

## MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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Rhododendron Society

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### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 5-7, 1995	Joint Meeting, PVC, Washington, D.C. area
Nov 10-12, 1995	Ramada Inn, Newport News, VA
Spring, 1996	Pipestem Park, Princeton, WV

*This issue is dedicated to the memory Terry Sheuchenko.*

#### ONE OF A KIND - by Austin Kennell

Most of us lost a special friend when the President of The Middle Atlantic Chapter died unexpectedly on December 17, 1994.

Born Teresa Jane Wilken in East Hempstead, New York in 1930, she was "Terry" to everyone. She lived on Long Island where she met and married Peter Sheuchenko in the early 1950's.

About 1952, Terry and Pete moved to California where they lived until moving to the Barboursville, Virginia area in 1969 where they built a home and established the Lazy S's Nursery.

Their three children, Peter A. Sheuchenko, Paul R. Sheuchenko, and Janice Ann were born in California. Terry was very active in leadership of the 4H organization to which her sons belonged. Janice Ann suffered brain damage during birth which made her virtually helpless. She died in the late 70's at the age of 15.

In 1987 Terry's husband Pete, drowned in a pond on Nursery property. Subsequently Terry sold her home and property including the nursery to her oldest son, Peter, and moved into a small pre-fabricated home on a few acres carved out of the nursery property. She continued to work in various capacities for the nursery. She also worked in the tissue culture business of her close friends Cheryl Borgmann and Mike Henrietta.

Terry was many things. She was a good wife, a good mother, and a devoted grandmother. She was for many years a helpful partner in operating Lazy S's nursery. She was multi-talented: skilled calligrapher, gifted painter, and excellent propagator, an innovative crafts person. She won a nationwide contest for the best logo for the Rhododendron Research Foundation. Her imaginative signs were a feature of M.A.C. shows and meetings. She frequently spoke to horticulture groups. She wrote interesting articles. She was a good President.

Dr. August Kehr named an evergreen azalea 'Terry' for her help to him. She named and registered the Rhododendron 'For Pete's Sake' for her husband. She also named some evergreen azaleas including 'First Son', 'Second Son', 'Melissa', 'Kehr's Cat', and 'Bright Eyes'.

Teresa Jane Sheuchenko, you were a special human being. We love you. There will never be another Terry.

**SPRING MEETING 1995** - Reserve the dates of May 5 to May 7, 1995 for our District Meeting at the Fair Oaks Holiday Inn in Fairfax, Virginia. This will be a District Meeting with Potomac Valley and Mason Dixon Chapters. There will be a flower show, so bring your trusses and sprays. M.A.C. will not be holding a separate meeting this spring, so do plan to attend the District Meeting. A meeting announcement will be forthcoming.

**M.A.C. BOARD TO HOLD MEETING FEB. 11** - The Board will meet in Richmond on February 11, 1995 to conduct chapter business and plan future meetings.

**OTHER DEATHS** - On January 19, 1995, Mary Lay's father, Dr. John Garland Pollard, Jr. passed away.

**NEWS OF MEMBERS** - The Daily Progress of Charlottesville in its Thursday, December 29, 1994 issue featured an article about the M.A.C. donation of 16 plants of 4 different species to the Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton. The article included a photograph of Mark Gatewood of the Museum and Terry Sheuchenko and Ray Doggett.

Joan Winter is recovering from surgery she had on September 20, 1994.

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS** - The following new members are listed on the enclosed membership roster: Dennis Robertson, Bruce Heberton, Jack McDonald, and Roanoke County Public Library.

**CONTROLLING CANKERWORMS** - Extracted from an article by Jim Williams in Virginia Cooperative Extension's publication Close-up.

Cankerworms or inchworms that eat leaves of landscape trees in the spring are the result of female moths that climb up the trees in late fall and lay eggs. The eggs hatch at about the same time new leaves emerge the following spring. If Tanglefoot is to be used to control these caterpillars, it needs to be applied some time between the 1st and 15th of December in the Tidewater area (probably earlier in colder areas). It may be too late for this year, but try it next year.

When using Tanglefoot, do not apply it directly on the bark of the tree. Place a couple of widths of duct tape around the tree, then place the Tanglefoot onto the duct tape. Tanglefoot applied directly to the bark will leave a dark band, but is not supposed to harm the tree. (Editor's note: A number of years ago, I saw trees die after Tanglefoot was applied directly to the bark, so I would never apply it directly to the bark because some trees seem to have thinner or more sensitive bark.)

**QUICK FIX FOR PARTIALLY BROKEN BRANCHES** - If a rhododendron or azalea branch has been cracked or partially broken you may be able to save it with a little first aid. Wrap the injured part with black electrician's tape. Follow up in a few months after the wound has (hopefully) healed, and remove the tape. (from Fraser Valley Chapter Newsletter)

**EVERGREEN AZALEA ROBERT LEE** - by Harry Wise

Mrs. I.N. Smith, Jr., co-chairperson of the WV Friends of Stratford Committee, located two plants of the evergreen azalea Robert Lee growing at the home of Mrs. Turner Ratrie. The

Charleston Committee wanted to propagate this azalea to sell as a fund raiser for the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association.

Mrs. Ratrie was willing to help with the project and, as these old plants needed pruning, over 145 cuttings were taken in late June. About 125 cuttings were stuck in 3 flats with the remainder going to Frank Pelurie as insurance.

Disaster struck within three weeks! Almost all the cuttings in one flat and a number in a second flat had been completely defoliated by caterpillars, probably *Datana major*, although positive identification wasn't made. Quite a mystery as no evidence of any insects in the flat I had retained. Neither did Frank observe any insect problems with the cuttings he stuck. All three of the flats I had stuck had been treated the same, including a 10 percent Clorox solution dip as a disinfectant. Our conclusion is some eggs were present, survived the Clorox dip and hatched. Five caterpillars died as a result of overeating (or Diazinon/Orthene) after the damage was done.

There are now 50 healthy looking rooted cuttings in a protected outside bed at the home of Mrs. G. M. M. Ragland, the other co-chairperson of the WV Friends of Stratford Committee. With reasonable luck and a favorable winter their project should be off to a good start by next Fall.

P.S. Frank has 20 and I have 20+ rooted cuttings taken in late July as back up. It's great when MAC can be of service.

#### **MORE ON YANKEE KUDZU - by Ted Scott.**

'Yankee Kudzu' is one of the plants I have been tracking in a program jointly sponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society, for which I am conservation chairman, and the Virginia Division of Natural Heritage. VNPS and Department of Conservation & Recreation has published a fact sheet on this plant.

Mile-a-minute-weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*) is much more close related to rhododendrons than Dennis Rogers dreamed, but then he wasn't writing for rhodoholics. *P. perfoliatum* first appeared in Joe Gable's nursery in the early thirties, presumably arriving with plants shipped from Eastern Asia. On the other hand it might have come from B.Y. Morrison who discovered it in his nursery at Glenn Dale about the same time. Morrison could have gotten it from Asia or from Gable (they were, of course, exchanging plants), or vice-versa. In any event, Morrison took every precaution to destroy his infestation, but Gable was fascinated by the vine with its sharp, fine hooks that will catch anything it touches including one's skin (it's also known as velcro plant because of that) and permitted his plant to live. It is an annual and spreads only by seed. And spread it did, down the watershed to the Susquehanna River and on to the Bay. It then jumped to the Potomac watershed by the eighties. In Virginia two years ago, it was only known in Northern Virginia, but in 1994 it was found in Hanover County and in a remote area of the George Washington National Forest. Spread is obviously by birds eating the berries. I saw it this past summer in Delaware.

This plant was clearly an accidental introduction. Because it is an annual, it should be easily exterminated if we would hunt down the seed plants before they set seed and destroy them, yet the only area where I am aware of this being done is on Reston Associates property. This is the story of many other invasive alien plants, many of them introduced as plants for horticulture. They are spreading, destroying native habitats and the plants in them; and some are still being sold in the horticultural trade.

Oh, one more note. Morrison apparently did not succeed in exterminating the progeny of his plant. Some were found recently among the Glenn Dale azalea collection in the National Arboretum!

**THE REAL KUDZU**- extracted from article by Lisa Watts in Harvard Alumni Magazine, Sept-Nov 1994, sent in by David Lay.

Kudzu, the vine that is such a pest in the Southeast, could help curb the social pestilence of alcoholism. It may contain compounds that affect the metabolism of alcohol. Bert Vallee, distinguished senior professor and Wing-Ming Keung, visiting assistant professor of biochemistry, examined the behavioral changes in 71 boozing hamsters treated with an extract of kudzu root. The Syrian golden hamsters, known for their ability to put away the human equivalent of a case of wine a day, all cut their voluntary alcohol intake by at least 50 percent when injected with a chemical component isolated from kudzu.

The researchers' experiments were fairly easy to conduct because of the hamsters' appetite for alcohol. Offered a choice of water or water spiked with ethanol, the animals immediately opt for the hard stuff in contrast to rats and mice who don't usually enjoy alcohol. When injected with one or two compounds - dadzin and dadzein - that Vallee and Keung isolated from kudzu, the hamsters reduced their swilling in less than a day. The kudzu extracts did not seem to cause nausea as some other drugs purported to reduce drinking do.

Keung, a native of Hong Kong, proposed the kudzu experiment after translating a Chinese prescription from A.D. 600 that recommended the root extract for drinking problems. In 1991 he traveled across China, gathering accounts from herbalists who said they had successfully treated heavy drinkers with the kudzu-root remedy. Vallee's work has focused on the metabolism of alcohol.

**THE GARDEN** - Winter has been quite mild so far. The third week in January I was able to pick enough flowers in the garden for a large centerpiece. Included in the bouquet were many *Camellia japonica* blooms, some fragrant winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*), the Japanese flowering apricot (*Prunus mume*), some azaleas 'Day Spring' and 'Precocious Pink' and much greenery. This is unusual, even in the Tidewater area. Yellow winter jasmine is blooming at City Hall as well as *Magnolia stellata* (though it is not in full bloom), and the witch hazel is blooming in my yard. Daffodil buds are above the ground and fat. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the weather stays rather mild and we do not have any sudden steep temperature drops and damaging freezes.

The National Weather Service 90-Day outlook shows above normal temperatures for the whole state of Virginia and above normal precipitation for the state east of the mountains and below normal precipitation west of the mountains.

**SPECIES STUDY GROUP** - The next meeting will be March 4 in Williamsburg. Those interested in attending should call George McLellan at 804-693-4253.

**HARDINESS REPORTING FORM**- At our fall meeting Glenn Kauffman gave a talk about the new hardiness rating project of which he is our Chapter liaison for reporting to National. If you have misplaced the forms he passed out at the meeting, use the enclosed form or a facsimile on your own paper to rate the rhododendrons you grow. Rate plants that are at least 5 years old and that have not been recently transplanted. Do not report flower bud damage if the flower is injured by a late frost or cold spell after the flower has begun to open. Do not rate plants that have not recovered from prior stress such as cold damage, drought, excessive summer heat, excessive fertilization, etc.



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