

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 2-4, 2014 MAC at Days Hotel and Flatwoods Conference Center, Flatwoods, WV
May 16-18, 2014 ARS Convention, Cleveland, Ohio
April 20-24, 2016 ARS Convention, Williamsburg, Virginia

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society <http://www.rhododendron.org/>
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MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY) <http://www.macars.org/>
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UVA Special Collections <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/>
Old Quarterly Bulletins & JARS <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>
Rhododendron Blog www.rhododendron.org/blog/
Friends of the National Arboretum <http://savetheazaleas.org/>
FONA's Save the Azaleas and Boxwood site

FALL MEETING RICHMOND, VA, NOVEMBER 16, 2013

MAC had a late revision of its meeting location and date due to problems with finding space in Virginia Beach. Our Fall Meeting was a one-day event at Strange's Garden Center, Florist and Nursery in the Short Pump area near Richmond. There were 30 people in attendance. President Theresa Brents conducted a short business meeting and made announcements. Doug Jolley told about arrangements for next Spring's Meeting in Flatwoods, West Virginia. Save the dates of May 2-4 for this nice meeting Doug has planned.

November 16th was a misty, damp day in Richmond, so we were fortunate to have mostly indoor activities

scheduled. Jim Brant gave a Power Point presentation on the "Restoration of the Native Azalea Population on Hooper Bald." He had a lot of good photos and gave a history of the project.



Jim Brant

We had a fine selection of P4M plants thanks to Dr. Jay Gillenwater. There were native species from J and Lindy Johnson of Appalachian Native Plants, Inc., special selections of natives and hybrids from East Fork Nursery (Vivian Abney), and tissue culture plants from Briggs Nursery.

We had a delicious buffet lunch followed by a tour of the Strange's greenhouses and sales yard. Our book sale was available most of the day and during morning and afternoon snack breaks.

Sharon Horn asked for input for workday dates at JMU Arboretum for our gardens there so she can get them scheduled for next March and April before it gets hot. Jay Gillenwater said he had given JMU's Edith J. Carrier Arboretum Director Jan Mahon 15

plants on Friday. Jan is still trying to identify some of the older plants that were donated.

The afternoon speaker was Cathy Clary whose presentation was "Bringing Home Natives" The talk included information about natives and also



Cathy Clary

invasives. Some invasive plants Cathy mentioned were *Miscanthus*, *Euonymus alatus*, barberry, Japanese honeysuckle, oriental bittersweet, *Rosa multiflora* and autumn olive.

Plants she mentioned as companion plants for rhododendrons were witchhazel, *Hydrangea arborescens*, *Myrica pennsylvanica*, *Panicum* (switchgrass), *Lindera benzoin*, *Ilex glabra*, red twig dogwood, *Leucothoe*, *Kalmia*, dogwood, *Cercis canadensis*, *Amelanchier*, fringe tree, *Magnolia virginiana*, *Ilex opaca*, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, *Mertensia*, Jacob's ladder, *Trillium*, ginger, and wood aster.

The plant auction was conducted by Doug Jolley. There were many large and unusual azaleas.

The one-day meeting adjourned about 5pm.

DEATHS

Miss Mavis Haywood who was at the formative meeting of the Middle Atlantic Chapter May 23-25, 1952, and was the long time secretary and office manager for our chapter founder Dr. Thomas Wheeldon, died on November 9, 2013, in Tampa, Florida. She worked for Dr. Wheeldon for 34 years and then moved to Florida after Dr. Wheeldon died. In Florida she was a secretary at the University of South Florida where she met Dr. James Christensen and served as his office manager until her retirement in 2012.



Mavis Haywood at a 1959 MAC meeting.

While in Virginia, she served on the local and state boards of the Business and Professional Women's Club and the Professional Secretaries Association and was president of the Richmond Medical Secretaries Association. She received the Bronze Medal from MAC in 2004.

Mavis did much to make the chapter successful in the early years, handling the paper work, plans,

minutes, treasurer's work, and correspondence. She also handled much of the office work for the small rhododendron propagation setup that Dr. Wheeldon had.

Mavis remained a MAC member all these years and was still reading the newsletter and occasionally commenting by phone or email on items of interest to her.



Mavis Haywood

WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS, DECEMBER 2013 by Doug Jolley

Last fall, native witchhazels put on an outstanding blooming display. This fall is highlighted by bountiful displays of holly berries. Here in the garden and in the surrounding central West Virginia countryside, both American holly and species of deciduous holly are abundantly full of colorful berries. Late summer and fall has also been colorful with the various *Viburnum* varieties being also heavily laden with berries of many colors. I have photographed at least thirty species of songbirds either sampling or gorging on the offerings.



Doug Jolley

Probably the most excitement in the garden this fall was provided by two mature 'Lee's Dark Purple'. Unable to wait until next May, they burst into near full bloom in late September. Who needs Encore Azaleas when you have this behavior?

We have found a repository for not only large landscape plants but for our native azaleas and many of our Harry Wise hybrid rhododendrons. The location is the West Virginia Botanic Garden near Morgantown, West Virginia. The executive director is George Longenecker who is a recently retired

WVU Professor of Landscape Architecture. Through the West Virginia Nurseryman's and Landscape Association we donated multiple specimens of four varieties of *Viburnum* ('Michael Dodge', 'Cardinal Candy', 'Winterthur' and 'Brandywine'), specimens of *Rhododendron* 'PJM Elite' and *R. "Olga Mezzitt."* The viburnums were five foot specimens and the lepidote rhododendrons were three to four foot specimens. These were becoming too big to handle as nursery stock. Through Windbeam Way Nursery we made an initial donation of ten large *R. "Wise Chap"* which is Harry's cross of *R. minus* var. *chapmanii* and *R. minus*. I had collected the pollen from the *R. chapmanii* from a wild population in Florida in the mid 1980's and Harry made this cross. This plant has now been distributed from Long Island to North Carolina and I have received more positive correspondence from rhododendron growers about the performance of this plant than any other. Over the next couple years we hope to provide landscape size native azaleas, native hybrids and varieties of rhododendrons of our own and from our Harry Wise collection which we collectively call the "Wise Guys." Visit the Botanic Garden website at www.wvbg.org.

With fall progressing with fine weather so far, it will be interesting to see what winter brings.

IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

This past spring I was given a gift plant as the outgoing President of the Middle Atlantic Chapter. Theresa Brents had picked out the plant to give me, and I immediately liked my new deciduous azalea. I decided to make that gift plant the centerpiece of a new plant bed and went out and purchased four plants (cost \$120) to go to each side of the new deciduous azalea and eight plants (cost \$80) to go in front of the new deciduous azalea. Knowing the new bed would need to be mulched a truck load of aged pine bark mulch was ordered (cost \$220).



Lloyd Willis

When digging the holes for the new plant bed, an electrical line was cut in half resulting in no

electricity to a garage. The handy man was called (cost \$35) and while he could not fix the electrical line he would call and meet the guy from a local electrical company which could and did fix the line (cost \$165).

Three of the grand children asked if they could help mulch the new plant bed, and cash for their labor was acceptable (cost \$30).

In case you have not added up the costs listed above associated with the new plant, I will only say that it did cost more than I am willing to talk about, and once again, Mrs. Willis is a very patient person.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Baur, Richard, Yorktown, VA

23692

Constable, Ella, Troy, VA 22974

Reinke, Budne & Diane, Silver

Spring, MD 20902-2039

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LAURA GRANT:

It is now possible to receive an on-line *Journal* instead of or in addition to the paper *Journal*. The cost of printing and mailing the paper *Journal* keeps increasing and those who do not really want to have a paper copy could save some money for the Society by reading the on-line *Journal*. The link to the online *Journal* is as follows:

1. Go to ARS Office website: www.arsoffice.org
2. Click on "View Journal American Rhododendron Society online edition which is about halfway down the page.
3. If you already have a username and password, click on "login". If you do not have a username and password, click on "Register Now" and follow instructions for obtaining them

The members will need their membership number to log in which is found on the mailing label.

INSECTS AND AUTUMN COLOR, OCTOBER 31, 2013 by William F. Bedwell

I just saw a story about huge numbers of ladybugs in parts of the south, including middle Tennessee. Here at home, I have seen only one in the house and it looked smaller than normal so I was not sure if it was a ladybug. I am afraid they have consumed most of their food supply and moved on. They provided superb control of the aphids or whatever sucking insects that were ruining the crepe myrtles, turning the

leaves black with sooty mold and curbing the flowering to almost nothing. Every winter, up to 7 to 10 have been allowed to live in the house and reproduce before warm weather when I capture them in a cup and dump them out the window. There were fewer last winter and now nothing so far.



Bill Bedwell

A new insect appeared in large numbers in the house this late summer/autumn, miniature yellow jackets that are non-aggressive, fortunately. They fly and crawl around the house appearing to want to get outside and then they die. Sometimes they would land briefly on me and then fly away. I have seen at least a hundred bodies and perhaps hundreds. They are about half the size, or less, of yellow jackets that I have seen in the past. Then, more recently I have seen some slightly larger versions of them. Did they destroy the lady bugs, I wonder? Or did the lady bugs destroy most of their own food supply?

All that rain this summer seemed to wash away the mosquito eggs so I saw very few mosquitoes, no chiggers, and very few ticks.

I saw almost no Japanese beetles this summer and almost no signs of their damage. I know the Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services introduced a small, "harmless," wasp from Japan years ago that was said to keep them in control in Japan so they were no big problem. Dinwiddie County was one of the places where it was released. It must be working. I saw that wasp years ago but do not remember what it looked like. I assume it is not the same as my miniature yellow jackets.

Then, the wooly worms I have seen this fall are half black and half reddish brown, divided equally at the middle. Usually those caterpillars have variations of segments of the two colors, and I have heard their configuration is supposed to forecast the winter to come. I do not know how to read their forecasts. A winter that is half cold and half warm?

Also, there were fewer grasshoppers than usual. I wonder if the two flocks of wild turkeys ate them. There has been no sign of turkeys since I started mowing off the crab grass flower stalks frequently, and mowing 1 to 1.5 inches lower in

preparation for spreading grass seed. Even if I do not see the turkeys, they usually leave white polka dots all over my asphalt driveway.

By the way it appears that I have had good germination of the new grass seed, and it is coming up through the dying crabgrass and the wild *Lespedeza* that I mowed closely. Time will tell if the *Lespedeza* kills the new grass as it has seemed to do in the past. Since the grass seed was on the ground for about 5 weeks before we finally got some rain, I was afraid that something may have eaten it, but it appears that did not happen. Though I can see where some may have washed into bunches during the rains. The crabgrass may have reduced that problem. I hope I get a good stand of grass and can apply the crabgrass preventer next February. I do have patches of good grass from the past, but not enough. I am still trying to recover from killing all the wiregrass (and good grass) with Roundup a few years ago and then having problems with re-seeding. There may be success this time.

The shrubs and trees that I chose for fall color have been glorious recently and are at a peak today, though the Japanese maples are just getting started. Fall color has not been very good this fall so when I drive around here, my lawn has more color than anywhere. My neighbor with the expansive lawn and nice landscaping has only dogwoods for fall color and they are dull this year. They have some crepe myrtles but I do not see those from the road. Crepe myrtle color has been mixed here. Some not very colorful and others late.

Right now the 'Miami' crepe myrtle is a nice blend of orange and dark yellow and bronze standing in between the brilliant red of *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' and the bright yellow of the American smoketree, *Cotinus obovatus*, which gets better every year. I got this wonderful tree of superb spring, summer and fall beauty following the October 2004 MAC meeting in Charlottesville when Billy Constable gave us a tour of the nursery where he was working. I like it better than other smoketrees. Then next to the smoketree is the now sizeable (7 feet) dissectum Japanese maple, 'Garnet', that I got really cheaply at the ARS Convention in Oregon in 1995 and brought back in my suitcase. Here at the end of October it is deep, dark red and getting brighter, a nice contrast with the bright yellows around it. On the other side of that is the bright butter yellow of the so-called flowering pomegranate.



MAC members having a break. Photo by S. McDonald.



Auctioneer Doug Jolley.



MAC members touring one of the greenhouses at Strange's.



Don Hyatt, Karel Bernady, and Paul James..



Bill Bedwell and Jeanne Hammer.

Then across from that driveway entrance is the bright yellow *Corylopsis pauciflora* (from a MAC auction), and the soft yellow *Magnolia* 'Dr. Merrill' followed by *Camellia sasanqua* 'William Lanier Hunt,' loaded with a variety of flower colors in rose, pink, and coral, and bluish pink older flowers. (I cannot decide if I like the bluish pink flowers mixed in, but this is an extremely good doer and a compact round bush with super good leaves, almost as perfect as 'Yuletide'.) Then there are two large bushes of white camellias loaded with flowers. On the other side of the conifer border, next to a yellow threadleaf *Chamecyparis pisifera* 'Gold Mop' that forgot it was a dwarf years ago and the blue *Chaemecyparis pisifera* 'Boulevard' is the supreme *Camellia sasanqua* 'Yuletide,' which started blooming extra early this year with its bright true red flowers and bold yellow centers set off by the wonderful dense dark green foliage. The dark green leaves and red flowers look so good with the blue and gold of the conifers.

There are some rhododendrons in the midst of all this but the current standout is 'Taurus' with large dark green leaves and red flower buds waiting for their March-April opening of those gorgeous red trusses. In the lawn on the other side of the house, the two *Pyracantha* bushes are brilliant with red berries and a background of bright yellow variegated *Euonymus*, blue green *Cedrus deodara*, and the *Magnolia grandiflora* with dark green leaves that curl up to show the bright brown indumentum. All of these provide other background colors for the bold red berries of the *Pyracantha*. The 'Bloodgood' Japanese maple has only just started to get more color.

You can tell I am not afraid of color. Not at all. I may not have many flowers left after knee problems interfered with gardening but my fall color show, which has come from carefully selected plants, has become the big thing here, lasting 3-4 months, and peaking around now. Especially enjoyable since this is a true Indian Summer.

ARS DISTRICT 9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT by Don Hyatt

Plans for the 2016 ARS/ASA Convention in Williamsburg are well on the way. We have selected the dates for our meeting, April 20-24, 2016. This will be the weekend prior to Historic Garden Week in Virginia, one of the prettiest times of year. We have signed with the Fort Magruder Hotel, the site of the 1988 ARS Convention, and obtained a very

reasonable room rate of \$119 per night which includes the buffet breakfast. The rates will be good for two days on either side of our event. The facilities are within a mile of Williamsburg's historic district and ideal for our needs with ample space for the plant sale, flower show, banquets, and speakers. We have sketched out a tentative program with workshops in the morning, afternoon garden tours to Williamsburg, Richmond, Gloucester, or Norfolk, and evenings featuring keynote speakers and society banquets. We have selected the convention theme "Legends and Legacies" and have even established a website: <http://arsasaconvention2016.org>

The convention plant sale committee has been very active, and each chapter coordinator has been gathering rhododendron and azalea cuttings to propagate. We will emphasize new introductions by our local and regional hybridizers, so look forward to many new and rare cultivars in the plant sale. Next year, we will need many more volunteers to help, especially when we transplant those rooted cuttings.

Looking ahead to other District 9 activities, Harold Greer has agreed to speak to us next fall the weekend of October 11-12, 2014. Since he is such a sought after speaker, we will arrange a District 9 luncheon for our three chapters and the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA at a location convenient to as many as possible. We see this as a team building activity to help us better stage the 2016 Convention. As for national concerns, I attended the ARS Board Meeting in Nova Scotia on October 4, 2013. Much discussion centered around two major areas: 1) financial concerns due to declining membership, and 2) bylaws and policies changes needed by the IRS for us to continue as a tax exempt organization.

We currently have only 3170 members and that greatly impacts our financial decisions. A capping limitation for the Endowment Fund affecting transfer of money to the General Fund was suspended for one year. The Endowment Fund had appreciated significantly, so we were able to transfer a full 4% or a \$4000 increase this year to resolve budget problems. Sadly, we learned that the Pine Barrens Chapter dissolved, but most of their members have now affiliated with other chapters.

A proposal to raise the cost for overseas membership to cover mailing expenses was tabled. The ARS does pay \$6 more per year to send Journals overseas, but many of those members have no chapter affiliation, so the ARS keeps the \$10 that normally stays with the chapter.

Very few members are logging on the ARS website to read the online Journal. The new Student Membership category requires use of the online Journal, and we discussed an "Electronic Affiliate" proposal that would be similar. Back issues of older Journals housed in the Virginia Tech archives are used heavily. Last year, there were 4000 documents and 167,000 pages downloaded. An article on pollination by David Leach was the most popular, and 3 of the top 10 were scientific research papers.

We discussed the production costs for the Journal since that is our major expense. Rather than reducing quality to save a few dollars, the Board approved an upgrade recommended by the Editorial Committee instead. For an additional cost of only \$350 per issue, we can increase the number of color pages from 16 to 36 in a typical issue. A great Journal is essential for keeping and attracting members.

Steve Henning received strong support to establish an Online Store for the ARS. We will not be selling things directly, but through the store, the ARS would receive a commission on sales of books or other items from participating commercial websites if the search was initiated from our site.

Significant time was spent modifying our policies and bylaws in order to be compliant with IRS guidelines for tax exempt organizations. These included statements on conflict of interest by board members, anti-harassment and discrimination policies, and record keeping requirements. All officers present signed a form accepting those changes while on the Board. A previous proposal to consider changing the ARS name to reflect our international status was deemed unnecessary and dropped.

I appreciate the strong support from District 9. Please let me know if you have any concerns.

ARS STORE & AMAZON by Steve Henning

ARSSStore.org: The new ARS Online Store, Every purchase benefits the ARS

At the October 4, 2013, American Rhododendron Society Board of Directors meeting, the Board authorized the creation of an online ARS site that would not be selling items but would link to other providers. The online store was authorized to develop a relationship with Amazon as an affiliate store. The online store was also authorized to use the ARS logo and name to sell "ARS" merchandise. Product providers accessed through the ARS online store at ARSSStore.org pay referral fees directly to the ARS on sales made from ARSSStore.org referrals. These fees

from sales referrals go 100% directly to the ARS. ARSSStore.org has no expenses, only earnings.

The store has three divisions:

* ARS Logo Merchandise: featuring knit, woven and denim shirts, caps, visors, and computer briefcases.

* Amazon Merchandise: featuring Rhododendron & Azalea Books, Garden Books, Garden Tools, and any other item sold on Amazon.

* Participating Merchants: featuring other merchants who agree to give referral fees to the ARS for each purchase when you mention ARSSStore.org.

To access each division, just go to ARSSStore.org and from there select what interests you. If you don't see an item, just use the Amazon search feature. Amazon sells just about everything. You get the same low Amazon prices from the ARS store, but by using it the ARS gets a fee for referring you. As long as you go to Amazon from ARSSStore.org before making a purchase, the ARS gets a referral fee.

ARSSStore.org has the Main Store, a Canadian Store and a European Store. Canadians and Europeans can use the Main Store which uses Amazon.com, but the shipping can be expensive. The Canadian Store uses Amazon.ca, a Canadian affiliate, which carries many of the same things. If Amazon.ca has the item, the shipping within Canada will probably cost less. The European Store uses Amazon stores in the UK, Germany, France, Spain and Italy which can offer lower cost shipping within Europe. Do not go to the other Amazon stores directly from Amazon.com. If you do, your purchase will not qualify for a referral fee. Go to ARSSStore.org first and use links from there.

You may wonder if people who are not members of the ARS may use ARSSStore.org. Yes, most certainly! The objective of creating the ARSSStore website is to raise money for the ARS. The more money we raise, the better it is for the ARS. Invite all of your friends to use it. Invite your favorite nurseries to add links to ARSSStore.org.

The referral rate starts at 4%. If a total of 7 or more items are purchased from Amazon in a month, the rate is 6% or more. Typically it will be between 6% and 6.5%. It is 17% on ARS Logo Merchandise.

At ARSSStore.org, every purchase you make results in a contribution to the ARS at no additional cost either to you or to the ARS.



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

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