

# 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 27-29, 2018  
May 21-26, 2018

Harrisonburg, Virginia  
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>	

### SAVE-THE-DATE FOR SPRING MEETING

from MAC President Jeanne Hammer

MAC's 2018 spring meeting will be in Harrisonburg, VA the weekend of April 27-29. Garden tours include James Madison University's Edith Carrier Arboretum and the private "Heartflame Garden" near Elkton. Additional details will be posted to [macars.org](http://macars.org). The meeting notice mailing will go out in March.

### RON AND NORMA BROWN by Sandra McDonald

Ron and Norma Brown of Harrisonburg, Virginia, have had to move to assisted living facilities after Norma broke her leg and Ron became unable to drive. To top that off their house was built on a steep embankment, but suffered structural damage as the foundation started to shift downhill making the house no longer livable.

Some of you will recall the lovely tree peonies and *Trillium* and *Mertensia* on their mountainside. Ron has done a lot over the years for MAC that



Seedling tree peony of Ron Brown's. Photo by Don Hyatt.



Ron & Norma Brown at their home and garden. Photo by Don Hyatt.

some newer members may not realize. The chapter toured his garden many years ago.

Ron was heavily involved as a volunteer at JMU's Edith Carrier Arboretum in the early days of the arboretum, working with now deceased biology professor Dr. Norlyn Bodkin of JMU. When Ron heard that Le-Mac Azaleas was downsizing and had large plants that needed



*Trillium grandiflorum* at Ron Brown's. Photo by Don Hyatt.

a home, he put Norlyn in contact with Ken and Sandra McDonald. The arboretum needed plants and Le-Mac had some. This was the origin of the Sandra and Kenneth McDonald Azalea and Rhododendron Garden.

[https://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/arb\\_past.shtml](https://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/arb_past.shtml)

A number of trips from Harrisonburg to Hampton by Norlyn Bodkin and Ron Brown sometimes with another helper, Denis Whetzel, using a JMU truck or van resulted in the moving of a large number of mature rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas, and deciduous azaleas, especially a large batch of *R. prunifolium*.

Ron volunteered at the arboretum looking after many of the plants.



Ron Brown digging Rhododendrons at Le-Mac. Photo by S. McDonald.



Ron Brown and the arboretum's first director Dr. Norlyn Bodkin at Le-Mac. Photo by S. McDonald.

Another area of the arboretum featuring native azaleas is the Middle Atlantic Chapter garden which features donations from Doug Jolley and Harry Wise. The chapter donated a bench in honor of MAC President Terry Sheuchenko.

Ron spread his lovely wildflowers around at the arboretum.

More recently Sharon Horn has been organizing a work day one or more times a year to help maintain the plantings and remove storm debris, etc. Lloyd and Margaret Willis, Theresa Brents, and Glen Kauffman have been regular helpers with a



Ron Brown, Sybil Przypek, Ken McDonald, Sharon Horn, and Frank Pelurie at JMU Carrier Arboretum in August 2004. Photo by S. McDonald.

few other people from other areas of MAC sometimes pitching in when they could be in the area.

MAC has been making financial donations to the arboretum to help with care of the plants in recent years. Gladys Wheeldon at one point made a large financial donation to the arboretum to purchase more plants.

Ron has shared his beautiful tree peonies and wildflowers at MAC auctions. With his various contributions of plants, work, and expertise, he has added a lot of beauty to the world.

### IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is January 18, 2018, at 7:25 a.m. as I start to write this article. There is a light coat of snow on the ground and little or no snow on the trees and shrubs. It is quite cold this morning — in the teens — and I am wondering if the walk today will be done inside on the stairs. Yesterday within 15 feet of the house there was a bright red cardinal sitting in a dark green boxwood next to a rhodo next to a Japanese maple. I saw next year's Christmas card if I were a photographer and if we did photo Christmas cards.



Lloyd Willis

Added in the fall to the garden area next to the house was a three gallon size Japanese maple of a variety tagged Omuryama. (The correct spelling is probably Omure-Yama.) The maple was in fall



colors of yellow and the most beautiful pink. It was planted near the main walk to the house so it is visible when walking into and out of the house. All fall visitors noted how beautiful the leaves were. The plan is to find more of this type.

One evening when the ground was not frozen, Mr. Huff, who is one of my helpers, and I moved twenty one-gallon plants into a new and improved arrangement. We started about 4:45 p.m. and stopped about 5:45 p.m. due to nightfall. We were happy at how quickly it went.



The Willis's colorful Japanese maple. Photo by M. Willis.

So, where is the humor in this article? About three weeks ago I decided to put a mulched circular plant bed around a fairly large peach tree so that I could stop my very slow and careful mowing of the grass under the tree. It looked like an easy task—maybe thirty minutes of work to cut the sod out around the tree. My helper, Mr. Hexter, and I used the tree trunk as the center of the bed and cut a circle six feet across. It was an easy two hour job with both of us working. When we finished the bed, it just did not look right. The tree at about twenty inches out of the ground turned at a 45 degree angle for another twenty inches and then went upright. Therefore, we decided that we should use the point where the trunk turned upward for the second time as the center of the new bed. I then turned to get my shovel. When I looked again, I found Mr. Hexter, who is twenty years younger than I am, on his back on the ground with his head near the tree trunk. He was not moving. I feared he had had a heart attack. (Silly me.) He looked at me and said, “By looking at the tree branches from below, I can see that we have correctly found the new center of

the plant bed.” At our next work session we enlarged the bed from six feet across to fourteen feet across, added six English boxwoods in a hexagon pattern, and covered the area with several garden carts of mulch. Total work time this session was about seven hours—not bad for my job estimate of thirty minutes.

### **SPRING 2018 WORKDAYS AT JMU'S CARRIER ARBORETUM** by Jeanne Hammer

For a number of years, Sharon Horn has coordinated MAC volunteer workdays at the Edith Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. The spring 2018 workdays will be the afternoons of March 6 and 21 and the mornings of March 7 and 22.

These workdays involve clearing downed branches and leaves away from the azalea and rhododendron collections to help “spruce up” the arboretum for the prime April and May season when many visitors come to enjoy the spring bloom. The work is invaluable as the small crew of arboretum staff rely on volunteers to help with seasonal chores.

If you can volunteer any or all of these days, please contact Sharon Horn at (540) 350-2666 or [hi.meadows.farm@gmail.com](mailto:hi.meadows.farm@gmail.com). Please bring your own garden gloves, pruning shears, loppers, and rakes. Lunch will be provided each day at noon in the arboretum's Pavilion.

### **NATIVE AZALEA FESTIVAL BUILDS ON MAC WORK** by Jeanne Hammer

Since at least 2011, when the first seedlings were planted, the MAC Species Study Group, led by Jim Brant, George McLellan, and Don Hyatt, has worked closely with the Vaseyi Chapter and local Robbinsville, NC town council and tourist board member, Rovonda Williams, as well as other volunteers to restore the stand of *R. calendulaceum* on Hooper Bald. (See September 2017 newsletter issue.)

The project has increased awareness and appreciation of these native azaleas, resulting in the first annual Graham County Native Azalea Festival on June 14 through June 16, 2018. The event will include talks by Buddy Lee, noted Encore azalea hybridizer, as well as Don Hyatt and George McLellan. In addition, MAC member and Azalea Society of America President Rick Bauer will be

on hand to present the ASA "Azalea City" award to Robbinsville, NC.

**WINDBEAM WAY  
WANDERINGS  
FEBRUARY 2018** by  
Doug Jolley

The winter of 2017-2018 has been real. Here in central West Virginia we have recorded multiple nights below zero degrees F., off and on snow covering the ground, ample rainfall, and even some nice days in between.



Doug Jolley



*Hamamelis 'Cyrille'*. Photo D. Jolley.

One of our favorite companion shrubs include a number of witch-hazel cultivars. Some signal their coming into bloom by emitting an intense fragrance while others brighten drab area of the landscape. The winter which was just described effectively delayed January blooming and now in early February, the garden is coming alive with yellows, salmons and reds signaling witch-hazel season. The cultivar 'Cyrille' while not yet at peak anthesis is bright even on a dreary, rainy day.



Robins busy eating berries. Photo by D. Jolley.

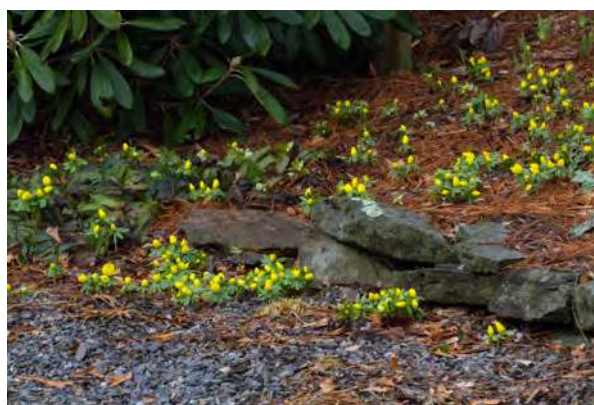
Probably the most memorable garden event this winter was the appearance of countless dozens of robins; maybe one thousand or more.

Robins descend upon hollies, viburnums and crab apple trees seeking sustenance during harsh late winter weather spells. This early February was no different except for the continual waves of birds covering trees, shrubs, lawn and pasture. Even seasoned birders do not get too keyed up about robins, but this event was



Robin with *Rhododendron 'Brandywine'*. Photo by D. Jolley.

impressive. In two days all berries and fruits were consumed and the birds moved on. A *Viburnum nudum* 'Brandywine' provided a stage upon which to enjoy an avian acrobatic performance right outside the living room window.



Winter aconite. Photo by D. Jolley.

At the recent chapter board of directors meeting, Sharon Horn asked me if I had heard of a new invasive insect pest. Yes, I have, and it has been recently found near Winchester, Virginia, and media outlets will be sure to cover this. The Spotted Lantern-fly was first seen in eastern Pennsylvania in late 2014. Quarantines and millions of dollars have not resulted in the halt of its spread. The insect is now listed for Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and Virginia. Links to information are abundant. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Penn State Extension and the USDA-APHIS have abundant information. An excellent recent article pertaining to this issue is from the Harrisburg Patriot News has the following:



[http://blog.pennlive.com/wine/2018/01/as\\_pa\\_asks\\_for\\_additional\\_help\\_to\\_combat\\_insect\\_more\\_states\\_report\\_sightings.html](http://blog.pennlive.com/wine/2018/01/as_pa_asks_for_additional_help_to_combat_insect_more_states_report_sightings.html)

The lanternfly is potentially devastating to vineyards, orchards, hardwood forests, vegetable crops and more.

State Departments of Agriculture are asking for sighting information so that immediate steps to combat this invader may be taken.

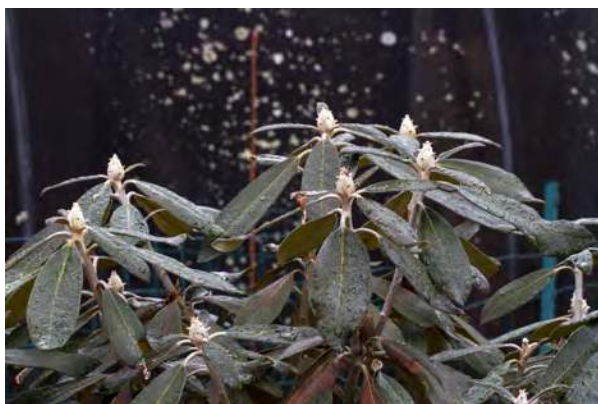


USDA APHIS photos of Lanternfly.



Cyclamen. Photo by D. Jolley.

While cyclamen and winter aconite brighten the ground beneath our rhododendrons, Davetta and I and a myriad of yet to open flower buds eagerly await spring!



*Rhododendron smirnowii* grown from ARS Seed Exchange seed. Photo by D. Jolley.

### DECEASED MEMBER

**Jay Murray**, the former ARS Registrar died on January 13, 2017, at the age of 94. Jay and her husband Bob received the ARS Gold Medal in

1999. Jay and Bob received the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society's Loder Cup in 2006 for contributions in the field of horticulture. Jay was ARS Registrar for 27 years having taken on the job in 1985. When Jay and Bob took over the job, everything was paper, and pen or pencil in the mail. She and Bob developed a database to start keeping the records. Jay and Bob have been Associate Members of MAC for many years.



Jay Murray. Photo by Walter Przypek.

### MORE ABOUT A CELEBRATION OF OUR NATIVE AZALEAS by George McLellan

On June 14, 15, and 16, 2018, The First Annual Graham County Azalea Festival will be held in Robbinsville, North Carolina, to promote our native azaleas. Featured among the many events will be tours of Hooper Bald (a short walk of only a tenth of a mile) to see the natural stand of *Rhododendron calendulaceum*. Members of the MAC Species Study Group will be on the Bald to answer questions and guide hikers on Friday. There will be speakers on native azaleas, a photo/art show, food, music, and many other activities on Saturday.

Information: 828-479-1255

Graham County is located in western N.C., just south of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It has many outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, mountain biking, paddling, and fishing. A must do is a walk through Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, one of the few remaining tracts of virgin hardwood forest in the East with 400 to 500 year old trees, some with a base of 20ft around. More information: 804-824-1012 (cell phone)



**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 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.

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