

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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May 2018

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

Oct 19 - 21, 2018

ARS Fall Conference, Chattanooga, TN

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/
Friends of the National Arboretum	http://savetheazaleas.org/
FONA's Save the Azaleas and Boxwood site	

SPRING MEETING IN STAUNTON AND HARRISONBURG by Sandra McDonald

We had a glorious weekend for our MAC Spring Meeting, April 27-29. Thirty-seven members had signed up for the meeting.

The meeting started Friday evening with a non-judged display of rhododendron trusses and azalea sprays, followed by a plated meal at the Holiday Inn Staunton Conference Center. President Jeanne Hammer did a presentation on the 2017 ARS Convention in California she attended showing the gardens she visited and the hazards of traveling by car there. A landslide had one road blocked that led to a lengthy detour. Different things caught the attention of Jeanne Hammer and Don Hyatt who also had attended the convention and took photos.



Doug Jolley, Barbara Hall, and David Taylor arriving at the arboretum. Photo by S. McDonald.



Entry to the Arboretum.

Following the program we had a brief business meeting electing three directors: Bill Bedwell, Sandra McDonald, and Lloyd Willis. Socializing in the hospitality room rounded out the evening.

Saturday was a lovely, sunny and warm day which was just right for our tours. After car-pooling to JMU's Edith J. Carrier Arboretum, we met in the Frances Plecker Arboretum Education Building for a brief introduction to the arboretum by Arboretum Director Jan Sievers Mahon. We divided into two groups for walking tours of the arboretum with Jan Mahon.



Doug Jolley, Barbara Hall, Debby Sauer, Don Hyatt, and Dave Banks entering the arboretum. Photo by S. McDonald



Jan Mahon talking to a MAC group. Photo by J. Hammer.



Jan Mahon outside the education building. Photo by S. McDonald.



MAC members in the education building getting ready to tour. Photo S. McDonald.

The Arboretum has a very nice website with much information available.

<https://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/affiliates.shtml>

They even have old and new newsletters online:
<https://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/newsletters.shtml?newsletter=current>

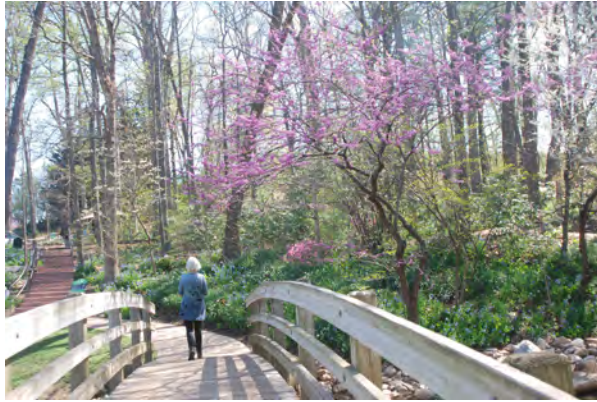
Our tour of the arboretum ended with a hearty box lunch at the Pavillion.



Bill Stump. Photo by Jeanne Hammer.



Jan Mahon leading tour of the arboretum. Photo by S. McDonald.



Bridge over the lake. Photo S. McDonald.



Doug Jolley auctioning plants. Photo S. McDonald.

After lunch we left for our tour of Heartflame Gardens in Beldore, Virginia, near the Shenandoah National Park. The garden features daylilies which were not yet in bloom for our visit, but there were many different kinds of plants on 1.5 acres of cultivated land. Many different plants were in bloom and we did see a gigantic white oak tree there which appeared to be several hundred years old.

We arrived back at the Conference Center in time for our book sale (Thanks, Theresa), our plant auction (Thanks, Doug), and the social hour. We then had a nice banquet buffet followed by a very educational slide presentation by Doug Jolley. Doug first updated us on the current status of the pests: the emerald ash borer and the spotted lantern fly. Then he went on to his main topic “Naturally Neighbors: A Look at our Native Ericas and Native Orchids” in which he noted which orchids were often found with which rhododendrons because they grew well in the



Inanna Garretson at Heartflame Garden. Photo S. McDonald.



President Jeanne Hammer.



Heartflame garden. Photo S. McDonald.

same habitat.

We closed the meeting with the P4M, and then adjourned to the hospitality room. Glen Kauffman invited attendees to see his garden on Sunday morning.

RON AND NORMA BROWN UPDATE

Ron Brown was able to attend our dinner on Friday evening with the help of Jan Scanlan. He and Norma got together again at Brookdale after Norma's previous fall, but then Norma had another fall and broke her femur necessitating more care at another facility for a while.

MAC VOLUNTEER WORK GROUP AT JMU ARBORETUM

March 8 was a workday for MAC volunteers at the arboretum. The volunteers' work is one of the reasons that the arboretum looked so nice for our visit.



Working at the arboretum in the cold: Glenn Kauffman, Sharon Horn, Margaret and Lloyd Willis. Photo by Jeanne Hammer who was also working.

DEATHS

Longtime member **William Templeton (Temp) Norris, M.D.** of Salem, Virginia, died on February 26, 2018.

Robert (CID) Scallet of Batesville, Virginia, died in December of 2016. Mrs. Scallet said they loved how prominent his nickname was in our membership roster!

IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

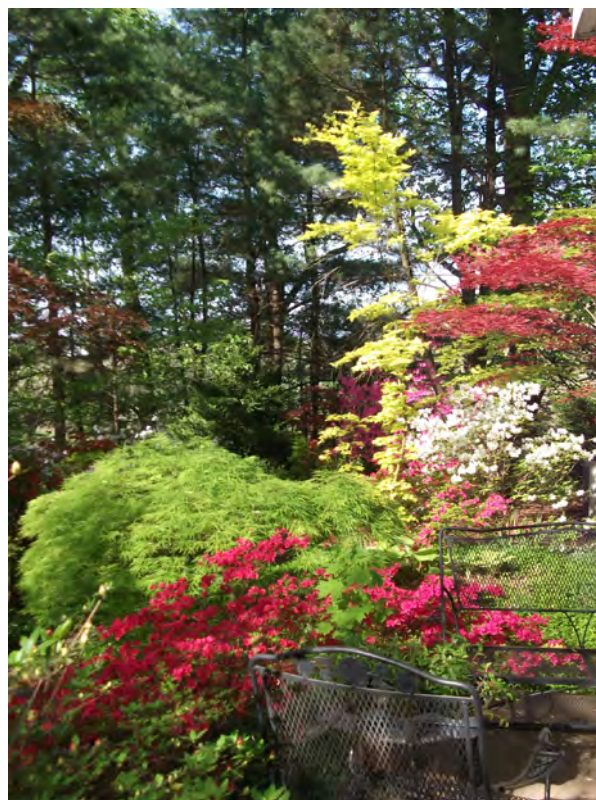
It is May 10, 2018 as I sit down to write this article. I am thankful and filled with joy at the beautiful spring we have had so far.

This morning on the



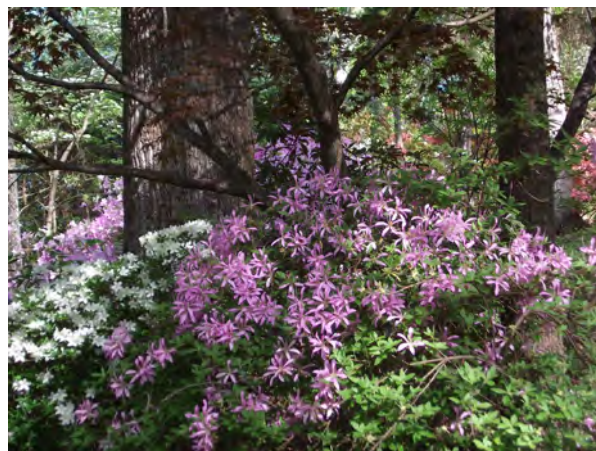
Lloyd Willis

walkway from our house to the garage, I counted 145 one inch tall Japanese maple seedlings. We have never had such a number of Japanese maple



The Willis garden. Photo Margaret Willis.

seedlings in one area. Of course, the plan is to save them all. Most of the Japanese maples in the yard survived the fluctuating warm, frigid winter weather. Two in pots did not. Two that had deer rubbings and looked dead are sprouting from the trunks.



Koromo-shi-kibu in the Willis garden. Photo M. Willis.

Last week when looking from a west window of our house, the view was blocked by the blooms of a single dogwood. It was the best bloom ever for that tree and the best bloom of all the dogwoods in the yard.

Today we walked by six foot tall, five foot tall, and four foot tall specimens of Gigi in full bloom. That was quite a treat. Another treat was to see a ball truss of an orange deciduous azalea hanging like a Christmas ornament—the first set of its green leaves several inches away from that truss.

There was also joy today in seeing that all eight autumn ferns planted last fall have reached about the same size as when they were planted.

Some good news. About a month ago, one of my good friends and helper, Jon Hexter, asked if he could redo the area where I keep potted plants before planting them. He moved all the plants out of that nursery area and put down four inches of mulch in an oblong bed. Then he put some soapstone steps across the bed and then arranged the 100 plus potted plants according to size and botanical likeness. The new nursery bed looked great. Everyone seeing it says it looks great. I'm wondering if Mrs. Willis (Margaret) is the person who suggested the task to Jon.

So where is the humor in this article? About two weeks ago, the hostas had gotten to a height that I decided it was time to spray them with the sulfur smelling product that usually protects them from deer. Since it was after 8:30 pm when I started, I had the spray in one hand and a flash light in the other hand—not a great plan. I am 15 minutes into the project on the side of a hill in the dark with sulphur smelling spray dripping off my hands onto my clothes when I remember that a few days before not 100 feet away a bear had been visiting trash cans in Crozet. At that point, the hostas were left for the deer and I moved back to the house quite quickly.

**WINDBEAM WAY
WANDERINGS, MAY
2018** by Doug Jolley

Spring was late to arrive here this year. The month of March and



Doug Jolley

most of April was cold and often rainy and by the last week of April, virtually nothing shrub-wise was in bloom. Last year on the last week of April most early rhododendrons and many native azaleas were in prime condition. Since the MAC meeting, things have been in overdrive here in the garden. In just a little over two weeks, the blooming cycle has caught up and native azaleas are passing peak bloom and early lepidote rhododendrons are finished.



R. maximum at Cranberry Glades. Photo Doug Jolley.

It won't be long until early June brings out the first *Rhododendron maximum* flowers here. With the elevation ranges in West Virginia, I can enjoy this plant blooming from mid-June here at lower elevations through most of July when visiting our mountain counties. While this plant occurs throughout the state, it is seldom used ornamentally and seems to be scarcely available for purchase. As part of my talk presented at the recent Spring MAC meeting, I noted the number of native orchids and songbirds that frequent native rhododendron stands. Small's Twayblade (*Listera smallii*) is found almost



Small's Twayblade. Photo Doug Jolley.

exclusively growing beneath a canopy of *R. maximum*. All the sites in which I have encountered it in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia find it growing beneath rhododendrons along mountain streams.



Black throated blue warbler. Photo D. Jolley.

Black-throated blue and black-throated green warblers are just two neotropical warblers that call rhododendron thickets home. With regards to the MAC membership area, the Swainson's warbler is found in scattered southern West Virginia rhododendron thickets and then is not at home again until habitat offered by the Cypress Swamps



Black throated green warbler. Photo D. Jolley.

of Virginia's tidewater. Such is the issue of choosing suitable homesites !



Pieris floribunda. Photo D. Jolley.

One of our first woody plants to bloom is *Pieris floribunda*; another mountain dweller. Fetterbush has found a home in our shade house and has become a consistent bloomer and lush evergreen plant. When not in bloom, it looks much like Mountain Laurel. Davetta and I have tried growing this plant without success until placing our now thriving specimen in the shadiest and what must be a cool enough spot in the corner of a shade house reserved mostly for woodland wildflowers. By late March for the last number of years, our

Fetterbush bursts into full bloom and in its protected location stays in bloom for weeks. Our favorite "spot in the wild" is on a mountain top along US Route 33 on the



Flame hybrid and dogwood. Photo D. Jolley.

Virginia – West Virginia border between Harrisonburg, VA and Franklin, WV.

At this writing, a number of native azaleas from the MAC Plants For Members program are just about to bloom for the first time. Given our latest warm spell they should be out any minute now.



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



R. periclymenoides. Photo D. Jolley.

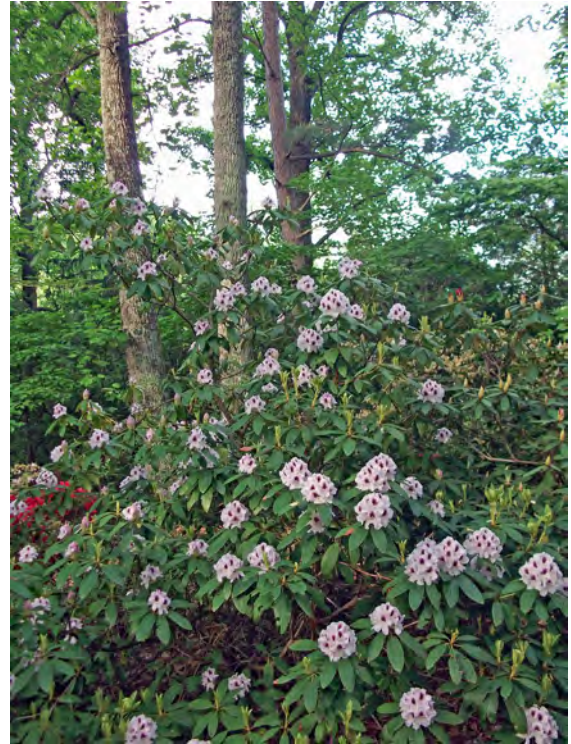


R. atlanticum × 'Avocet'. Photo by D. Jolley.



'Kennell's Gold'. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Rhododendrons in the Willis Garden. Photos by Margaret Willis.



Memberships and renewals should be sent to our Membership Chairman Jeanne Hammer at 231 N Robinson Dr, Macon, NC 27551.

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