

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XLIV No. 3

September 2017

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 20-22, 2017  
May 21-26, 2018

Richmond Airport Hilton Garden Inn  
ARS Conference, Bremen, Germany

### Rhododendron website addresses:

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

### MAC WILL HOST FALL EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING AT HILTON GARDEN INN-RICHMOND AIRPORT - OCTOBER 20- 22, 2017

Jeanne Hammer has planned a very nice meeting for us in Richmond where we will be hosting an Eastern Regional with an ARS Board Meeting. There will be our usual events of our Fall Foliage Show, Auction, and P4M Sale.



We have a different format for this meeting with a Saturday symposium of speakers. The lineup starts with Ken Webb, Western VP in an informal talk about his British Columbia Garden and a preview of the 2018 Convention in Bremen, Germany. Other speakers are Barbara Bullock on Glen Dale azaleas, Joe Brusco on "Hybridizing for Foliage", Richard Flavell on "Hybridizing for Large Leaf Rhododendrons". Ron Rabideau with talk on "Rhododendron Species for the Middle Atlantic Region", Dale Berrong on "Propagating Japanese Maples by Grafting", and then the after dinner speaker Steve Krebs, Eastern VP on "Leach Hybrids and the Holden Arboretum." Tours will be on-your-own on Sunday with Maymont and the Ginter Botanical Garden recommended.

### ARS 2018 CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN BREMEN, GERMANY; REGISTRATION ENDS NOV 15

The 2018 Annual Meeting of ARS will be in Bremen, Germany, on May 21-26. There are several pre- and post- convention tours. Space is limited. Registration cut-off date is currently Nov 15, 2017. For further details and registration go to <http://ars2018.org/>



### IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is August 25, 2017 as I start to write this article. The past two months have been quite dry. Even after a heavy rain two weeks ago, one can dig only an inch to find powdery dry soil. Several times during the

past two months the rhodos have rolled up their leaves as if it were a very cold day in the winter. The tulip poplars had an early leaf loss in July. Also, a few of the Japanese maples have had leaves and limbs lost.



Lloyd Willis

Since it is quite dry and quite hot for us this August, one would normally not consider transplanting any rhodos, hostas, boxwoods, or Japanese maples during this time. However, due to what can probably be labeled as my poor impulse control, I have transplanted rhodos, hostas, boxwoods, and Japanese maples in the past three weeks. All the plants were small plants (one to three gallon size), moved from shade to shade, extensively watered, fed with bone meal for their root systems, and surrounded with two to four inches of pine bark mulch. Of the over fifty plants transplanted, only one has needed to be removed. There is usually a once a day walk past these plants. If one of the group is looking water stressed, all the plants in that area get a heavy watering.

So, where is the humor in this article? I always want to show new plantings to the local grandchildren. However, that can cause possible problems. The main problem recently is that the grandchildren show up while taking our “grandpuppies” on a walk. These puppies are still on the slightly hyperactive side and still in training. The thought of them in the new planting area is quite painful. So far no grandchildren have been asked to view the newly planted areas. However, Mrs. Willis (Margaret) has, at my request, gone multiple times to view the new areas—more times than could reasonably be expected.

**RHODODENDRONS IN THE DOLOMITES** by Terri Bennett

I spent the last week of June in northern Italy on a trip to see wildflowers blooming in the Dolomite Mountains with fifteen other members of the North American Rock Garden



Terri Bennett



NARGS group in Dolomites. Photo by Teri Bennett.

Society as part of a Naturetrek tour. Naturetrek is a United Kingdom based wildlife tour company. We



Rosengarten. Photo by T. Bennett.

stayed in a small hotel in the Fassa Valley, which is part of the Italian Alps.

Each day, for six days, we drove a short distance from our hotel to a different part of the Dolomites



*Rhododendron ferrugineum*. Photo by T. Bennett.

and then went hiking in search of wildflowers. One



*Rhododendron hirsutum*. Photo by T. Bennett.

day we drove to a nearby town and then rode a cable car up towards a group of mountains known as King Lauren's Rose Garden. The first part of our hike was through a wooded area with masses of *Rhododendron ferrugineum* (Alpenrose) and *Rhododendron hirsutum* (Hairy Alpenrose) on both sides of the path. The *R. ferrugineum* were just starting to bloom, but the *R. hirsutum* had already finished blooming there. The two rhododendrons are similar, smallish shrubs with pink flowers, but *R. ferrugineum* usually has reddish brown scales on the undersurface of the leaves.



Val Venegia. Photo by T. Bettentt.

On the last day of the trip, we drove to a different valley, Val Venegia, and after hiking through a damp meadow, with several kinds of orchids, and passing through an area of scree, we came to an upland meadow with large boulders scattered all around. There were lots of wildflowers tucked

around the rocks, including several kinds of saxifrages. There were also some *R. hirsutum* in bloom, which can be distinguished from *R. ferrugineum* by the hairs that project from the leaf margins. While searching for wildflowers, we could hear cows roaming up in the mountains above us by the bells they wear around their necks. It was a memorable trip!

### WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS, SEPTEMBER 2017 by Doug Jolley

What a summer this has proven to be! Unlike reports from my outdoor and gardening enthusiasts from neighboring Virginia, we have experienced copious amounts of rainfall and an overall cool summer. There is little in the way of excitement to share other than that our ornamental garden has bloomed wonderfully and our vegetable garden has produced profusely.



Doug Jolley

As is becoming a trend, plants are blooming earlier and earlier. This summer our plumleaf azaleas



*R. prunifolium*. Photo by Doug Jolley.

(*Rhododendron prunifolium*) regardless of location were blooming by July 3<sup>rd</sup>. That is two weeks ahead of what was normal. Particularly enjoyable was the Mountain Laurel season. Plants were literally hidden by flower trusses. Davetta and I rarely dead-head plants any more but we made an exception with the laurel. As September approaches, the seed set on native azaleas is poor. However, plants are lush and flower-bud laden.



Mountain Laurel. Photo by D. Jolley.

A summer trip along the Scenic Highway running north from the Cranberry Glades Visitor's Center in Pocahontas County is usually quite worthwhile. In mid-June through the end of June, Mountain Laurel put on a show. Other ericaceous plants growing along this high elevation drive include cranberry (*Vaccinium sp.*), Southern Mountain Cranberry (*Vaccinium erythrocarpum*), Creeping Snowberry (*Gaultheria hispidula*), Teaberry (*Gaultheria procumbens*) and of course *R. maximum*.



*Rhododendron maximum*. Photo by D. Jolley.

Additionally, the views from the overlook areas are nice any time of year. July is when the rhododendrons put on their display. This July I encountered a hatch of White-striped Black Moths. They were visiting nearly any blooming plants including rhododendrons. Many nice color forms of *R. maximum* can be found by stopping and walking

in and about a given area. Also July is the time to enjoy blooming Canada Lilies (*Lilium canadense*) along the woodland edges. The native plant propagators had these for sale at our spring meeting



*Lilium canadense*. Photo by D. Jolley

at Wintergreen. One situation which is becoming very apparent along many stretches of the highway is the damage being done by Hemlock Woolly Adelgids. Mountainsides are becoming brown with dead and dying Hemlock trees. The demise of these trees will certainly allow for much different scenes as other vegetation replaces the hemlock.

Mid October will arrive soon enough and I look forward to seeing everyone in Richmond.

#### **REPORT FROM YOUR MAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS** by George McLellan

The Board asked me to update the membership on some of its actions regarding our chapter contributions and the special projects that the chapter supports.

Historically the Middle Atlantic Chapter has been able to establish an investment fund using funds generated from hosting ARS national meetings such as the 1988, 2006, and 2016 conventions, regional meetings, and exceedingly generous contributions and gifts from some members. This fund was established because Austin Kennell, Barbara Hall, Ken McDonald, Sandra McDonald, Harry Wise and David Sauer insisted that most of the revenue from the 1988 Convention should be put into CD's initially where the Chapter would only use the interest for future expenses, projects, and contributions, or to reinvest to let the fund grow. The fund has been very successfully managed over the years by our Budget and Finance Committee. (Special thanks go to the

current and past committee chairs, Bill Bedwell and Ken McDonald, and committee members Debby and David Sauer, Sandra McDonald, Theresa Brents, Dave Banks, and others who have served on the committee.) Income from this fund has allowed MAC to make gifts to horticultural and/or conservation organizations in our area. It has also permitted us to take on special projects, some of which are listed below.

**Gregory Bald** – A mountaintop in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park that contains the world-famous, native azalea hybrid swarm. MAC helps sponsor a summer intern; had an aerial photo now on disk taken to document the extent of the azalea stand; and helped obtain a DR Mower to use on the Bald to keep the forest from encroaching and shading out the azaleas. (Thanks to Jim Brant and others for coordinating these efforts).

**Edith Carrier Arboretum Garden** – located at James Madison University. MAC has helped with plants, labor, and benches. (Thanks to Ron Brown who was an early volunteer, and to Sharon Horn and her volunteers: Margaret and Lloyd Willis, Glenn Kauffman, and Theresa Bents; and to the McDonalds and Doug Jolley who have donated plants.)

**Norfolk Botanical Garden** – MAC donated funds for signage. (The McDonalds and the Azalea Society of America donated plants; and Jim Brant and Rick Bauer coordinated activities and helped get cuttings, etc.)

**Hooper Bald** – A mountaintop in the Snowbird Mountains that has some of the best *Rhododendron calendulaceum*. The Bald was being overgrown with trees, and MAC donated labor, seed-grown plants, and planting supplies. (Thanks to Jim Brant, George McLellan, and Revonda Williams for coordinating the work. Revonda Williams is a local activist from Robbinsville, NC who is on town council and the tourist board and is working to start an Azalea Festival in the local area there. )

In addition, MAC makes annual gifts to public gardens which feature rhododendrons and azaleas, including: Williamsburg Botanical Garden; White Garden (Potomac Valley Chapter); Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens; National Arboretum/FONA Save the Azaleas Fund, West Virginia Botanical Garden, Hahn Horticultural Garden at Virginia Tech, Alderman Library of UVA for maintenance of the Rhododendron archives, Virginia Chapter of the

Nature Conservancy, the Rhododendron Species Foundation, and the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

### **SPECIAL REQUEST**

If any member has an idea for a MAC project please contact George McLellan, chair of the Long Range Planning Committee and Species Study Group. Phone 804-693-4253. We are interested in Virginia and West Virginia area public gardens growing specimens of the genus *Rhododendron* and conserving public gardens and natural areas with rhododendrons or native azaleas.

### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Patricia Dorton-Boyd & Michael Hickey,  
Bristol, VA 24202

Randall Heise, New Kent, VA  
23124

Joanne & Dan Neckel,  
Fairfax Station, VA 22019

Kenneth Williams, Charleston,  
WV 25302

### **MAC MEN: LEGENDS AND LEGACIES – BERT SHOOSMITH** by Deborah Sauer

Yesterday, I was cleaning some storage shelves in the living room and happened across this article about Albert (Bert) Shoosmith, one of the founders of the Virginia Nurseryman's Association and the Middle Atlantic chapter of the ARS. Of course, I immediately abandoned my work to read the article, to remember and cherish the long association with Bert. The article appeared as a tribute to a long-time member of both associations on the celebration of his 80th birthday. Here are his reflections:

Personally, my experience in the nursery business started a while back when I was about 5 (in 1912) - waiting to start school. Our congressman at that time mailed seeds free to all people on rural routes. Some neighbors gave me theirs. I started a vegetable garden and sold some of the plants back to the neighbors. When I was about 8, my ambition was to be able to hoe a row right along with my father and the men in the field. With a short-handled hoe I went to work with them. In this close association, I



Bert Shoosmith

increased my vocabulary remarkably fast for an eight-year-old, much to the dismay of my family!

At 13, I grew Gladiolus and Dahlias and carried them by inner-urban car (street car) to Richmond and Petersburg florists.

At 16, I went with my father to my first National Nursery Convention in Atlantic City. After one stroll down the boardwalk, what I saw made me decide then and there that the nursery business was for me! Especially with conventions in Atlantic City!

In 1930. Over a period of several months, 7 men (Fred Shoosmith and Bert Shoosmith, both of Richmond; William Roper of Petersburg; J.T. French, State Entomologist; Deacon Jones of Norfolk; Owen Wood of Bristol; and Tcharner Watkins of Midlothian) met under the Big White Oak at the Southside Nurseries [Bert Shoosmith's nursery] to discuss the formation of a state Nurseryman's Association, and that was the beginning of the VNA in 1931. Probably most of the Regional Nursery Organizations throughout the state are an outgrowth of the original VNA. At the May meeting of the VNA this year, over 60 people were of 16 or so people some 35 years ago. The earliest conventions of the VNA were usually held at the John Marshall Hotel - so the women could go shopping in Richmond. There was a big Ladies Luncheon planned during the convention and I heard much talk about Sara Sue hats and David Dow suits which were the "signs of the times: for the ladies." In those days parties in the hotel rooms held up the banquet, so I claim credit for suggesting a cocktail party at the banquet room - but I give full credit to Sam and John Ed Tankard for making it the huge success that it became! Everybody got down in time (even early!) so as not to miss those marvelous free oysters.

One of the most stimulating factors for me has been working with the young people who are aware of the importance of continuing education and promotion of the industry on the highest level. Although I enrolled in Architectural Engineering at VPI in the mid 1920's. the course did not relate enough to living things to suit me. Around 1930, I was fortunate enough to be able to enroll in a special project for Landscape Engineering and Construction at Harvard University. This was an exciting and stimulating learning experience. As the Depression deepened, many of us were unable to return.

Bremner Pond, head of the Landscape Architecture Department, outlined a self-study course, and some valuable advice: wherever we were, we should learn from our daily experiences. With self-discipline, this would be a greater education than from any school.

When asked what is my greatest pleasure as a result of being a nurseryman, I'd have to say that there are many. The fine and interesting friends and customers have contributed greatly to my life, but after 6 and a half days a week at work, one of my greatest pleasures is a walk in my garden at home in the cool of the evening. Even if I cannot find the help to keep it as I would like, the plants in growth and those in bloom are always inspiring, relaxing and very enjoyable.

It is sad to see so many people not enjoying their gardens because of lack of help. Coping with the lack of personnel, and the high cost, has brought about changes which some people find hard to accept. I say: "just over-look a few weeds, and enjoy the beauty of the plants." It is not easy - but what good thing is easy? Look over the lack, and enjoy the great peace and satisfaction in the beautiful colors and interesting growth habits of the plants in God's garden.

This attitude can give us much pleasure and some inspirational insight into the mind of our Creator. It is easier to understand the Biblical setting of our creation as being the most beautiful we can imagine - whatever your view of creation may be. Our gardens can be a duplication of that place of peace - or, a burdensome project - the choice is ours. I choose the peace and joy despite the problems.

#### **ARS DISTRICT 9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT** by Bill Meyers, May 24, 2017

The ARS Board of Directors' Meeting was held Thursday, April 27, 2017, in Eureka, CA. Our own Ann Mangels, Eastern VP and incoming President, conducted the meeting owing to the absence of then President Bob McIntyre for medical reasons.

We were saddened to learn, at the start of our Board Meeting, that Kathy Van Veen of Van Veen Nursery, had lost her battle with cancer. It was her wish that the Nursery continue to operate and the good news is that is going to be done.

Gordon Wylie proposed updates to the Policies and By-Laws to reflect the new structure of the ARS now having an Office Administrator rather than an Executive Director. They now also reflect reduction

of our expenses to more closely match our income. Three committees, Ratings, Pollen Bank and Rhododendron Database, no longer functioning or deemed needed, were eliminated.

Dave Banks, Treasurer, and Bill Mangels Chair of the Endowment Committee, were asked to develop a policy which we do not currently have, regarding the acceptance and disposition of donations and gifts.

There was discussion about offering a reduction in dues of \$5.00 for members who wanted to receive the Journal in digital form only. This would reduce mailing costs and some printing cost. Bob Weissman, our webmaster, reminded us that only 3% of members now have an online login for the Journal and 99% are not interested in having the Journal be digital. The motion made to do this was defeated.

A proposal was made by Juliana Mederios, a scientist and researcher at the Holden Arboretum and Great Lakes Chapter member, to establish a long term Rhododendron Research Network (RCN) between the ARS and rhododendron researchers world wide. Goals would be promotion of rhododendron as a model woody system for research, promotion of ARS and botanical garden memberships and creation of opportunities for collaboration between the research community and ARS members. Activities to be included will be hosting of a RHODi-RCN website within the ARS website, publishing in a scientific journal, initiating collaboration between ARS Members and researchers, initiation of science projects to strengthen that collaboration, and seeking of further funding. This was approved by the Board.

To help increase membership it was suggested we encourage students of horticulture at nearby universities, colleges and community colleges to join the ARS. Chapters can give student memberships for only \$5 each. The fee is \$10 but \$5 goes to the ARS and \$5 goes to the Chapter. The student membership gives digital access to the Journal but not the print version. (Garden Club members and Master Gardeners are other potential members. Our ARS Chapters need to aggressively pursue all these folks as prospective members! My parentheses.)

Our Bill Mangels reported three Endowment grant applications were received and funds were approved by the Board of Directors to be distributed to Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum, Planting

Fields Arboretum and to the Breuckner Hybrid Test Garden.

Dave Banks, Treasurer, reported the financial health of the Society is better than it was two years ago although membership is down.

Dave stressed that each Chapter must complete their IRS on-line e-postcard, Form 990-N, to maintain their Tax Exempt Status. Failure to do so can mean a very difficult application process to restore that tax exempt status. According to Steve Henning, EIN numbers of each ARS Chapter can be found at <https://apps.irs.gov/app.eos/pub78Search.do?dispatchMethod=navigateSearch&pathName=forwardToPub78Search&searchChoice=pub78>

Then go to <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard>

Ann Mangels reminded all of the 2017 ARS Fall Conference that will be held in Richmond, VA, October 20 and 21 at the same time and place of the MAC Chapter bi-annual Meeting. Other forthcoming Conventions and meetings are:

Spring 2018 – May 20-27 - Bremen, Germany with pre-tours of Wales, UK, April 22-29, Holland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden and a post tour of Finland (See <http://ARS2018.org>) Earlybird member deadline to register is Oct. 30, 2017!

Fall 2018 – Chattanooga, TN

Spring 2019 – Philadelphia, PA (See <http://ARS2019.org>)

Spring 2020 – Portland, OR (for the ARS 75th Anniversary)

Chapter Presidents! Please respond to JARS Editor, Glen Jamieson's Survey, attached, on ways each Chapter meets and conducts its business, ASAP.

In conclusion, Bob Weissman, our ARS Webmaster, is updating the website. Changes to likely be available this Summer (testing is underway now) will include multi-year memberships, making donations and using PayPal or a credit card.

Following the Board Meeting, at the Saturday evening Banquet, ARS Silver Medals were awarded to Don Wallace, Ken Webb and Nick Yarmoshuk. ARS Gold Medals were given to Fred Whitney, E. White Smith and Dee Daneri. Congratulations to all!



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

## **CONTRIBUTIONS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS OF THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC CHAPTER ARS**

by George McLellan

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GARDENS OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS - New members are encouraged to visit members' gardens in their area. The officers and board members have agreed to show new members through their gardens if the member will call ahead and arrange a convenient time. Telephone numbers and towns are listed below.

**Memberships and renewals should be sent to our Membership Chairman Jeanne Hammer at 231 N Robinson Dr, Macon, NC 27551.**

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  
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