

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXXVI No.4

December 2010

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

April 15-17, 2011	Lake Wright Quality Suites & Sleep Inn, Norfolk, VA
Oct. 21-23, 2011	Doubletree Inn near Richmond airport (with ARS Board Meeting)

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society	http://www.rhododendron.org/
MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)	http://www.macars.org/
U VA Science & Engineering Libraries	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm
UVA Special Collections	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/
Henry Skinner Website	http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/
Old Quarterly Bulletins ARS	http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR TWO GREAT MEETINGS

Reserve the weekend of April 15-17, 2011, for our MAC Spring Meeting in Norfolk. The motel will be the Lake Wright Quality Suites and Sleep Inn. Activities will take place at the nearby Norfolk Botanical Garden. Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery will be one of our speakers. Watch for more information in the February newsletter.

The Fall Meeting plans for October 21-23, 2011, are also well underway and should be noted on your calendars. We will have as our Saturday evening speaker, Tim Walsh of the Eureka Chapter, a past ARS treasurer and Silver Medal recipient along with his wife June, and current member of the ARS Board of Directors. Tim will talk about West Coast gardens and new Humboldt Botanical Garden.

RECAP OF MAC FALL MEETING 2010

Attendance at our Fall Meeting in Winchester on September 23-25 was 48. We had a very warm and sunny day for our tour of Long Branch Historic House and Farm, the State Arboretum of Virginia, and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley including lunch at the museum, and tours of the garden and Glen Burnie House.

On Friday evening Kim Strader of the State Arboretum gave a presentation about invasive plants in the landscapes with suggestions of other plants

that could be used as substitutes. The Plants for Members Sale (P4M) took place after the talk and members were able to purchase many interesting new plants that Dr. Jay Gillenwater had grown. Theresa Brents also had plant books for our book sale.

We started out early on Saturday for our bus tour stopping first at the elegant 1811 Long Branch House where we were given a tour by a French former curator who had a role in restoring the home. The second stop for our tour was the State Arboretum of



MAC President Celia Dollarhide. Photo by S. McDonald

Virginia where Steve Carroll led our group. Plants were suffering through the extreme drought conditions there. Our last stop was at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley where we had lunch, then tours of the garden and Glen Burnie Historic House.

Saturday evening Doug Jolley energetically conducted our plant auction before the buffet dinner.

Theresa Brents and Sharon Horn received Certificates of Appreciation. (See below.)

Carol Segree won Best in Show in the Fall Foliage Show with evergreen azalea 'Buncho'. The Photo Contest had 10 entries. Don Hyatt won Best Photo in Show with "Lütensburg Castle" (places). Don also won best photo for plants with "Goldsprengle", as well as best photo for people with "Sandra and Anita; Southern Highlands Reserve".

Don Hyatt presented the program after dinner, a PowerPoint presentation of "Rhododendrons in Germany" which showed the magnificent plants and interesting sites he saw at the 75th Anniversary of the German Rhododendron Society.



Kim Strader of the Virginia State Arboretum. Photo by S. McDonald

enthusiastic support to MAC as a member of the Board of Directors and the Meeting Planning Committee. She has tirelessly attended to the myriad details required for the spring and fall meetings, prepared the registration documents, and orchestrated the book sales. Her boundless devotion to the meetings has assured their success. We offer our thanks and gratitude. Celia Dollarhide, President, September 25, 2010.



Bill Bedwell presenting the Certificate of Appreciation to Sharon Horn. Photo by S. McDonald

CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION TO THERESA BRENTS AND SHARON HORN



Bill presenting the Certificate of Appreciation to Theresa Brents. Photo by S. McDonald

The Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Theresa Brents in recognition of her many years of

The Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Sharon Horn in recognition of her tireless energy and support throughout the years to MAC as a member of the Board of Directors and the Meeting Planning Committee. In addition to attending to all inherent details in the spring and fall meetings, she has taken on the responsibility of the flower and foliage shows. Her contributions have been substantial and given the joy of rhododendrons to many. We offer our thanks and gratitude. Celia Dollarhide, President, September 25, 2010.

CORRECTION

The September newsletter had an article on page four about mulberry weed or hairy crabweed with an incorrect spelling of *Fatoua villosa*. Our in-house nomenclature expert, Don Voss, spells it as above. The name was found two ways at different university Web sites. Your editor does not have it listed in her rather old botany manuals.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

Kathy Andrews, Rixeyville,
VA 22737



Gray Carter, Book Chairman Theresa Brents, and Sandra McDonald at Book Sale. Photo by W. Przypek



Waiting for dinner program: clockwise from projector George McLellan, Jim Brant, Don Hyatt, Jane McKay, Margaret & Lloyd Willis, and President Celia Dollarhide. Photo by W. Przypek



Getting ready for bus tour: Jim Brant loading supplies, Erik Nilsen being greeted by Paul James. Photo by W. Przypek



Guide at Blandly Farm of the State Arboretum of Virginia speaking to our MAC group. Photo by W. Przypek



Long Branch with MAC members in front. Photo by W. Przypek



Margaret Willis, Bill Bedwell, Lloyd Willis & Phillip Wilkinson. Photo by W. Przypek



Peggy and Charles McComb in the garden at Glen Burnie. Photo by W. Przypek



Theresa Brents showing her new Certificate of Appreciation to her table mates. Photo by W. Przypek

DEATHS

Michael Kane of Virginia Beach died quite recently. He was a new MAC member.

Velma Haag of Brevard, North Carolina died in early October. She was not a MAC member, but many of us had been to her extensive garden on tours.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

It feels like winter has arrived in central Virginia. Yesterday morning the temperature was 27 degrees with a heavy frost. The last bloom on the cold hardy camellias, 'Snow Flurry' and 'Winter's Star' went down. 'Snow Flurry' is growing in heavy shade, at the lowest area of the garden along the stream and blooms heavily every year. It may even have some unopened buds remaining. 'Winter's Star' receives a bit more sun and also blooms well each year. Three azaleas were also in bloom when the frost hit, the Encore azalea 'Amethyst', the Linwood azalea 'Opal' and the white azalea 'August to Frost'. 'August to Frost' is a plant George Ring was growing. He gave one to me.

My son Darren and his family were here for a week over Thanksgiving. We all pitched in and cleaned up all the leaves on the driveway and walks and bagged them all. To at least half the bags I added the remains of annuals that had gone down along with the soil that clung to the roots. I also added any vegetable parings and coffee grounds that I had plus a watering can full of water. I seal the bags and store them in the sun. Usually by next summer (or sometimes earlier) I have compost. To me this is much easier than hauling leaves to a large compost area and have to turn it frequently. In addition I would have to add water frequently during dry weather. I used this bag method when I lived in New York, and it worked well. I never take the leaves out of the garden. They are a good mulch and feed the soil as they break down. I do take the leaves off the plants especially the ones that have settled in the center of the azaleas. By the way, my trees are predominately oak with a few hickory scattered through.

The high heat this past summer combined with the lack of rain didn't seem to effect the azaleas or rhododendrons, the dwarf conifers were a different story. Several of these died and quite a few more have partial burning even though I did water. On the back hill of my property is a good size stand of

mountain laurel. These are native to the property and I have never watered them. They are in excellent condition.

Most of my garden is enclosed with 7' wire fencing. I do grow rhododendrons outside the fence and do spray with a deer repellent in the fall and again in mid winter (on a mild day) and the deer for the most part leave them alone. I never fertilize these plants and they do well. Recently I read that if you have a deer problem you should NOT fertilize plants especially if the fertilizer contains nitrogen as plants high in nitrogen are more appealing to deer.

When I first moved to Virginia from New York, I brought with me a few lepidote rhododendrons. I promptly planted them in the sunniest areas as that is how I grew them in NY on Long Island. The plants deteriorated rapidly and it took me awhile to realize they should be moved to the shade. I moved them, and they perked up quickly. I want to tell you about one that is outstanding, at least in my garden. I don't know where to get it as mine was a gift (and the giver is deceased). The plant's name is *R. 'Lynn Robbins Steinman'*, and it originated with Weston Nurseries. I believe it was a Mezzitt cross. It has bloomed heavily every year and the fall foliage color is outstanding. I'm always willing to share cuttings.

VACCINIUM IN THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC by David Lay

I read with interest the article on *Vaccinium* in the *ARS Journal* in the fall of 2010. Here on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay we have had no experience with most of the species discussed but have grown the east coast *Vaccinium crassifolium*, the creeping blueberry, which is a fine groundcover for rhododendron and azaleas.

It is an evergreen spreader with shiny, very dark green leaves smaller than those of English boxwood. It is never over 2" to 3" high and looks great winter and summer. We have grown it for over 35 years in high shade. Our original plants came from nurseryman James Wells in coastal New Jersey. It likes very acid soil and perhaps more moisture than it gets here where most patches are beyond reach of our 100 ft. hoses.

In recent years it has persisted but has not flourished, I suspect this is because of the periods of extreme drought we've had. Paul James took some and it has done well, but I think he probably gives it more TLC. It was discovered in the Carolinas in the

late 1700's so our MAC chapter may be at its northern limits. If anyone wants to try it let me know and I will be happy to give you some in the spring.



Erik Nilsen, Bill Bedwell, & Don Hyatt. Photo by S. McDonald



Jeanne Hammer, Pat & Kendon Stubbs resting during the tour. Photo by S. McDonald



Gray Carter at Plants for Members (P4M) Sale. Photo by S. McDonald

AUTUMN LEAVES by Sandra McDonald

Fallen autumn leaves can make an unattractive mess collecting in evergreen azaleas. I asked Jane McKay if she had any tricks for getting rid of them. She doesn't do the azalea leaf removal as a one time job, but all during fall and winter when she walks around her garden she does work on different areas. This can be a large or small area according to her mood. She just sticks her hand in and pulls the leaves out and says that's one of the reasons her nails and hands are always a mess!

Debby Sauer's method is just to grab a limb and gently shake the plant. She has many large, mature evergreen azaleas.

We have evergreen azaleas of different habits. The compact, low growing ones collect a lot of dead leaves on top. Sometimes I use a leaf rake and gently try to flip the leaves off to keep from smothering the plants. Shaking the tall plants does a pretty good job of removing trapped dead leaves. However, with the wide variety of trees in our yard we have leaves falling from early fall (the neighbors hackberry on the property line) to late winter and spring when the live oaks drop their leaves.

If anyone has a really good way of handling this cosmetic nuisance, please let your editor know so the information can be passed on to our members.

MAC MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

The June 20, 2010, *Virginian Pilot* had an article about **Jim Brant** and **George McLellan** "Azalea Lovers' Preservation Blossoms with Possibilities". The article tells about the Hooper Bald project and work that has been taking place there. The article includes a photo of Jim and George standing by the big *Rhododendron calendulaceum* they call 'Hooper's Copper'.

Doug Jolley just came back from giving a talk about "Seeking out Wild Ericas and Native Orchids" to the New York Chapter.



MAC auctioneer Doug Jolley. Photo by S. McDonald

Memberships and renewals should be sent to Jane McKay, Membership Chairman, 3 Cobb's Ct., Palmyra, VA 22963.

Annual membership dues are \$40 per year.

Miscellaneous inquiries may be sent to the editor (address below) for forwarding to proper individual.

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor
Mid-Atlantic Rhododendron News and Notes
4302 Chesapeake Ave
Hampton, VA 23669