

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 MAC MEETINGS

Apr 24–27, 2003

District Meeting, Washington, D.C. area

Meeting opens Thursday evening

Oct. 17–18, 2003

Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, Bristol, VA

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society <http://www.rhododendron.org/>

U VA Science & Engineering Libraries <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm>

SPRING MEETING WILL BE A DISTRICT MEETING IN ANNAPOLIS, APRIL 24-27

You should have already received the meeting announcement from Potomac Valley Chapter inviting us to the District Meeting in Annapolis. Register early before March 24 or rooms may not be available. The meeting will begin on Thursday evening with Frank Pelurie and Harry Wise doing a humorous presentation.

Friday will be an all day tour of the U.S. National Arboretum with staff and volunteer guides. In the evening George McLellan will show slides about Castles, Gardens, and Rhododendrons in Scotland. The Flower Show and Plant Sale will open that evening.

Saturday's tour will be London Town Gardens, and the private gardens of Bob and Rosa McWhorter, Carol Segree, and Maggie West. Dinner will be at Annie's Paramount Steak and Seafood House on the Eastern Shore. The banquet speaker will be Scott Vergara formerly of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and now with Conard-Pyle. No activities are planned for Sunday, but there are many sites to see in the area.

WONDERFUL AZALEAS AT SPRING MEETING APRIL 24-27, 2003 by Frank Pelurie

You should attend – mark the date! The Potomac Valley Chapter has done an outstanding job putting together interesting field trips, speakers, and a truly outstanding plant sale of many hard to find plants.

What always excites me is the opportunity to visit the National Arboretum, no matter how many times I have been there before. A few years ago Paul James and I left Roanoke early on an April Sunday morning and headed for the National Arboretum. We

wanted to see the azaleas in flower, and we were not disappointed. Paul was so excited — you all know that he has a few hundred of his own — when we started into the first garden. Quite frequently our walk came to abrupt stops while we looked for the a plant's name tag so



Frank Pelurie

that Paul could add the plant's name to his list of 'must haves'. Between writing down plant names and taking pictures I was afraid that we were not going to have enough time to see the Glenn Dale azaleas along the side of Mount Hamilton. Finally, we made it out of the Walled Morrison Garden and into the large old Glenn Dales.

It took almost half of our day to get through all the azalea plantings. The paths through the plantings were well laid out and maintained, the more formal gardens were picture perfect, and the Glenn Dale area, while needing some maintenance, was still a sight to see. We made fast passes through Fern Valley, and the Holly Collection. The pace slowed though when we came to the Asian gardens. There is just too much to see in these gardens and they are so well done. Somehow we got so intrigued exploring these gardens that we found ourselves off the beaten path and then had to wander uphill trying to find our way back. This was slow going because we were finding untagged plants that were interesting and that neither of us knew. We finally came out of the woods close to the Dogwood Collection. While looking at all the different and

interesting dogwoods we noticed that there were quite a few deciduous azaleas scattered around the area. By this time it was getting late, but we made a fast run through the Dwarf Conifer Collection, Herb Garden and Bonsai Collection before leaving for Roanoke.

It was a long tiring drive back to Roanoke. We kept each other awake talking about our day at the National Arboretum and the great things we had seen. We both agreed that a MAC meeting needed to be scheduled to visit the National Arboretum when the azaleas were in peak flowering so the rest of you could experience the joy of visiting this wonderful arboretum. Well, the District 9 meeting in Annapolis is it. I know you will enjoy it.

An alternative for those of you that are looking for something to do Sunday, April 27, and those driving south in the western part of Virginia is to stop in for a visit at JMU's botanical garden in Harrisonburg. Last spring after our meeting in Luray the Jolleys and McDonalds visited this botanical garden and both reported that the rhododendron and azalea plantings were looking good. To date large numbers of plants have been given to the garden by the McDonalds, Doug Jolley, and George Ring. And, Ron Brown has put a considerable amount of effort into this garden as well as plants. There are also many Glenn Dale azaleas scattered throughout the garden. It will be interesting watching the rhododendron and azaleas develop, as well as the garden itself, over the next few years. Stop by and take a look, you won't be disappointed.

ARS CONVENTION INSERT

If you are going to the ARS Convention and your winter *Journal* does not have the insert, contact Dee Daneri at 707-725-3043 or e-mail at deedaneri@aol.org

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

As I wander in the garden these cold winter days I first notice the chores I neglected to do late last fall. I then look to the trees that need limbing up, a job we usually do in winter but this year the weather has not cooperated. Soon I start to think back over the last forty plus years and all the memories my plants bring to mind.

In the late 50s end early 60s my father in his garden and I in mine began to think beyond marigolds, zinnias and tomato plants. We started to collect different varieties of azaleas and a few rhododendrons. In 1962 we both joined the New

York Chapter, ARS. On my first garden tour at the magnificent garden of the late Nat Hess, one of the founding members of the New York Chapter, I admired a purple azalea, he promptly dug it up and gave it to me. The azalea was the Glenn Dale 'Chanticleer'! When we retired and moved to Virginia ten years ago a rooted cutting of 'Chanticleer' came with me. I think of Nat every time I pass the plant. That incident was just the first of many, too many to list here. The generosity and friendship of plant people will never be forgotten. Our garden is truly a garden of memories.

When we moved to Virginia the MAC Chapter welcomed us Yankees with open arms and the sharing continues. Another story comes to mind. In 1976 the Azalea Study Group of the NY Chapter was presenting a program on azaleas at the ARS convention in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. In preparation I wrote to some of the azalea hybridizers for information. The late Ralph Pennington of Covington, Georgia not only sent me information but also a collection of his azaleas! Naturally I have plants from cuttings I took before I left NY. How could I leave behind this reminder of such thoughtfulness and generosity? The late Peter Girard, Sr., sent me slides of some unusual and unnamed deciduous azaleas. When I inquired when they would be introduced since they were so beautiful he invited me to come to his garden and take as many as I wanted. Unfortunately, I never got there but his generosity is remembered.



Jane McKay

I could go on and on but a 40 year story is too long to write here. As I said previously this garden is truly a garden of memories. How about your garden?

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Baer, Jake, 56 South French St., Alexandria, VA 22304

Chestnut, Doug, 376 Maple Ave, Waynesboro, VA 22980

DEATHS Calvin Segree, husband of Carol Segree of Gambrills, Maryland, died in January of cancer. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Carol.

TIDBITS FROM THE TRADE

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Jan 12, 2003.

*Washington State Dept. of Agriculture proposed adding kudzu to the state's Class A noxious weed list. Kudzu can grow 60 feet a year and has been called "the weed that ate the South." It was discovered in Washington's Clark, Grays Harbor and Island counties in the past 2 years. There have also been several small outbreaks discovered in Oregon since 2000. All of these infestations, as well as the ones in Washington, are believed to have been eliminated. Adding the plant to the Class A list would call for the immediate elimination of the plant once it was discovered in the state. smcgonigal@agr.wa.gov

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Jan. 28, 2003

* Oregon Invasive Species Council gave the state a C+ grade for its efforts in controlling invasive species. The grade is passing, but there's room for improvement, according to the council. "I don't think C+ is acceptable, and I hope the public agrees. To me, it means we're losing the battle, but more slowly than we would without any effort being made," said Keith Warren, council member and director of product development at J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co., a Boring, Oregon, nursery. The top 3 invasives in the state have been identified as meadow hawkweed, feral swine and New Zealand mud snail, none of which have significance to the horticulture trade.

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Dec. 3, 2002

* USDA released beneficial flies throughout the federal imported fire ant quarantine areas this month. South American phorid flies inject eggs into the ants, and the developing larvae kill the pests. "This is the only way we're ever going to see a reduction in the number of fire ants in North America," said Fred Santana, IPM coordinator for Univ. of Fla. Inst. of Food and Ag. Sciences Sarasota County Extension Service. fsantana@co.sarasota.fl.us

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Dec. 17, 2002

** For the first time since the program began in 1990, Perennial Plant Assoc. named a fern as its Perennial Plant of the Year. Japanese painted fern, *Athyrium nipponicum* 'Pictum,' was selected as the 2004 winner. It reaches 12-18 inches tall and wide and

grows best in partial to full shade and moist, organic soils. Its fronds contain shades of gray, green, red and purple and it's hardy in Zones 4-9. The 2003 winner is *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Becky.' <http://www.perennialplant.org>

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Dec. 31, 2002

* Tree-ring research has shown that the worst North American drought in the last 2,000 years took place in the 1500s and lasted 40-50 years. Not every year was dry, but rainfall was well below average for the period. Researchers say that these "megadroughts" have been regular occurrences since the last ice age. Since the 1500s, the worst dry-weather period was the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Source: Dallas Morning News.

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Oct. 1, 2002

* Missouri Botanical Garden received the largest private gift ever to a U.S. botanic garden -- \$30 million from the Jack Taylor family -- to support global plant research. The Taylor family owns St. Louis-based Enterprise Rent-A-Car. The gift will establish the Taylor Fund for Ecological Research, enabling Missouri Botanical Garden to accelerate one of its key strategic initiatives -- to identify, catalog and preserve plant species before they become extinct and their potential benefits are realized.

Reprinted with permission from Weekly NMPRO E-mail, Oct. 29, 2002

* Asian longhorn beetles were found for the 1st time in New Jersey this month (October 2002). As a result, New Jersey Department of Agriculture quarantined a 9-acre site in Jersey City. The quarantine will restrict movement outside the quarantine of nursery stock, firewood, green lumber, logs, stumps, roots and branches from potential host trees. An initial survey found 100 trees infested by the pest. The source of the infestation is not known. Since a New York City-area infestation was discovered in 1997, NJDA and USDA have conducted annual ALB surveys in N.E. New Jersey. (609) 292-5440;

<http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture>

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 Jane McKay, Membership Chairman, 3 Cobb's Ct., Palmyra, VA 22963.

Annual membership dues are \$28 per year.

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

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor

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