

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXXXII No.2

May 2015

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 23-24, 2015

Roslyn Center, Richmond, VA

April 20-24, 2016

ARS ASA Convention, Williamsburg,  
Virginia

### Rhododendron website addresses:

**American Rhododendron Society**

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

**ARS Store** Order from Amazon thru this site

<http://arsstore.org/>

**MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)**

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

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

**Friends of the National Arboretum**

<http://savetheazaleas.org/>

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

**Our 2016 Convention site (NEW)**

[www.arsasaconvention2016.org](http://www.arsasaconvention2016.org)

### SPRING MEETING 2015

The MAC Spring Meeting on April 24-26 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Durham, North Carolina had an attendance of 48 for a very nice meeting. The rainy weather held off until Saturday afternoon.

Some members arrived early for a tour of Tony Avent's Plant Delights Nursery. Friday evening we were treated to Don Hyatt's famous Bucket-List presentation which was very entertaining and got many laughs from the audience.

The Willises brought Jay Gillenwater's P4M plants after Jay was unable to attend at the last minute. We didn't have a judged flower show, but there were many sprays and trusses on display for Sandra McDonald and Carol Segree's personal flower show.

Theresa Brents did a fine job conducting the meeting and keeping us organized. Incoming President Jay Gillenwater had sent a very nice note to outgoing President



Theresa Brents

Theresa for her service. Theresa read it at the meeting.



Entrance to Duke Visitors Center and Gardens. Photo S. McDonald.



J Jackson, Barbara Hall, Debby Sauer, George McLellan, Ken McDonald and Lindy Johnson in Sarah P Duke Gardens. Photo S. McDonald.



Dave and Virginia Banks at Sarah P. Duke Gardens. Photo by S. McDonald

Saturday morning was cloudy, but we did get to tour the lovely 55 acre Sarah P. Duke Gardens at Duke University during the morning where we saw the H. L. Blomquist Garden of native azaleas and other plants and the William Louis Culberson Asiatic Arboretum with its large pond and Asiatic plants. It started misting at the end of the tour, but we were able to buy a few plants and other items at the gift shop. We went back to the hotel for a good hot lunch in the cool weather.



Glenn Kauffman browsing at the MAC Book Sale. Photo by S. McDonald.

It started raining in the afternoon and the tour of the J. C. Raulston Arboretum at N. C. State University had fewer people on that tour, but it was quite educational with our knowledgeable volunteer guide. The A. E. Finley Foundation Rooftop Terrace

was very interesting.

The JC Raulston Arboretum website says: “The green roof is an integral part of the building and environment and provides an insulating factor for the geothermally heated and cooled McSwain Center. Designed and constructed to support vegetation, this rooftop garden has planting beds as shallow as eight inches in some places. Layers of

growing media, drainage elements, and protective roof membranes are hidden beneath the surface. Planting beds contain a mixture of sand, a heat-expanded slate material (PermaTill), and organic material appropriate for use on green roofs. Growing here is an unusual selection of plants, resistant to heat and drought conditions.

“Also on the rooftop are sunny trough gardens, traditionally used for growing alpine plants and creating miniature gardens. These troughs are planted with dwarf conifers, sun ferns, tiny daphne, small bulbs, and cascading perennials.”

A searchable database of plants is at:

<http://jcra.ncsu.edu/horticulture/our-plants/index.php>

There are 18 types of gardens listed on their website and our tour leader took us through many of them, explaining as she went along. One main focus of the Arboretum is to test and display new plants so that nursery people can have new material to work with. There is frequent change in the garden. The boxwood, redbud, and magnolia are especially well-known.

Saturday evening was the Plant Auction and a short business meeting with our election. The slate of officers and directors elected:

- President Jay Y. Gillenwater, M.D.
- Vice president Jeanne Hammer
- Secretary Doug Jolley
- Treasurer Debby Sauer
- Directors: 3yr Glenn Kauffman  
Bill Bedwell  
Sandra McDonald
- Director: 1yr Teri Bennett

Elissa Steeves topped on the evening with a presentation on famous gardens she has recently visited in the Philadelphia area: Longwood, Mt Cuba, and others, showing many beautiful photos.

**FALL MEETING OCTOBER 23-24, 2015**

Debby Sauer and Barbara Hall have been working on the Fall Meeting. Speakers are to be Karel Bernady and Mike O’Hara. Rachel Yungman will have a workshop on making concrete orbs and casting leaves for the garden.

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER**

Jackson McCarter, Travelers  
Rest, SC, 29690





Iris and azaleas at Duke Gardens. Photo S. McDonald.



A rare weeping elm at JC Raulston Arboretum. Photo S. McDonald.



Japanese roof irises at Suzanne Edney garden. Photo by Barbara Hall.



Saturday evening speaker Elissa Steeves. Photo by S. McDonald



Phyllis Rittman and Joe Miller by the arched bridge of the W.L. Culberson Asiatic Arboretum at Sarah P. Duke Gardens. Photo S. McDonald.



Part of our MAC group ready to tour JC Raulston Arboretum. Photo S. McDonald.



Graham Ray's rock garden. Photo by Barbara Hall.



Azalea sprays on display. Photo S. McDonald



P4M plants. Photo by S. McDonald.



## DEATHS

**Ian Robertson** of Charlottesville died in November 2014. Although not a MAC member, Ian spoke to us at our November 6, 2009, meeting. He was an internationally known garden designer, educator and author.

**Dr. David Fluharty** died May 3, 2015. He had retired from Newport News to Taxco, Mexico, before 2000. He was more recently an at-large ARS member, but many years ago had been a member of the Middle Atlantic Chapter as well as the Tidewater Orchid Society and served as an ARS director before the district system was put in place.

## IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

If I were to pick the favorite early red rhodo in our garden, my winner this year would be 'Taurus'. We have only two of these plants and they are close to each other (maybe 10 feet apart). Both are about six feet tall—one is four feet wide and the other six feet wide.



Lloyd Willis

These two plants were the first rhodos to bloom in our garden this year. What clearly made 'Taurus' the favorite was seeing the two plants about 7:30am during their first week of bloom. Mrs. Willis and I were standing west of the two plants with the sun passing through the blooms. We were seeing multiple shades of red that led to the statement of "Wow! That made our morning walk worthwhile." Not said until later, "I think another 25 plants of 'Taurus' would look great in the same area." Nice to have a goal. Nice to see such beauty. Nice to be looking forward to the blooms of next year.

So what is the humor in the article? This past Monday Mrs. Willis and I along with Theresa Brents, Sharon Horn, and Sharon's friend Mary were the MAC volunteer crew for rhodo and azalea cleanup at the JMU Arboretum. We started work about 9:30am, worked to lunch—as usual tastily prepared by Sharon—and stopped about 3 pm with the temperature around 84 degrees. My thought more than once as the afternoon passed was "I'm missing my nap. Not to worry though, we will be home by 4 pm, get cleaned up, and will have a late nap around 5 pm." By 5:01, I was cleaned up and heading for my nap. Life is good—a short nap and I will be ready for supper. At 5:02 the phone rings. The older daughter

has a question, "If you are going to Ava's (our 15 year old granddaughter) soccer game, can you take Silas (age 7) with you?" We had completely forgotten the soccer game. We went. Even though we had Silas with us, I had a nice nap during half-time.

## WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS MAY 2015

by Doug Jolley

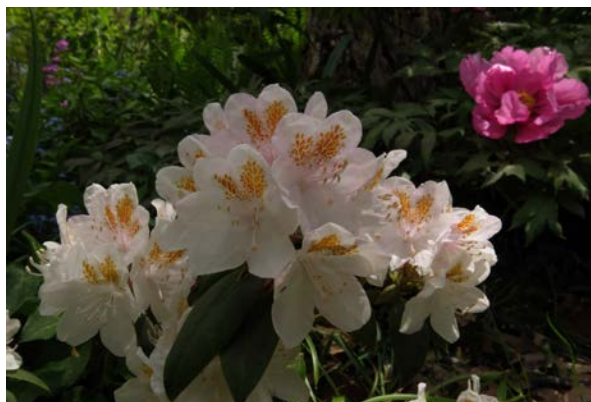
The spring garden season in central West Virginia has been enjoyable. Temperatures have been slow to warm and with bountiful rainfall, wildflowers and rhododendrons alike have come into bloom on time, slowly and have stayed in bloom for extended periods.



Doug Jolley

Who needs rhododendrons? The highlight of this spring will certainly be a visit to the garden of longstanding MAC members Ron and Norma Brown in Harrisonburg, VA on May 3. It had been over a decade since Davetta and I had been to the Brown hillside garden during peak bloom. The garden is as stunning as we had remembered it. Ron's tree peonies created the first visual impact upon approaching the property and continued to provide focal points throughout the, at least half acre, woodland paradise. Everything from native wildflowers to ornamental varieties number in the hundreds if not the thousands. Ron estimates his trillium population at over one million trilliums and it would be hard to dispute that statement.

While elepidote rhododendrons were yet to come into anthesis, lepidotes and evergreen azaleas were in their prime. A favorite to me was Rhododendron "Yellow Eyes." Ron led us along pathways lined with woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), hellebores, primroses of many colors and more. The entire time



Rhododendron 'Yellow Eyes' photo by Doug Jolley.

tree peonies of all colors imaginable kept vying for attention. Visitors were leaving as we arrived and more visitors arrived as we left. It was a most enjoyable visit.

On the return to West Virginia, we stopped at the West Virginia – Virginia state line to enjoy the scenic overlook framed by blooming Serviceberry trees and climbed the bank across the road to take in the mountaintop woodland full of native *Pieris floribunda* in a profusion of bloom.

Our garden azaleas and rhododendrons are just beginning and the month of May should be a colorful one this year.

### MAC ARS SPECIES STUDY GROUP 2014 ACTIVITIES PART II by George K. McLellan

(Part I of this article appeared in the February newsletter which you can review online at [macars.org](http://macars.org) if you don't have your paper copy.)

April 20<sup>th</sup> was a rain day that we spent traveling down from the Blue Ridge Parkway sightseeing on our way to Franklin, North Carolina, in preparation to visit Wayah Bald.



George McLellan

April 21 was spent on Wayah visiting sites for *R. arborescens*, *R. calendulaceum* and *Kalmia latifolia*. It was a good bloom year for *R. arborescens* and *Kalmia* and as usual the most interesting plants visited were found in the area of Wine Springs Bald which has the most interesting forms of *Kalmia* of that I have ever seen in my travels.

The next day, April 22, was spent on Hooper Bald and Huckleberry Mountain. It was a little past peak bloom, but since Hooper has a long bloom period we saw many interesting plants in bloom. The best red *R. calendulaceum* that any of us has run across still had some bloom and 'Hooper's Copper' was at peak bloom. Then we found something that was very bizarre. By a small circle of stone, which someone had built and used as a fire pit to roast hot dogs or marshmallows in the winter, were several sticks with ends charred and then stuck in the ground around the pit. The branches that had come from *R. calendulaceum* were sprouting new green leaves. Karel Bernady wondered if this was a new way to propagate deciduous azaleas!

We were to climb to Gregory Bald on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, but we decided not to because the bloom would be almost past and there were predictions of bad storms.

Instead we drove to Newfound Gap to hike out to Mount Kephart at 6217 feet and take a side trip to the Jump Off at 6133 feet and explore that area for *R. minus* 'Smokianum'. The Appalachian Trail at this altitude in the Smokies is a scenic and beautiful trail with ferns, furs, spruce, and hardwoods, and all the beautiful understory plants. It is not too difficult a hike but the side trail to the Jump Off is a DOG (rough, rocky, and steep). The Jump Off itself is amazing, a sheer rocky cliffs that drops about 1000 feet and is covered with plants of *R. minus* 'Smokianum'. We had come at peak bloom and the cliff was covered with purple bloom that made the trip worth it. (For a more detailed account and some marvelous pictures see Don Hyatt's article in JARS, volume 28, page 211, fall 2014.)

The last trip of 2014 was our October Columbus Day outing to collect seed for different seed exchanges and as usual the fall foliage was brilliant and the seed set was good. *Rhododendron arborescens* around Wine Springs Bald was especially fruitful and we gathered pounds of seed of *R. arborescens* which had been in short supply for the last few years. The end of the trip was to Mountain City, Tennessee, to drop off some seed to the Jackson's and a trip to Suba's for a gourmet meal, all in all a good trip.

Any member who wishes to join us on any of the trips can check the [macars.org](http://macars.org) website where we usually have the information posted. Any and all are welcome to join us.

### A protocol for planting native azaleas in the wild

The planting was done at Oak Knob on Huckleberry Mountain at about 5100 feet. It was in a field that is cut for hay once a year in the Unicoi Mountains of North Carolina just off the Cherohala Skyway and is part of the Nantahala National Forest Cheoah District. The field is grasses and other herbaceous plants used to attract wildlife, especially birds.

- 1) Use a local seed source (we use seed of *R. calendulaceum* collected on Hooper Bald less than a mile away.)
- 2) Seedlings should be at least two years old and 6 to 12 inches tall in 4 to 4 ½ inch pots.
- 3) Select spots 5 to 7 feet apart in a random pattern.
- 4) Using a string trimmer cut all the vegetation to bare soil making a clear space about 1 ½ feet in diameter.

- 5) Dig planting hole about 6 inches deep (a lady shovel is handy) .
- 6) Chop soil and roots very finely.
- 7) After removing plant from pot tease out roots and plant at the existing depth.
- 8) Use a 10 inch diameter fiber mulch ring and insert around azalea.
- 9) Fall planning is best. If it is not possible do it in the early spring.

**DISTRICT 9 DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MAY 2015** by Donald W. Hyatt

I want to thank the members of the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS for your kindness and support during my term as your District 9 Director. My three-years are now over, so Dave Banks has become the new Director and Bill Meyers of the Mason Dixon Chapter is your new Alternate Director.



Don Hyatt

At the May 6 ARS Board Meeting I attended in Sidney, BC, much of the discussion centered on financial issues. Like many societies with declining membership, the ARS has some serious concerns. Our membership was over 5000 when we hosted the 2006 Convention but we have only 2800 members now. Dues income is now half of 2006 levels, but many costs are unchanged and some have risen.

Dave Banks, chair of Budget and Finance Committee, worked with ARS Treasurer Sam Burd, as well as Dave and Kath Collier to develop a balance budget. Dave presented a clear and concise report reflecting our financial situation. Expenses must not exceed our income which comes primarily from four sources: the \$30 the ARS keeps from your \$40 dues, miscellaneous sales including Journal advertising and commissions from the ARS Store, income from investments, and various donations or bequests.

The primary expenses of our society fall into two general categories, the publication of the ARS Journal and the cost of running the ARS Office. The Journal is essentially our “product” and Editor Glen Jamieson did cut his costs to the bare bone. It is important to maintain the high quality of the Journal.

A balanced budget required cuts from the ARS Office. Whereas many non-profit organizations try to

keep administrative expenditures at no more than 10 to 15% of income, running our ARS Office has now exceeded the 50% level. Administrative costs now consume \$25 out of the \$30 dues from each member. Among other things, the new budget did call for reduced expenses, better banking arrangements, a 20% reduction in compensation for the Executive Director, and some mailing addresses changes. The budget did return funding for Endowment Fund grants that had been suspended to cover prior budget shortfalls.

After a rather heated discussion, we did adopt the budget by a narrow margin. Laura Grant indicated that she would not serve as the Executive Director after April 2016, so we are looking for suitable replacement. Laura said she would not provide any membership renewal materials to the chapters this fall. That will save her office time and money, but the responsibility will fall to each local chapter. We did discuss other membership concerns, but a new task force will be put in place to look for ways to restructure the entire ARS Office and make it more efficient. An updated website is on the way, too!

The 2015 Convention put on by the Chapters in District 1 (Victoria) was excellent. The gardens were lovely, but so was the weather. The speakers who came from around the world were superb, and they were funded by corporate sponsorships so that did not add to convention costs. What a great idea! Ken Cox from Scotland was the Thursday keynote. He spoke on Glendoick Gardens but made a plea for chapters to find ways to help the earthquake recovery efforts in Nepal. Nepal is a world center for rhododendron diversity. Friday’s keynote, Hartwig Schepker, spoke on rhododendrons in Germany. He also expressed interest in hosting a future convention in Bremen. The Saturday keynote was Lionel de Rothschild, grandson of the man who built Exbury Gardens in England. Other speakers were Jim Barlup from Seattle, Marc Colombel from France, Harold Greer from Oregon, and Guan Kaiyun from China.

At the annual meeting on Saturday night, we were pleased that MAC Associate Member Karel Bernady received the Gold Medal. An unfortunate situation caused Bruce Feller to resign as President last fall, but the ARS did honor his service and invited him to serve on the Board as Immediate Past President. He accepted. I did invite attendees to our District 9 Williamsburg 2016 Convention next April. Many people expressed interest in coming which is a very good sign, but we will need your help!!



Looking ahead to future ARS meetings, the 2017 Convention is planned for Eureka, CA. The 2018 Convention may be held in Bremen, Germany, and there is talk of holding the 2019 Convention near Philadelphia. The Portland Chapter has already requested the 2020 Convention date since the ARS will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the place where it all began. We won't be due again until 2026.

It was an honor to serve you, and I will do my best to support MAC and the ARS in any way I can.

Photos from the ARS Convention:



ARS President Bob MacIntyre, Steve Henning, Karel Bernady with Gold Medal Citation, and District 9 Director Don Hyatt. Photo by Bill Bedwell.



ARS President Bob MacIntyre, ARS Past President Bruce Feller, Western Vice President Ken Webb. Photo by Don Hyatt.

**2016 CONVENTION STATUS UPDATE** by Don Hyatt

I feel we are in good shape with respect to the joint ARS/ASA Convention that we will host in Williamsburg from April 21 – 24, 2016. Staging this event will become a major focus of our District this year. We have finalized most major aspects including the hotel, garden tours, and speakers. There was

some confusion about who was raising plants for the sale, but I feel we will have enough plants to sell. Check out our website to see convention plans including images of the gardens we expect to visit:

**[www.arsasaconvention2016.org](http://www.arsasaconvention2016.org)**

As the 2016 Convention draws near, we will need many volunteers to assist with a myriad of details related to garden tours, the plant sale, hospitality, and more. Please help us if you can. Thanks!

**ON-YOUR-OWN TOURS AFTER MAC NC MEETING**

Some chapter members were able to tour two special private gardens on Sunday, April 26th, after the Durham meeting. Barbara Hall has shared some photos from the garden of Suzanne Edney in Apex and Graham Rice in Greensboro.



Cat gate at Suzanne Edney garden in Apex, N.C.. Photo by Barbara Hall.



Graham Ray's garden in Greensboro, N.C. Photo by Barbara Hall.



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



BONUS ONLINE PAGES: photos by Sandra McDonald unless otherwise noted.



Jackson and Pamela McCarter with Jeanne Hammer in Duke Gardens.



Elissa Steeves, Barbara Hall, Paul James and Debby Sauer in Duke Gardens.



The pond and arched bridge in W.L. Culberson Asiatic Arboretum at Duke Gardens.



Looking towards the Historic Gardens and Fountain at Sarah P. Duke Gardens.



JC Raulston Arboretum Japanese garden.



JC Raulston Arboretum Japanese garden.

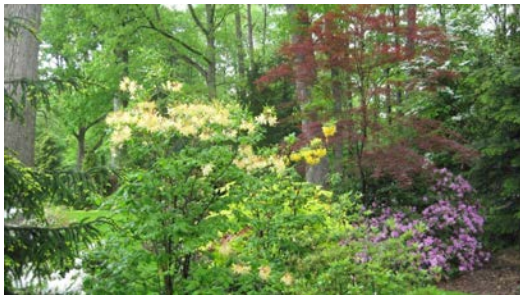




A weeping red-leaved *Cercis* at JC Raulston Arboretum.



Gold form of *Hakonechloa* and yellow tips on new growth of a conifer. Photo by Barbara Hall.



Conifers and deciduous azaleas in Graham Ray's garden. Photo by Barbara Hall.



Hydrangea 'Little Honey' and deciduous azalea in Graham Ray's garden. Photo by Barbara Hall.



Paul James helping George McLellan with the auction.



Paul James, Audrey Stelloh, and new MAC Board Member Teri Bennett.



Don Hyatt, our energetic Friday speaker.





Waiting for the Friday evening program.



Waiting for the Friday evening program.



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.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC CHAPTER OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

**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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