

# 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

April 27-30, 2017

ARS Annual Convention, Eureka, CA

May 12-14, 2017

Wintergreen Resort, Wintergreen, VA

### 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>	

### SAVE THE DATE by Jeanne Hammer

The Spring 2017 MAC meeting will be at Wintergreen on May 12-14, 2017. Room rates are \$109 per night (single or double) plus 10% resort amenity fee and 10.3% sales tax. Program details will follow in late winter/early spring, but room reservations can be made now by calling toll free number 855-894-5385, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Ask for the American Rhododendron Society Middle Atlantic Chapter block of rooms.

### DISTRICT 9 DIRECTORS REPORT by Bill Meyers

I attended the recent ARS Board Meeting at the Western Regional Meeting in Newport, OR on Friday, September 30, 2016.

Key items discussed were:

Our Ann Mangels headed a Transition Team which included cutting a number of significant costs and reorganizing some roles. We changed printer of the Journal saving \$2,000 per issue. By-laws and policies are being adjusted and/or re-written.

Dave Banks is new ARS Treasurer. He was previously our DD.

With this change I was made DD instead of Alternate DD. I have been able to get Richard Mohr of PVC to become our new Alternate for District 9. Katherine Sterner is new Office Administrator and will handle all membership services and dues monies. Laura Grant has retired.

For those who purchase items on-line through Amazon, please first go to ARSstore.org, then click on Amazon. Your Amazon order will then be handled as usual except the good news is the ARS will get 5.5% of the cost. This is significant through the year but can be even more significant at holiday time.

Ann Mangels, currently Eastern VP, will be our new ARS President at the end of the Spring Convention to be held in Eureka, CA, April 27-30, 2017. We will then need a new Eastern VP.

Additional forthcoming Conventions will be:

- May 2018 - Bremen, Germany with a pre-convention tour of the Netherlands and a post convention tour of Denmark and possibly Finland.
- 2019 – Philadelphia, PA
- 2020 – Portland, OR for the ARS 75th Anniversary where ARS was founded.

No Fall Regional Meetings in the East are scheduled yet. We should have one in the east in 2017 and 2019. Eastern Directors are asked to suggest locations. No tours are needed, just speakers.

District 1 is to arrange a Western meeting.

Chapters are urged to send copies of their newsletters to Katherine Sterner, Office Administrator.

New members who sign up after April 1st, will get the Journal for 18 months.

There is now a printed Journal and an on-line Journal. They are different so check them out. You will need to create a personal log-in to access on-line Journal.

It was found there are 15 rhody societies world wide. There was a brief discussion about creating one worldwide Society.

Ken Webb, Western VP, reported District 1 is doing lots of propagation. He suggested each Chapter have "a propagation center" that all its members could use. Sixty percent of seed exchange orders went to Europe last year.

Several Chapters have started Facebook pages generating interaction but it was noted someone has to run each of those.

There was lots of discussion about how to generate new members which is really important for our continued financial success and future growth. There was also some brief discussion about the common interests of the ASA and the ARS and possible combination of at least "back office" functions, but no conclusion was reached.

Bob Weissman, our national Webmaster, reported his re-design of our website to be more attractive to young folks. It now has more and better graphics and photos, a searchable database of plants which can be searched by bloom time, available hybrids, etc. You can enter a zip code and find all rhody sales businesses within a 25 mile radius, etc. Check it out!

We need chairpersons for Fund Raising, Membership and PR/Publicity. Anyone interested please let me or Ann Mangels know ASAP.

#### **JMU ARBORETUM UPDATE** by Lloyd Willis

During the spring and fall, MAC members had several workdays at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU. The workday activities included dead heading, dead limb removal, plant shaping of azaleas and rhododendron, invasive plant removal, and transplanting of rhododendrons. MAC helpers at one or more workdays included Theresa Brents, Jeanne Hammer, Sharon Horn, Paul James, Glenn Kauffman, Lloyd Willis, and Margaret Willis. On each workday Sharon Horn provided a wonderful lunch.

At the MAC winter board meeting, new funds were approved to help the arboretum with speakers and to purchase additional plants. Recent donations of plants to the arboretum were made by Jay Gillenwater.

During the fall, Jim Brant and George McLellan met with Sharon Horn at the arboretum. George outlined suggestions for the improvement of the area

in the arboretum that contains the Terry Sheuchenko memorial bench. The next workday will probably be work on the plant removals and plant additions suggested by George. There is also a goal of each small azalea or rhododendron getting a permanent name tag as well as a weed preventative mat around its base.

Jan Mahon, the arboretum director, and Janis Trass, the arboretum volunteer coordinator, are the two staff members with whom the group most directly works. Each has been profuse in their thanks for the various types of support given by MAC.

#### **NEW ACQUISITION AT UVA'S SPECIAL COLLECTIONS** by Jeanne Hammer

The University of Virginia Library has acquired a unique copy of *Rhododendrons and the Various Hybrids* by John Guille Millais. The three volumes are the author's own proof copy of both series and the second stage of proofs of the first series. The text and paper of the proof volumes vary somewhat from the final, published volumes. Of special note are the extra illustrations bound into the volumes that include hand-colored lithographs and original photos. These proof volumes are housed in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library and are a significant addition to the Rhododendron and Azalea Collection which is supported in part by an endowment established by the Middle Atlantic Chapter. The late Gladys Wheeldon was the primary benefactor of the endowment.

#### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER**

Debra Porter, Burke, VA  
22015.

#### **DEATHS**

**Walter Clarence Bell Jr.**, 74, of Salem, passed away October 21, 2016. Walter is survived by his wife Barbara and many relatives and friends. Walter was a retired school teacher of Salem High School where he taught computers, math and other subjects over the years. He and his wife owned and operated Bell's



Walter Bell in 1986. Photo S. McDonald.

Farm Nursery for 20 years growing and selling azaleas. Walter used to bring plants to our MAC meetings and also had the chapter tour his nursery, but he has been in poor health for a good while and hasn't attended recent meetings. The graveside service was Tuesday, October 25, 2016, Sherwood Memorial Park.

**Theodore S. Stecki**, a past president of ARS from Voorhees, New Jersey, died on November 26, 2016. He was active at various levels of ARS for many years. He was also a member of the Azalea Society of America and in his spare time had a business, Hill House Nursery.

### IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is November 16 as I start to write this article. We have had less than one half inch of rain in the past two months. When we dig a hole, the soil reminds me of powder and the dirt flows off the shovel like powder. In addition to the new flower beds needing water, some of the 10 year plus flower



Lloyd Willis.

beds have also been needing water. Often the rhodos in the clay pots near the house can go the entire year without needing water. These clay pot rhodos have needed watering several times in the past two months.

Has a lack of rain stopped any new planting in the garden? "Of course not," most of you would guess and rightly so. In the past three months, the helpers and I have planted twenty 3-gallon size Green Mountain boxwoods, twenty 1-gallon Green Mountain boxwoods, fifteen 1-gallon azaleas, and five 3-gallon Japanese maples. Why was all the planting necessary? Because the boxwood blight has caused the removal of over one hundred dead or dying English boxwoods. No fun.

The rhodos looking the best this fall are any of the Yaks, the evergreen azaleas are looking good, and the deciduous azaleas without their leaves are looking like sticks. I just remembered we recently planted over thirty 1-gallon ferns. Who could pass by a 50% off sale on the ferns and the chance to

make two trips to transport to Crozet all the ferns the store had in stock?

So where is the humor in this article? On Tuesday of this week, one of my helpers and I started the leaf cleanup. The helper blows the leaves into a pile and I use the riding lawn mower to cut them up. Because of the dryness, the leaf blower and the lawn mower were putting a huge amount of dirt and dust into the air. To me it looked like we were creating a miniature dust bowl. I collected several layers of dust on me from head to toe. When I came into the house, Mrs. Willis calmly said "It might be best if you take a shower before you have supper and don't forget to shampoo your hair."

### WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS, DECEMBER 2016 by Doug Jolley

Harvesting vegetables finally finished on November 15 for us. That pretty well sums up our autumn season which we experienced since the Fall MAC meeting. Even tender annuals bloomed a few days beyond that date. One favorite annual is now flowering tobacco whose



Doug Jolley.



Flowering tobacco, *Nicotiana*. Photo by Doug Jolley.

seed was collected three years ago on a visit to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The grounds at the station also have a nice selection of Ericaceous plants all nicely labeled.

Berry production has been outstanding from both deciduous and evergreen hollies as well as our

American Dogwood. For weeks this fall, migrating and resident birds visited these shrubs and trees in droves to feast on the bountiful seed crop. Deciduous holly growing in wild sites is as heavily fruited as I have known. While oriental witch-hazels are a month or more from blooming, the native witch-hazels in the



Witch hazel bouquet. Photo by Doug Jolley.



Cedar Waxwing with dogwood berry. Photo by Doug Jolley.

garden provided handsome bouquets on more than one occasion.

Seed collection has been spotty this fall in areas that I have been visiting. *Rhododendron arborescens* pollination must have been interrupted by constant June rains and even by severe June flooding in areas this plant frequents. Some seed searching stops have seen flood debris resting higher than the azalea plants themselves. Included in the June blooming seed set difficulty scenario is *Rhododendron maximum*. This year's seed sources are from two counties in north central Pennsylvania.

I did have the unfortunate experience of discovering a new invasive plant for West Virginia this fall while weeding landscape beds-- in my own garden ! I realized this in searching another weed for an inquiry at work and noticed that the weed that I had been pulling by the bucket fulls was



Mulberry weed, *Fatoua villosa*. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Mulberry Weed (*Fatoua villosa*). No maps on plant distributions researched showed this for West Virginia. I sent photos to the curator of the herbarium at West Virginia Wesleyan College (Dr. Katherine Gregg) and to a young botanist friend who works for the Virginia Natural Heritage Program (Zach Bradford). Both returned the identification as mulberry weed. This definitely is a nuisance weed and grows in all situations from gravel paths to our bog garden. This is a plant distributed widely by the nursery trade and mulch industry so be on the lookout



A woodpecker enjoying dogwood berries. Photo by Doug Jolley.

for it. It has been known from Virginia for some time. The plant flowers at an early age and is a prolific seed producer. Plants weeded out should be disposed

of in the trash, not discarded into compost bins or just thrown somewhere out of the way. As a final footnote, in preparing for a short talk to the West Virginia Invasive Species Work Group, I did find out that it had been found and disposed of in the WVU greenhouses some time ago so I was somewhat relieved as not to report my garden as the initial site.

Finally, there was, unlike last fall, very little fall blooming among the rhododendrons. I only saw a couple trusses try to open on Lee's Dark Purple and just three white flowers opened on a large Girard's Pleasant White. The cyclamen that we were given by Ron Brown have thrived and really did put on a show this fall. The carpet of mottled foliage that is developing is striking. Davetta and I have completed our annual chore of pine needle raking for nearby friends and generally speaking, all things point to a promising garden season next spring.

**WARMEST SEPTEMBER** from NASA  
<http://data.giss.nasa.gov/gistemp/news/20161017/>

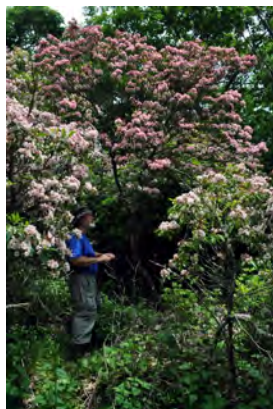
September 2016 was the warmest September in 136 years of modern record-keeping, according to a monthly analysis of global temperatures by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York.

September 2016's temperature was a razor-thin 0.004 degrees Celsius (0.0072degrees F) warmer than the previous warmest September in 2014. The margin is so narrow those two months are in a statistical tie. Last month was 0.91 degrees Celsius ( 1.638 degrees F) warmer than the mean September temperature from 1951-1980.

The record-warm September means 11 of the past 12 consecutive months dating back to October 2015 have set new monthly high-temperature records..

**FIRES IN THE SMOKIES**

In addition to the record heat, there has been exceptional drought in the Southeast with resulting wildfires in our beloved Appalachian Mountains, some suspected of being set by an arsonist. As most of you probably know, the town of Gatlinburg, Tennessee, suffered badly with 300



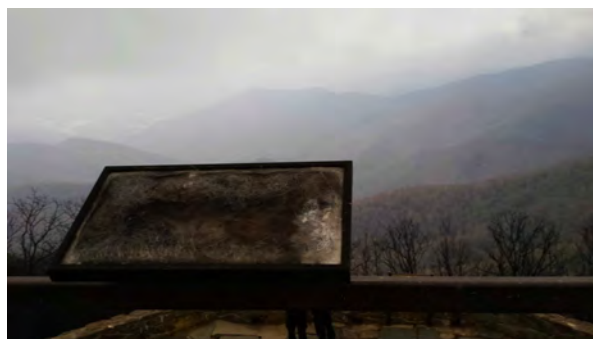
*Kalmia* on Wayah.  
G.McLellan photo

buildings burned, and 400 more burned in Sevier county. Also seven human lives have been lost so far.

Many of our Species Study Group members have been on hikes in various areas that have recently burned. Wayah Bald had a bad fire with fire destroying the roof of the stone fire tower and also burning the huge plants of *R. arborescens* and *R. calendulaceum* and *Kalmia latifolia*.



<http://thunderpigblog.blogspot.com/2016/11/wayah-bald-after-camp-branch-fire.html>



Photos from Wayah tower from thunderpigblog.



**Remember all photos plus extra online 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.

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