

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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September 2004

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

October 15–17, 2004

Charlottesville, VA

May 15–17, 2005

District Meeting Westminster, MD

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society

<http://www.rhododendron.org/>

MAC Website NEW!

<http://www.macars.org/>

U VA Science & Engineering Libraries

<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm>

FALL MAC MEETING 2004 IN CHARLOTTESVILLE by Jeanne Hammer

By the time you are reading this, all MAC members should have received the fall meeting notice in the mail and have made their reservations at the English Inn of Charlottesville. If you haven't received your mailing, please contact me at jeanne_hammer@ncsu.edu.



The English Inn

George McLellan on the Species Study Group's most recent trip to view native azaleas in bloom. Our Saturday field trip will take in the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's parkway trail and Center for Historic Plants. The P4M sale will offer choice rhododendrons, native azaleas, and named *Kalmia* cultivars. Nearby Grelen Nursery will be open for tour on Sunday.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

The garden is looking good on this Labor Day weekend. Some of the fall blooming azaleas are beginning to bloom. 'August to Frost', 'Opal', and the Encore azaleas 'Autumn Amethyst', 'Autumn Embers', 'Autumn Royalty' and 'Autumn Sangria' are starting to show color. Though not considered a fall bloomer, 'Alpen Rose' always partially blooms here in the fall. Some rhododendrons also open a few

flowers, *R.* 'Pink Sherbet' (a "yak" hybrid) and *R.* 'Rocket' (a Shammarello hybrid) always do it. This year *R.* 'Gordon Jones' has also opened a few flowers.

The early colchicums are starting to pop up and *Arum italicum* is beginning to leaf out.

We have finally removed all the debris off the plants from the May storm. A lot of work remains to be done and we are waiting for our tree man to come and remove a few damaged trees. We managed to save most of the plants that were under the fallen trees, some had to be cut back and a few hollies were topped. The largest root is still on its side and our poor *R. arborescens* remains hanging in the air. It still bloomed and now has set buds.

This fall we will not enjoy the beautiful dwarf nandinas that were interspersed with various

conifers planted along our driveway. One by one the nandinas went over, their roots completely chewed off by voles. On the subject of voles I knew that pulmonarias were vole resistant so I tried a few outside the deer fence along the deer run, so far the deer have not touched them. They have been in that area for a year so we will see what happens.

I'll list a few more observations I've made this past season. It is about all I do in the garden when it's hot and humid.

Leaf gall, *Exobasidium vaccinii*, was almost absent this year. I thought with all the rain the gall would have been more frequent not less.



Jane McKay

While at David and Mary Lay's garden during the spring meeting many comments were made and questions asked about the azalea with no petals. The name of that azalea for those who may have missed is *R. kaempferi* var. *angustisectum* (red petaloid flower). We have a plant, given to us by the Lays, about ten years ago. The 'flowers' last at least twice as long as normal azalea flowers do and never get petal blight.

The humming birds have been abundant this year. Their favorite flower in our garden is *Salvia guaranitica*. I know this salvia is supposed to be tender but we have it in three different locations and it has lived and flourished here for eight or nine years.

Why can't I locate a plant of *Pieris japonica* 'Shojo'? I have been trying to obtain one for many years and I never see it listed in any of the catalogs I receive.

And finally, let's get down to business. It's DUES time again. Please get you payment back to me ASAP. I hate to stamp all those extra envelopes and stick on all those extra labels, not to mention the extra cost for postage the chapter has to pay. Just think I could spend all that valuable time pulling weeds!

UVA LIBRARY ADDS RARE BOOK TO RHODODENDRON COLLECTION

by Jeanne Hammer

When I departed the University of Virginia Library to take a position with the North Carolina State University Libraries, I was surprised and gratified to learn that Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker's *The rhododendrons of Sikkim-Himalaya*, published in 1849, had been added to the UVA's Rhododendron & Azalea Collection in my honor. As many of you know, Hooker was one of the great plant explorers of the 19th century, who later succeeded his father as Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. His account of the rhododendrons discovered during his journeys through the Himalayas is a keystone work for any comprehensive rhododendron collection. Although trained as a doctor in Edinburgh, his principal interest was botany, and his talents as a scientist were enhanced by his artistic ability to record quickly what he observed during his explorations. Thus, this volume is beautifully illustrated by color plates based on his drawings. Anyone who loves rhododendrons owes a

debt of gratitude to Hooker for the nearly forty species of the genus he introduced.

DAVID LEACH'S GARDEN LEGACY by Martha Derthick

Major gardens often die with their creators, or are even disassembled by them (as happened with Beatrix Jones Ferrand). That of David G. Leach, the great rhododendron hybridizer, is an admirable exception. I am happy to report that Leach's garden is thriving, both as a place of beauty and as a research station.

Leach died in 1998 at the age of 85, but more than a decade before his death he had signed an agreement with the Holden Arboretum in Kirtland, Ohio, to make his garden its satellite. The two lie east of Cleveland, about 25 miles apart near the Lake Erie shore.

Because it is a research station with only a small staff the Leach garden is not regularly open to the public. However, in the spring of 2004 for the second time it held a series of three weekend open houses, which were attended by about 400 persons. To my regret, I was unable to be in Ohio for any of the scheduled dates, but following a series of cordial e-mail exchanges with the station's director, Stephen L. Krebs, I was able to arrange a personal visit in mid-June. Steve was away, but I was warmly greeted by the station's two other employees, Don Whitney and Almi De La Fuente.

Don led me on a tour of the grounds. The whole consists of 30 acres, which Leach acquired in the 1970s following a fire in 1969 at his property in Brookville, Pennsylvania. He moved thousands of plants to the new location. (This recalls the comparable misfortune of Guy Nearing, who moved after his garden was destroyed by a flood. Nearing had to start over again, whereas Leach's rhododendron collection must have largely escaped the fire.) Today 15 of the 30 acres contain display gardens and another five acres are field growing space devoted to evaluating new breeding populations of rhododendron.

Steve had warned me that the gardens would be well past their peak of bloom. Nonetheless, a few specimens were blooming. Particularly memorable are 'Summer Snow', a large white rhododendron by Leach, and 'Pink Puff', one of his deciduous azaleas, which is a strong pink with a yellow flare against shiny dark green foliage.

The garden was artfully designed, and it is superbly maintained. The visitor can meander on grass through beds of mature, healthy rhododendrons and companion plants. Among the 2,000 rhododendrons in the display garden, the named Leach introductions (about 80) are featured, but most are unnamed, one-of-a-kind plants that Leach selected for further evaluation and use in breeding. There are large examples of 'Edmond Amateis', 'Rio', 'Capistrano', and 'Spring Frolic', among many others. There are also some species rhododendrons—for example, *R. metternichii* with a distinctive mahogany indumentum/tomentosum. And there are named varieties of other hybridizers, such as Cleveland's Tony Shammarello, whose 'King Tut' stood out, and Orlando Pride, whose 'Pink Peppermint' azalea likewise stood out.

The canopy is distinctive for the large number of native black locusts, along with maples, oaks and tulip poplars. Large hemlocks form a background, looking very dense and lush to the eye of a Virginian accustomed to battling the woolly adelgid. In general the plants appear blessed by a hospitable environment (a sandy loam to grow in, as well as the moderating effects of the lake). I saw virtually no leaf damage; rhododendron foliage was rich, intact and pure.

The research station so far has not made any introductions. It currently has 10,000 experimental rhododendrons in field rows, forming the pipeline for future cultivars. The plants move to the field after one year in seed flats and another in ground frames. "Steve would like to do some offsite testing," Don told me, perhaps mindful that Leach's introductions are reputed to do much better in the Great Lakes area than, for instance, our own climate. I can testify that they are well shaped and flourishing on the Lake Erie shore.

For more information, visit www.holdenarb.org or e-mail slkrebs@holdenarb.org.

BRONZE MEDAL AWARD FOR MAVIS HAYWOOD

Mavis Haywood was scheduled to come to Richmond in June, but was unable to make it. Therefore, the following citation was mailed to her in Florida:

The Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society presents to Mavis Haywood

this Bronze Medal Award in recognition of her contributions to our chapter.

Although Mavis has been an ARS member since 1979, she was involved practically since our chapter's inception in 1952. As secretary to our chapter's founder, Dr. Thomas F. Wheeldon, she did much to help him in his efforts as chapter Secretary and President for many years, including chapter correspondence and meeting notices. In later years, she herself became the chapter Secretary and continued after his death, until 1977 when she retired to Florida. In this capacity, she was instrumental in the transition of chapter leadership for continued success over the many years since that time.

We will always remember her quiet presence and efforts to solidify and continue our chapter. For this we present with sincere appreciation this Bronze Medal, our chapter's highest honor.

TRAPPED BY GASTON (Email letter from Bill Bedwell)

Thanks for your inquiry about how I fared in the storm. My home and rhododendron garden here in Dinwiddie was okay when I finally got here. However, there was a mini-tornado in another part of the county.

But I had quite an experience with the flood in Richmond. I think I told you I visited my cousin in Winchester and that combined with the MAC Board Meeting on Saturday in Harrisonburg, made a nice long weekend. I left Winchester on Monday, did some things along the way, and was about 30 miles west of Richmond around 4:30 that afternoon, when it started raining. I was unaware of what was ahead.

My first indication of the flood problem was shortly after the I-64 East traffic came to a standstill when I was at the Staples Mill exit (that leads to the former Executive Motel where we used to have MAC meetings many years ago). It was raining extremely hard, but I have gotten used to that over the last two years and gave it no thought. This was around 5 PM Monday and I know there are frequent problems with delays from wrecks so I made a quick decision to take the Staples Mill exit. I had not gone very far when I got to an intersection with deep water about 100 feet ahead where cars that went through the intersection were just stopped and seemed to be afraid to go any further. I turned left on some road and eventually came upon another traffic back up

from an unknown cause so I turned right through a high water area onto another unfamiliar street and then saw Westmoreland to the left. I remembered that Westmoreland was usually at high intersections and it went to Grove Avenue, not far from a friend's house in a high area, so I turned onto that street.

It turned out that Westmoreland also had two low intersections with clogged street drains where a few cars ventured through while others were turning around. I made it through them and gained more confidence in my Subaru Outback which sits up higher, with bigger wheels than most cars. After all,



Richmond flood photo from Bill Bedwell

I was no where near a flood prone area, and neither was my friend's house located on Ellwood Avenue just east of Hamilton Street.

I turned east on Grove Avenue, headed toward Hamilton, but came to another traffic backup before the low intersection of Grove and Hamilton. I was close to my friend's house so I quickly turned into the parking lot behind the Malvern Manor apartments and went the length up to near Cary Street where there was an exit onto a side street. Traffic on the side street also was at a stand still but across the side street was an alley I could take. A nice driver let me into the backup and I went into the alley that led to Hamilton close to the intersection with Ellwood where I could turn right onto my friend's block. I was surprised to discovered the water on Hamilton was really deep and the intersection was blocked by two stalled cars that prevented a turn to the street I wanted.

I decided to continue just a little further down Hamilton Street to the alley behind my friend's house. The other end of that alley goes onto Cameron that is a sharp incline all the way down more than 100 feet to I-195, about 200 feet from my friend's back yard, so I thought that section of the alley surely would have good drainage. The water got deeper as I moved down Hamilton and waves were sloshing almost up to the windows. When I turned into the alley it was less deep but trash cans and debris were floating. I made it to behind my friend's house and stopped. Illegally parked cars blocked the other end of the alley. I supposed they thought that incline was the driest area they could find.

My Subaru Outback handled all of this just as if I had been driving on a dry highway. Then my feet started getting wet and then I felt my bottom getting wet. Water was getting deeper in the car. With water coming in, there was no reason to avoid opening the doors and evacuating the car. The water became about 4 or 5 inches deep in the car, nearly up the gear shift in the floor. Outside, I was knee deep in water, but not as deep as it was on Hamilton where I had just been (one person said it was crotch deep there). My friend's back yard had no water but the back yard of the woman next too him had concrete garden statuary floating around in it and the water was about 10 ft. from the house.



Cars piled up in Richmond flood.

There was no water in my friend's front yard either but the cars parked on the street where I originally intended to park had water well above the bottom of their doors. There was an inch or two of water in some places in the basement, but it drained out by the next day. There was 10 ft. of water in the basement of the house at the end of the block near that flooded intersection where I passed the stalled cars and the two old ladies who lived there were among the many who lost their furnaces and hot water heaters.

This was not a river flood. All of this flooding was located near the upper end of a hill and a 100 ft. drop down to I-195. All aggravated by clogged street drains and storm sewers that have been ignored for years. The natural flow of water from these high areas has been diverted to the poorly-working drains, causing ponds all over the city. According to the news, tropical storm Gaston produced much more costly devastation in Richmond and surrounding counties than did Isabel. Isabel just looked worse. I finally got a rental car to use until something can be done about my car. I was able to drive my car to the Subaru dealer where I bought it less than two months before. It drove okay for a while, but it was barely moving by the time I got to the shop. All I have heard so far is the computer needs replacing and the upholstery cleaned and dried. I wish the insurance company would let me have a new car.

My story was minor compared with many.

SUDDEN OAK DEATH (*PHYTOPHTHORA RAMORUM*) by Sandra McDonald

Sudden oak death (SOD) or *Phytophthora ramorum* is a relatively new disease in the U.S. It has been killing some species of oak trees in California and has frightened agricultural interests in west coast states and more recently some eastern states. SOD was found in the past year on nursery-grown camellias in Georgia that had been shipped in from California. SOD was recently found in a Hampton nursery camellia, and on a rhododendron at a Chesapeake nursery according to the state Office of Plant and Pesticide Services. More information can be found on the U.S. Forest Service's Website: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/sod/>.

Certain oaks are not the only plants susceptible to SOD. Many other plants are susceptible, including some species of plants in the genera *Camellia*, *Rhododendron*, *Pieris*, *Leucothoe*, *Kalmia*, *Ilex*, *Viburnum*, *Carpinus*, *Cotoneaster*, *Gaultheria*,

Hedera, *Nandina*, *Pachysandra*, *Syringa*, *Vaccinium*, *Zenobia*, and even Douglas fir. For a more extensive list see the bulletin at the Virginia Tech Website: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/plantdiseasefs/450-801/450-801.html>.

Extension Specialist Chuan Hong at Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Virginia Beach writes in the above SOD publication:

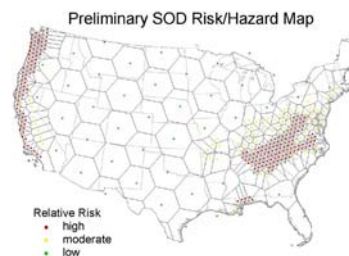
"The outbreak has prompted the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to quarantine some counties in California and Oregon and prohibit the interstate movement of host-plant material from those counties. *Phytophthora ramorum* is a new species of *Phytophthora* that was first described as a pathogen of *Rhododendron* and *Viburnum* spp. in Germany and the Netherlands in 2001. It has a broad host range and is a very destructive pathogen. The spread of this pathogen would cause devastating economic losses to the nursery and forest industries as well as severe ecological impact to the natural landscape and forest ecosystems of America.

"The most common symptoms on shrubs such as rhododendron are twig dieback and leaf spotting. Blackened shoots with or without foliage attached are typical of twig dieback caused by *P. ramorum*. Leaf spots are brown in color with diffuse, fuzzy margins. *P. ramorum* usually does not kill shrub hosts with the exception of *Viburnum* spp. *P. ramorum* causes wilting of arrowwood in Europe, but this has not been found in the United States.

"According to a comparative study conducted by USDA Forest Service, Washington state is a high-risk area for sudden oak death. Virginia, along with North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, also were ranked as high-risk regions for this disease. Pilot surveys for this pathogen at nurseries and in surrounding forests in these five states are underway."

Precautions you can take:

Avoid purchasing plant materials, including stock plants and plant products from the quarantine areas of California and Oregon, since the full host range of *P. ramorum* is still unknown. Report any incoming plant materials you suspect with contamination from *P. ramorum* to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at (804) 786-3515.



2004 MAC Flower Show
 Classes and Subclasses
 April 30 - May 2, 2004, Kilmarnock, Virginia

Award	Exhibitor	Plant name
Rhododendron Species		
Lepidotes (scaly series)		
Blue	Bill Bedwell	<i>R. chapmanii</i>
Rhododendron Hybrids		
Elepidote		
White w/prominent blotch		
Blue	Walter Pryzpek	R. 'Sappho'
Light yellow shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Vinecrest'
Red	Sandra McDonald	R. 'Merley Cream'
Lavender shades		
Blue	B. Bedwell	R. 'Anah Krushke'
White	Billy Constable	Unnamed seedling
Medium Pink shades		
Red	B. Bedwell	R. 'Wheatley'
Rose-red to Red shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Taurus'
Red	B. Bedwell	R. 'Dexter's Red House'
Red	B. Bedwell	R. 'Dorothy Russell'
White	S. McDonald	Unknown Dexter
Lepidote		
Light pink shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Angel Powder'
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Pioneer Silvery Pink'
White	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Arsen's Pink'
Medium pink shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Olga Mezzitt'
Lavender to Purple shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Starry Nite'
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Rosemary'
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Senora Melden'
White	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Blaney's Blue'
Yellow to Green shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Shamrock'
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Patty Bee'
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	R. 'Princess Anne'
Azalea Species		
Deciduous		
White		
Blue	S. McDonald	<i>R. alabamense</i>
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. canadense</i> album
Pink to Lavender shades		
Blue	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. schlippenbachi</i>
Red	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. kiyosumense</i>
White	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. canadense</i>
Azalea Hybrids		
Evergreen		
White		
Blue	B. Bedwell	'Sandra's Green Ice'
Red	B. Bedwell	'Puck'
White	B. Bedwell	'Hardy Gardenia'
White w/border		
Blue	B. Bedwell	'L. J. Bobbink'

Red	S. McDonald	'Cattleya'
Pink w/prominent blotch		
Blue	B. Bedwell	'George L. Taber'
Red	Ray Doggett	'George L. Taber'
Medium pink w/border		
Blue	R. Doggett	'Janet Rhea'
Deeper pink shades		
Blue	R. Doggett	'Pink Ruffles'
Red	R. Doggett	'Anna Kehr'
White	B. Bedwell	'Pink Ruffles'
Green	W. Pryzpek	'Pink Ruffles'
Orange-pink, hose-in-hose		
Blue	R. Doggett	'Hampton Beauty'
Red	B. Bedwell	'Sweetheart Supreme'
White	S. McDonald	Chisolm-Merritt 'Rosebud'
Salmon-pink shades		
Red	S. McDonald	Unknown
White	S. McDonald	'Marjorie Ann'
Red, Rose-red or Crimson shades		
Blue	S. McDonald	'Kara Fune'
Red	B. Constable	'Mother's Day'
White	S. McDonald	'Addy Wery'
Deciduous		
Pink		
Red	B. Constable	'Rosy Lights'
Yellow to Orange shades		
Blue	B. Bedwell	'Sweet Christy'
Red	Carol Segree	'Admiral Semmes'
White	B. Constable	<i>R. calendulaceum</i> cross
Green	B. Constable	'Golden Lights'
MAC New Hybrids		
Azalea - deciduous		
Blue	S. McDonald	'Primrose' × <i>R. austrinum</i>
Red	S. McDonald	Sommerville selection of <i>R. atlanticum</i> hybrid
Azalea - evergreen		
Blue	S. McDonald	'Hot Shot' × 'Hershey Red Tetra'
Blue	W. Pryzpek	'George L. Taber' × 'Formosa'
Red	S. McDonald	Unknown pink rogue × 'Blushing Angel'
White	S. McDonald	Unknown pink rogue × 'Blushing Angel'
Class Winners		
Best Rhododendron Species	Bill Bedwell	<i>R. chapmanii</i>
Best Rhododendron - Elepidote	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. 'Taurus'</i>
Best Rhododendron - Lepidote	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. 'Shamrock'</i>
Best Azalea - Deciduous	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. schilippenbachii</i>
Best Azalea - Evergreen	Bill Bedwell	'Sandra's Green Ice'
Best MAC New Hybrid	Sandra McDonald	'Hot Shot' × 'Hershey Red Tetra'
MAC Perpetual Awards		
Best Rhododendron - D. D. Withers Trophy	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. 'Taurus'</i>
Best Native Azalea - Austin Kennell Award	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. schilippenbachii</i>
Best Azalea - Mary Morris and Richard Clemmer Trophy		
	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. schilippenbachii</i>
Best MAC New Hybrid	Sandra McDonald	'Hot Shot' × 'Hershey Red Tetra'
Best In Show - The Thomas F. Wheeldon Trophy	Marianne & Bruce Feller	<i>R. schilippenbachii</i>
Sweepstakes Award	Marianne & Bruce Feller	

Totals: 24 classes, 60 entries

Judges: Jeanne Hammer, Paul James, Don Hyatt: Chairman: Sharon Collins



Harry Wise receives ARS Silver Medal Citation from Frank Pelurie who had picked it up for Harry at the ARS meeting in King of Prussia in May. Photo by Doug Jolley.



R. schlippenbachii Best in Show



Ron Brown, Sybil Przypek, Ken McDonald, Sharon Collins & Frank Pelurie visiting the rhododendron gardens at JMU Arboretum before the August 28th Board Meeting.



'Hotshot × 'Hershey Red Tetra' Best MAC New Hybrid



Mavis Haywood at Longwood Gardens Nov. 28, 2003



Mavis Haywood, 1959