

# 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 19 to 21, 2019

May 15 to 19, 2019

MAC Spring Meeting, English Inn, Charlottesville, VA

ARS 2019 International Convention, The Desmond Hotel,  
Malvern, PA

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

**American Rhododendron Society**

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**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**

## SPRING MAC MEETING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE - by Jeanne Hammer

Mark your calendars for April 19-21. MAC's Spring Meeting this year will be in Charlottesville. We will use the English Inn again as our "base camp" for lodging and meeting space.

On Friday evening, Rick Bauer, MAC member and current president of the Azalea Society of America (ASA), will talk to us about the ASA's Legacy Project. The project seeks to increase knowledge of hybridizers and their hybrid cultivars and encourage propagation and introduction to a wider audience. On Saturday evening, there will be a presentation about Charlottesville's future 8.5 acres botanical garden. The current president and incoming president of the McIntire Botanical Garden's board of directors will share the vision for the garden and present its conceptual design by Mikyoung Kim Design of Boston and Waterstreet Studio of Charlottesville.

Saturday's tours will include the mature gardens of two MAC members and one past-MAC member: Frances and Andrew Boninti, Dr. Jay and Shirley Gillenwater, and Toby and Mike Zakin. Frances' garden, designed with "rooms," paths, and terracing, emphasizes native plants and abounds with non-



natives, too, such as daffodils and groves of rhododendrons and azaleas. It will be one of the 2019 Historic Garden Week tours in Albemarle County on April 28. Jay's expansive garden lies along a ridge near Ivy and features many Hachman hybrids, as well other choice plants, along its winding paths. Also near Ivy, Toby's garden includes mature rhododendrons and azaleas from past P4M sales and a spectacular, artificial waterfall feature facing the entry to the house.

The deadline for reservations at the English Inn using the MAC block rate of \$124 plus tax per night is March 19, a month ahead of the meeting. If you are thinking about attending, go ahead and call the English Inn at (434) 971-9900 to reserve your room and ask for the MAC-ARS rate.

## WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS FEBRUARY 2019 - by Doug Jolley

The winter of 2018 and into 2019 has been uneventful. Here in central West Virginia, our garden has experienced ample rainfall, mostly mild temperatures, and our rhododendrons seem to be enjoying the whole affair and anxiously await the arrival of spring.

One enjoyable outing was a trip to Pittsburgh to take in the Phipps Conservatory Winter Light Show. The first Saturday in December was sunny and unbelievably 70 degrees in the city. The show included the inside of the conservatory as well as out of doors. While not geared for rhododendron

enthusiasts, this was a great way to enjoy a great December day.



Witchhazel Magic Fire. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Witch hazels are a favorite of ours. Blooming season begins in mid-October with our native witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*). At this writing the oriental witch hazels are beginning to put on a show. The flowers seem to be impervious to virtually any temperature swing. Last week we experienced single digit nights. A couple days of moderate temperatures, and the flowers



Bee on winter aconite. Photo D. Jolley.

spring back to life. These flowers and the patches of winter aconite that are blooming now are great attractions to honey bees. Yes, bees working in February. The dozen varieties of witch hazel will provide splashes of color through much of March.

Included with this writing are a couple photographs of bud-laden rhododendrons. Our coldest couple of nights were in the single digits; not enough to harm our plants. One of our most consistently heavily bud-laden plants is a *Rhododendron prunifolium*. We obtained this plant from the McDonalds more than 30 years ago. Aside from the source, one unique feature of this plant is that it resides outside our deer fence. It is at the edge of a group of mature white pine trees and happens to be a favorite bedding spot for a handful of deer through the winter months. We are often asked if deer eat deciduous azaleas, and we often point to this plant as an example that deer do not “prefer”



Snowdrops and winter aconite. Photo D. Jolley.

our deciduous azaleas. Nothing is guaranteed, as we all know, when it comes to what deer will and will not eat. For whatever reason though, this plant seems immune to browsing and is floriferous year after year with no special care. Rhododendrons in winter are still interesting given the myriad of shapes and textures of buds and leaves.



Robin in American holly. Photo D. Jolley.



One day this week scores of robins descended upon our holly trees. For nearly all that day they fed on a bountiful crop of berries. As quickly as they arrived, they departed. Spring is here !!

### **LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN WORK DAYS** - by Barbara R. Hall, co-chair, LGBG Rhododendron Project

Many years ago, members of the Middle Atlantic Chapter donated plants for a rhododendron display area in the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Over the years, unfortunately, that area has become neglected and needs some maintenance work to get it back in shape to be attractive to the public. We have arranged with the LGBG staff to set up two work days, March 12<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) and March 21<sup>st</sup> (Thursday), for our members to do some clean-up work in that area. The work will mostly involve trimming up the existing rhododendrons and removing small saplings that have invaded the area and threaten to crowd out the rhodos. We plan to work both days, weather permitting, but volunteers may elect to work either one or both days. Some potential volunteers signed up at the MAC fall meeting, and they will be contacted by email. If you haven't already signed up, but you are interested in helping, please send me an email at [hortusportus@cox.net](mailto:hortusportus@cox.net) so I can send you additional information when available. Here's an excellent opportunity to get involved "hands on" in a chapter project!

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

It is January 31, 2019 as I sit down to start this article. The temperature is hovering around 8 degrees. When I was outside a few minutes ago, the ground felt like I was walking on cement. The good news is that the very strong winds of yesterday are gone. Several people much lighter in weight than I were in danger then of being blown over by those winds. During my brief walk this morning, the leaves on every rhodo were just slightly curled to highly curled. The evergreen azaleas looked fine, and as expected the deciduous azaleas looked like dead sticks.

We did have a snow this month that provided quite a nice visual in the garden that day. The snow fell gently, and it was a no-wind day. The snow was caught on the limbs, twigs, and on attached dead, brown leaves. The trees were outlined in snow and,

the snow made the attached brown leaves disappear. The snow covering the leaves reminded me of some Christmas decorations. The morning of that snow we had a rare heavy winter fog in Crozet that lasted until



Margaret and Lloyd's Yak in their single digit weather.  
Photo Margaret Willis.

about 11 am. For a few hours that morning, we had close to a white out situation: no wind just white fog and white snow. Margaret and I enjoyed a walk in that white world.

So, where is the humor in this article? I keep a "to do" list of outside projects. The words that caught my eye recently said, "Remove honeysuckle from trees at bottom of hill." This was a project suggested by Mrs. Willis aka Margaret, and I liked her suggestion. The next time the Monday helper came, we headed for the bottom of the hill to do a ten minute job of removing honeysuckle. Step one was removing the longest vine—it was only about twenty feet long. After that, several smaller vines were removed from the trees. Then we decided that we needed to remove the roots of the honeysuckle. With all the honeysuckle gone, we could see that the one large tree and several small trees were too crowded. This led to the removal of several small trees. Of

course, this opened up space that begged for about ten small Japanese maples to be planted. Instead of the 2-3 inches of mulch, 4-5 looked much nicer. So, my ten minute job of honeysuckle removal turned into a combined fifteen hours of labor for my helper and me. Isn't life fun?

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

John Auditore, Arlington, VA 22203

Kevin Kosa, Harper's Ferry, WV 25425

## DEATHS

Longtime MAC member **Ronald "Ron" Brown**, 89, of Harrisonburg, died Saturday, Dec. 22, 2018, at Sunnyside Retirement Community.

He was born Oct. 23, 1929, in Fairmont, W. Va. He grew up farming, and graduated from Morgantown High School. Ron was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and served during the Korean War. He retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration, where he helped individual farmers, low-income families and seniors in rural areas secure loans for housing, farm improvement, water systems and emergency relief.

Ron had a wonderful garden at his home that was often open to friends and the public. He had fantastic tree peonies he grew from seed, and a woodland of *Trillium*. Ron always greeted visitors with a smile, a guided tour, and often a free plant or two. He was a long time member of MAC.

He volunteered at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. He led an effort to move over 500 donated plants from Le-Mac Azaleas into the arboretum's collection to help create the



Ron Brown



Ron Brown with Dr. William Constable at 2004 MAC meeting. Photo S. McDonald

arboretum's McDonald Garden in 1994.



Ron Brown and Dr. Norlyn Bodkin getting ready to drive back to JMU arboretum after digging plants at Le-Mac in 1994. Photo by S. McDonald.

Ron received the Bronze Medal from MAC at the Colonial Heights Meeting, September 12, 1996, "in recognition of his many years of participation and service to our Chapter, organizing a meeting in Harrisonburg, having his garden on tour, his many donations of plants to our auctions and sales, and his terrific efforts at the James Madison University Arboretum in helping Dr. Norlyn Bodkin to establish rhododendron and azalea gardens there."

He is survived by his wife, Norma L. Brown of Harrisonburg; daughter, Nicole M. Brown and partner, Katie E. Marion, of Malden, Mass., and grandsons, Zachary and Theodore, and five sisters and one brother.

MAC member **Henry Casabianca Mayo** died January 26, 2018. Henry was born on November 4, 1937 in Richmond, Virginia. His family moved to Arlington, Virginia, where he grew up and attended Wakefield High School and George Washington University where he studied Mechanical Engineering.

Henry worked for the Department of the Navy at the Naval Research Lab and for the Department of the Army at Fort Belvoir after graduation. He later worked as a patent researcher at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Virginia. He held several patents privately but also for the government.

Henry created a conservation easement of land that has been continuously owned by his family for over 100 years in Goochland, Virginia and hoped that it would be passed down for generations to come. He loved the land and the Goochland area.

Henry is survived by his two daughters, Melanie



Mayo-Rodgers (Ron) and Monica Mayo Condon (Mike) his two sons David Mayo (Ashley Kotania) and Ted Mayo (Ashley), two brothers, a sister, and seven grandchildren.

#### **INPUT WELCOMED** - by Sandra McDonald

Your editor has been putting out this newsletter since late 1974 to 1975 or around 45 years. I would be surprised if I am not the longest serving chapter newsletter editor in the Society. This long journey started out with an old electric typewriter with copies being printed by a small, local printing company. I upgraded to an early computer and kept upgrading as technology improved. Somewhere along the way in the early days the volume number skipped a year, but by the time I discovered it, I couldn't go back.

Many MAC members have contributed articles over the years, and they have all been very much appreciated. These days I especially appreciate the contributions of Doug Jolley and Lloyd and Margaret Willis. Walter Przypek contributed many photos of chapter activity over the years when he attended our meetings.

With the help of Dave Banks, the newsletter is now sent as a pdf to many of our members and mailed copies to a few, which saves the chapter money.

I should retire from being newsletter editor and welcome hearing from anyone who would be interested in taking over this job.

It is becoming more difficult for me to get to meetings that are very far away to get information to write articles. I would appreciate very much articles submitted to me for the newsletter by chapter members as long as I am doing the job. My email address is listed on the back of the newsletter under the Officers and Directors information.

#### **NURSERY FIELD TRIPS**

George McLellan is planning a trip to N.C. nurseries from February 28 to March 2, leaving from Brent & Becky's Nursery at 7:30a on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Contact George at 804-824-1012 (cell) for more information. Don Hyatt has a group that will meet up with George on March 1 and 2. Don Hyatt (703-241-5421(home) and 703-975-0409 (cell on the road).

#### **RHODODENDRON BUDS IN WINTER**



Another heavily budded *Rhododendron* at Doug Jolley's.  
Photo by D. Jolley.



A cold, well-budded *Rhododendron* in the Willis garden.  
Photo by Margaret Willis.



**Remember all photos can be seen in color and ENLARGED at [MACARS.ORG](http://MACARS.ORG). Click on Newsletter on left panel.**

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.

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