

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXXIX No.4

December 2012

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

Spring 2013

Gloucester, VA

### Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

**American Rhododendron Society**

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

**MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)**

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

**U VA Science & Engineering Libraries**

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

**UVA Special Collections**

<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/>

**Henry Skinner Website**

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/>

**Old Quarterly Bulletins ARS**

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

**Rhododendron Blog**

[www.rhododendron.org/blog/](http://www.rhododendron.org/blog/)

**Friends of the National Arboretum**

<http://savetheazaleas.org/>

**FONA's Save the Azaleas and Boxwood site**

## FALL MEETING AT MASSANUTTEN RESORT

About 40 MAC members attended the Fall Meeting on November 2 to 4, 2012, at Massanutten Resort. It took us a little while, but we did learn our way around the resort!

Friday night we had a very nice BBQ dinner catered by Hank's Smokehouse, followed by our chapter business meeting. Sally Perkins gave a talk about "Interweaving Companion Plants in the Rhododendron Garden". Many of the plants were wild flowers for which she had excellent photos. Dr. Jay Gillenwater had another big lot of P4M plants available for members. Early registrations got the best choices! Thanks, Jay.



Sharon Horn, George McLellan, Don Hyatt and Bill Bedwell at the BBQ dinner. Photo by S. McDonald

Saturday started with a big buffet breakfast then a bus tour to the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at

James Madison University. We had an introductory talk about the garden in the new Frances Plecker Education Center followed by a tour of the arboretum visiting the garden with the MAC deciduous azaleas and also the McDonald garden where some MAC members may remember our May 1996 dedication of the garden. It was encouraging to see the sizes some of the azaleas and rhododendrons had achieved. The large rocks are still there.



Entrance to the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. Photo by S. McDonald

After walking around the arboretum, we boarded the buses for our trip to the Mimslyn Inn in Luray. We had a delicious, elegant, buffet lunch there. This was the location where MAC had celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May 2002.

We had been scheduled to tour the Skyline Drive South from Thornton Gap with a ranger, but due to

snow and trees felled by Superstorm Sandy, Skyline drive was closed and the rangers were busy with cleanup and could not be spared.

Meeting organizer Sharon Horn rides with the punches though and since Sandy interfered with our plans we changed plans and we went back to Massanutten and heard talks by J. Jackson and George McLellan. J. Jackson of Appalachian Native Plants, Inc. near Mountain City, Tennessee, talked about “Why we do what we do”, how he got interested in growing native azaleas. He has a non-profit operation and cooperates with the county, uses solar heat in his specially built greenhouses and starts seeds in the basement. He is away at times in his regular occupation as a ship captain and Lindy takes care of things while he is away. They custom-raise some seed and grow some seed from the Perkins trials with ploidy research. They have some Zophar Warner hybrids and Gregory Bald plants.

George McLellan had recently given a talk about “The Garden in Winter” to the Holly Society of America so he was prepared to step into the afternoon program. He showed slides of many plants that are interesting in winter such as hollies, *Prunus subhirtella* ‘Autumnalis’, *Prunus mume*, and several varieties of *Camellia sasanqua*. Also mentioned were small plants like *Cyclamen coum*, *Cyclamen hederifolium*, and snow drops (*Galanthus nivalis*).

After the talks we had our social hour, book sale, a big plant auction with Doug Jolley as auctioneer, and a dinner catered by Mrs. Rowe’s Restaurant. The keynote speaker was John Perkins who talked about ploidy, mostly in native azaleas and their hybrids.

A separate location had been open as a hospitality house for after the programs on both Friday and Saturday nights for those who were up to it.

On Sunday about 10 to 12 members took the tour to Deep Run Ponds Natural Area. This area has blocks of hybrid trees about 40 to 50 feet tall growing in straight lines. There are sink holes which were dry at the time of the visit. Globally rare wetland natural communities harboring global and state rare plants species grow there. The property was acquired with funds from the 1992 Parks and Natural Areas Bond. This area is now closed to the public although periodic interpretive tours of the preserve are offered. It is under the Virginia

Department of Conservation and Recreation Natural Heritage Program.

### **IN THE CROZET GARDEN** by Lloyd Willis

We prepared for the expected storm Sandy (Nov 4-5) by getting two new battery operated lanterns. Because of Sandy the local public schools and the local college were closed for the first two days of the week. We stayed home and mainly inside for two days.



The electric power Lloyd Willis

was out for only five hours, from Sunday p.m. to Monday a.m. The winds were high, but we had expected little damage to the garden. After the storm we were surprised to find four trees down in almost a straight line. Three were on our property and the fourth was about a block away. Maybe a small tornado had hit.

Well even with three more trees to clean up, what is neat in the garden on November 14, 2012, is seeing the carpet of red Japanese maple leaves on the ground and on the periwinkle with the yak rhodo that appears to have sprouted from the periwinkle. What is neat is seeing the garden with rhodos not water stressed! What is neat is seeing a side yard almost full of Japanese maples with each one having a different fall color. What is neat is seeing some hostas that are now totally white but still clearly looking like hostas. What is neat is knowing that every day the ground is not frozen is a day for planting and transplanting. Even after two bad storms in six months, the garden remains a joy!

### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:**

Joseph Dunkin, Fredericksburg, VA  
22405

William Meyers II, Towson, MD  
21204

### **DEATH**

Carolina (Carole) Martinez Lago, wife of associate member Carlos Lago, died on September

21, 2012 of a heart attack. She had fled in her early twenties with her family from Cuba and the Castro dictatorship. She was the great grand daughter of the first vice-president of Cuba, Domingo Mendez Capote. Her parents were Dr. Emilio Martinez and Marta Pujol Martinez. The family eventually emigrated to the United States after living in Spain and Puerto Rico. Carolina graduated from Columbia University. After college Carolina reconnected with a childhood acquaintance Carlos Lago while in Puerto Rico. They were married and eventually they settled in Virginia where she worked for the U.S. State Department She taught Spanish to American ambassadors, senators and congressmen. They have two children, Suzanne Lago Arthur and David Carlos

### **WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS: END OF SEASON NOTES** by Doug Jolley

Adequate rainfall occurred throughout the summer and into fall here in central West Virginia. By July, blooming times were normal. This was an exceptional year for plumleaf azaleas (*R. prunifolium*). The first bud color was noticeable in early



Doug Jolley

July and the plants bloomed into August. Our first plumleaf azalea plant was acquired in the late 1980's from Le-Mac Nurseries and now is over seven feet tall. It and the others were enjoyed not only by Davetta and me: the hummingbirds and butterflies seemed thrilled also.

This fall seems also to be a spectacular year for the native witch-hazels (*Hamamelis virginiana*). Not only in our garden, but in traveling across West Virginia, plants in our area are putting on a show. Maybe this is because much of the fall foliage has been removed by multiple recent storms.

The garden season, I think, wound down with the recent MAC Fall Meeting. In addition to the scheduled events, Ron Brown extended an invitation to meeting-goers that he would welcome visitors on

Sunday, the last day of the meeting. We took Ron up on his invitation. His hillside garden in Harrisonburg is outstanding at any time of year. Thousands of blooming cyclamen were dotted everywhere. Evergreen ferns which may not be prominent during the warm months were another visual feature. Rock polypody (*Polypodium virginianum*) is a native, evergreen fern which I don't recall having seen in a garden setting. Dozens of Encore Azaleas were also still in bloom. Ron's garden is always worthwhile seeing.

The recent snowstorm from Hurricane Sandy which left feet of snow in neighboring counties left only two inches of very heavy wet snow here. One lightweight metal framed shade structure slowly folded in on itself but luckily plants were bent but not damaged. Let's hope that the winter weather turns out to be unremarkable!

### **HURRICANE SANDY** by Sandra McDonald

I haven't heard much about the impact of Hurricane Sandy on MAC members. It was scary in Hampton with the high water coming up to the top of our break water, but not over it. However, associate members **Jay and Bob Murray** in Colts Neck, New Jersey, reported that they lost a number of mature (80 or so feet tall) trees. The tree cleanup resulted in the loss of between 100 and 200 large, 30 year old rhododendrons which were in the woods. They also had a large branch land on their roof, but the damage was more cosmetic than structural. Another tree put some dents in their almost brand new car. The heat, phone, and water all depend on their electric power so they were without those utilities for almost a week.

Long Island suffered much damage. George Woodard who is at the **Phipps Estate** which many of you have toured reported that 300 trees were lost on the estate and it looked like a war zone. White pines were twisted and uprooted and big red oaks still had leaves on them and just blew over. Thirty-six of them were 100 years old. Two rhododendron planting areas were damaged, but George reported that the gardens are in decent shape.

If more damage reports are forthcoming, they will be included in a future newsletter.

## **DISTRICT 9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT, FALL 2012**

By Donald W. Hyatt

As the new District 9 Director, I attended the Fall ARS Board Meeting on your behalf in Nanaimo, British Columbia, on September 21, 2012. President Don Smart called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM. We had a very cordial and productive session, adjourning at 5:30 PM.

One of the first agenda items was a proposal for a reduced-rate student membership category. Details are not finalized yet, but we could offer a significant cost reduction to students if they forego a printed copy of the Journal but only have access to the digital version. There has been strong support for reaching out to young horticulturists so we expect this to pass easily at our next meeting in May. The digital version of the Journal is now online so all members are encouraged to check it out. Details including how to set up an account are in the 2012 Fall Journal on page 205.

The majority of the meeting was spent on the annual budget. The ARS has experienced a significant loss of membership recently and that has caused financial strain. Not long ago, we had 5000 members and if still at that level, our finances would be fine. Currently we have just 3215 members so we have lost significant income. Our largest expense is producing the Journal but most of those costs are fixed, independent of membership numbers. Reducing the size or quality of the Journal, or publishing only 3 copies per year were not considered acceptable cost-saving options.

Dave Collier, chair of the Budget Committee, went through the budget in great detail. We made significant cuts in many expenses but did have to raise others. The budget committee's role is to provide a planning guide, not to restrict expenditures. With projected income from dues set at \$148,040 and likely expenses at \$161,544, we do face a potential shortage of \$13,504. We did discuss many additional revenue sources and will continue to seek solutions as we do not want to sacrifice quality. One idea was to request modest donations of \$5 to \$10 from our members for the General Fund. If many people are willing to donate, that could easily resolve the shortfall.

We will save money by shifting to digital publications. Older ARS Journals are now online at the Virginia Tech Digital Archives

(<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS>), so one cost-saving motion was to stop maintaining hard copies for resale. Demand has been low, so past issues will soon be dumped for paper recycling. Contact the ARS Office quickly if you want something.

The ARS Board gladly approved the application for a new Finnish Chapter. Since overseas mail delivery is slow but also very expensive, a committee was established to study the feasibility of Electronic Associate memberships. The thought is to provide International Rhododendron Societies a reduced rate for access to our online Journal. That could provide a new revenue source for the ARS. A proposed cost-saving option for board members is to conduct one board meeting each year by electronic methods rather than face-to-face. The earliest date for that would be the fall of 2014.

We discussed the ARS website and the need for greater depth in educational materials. Since what is successful often varies by region, every District has been asked to determine the 10 most common questions that people ask about rhododendrons, such as how to plant, common disease problems, hardiness, etc. The ARS does have an online blog but they need more writers willing to support it. Another committee was established to investigate the feasibility of an online store.

The nominating committee has proposed a slate of officers for next year including Bruce Feller as ARS President and our own Ann Mangels as East Coast Vice President. Bill Mangels will continue as Treasurer for one more year as we go through a new accounting review.

There has been some reluctance in accepting responsibility for hosting ARS conventions but that may be changing. A general rule is that each District should try to host a convention in its region about once every 10 years. Next spring, the ARS Convention will be in Seattle, and in 2014, it will be in the Great Lakes area. Victoria hosted the 2005 Convention and they have offered to host it there again in 2015. Our last District 9 Convention was in 2006, and some of us have been discussing possibilities of a joint ARS/ASA Convention in the Norfolk area in 2016. I have spoken with all District 9 chapters now and have received positive feedback from each one. Thanks!





Sharon Horn as bus captain. Photo by S. McDonald



MAC touring Carrier Arboretum. Photo by S. McDonald



An elegant lunch at Mimslyn Inn. Photo by S. McDonald



Lindy Johnson & speaker J. Jackson at Mimslyn. Photo by McDonald



Speaker Sally Perkins. Photo by S. McDonald



Speaker John Perkins. Photo by S. McDonald



Jan Scanlon & Ron Brown. Photo by S. McDonald



Auctioneer Doug Jolley.



Sandra & Ken McDonald with their McDonald garden sign.



Sign for MAC Native Azalea Garden at JMU.

**LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM**

Dear FONA Members and Arboretum Stakeholders,

The U. S. National Arboretum has been working over the last 18 months to develop a new 5-year strategic plan that will guide the Arboretum into the future and empower it to better achieve its mission and goals. To prepare for the next steps in the process, the draft Strategic Plan has been posted on the Arboretum's website. You can see the strategic plan, along with Arboretum Director Colien Hefferan's invitation for public guidance and input here. The public comment period is open now through December 5th, 2012.

We applaud the steps the Arboretum is taking toward increased sustainability, and encourage all FONA members and Arboretum stakeholders to take advantage of this important opportunity to review the Plan and provide feedback. The draft of the strategic plan and a comments submission form are available online here .

Kathy Horan  
Executive Director  
Friends of the National  
Arboretum

**MEMBER IN THE NEWS** by Sandra McDonald

*(From an article in the October 22, 2012, Charleston - West Virginia Gazette by Travis Crum.)*



Photo by Doug Jolley

Doug Jolley was one of two from Plant Industries (along with two from Marketing) chosen to accompany a delegation of six Chinese agriculture company delegates who toured West Virginia on a trade mission. There were also two Chinese doctoral students from the WVU School of Agriculture who served as translators.

This was the first step in building a relationship with about 23,000 farmers living and working in the state, according to state Agriculture Commissioner Gus R. Douglass.

The delegates showed an interest in learning more about greenhouse technology when they visited Bob's Market and Greenhouses in Mason. It is one of the top 10 greenhouses in the country. Chinese



Doug Jolley and two of the Chinese visitors.

agriculture companies are looking into extending their seasons with greenhouses. In return , the Chinese delegates will teach West Virginia horticulturists how to genetically alter plants and flowers. Chinese horticulture companies are good at changing flowers' colors to make them more vibrant.

Jianguo Deng, vice president of Orient Landscape wanted the tour to be the first of many to West Virginia. His company provided landscaping services for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The company is worth about 3 billion Chinese yuan, about \$455 million.

Jianguo Deng wanted to take home and grow some sycamore and red oak trees from West Virginia.

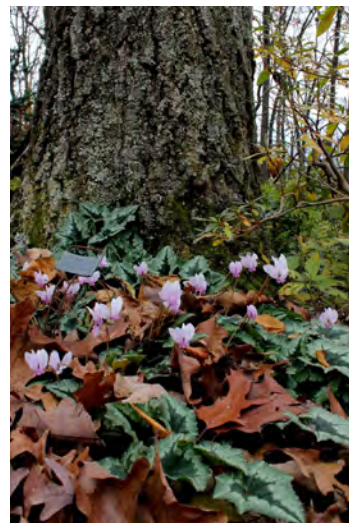




The Chinese delegation at the Greenbrier. Photo by Doug Jolley



Chinese delegation at the Sunshine Farm tour. Photo by Doug Jolley



*Cyclamen* blooming in Ron Brown's garden. Photo by Doug Jolley

## FROM MASSANUTTEN TO WEST VIRGINIA

Doug and Davetta Jolley accepted Ron Brown's generous invitation to stop by his garden in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on their way back to West Virginia. Ron has masses of *Cyclamen* blooming in his woods at this time of the year.

**REMEMBER ALL NEWSLETTER PHOTOS  
CAN BE SEEN IN COLOR AT OUR  
MACARS.ORG WEBSITE**

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.

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