Hyatt or Rick Bauer know. See contact information at end of schedule.

#### Tuesday, April 19

**Plant Sale Staging:** 8 AM to 6 PM.

Move plants from various places to the hotel.

#### Wednesday, April 20, 2016

**Plant Sale Setup:** 8 AM to 5 PM

Put plants on tables and organize the sale.

**Flower and Photography Show:** 9 AM to 5 PM

Accept entries and organize the display

**Registration/Hospitality:** 9 AM to 6 PM

Man registration desk and pass out packets

Assist people with Pre-conference tours

**Plant Sale Open:** 5:00 PM to 11 PM

Cashiers and people to assist with sales

**Evening Program:** 7 PM to 11 PM

We need 3 Moderators and computer savvy AV people to run discussion groups: 1) Rhododendron Breeders Round Table, Native Azaleas, Evergreen Azaleas

#### Thursday, April 21, 2016

**Registration/Hospitality:** 7 AM to 9 AM

Man registration desk and pass out packets.



snow and frozen slush. So I must reflect on what has pleased me the past months in my winter garden.

Winter foliage can be as pleasing in the garden as winter flowers. Two genera of plants have fascinated me this winter, they are *Cyclamen* and *Arum*. Both are



George McLellan

perennials which do well in dry shade but dislike wet and bog-like conditions. They are what Pamela Harper calls her “Summer Escapees,” for their habit of disappearing when the summer heat arrives and then reappearing in the cool of autumn.

Two *Cyclamen* which I recommend are *Cyclamen hederifolium* and *C. coum*, both hardy in Zone 8 to Zone 4. *Cyclamen hederifolium* blooms before its foliage emerges starting sometime in August with a few flowers, reaching its peak in October and declining as its foliage begins to appear in late October. The five swept-back petals appear on 3 inch stems (scapes) and can range from deep pink to pale pink and white on different forms. But it is the winter foliage that is the real star for the winter garden. Each tuber produces its own distinct foliage with different patterns, colors, and shapes



*Cyclamen hederifolium*. Photo by S. McDonald.

Colors range from greens, grays, silver and blush gray in many intricate patterns. Leaf shapes have many varied forms: ivy leaf shaped, round, shield shaped, and arrow shaped. These plants also will seed around when happy and make a nice winter ground cover over time.

*Cyclamen coum* has a different cycle with its rounded, quarter size foliage appearing usually in December and its flowers of deep pink to white opening in late January March. Both of these easy to grow plants go into dormancy with the coming of summer.

The second of our “Summer Escapees” is from the *Arum* genus: *Arum italicum* and its many cultivars. The first to arrive in my garden was a plain green leaf form, which should be *A. maculatum* var. *immaculatum*, but I have since begun to secure the true forms of *A. italicum* which all possess brightly marbled foliage of green and silvery white.

It is a pleasure to see this bright foliage appear over the leaves of plants cut down by the first freezes. (They are a perfect companion to *Hosta*.) These arums are tuberous perennials with pointed arrow shaped green leaves patterned with veins of silvery-white in many diverse configurations. When the leaves begin to die down in spring a cowl-like spathe of a greenish-cream shade emerges and in mid to late summer a stalk of tightly clustered bright red berries will appear to decorate your garden. If you plant different forms you can have many different patterned seedlings appear. Presently you can find some of the following forms of *A italicum*, Marmoratum, Pictum, Scottish Silver, and Winter White.

Happy Gardening! George

## WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS FEBRUARY 2016 by Doug Jolley

Rhododendrons and evergreen azaleas bloomed into December. Winter finally put an end to the show with a colder end to the month and then early January saw temperatures fall to single digits more than once. Finally the snow arrived in mostly one event as 20 or more inches fell here on January 24.



Doug Jolley

The telltale warning may have been announced by the hundreds of robins that descended upon our holly trees the previous week. In a matter of a few days, bumper crops of holly berries were consumed. During and after the storm, robins visited *Viburnum*

*nudum* varieties and other viburnums that still retained persistent berries.

For our garden, a variety of *Viburnum* species makes for great companion planting for our rhododendrons and azaleas. In addition to a variety of flowers, fragrance and foliage, they are a magnet for birds in that they provide shelter for nesting and a bounty of berries which are consumed at various times through the year. In one season, in preparing for a Master Gardener talk, I photographed twenty-one species of birds that visited our viburnums. One other great bird plant is of course our native dogwood, *Cornus florida*. Its flowers and fall foliage are nice and again, the birds appreciate the



Robin with holly berry. Photo by Doug Jolley.

berries. One big dividend to a garden for sure is our songbirds!

One other plant that we enjoy when it self sows in proper settings is the common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*). The wooly basal leaves can reach immense proportions in a garden setting and the one bird that has a grand time on the five to six foot stalks is the downy woodpecker. Our woodpeckers start to bug hunt on these stout stems from bud stage and continue on as the stems turn woody.

I am assuming that soon a *Rhododendron dauricum* beginning to bloom will signal an end to winter and conversations can return to rhodos and azaleas.

#### **OTHER AREA ACTIVITIES**

##### **The Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants**

George McLellan suggested some possible events that may be of interest to MAC members.

The Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants is Monticello's unique nursery and garden center at Jefferson's Tufton Farm. 2016 Open House events at Tufton Farm are free and are held from 10 am - 2pm. Events will be April 30: Spring Open House; May 28: Wine and Roses Open House; October 15: Fall Open House.

##### **Colonial Virginia Chapter of the Holly Society of America (CVCHSA)**

On March 19, the CVCHSA will hold its Spring Meeting from 9:30am to 3:30pm at Joe & Mimma's Italian Restaurant, 5742 George Washington Hwy (Rt 17), Grafton, VA. The cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for non-members. This includes a speaker Darl Fletcher from the Virginia Living Museum, a plant auction, an Italian Buffet lunch, and an afternoon tour of Pamela Harper's garden in Seaford. Transportation for the garden tour is not included. Contact Peggy McComb to register. [M.mccombab@gmail.com](mailto:M.mccombab@gmail.com) or phone 804-642-2449.

#### **MEMBER IN THE NEWS**

Doug Jolley gave a presentation to the New York Chapter ARS. He said the chapter had funded the



A vireya at Planting Fields. Photo by Doug Jolley.

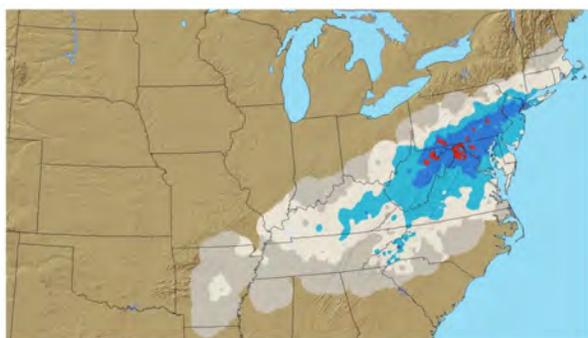
acquisition and installation of a vireya collection at Planting Fields Arboretum and had some nice photos of the plants. Congratulations to the NYC ARS.

#### **CRAZY WEATHER** by Sandra McDonald

It's hard to know where to begin telling the story about the wild weather extremes we have been having. Here at our house on the shores of Hampton Roads we didn't have a frost last fall and my *Coleus* and *Impatiens* didn't die until January 5, 2016, when

we had our first freeze of the fall-winter season. This is not to say that nearby areas even a few blocks away didn't have light frosts earlier, still in 2015! Since we are right on the water, we are slightly more moderated by it than they are. I had been reading that 2014 was the hottest year on record, then along comes 2015, and it breaks the record again. What is a plant to do?

On January 16, 2016, flowering quince (*Chaenomeles*) was in flower at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, as was *Magnolia stellata*, *Primula*, and *Viburnum*. On January 10, I had seen new growth coming out on *Clematis* and river birch at home. I even thought I saw one red maple (*Acer rubrum*) starting to flower in the neighborhood. Then along comes the Blizzard of 2016 from January 22-24! It didn't hit us too badly because we were near the southern edge.



22-24 January 2016  
NESIS = 7.66  
Category 4

Total Snowfall  
 < 4" 4"-10" 10"-20" 20"-30" > 30"



It dumped heavy snow from the Mid-Atlantic to southern New England and was rated as a Category 4 or "Crippling" winter storm on NOAA's Northeast Snowfall Impact Scale. It is also among the most powerful winter storms, ranked 4th, to impact the Northeast U.S. since 1950.

To quote from Greg Laden's Blog <http://scienceblogs.com/gregladen/2016/01/25/how-did-climate-change-cause-the-great-moreeaster-of-2016/> on January 25, 2016:

"There are two factors that needed to come together to make a storm into a large southern-offset blizzardy mess like this one. First, there needed to be cold air tracking farther south than usual, and this happened as a result of trade wind and jet stream meanderings which have become more common with climate change, and made more likely this year, probably, because of El Niño. Second, there needed to

be more moisture in the air coming off the Atlantic Ocean. This happened last weekend, and during other recent storms over the last few years, because the Atlantic is much much warmer than it usually is in the immediate region of the coast."

He said the Atlantic has been very warm for several years and is getting warmer annually. I guess that means more heavy snows and heavy rains are in store for us and the plants.

On February 9<sup>th</sup> a form of *Rhododendron dilatatum* is blooming. It was from Mr. Ishida in Japan back in the 1993 ARS Seed Exchange. *Erica carnea* has been blooming for a long time, and various *Prunus mume* selections over the winter.



Doug Jolley's back porch. Photo by Doug Jolley.



Deer in the snow. Photo by Doug Jolley.



**Remember all photos can be seen in color and ENLARGED at MACARS.ORG. Click on Newsletter on left panel.**

**Birds in the snow. All Photos by Douglas Jolley**



Female cardinal.



Bird feeding pathway in the snow.



Wren.



Fox sparrows.



Plastic house in snow.



Titmouse.

**A Visit to Planting Fields Arboretum with all photos by Doug Jolley.**



Vireyas in the Planting Fields greenhouse from the New York Chapter ARS project.



Witch hazel blooming at Planting Fields.

**Memberships and renewals should be sent to our Membership Chairman Jeanne Hammer at 815 Porter St. Apt 301, Richmond, VA 23224.**

Annual membership dues are \$40 per year.

Miscellaneous inquiries may be sent to the editor (address below) for forwarding to proper individual.

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor  
Mid-Atlantic Rhododendron News and Notes  
4302 Chesapeake Ave  
Hampton, VA 23669