

MID- ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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February 1996

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 7-12, 1996	ARS Convention, Oban, Scotland
May 31-June 2, 1996	Brier Inn, Lewisburg, WV
(Be sure to note the corrected date above for the Spring Meeting)	
Fall, 1996	To be determined
Spring 1997	Harrisonburg, VA
Fall 1999	Eastern Regional Meeting -host MAC

SPRING MEETING TO BE HELD MAY 31 - JUNE 2, 1996, BRIER INN, LEWISBURG, WV - Frank Pelurie and Doug Jolley have a great get-away to West Virginia planned for us for May 31 to June 2, 1996. Frank outlined the plans in our last newsletter. Some events from which to choose include a presentation on the history of Lewisburg and the Greenbrier River Valley, slides of unregistered plants by MAC hybridizers (Doug Jolley says bring some slides of early bloomers and let members have a peak at your garden - phone Doug at 304-765-5551 daytime or 765-2608 evenings), a possible trip to Seneca State Forest and across Kate's Mountain and with its rare shale barrens flora, a program about water gardens and hostas at the Greenbrier Nursery, flower show, seedling sale, book sale, plant auction and Saturday night banquet speaker Paul James on Delp hybrids. Our MAC get-away to the mountains has great hotel facilities, the beautiful mountains with their very special plants, interesting programs and, of course, wonderful friends. Join us for our get-away in West Virginia!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS - Welcome to the following new members:

Amy Elizabeth Bennett Williamsburg VA 23185
Malcolm L. Clark (Assoc.) Chandler Gardens, Southern Pines, NC 28387
M/M I.T. Cruz, Williamsburg VA 23185
Wallace Gusler, Williamsburg VA 23185
Dr. David G. Fluharty, Jr.(Life & Assoc.) , Newport News VA 23606
Don & Carolyn Dana Lewis, Arlington VA 22201
Carla Norris2, Ridgeway VA 24148
Eric L. Peterson, Williamsburg VA 23185
M/M Andrew M. Sims, Williamsburg VA 23185
M/M Edward B. Stvan., Williamsburg VA 23185
M/M Robert Turvene., Williamsburg VA 23185

NEWS OF MEMBERS - Did you miss **John Buschmann** at our fall meeting? Our friend John is hard to miss when he comes to a meeting, but he can be very quiet about some things. John Buschmann has undergone successful heart surgery and has a new valve and did not let any of us know about it. Ray Doggett has recently talked with John and he is progressing well. We did miss you John!

Jim Bowyer had a knee replacement and is doing so well he wants to have his other one done. **Bob Singleton** also had knee surgery. Could gardening be hard on our knees?

Our condolences to **Harry Wise** whose mother passed away recently in Alabama.

A POSSIBLE SIDE TRIP ON THE WAY TO OUR SPRING MEETING - James Madison University is having a ceremony and some festivities on the afternoon of Thursday, May 30, 1996 at the JMU Arboretum in Harrisonburg, Virginia. This will be a dedication of the new **azalea garden** at the Arboretum that Dr. Norlyn Bodkin, MAC member - volunteer Ron Brown and staff have worked so hard to bring about. MAC members are invited.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - by Ray Doggett.

I want to thank all who have and are continuing to give of your time and talents to our society. Your willingness and friendship/fellowship are deeply appreciated. And now I hope you will respond to urgent needs of our chapter: Approximately 30 members have not renewed for 1996 which is about 15% of our membership. Perhaps some have just overlooked the dues notice. Perhaps some are no longer able to attend. Perhaps...??? MAC has been an active chapter because so many participate - we need these members and we need new members. And we need.....??? Only you may tell us what MAC needs! Therefore I will appoint a new Membership Committee, charged with obtaining new members and retaining all members. A "subcharge" will be to constantly query our members as to their desires - what they expect of MAC. Won't you serve on this committee? I need your phone calls NOW - 1-800-480-9576, or my home 804-642-9190. NOW NOW NOW!

The Terry Sheuchenko Memorial Fund has reached approximately \$550. At our November '95 meeting the chapter voted to contribute to the garden being established at the Children's Rehabilitation Center in Charlottesville, by Master Gardeners. This Center had a part in Terry's life some years ago, and the planned garden is a fitting site. Terry's personal sundial from her garden will be purchased from the estate and presented to the garden. Possibly a teakwood bench may also be provided. Contributions will continue to be accepted by the Treasurer. (See address on back page.)

DECEASED MEMBER - Former MAC president **Dr. Irving G. Roberts** died on December 25, 1995 in Richmond after a long illness. He was a former vice president of Reynolds Metals Co. and a former scientist with Medical College of Virginia. In 1985 he became co-owner with his wife of the Fan Garden Shop Inc., a landscaping and florist business. His Celebration of Life Service was held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond on December 29th. The family suggests contributions to the Dr. Irving Roberts Rhododendron Collection at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond. The Chapter extends deepest sympathy to his wife Doris. The following comments are from Bill Bedwell:

"MAC toured his garden at least twice in the Richmond meetings that I remember. The first time, I remember that he and Doris served a nice lunch in the garden and I do not remember any charge for the use-your-own-car tour. I took my mother and a neighbor in Dinwiddie. Later, I remember that Irving showed his slides of tours at an ARS Convention in the Northwest, and that gave me the craving to start going to them as soon as I could scrape together the money.

"After Irving joined his wife in running the Fan Garden Shop and started designing landscaping of small city gardens, following publication of his book on home landscaping, he promoted rhododendrons in Richmond and used them in the landscaping. For example, in the late 1980's when my former boss bought

a house in the Fan not far from me, he showed me the backyard that was filled with approximately 10 - 15 year old azaleas and rhododendrons, and I am certain that Irving had something to do with it.

“Then, I remember for two years Irving answered Austin Kennell’s plea for someone to handle a pool order from Greer and both Dorothy Robinson and I took advantage of it. When MAC first joined with the national convention of the Azalea Society for the 1982 meeting, and Harry (Wise) was president, Irving was the Friday night speaker that initiated the meeting theme, “The Asian Influence,” by developing a slide talk on working the Asian Garden designs into home landscapes. Another time, he agreed to open his garden on Sunday even though it was a hardship on him and Doris because the meeting was Mother’s Day weekend, a busy time for a florist. By that time the garden shop had expanded into the florist business which was Doris’ thing. I remember that his garden tours were as educational as they were beautiful because he gave so many tips. I learned a lot from him. After Irving got back into research, he only showed up at a few MAC Saturday evening programs in Richmond. They welcomed the Azalea Society for a tour several years ago. I saw them at the annual garden parties at Ginter, except last spring, and they were always so friendly.”

NEW BEGINNINGS - by Jane McKay

When I became a member of the Board of Directors of the New York Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society in the early ‘70’s, I was told it was a “requirement” of the new Board members to write an article for the New York Newsletter. I was asked to write about my favorite evergreen azaleas. Back then we had less to choose from. There were Kurumes, *R. kaempferi*, Gables and Glenn Dales. My list of favorites has grown since then. I haven’t eliminated the old favorites, I’ve added more. I thought that since I am a new member of the Board of Directors of MAC, I should fulfill my “requirement” and write an article for MAC’s Newsletter.

I am at a distinct disadvantage, since we’ve lived here only two years and we are learning all over again. Our garden on the north shore of Long Island and our Virginia garden at Lake Monticello in Palmyra, Virginia (15-18 miles SE of Charlottesville) are both Zone 7. Here the similarity ends. In Virginia the soil is different, very different; frost arrives earlier - stays later; humidity in winter is lower and though temperatures in summer are only a bit higher during the day, they are much higher at night. We’ve also come to the conclusion that every ‘bug’ in the universe resides in the state of Virginia (at least at Lake Monticello).

In February of ‘93 we rented a cargo van and dug some 500 plants (some sunk in the ground - others still planted in the ground) during a sleet and snow storm on Long Island and moved them to a rented house in Virginia. These plants remained out of the ground, mulched by pine bark until planted in the fall of 1993 at our new home. The gist of this report is to talk about which of the transplants adapted well.

The two evergreen azaleas that are the best performers so far are Beth Bullard, a Pennington azalea which has large heavy textured salmon flowers, is late blooming with gorgeous foliage, and is a low compact grower and Sir Robert, a Robin Hill azalea with large pink flowers, beautiful foliage, and is also a low grower. Also doing very well are Pennington White, which is an upright frilled white and several more Robin Hill azaleas, Mrs. Emil Hager, a deep semi-double hose-in-hose; Betty Ann Voss, a double hose-in-hose light pink and Laura Moreland, a pink semi-double. The Robin Hills listed above are all compact plants with beautiful foliage, as are most of Bob Gartrell’s Robin Hills. Fedora, an old favorite deep pink *kaempferi* hybrid seems to be happy here, much to our delight. Garden State Glow, a Linwood purplish red really does glow. Janet Rhea, another Linwood, purplish pink edged white has adapted well. A surprise both on Long Island and here is Easter Parade and Sport of Easter Parade, which have bloomed consistently in both gardens. A few of my own hybrids are performing satisfactorily, but need further evaluation. We are also trying some of Sandra McDonald’s hybrids, so far so good. In a few more years we will be able to judge more accurately.

Most of the elepidote rhododendrons we brought were one year propagations so are too young to judge. The larger rhododendrons we transplanted seem to have had a harder time adjusting. A few of the

lepidotes that appear happy are a *minus x racemosum* cross, Carolina Rose, Joseph Dunn and Pride of Split Rock. The species *R. dauricum* (white form) does well; open flowers are sometimes frosted but unopened buds are not affected and open in a few days.

The dwarf conifers have fared well except for the firs: *Abies lasiocarpa* 'Compacta' died late this summer and *Abies koreana* 'Prostrate Beauty' is struggling, but we will prune it back and see what happens. Our hostas were doing great until the deer discovered the leaves and the voles discovered the roots. To keep the deer at bay we installed some ugly wire and net fencing and in hopes of defeating the voles we've put all our hostas in large pots with the holes covered by hardware cloth (1/4" wire mesh) and sunk them in the ground.

Despite bugs, fungi, deer, voles and high water bills we are not about to quit; we enjoy the challenge; we enjoy Virginia and have found a home in the Middle Atlantic Chapter.

MAC BOARD MEETING - The MAC Board met in Charlottesville on February 10. **Ronny and Theresa Brents** were awarded the Chapter's Certificate of Appreciation for their work on behalf of the Chapter. The award had been prepared for presentation at the 1995 Spring Meeting, but the Brents had not been able to attend the last two chapter meetings. Also at the Board meeting, **Rosa Carter** had to resign from her duties as Treasurer on doctor's orders. President Ray Doggett appointed **Ray Brush** the new Treasurer and **Sybil Przypek** the new Secretary to serve until the next election in 1997. The Board approved.

SPECIES STUDY GROUP TO MEET AGAIN FEBRUARY 17 - The MAC Species Study Group will be meeting again at the McDonald's on February 17 to start putting together another slide program on the different species of our native azaleas. MAC members interested in species are welcome to attend the meetings. Call George McLellan at 804-693-4253 if interested. The group meets several times per year at members' homes or for field trips. Pictures below are from the March 4, 1995 meeting at Bland Freeman's home in Williamsburg.



Bill Bedwell



The Freemans and George McLellan



Bland Freeman

THE GARDEN - by Sandra McDonald

As I sit here thinking about the garden in early February, we have just had the coldest night in quite a few years, +7 degrees F here on the Hampton Roads waterway. I am very grateful for the approximately 2 inches of snow we have even though it came on top of some freezing rain. The ice from the freezing rain is bending down many pine tree limbs, *Rhododendron wadanum*, birch trees (*Betula jacquemontii*), live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and a few other things. So far only a pine branch or two has broken.

When the weather man was warning us of the bad weather coming, I did go out and use some pine needles to mulch some plants in pots and containers that were exposed to the weather. It was just in the nick of time, too because the freezing rain came that night.

The season is late at this point. Last week I did smell and see some open blossoms on the wintersweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*). The witch hazel tree (*Hamamelis* sp.) had been just about ready to

unfurl some red-orange strappy blossoms, but the ice, snow and cold temperatures have slowed the advancement of the blooms for a while.

The birds have gotten all the berries from the deciduous hollies, but the evergreen hollies still have some decorative red berries. Birds have also apparently been eating the berries of the southern wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), which I have never noticed before. The bark of the *Stewartia pseudocamellia*, crape myrtles, river birch, Coral Bark maple and 'Cinnamon Flakes' maple are all very decorative. To top it all off is the crystal of the iced branches and icicles.

Gardening continues indoors on a small scale with some small seed trays of rhododendron and azalea seeds and a few other species under lights in the laundry room. I am late again this year, but at least the *Dianthus* is already germinating, and turning my thoughts to spring.

AN INVITATION TO MAC MEMBERS ATTENDING THE MEETING IN OBAN -

MAC member Roy D. Milne of Woodborough, Porlock Weir, Somerset, TA24 6NZ in England has invited any of the MAC delegation who can make it to visit his garden after the convention in Oban. Roy Milne writes:

"In May, I fully expect to find the whole MAC descending on Scotland for the convention. Such an intrepid crowd will, once the convention is over, undoubtedly be rushing down to the S.W. of England, where the real gardens are. Those members that come to this area may care to have a look round our garden here at Porlock Weir. Although fairly small, about 1 ½ acres planted, it does in May present a fair blaze of colour.

"If any folk can make it on the 18th May, the SW. Rhodo. Camellia & Magnolia group of the RHS will be paying a visit to the garden between 11:00 and 14:40 hours, so there could be anything up to 70 quite knowledgeable people they could meet. Those that cannot make it on that date are most welcome to come at any other time - just contact either of us at the convention or ring us at telephone number 01643-862406.

"If any members want to know something about the garden, the Sept. 1991 newsletter contained an article I sent giving details of the place."

REPORT OF DISTRICT NINE DIRECTOR, ARS FALL 1995 BOARD MEETING, PRINCETON, NJ - by Jean Beaudry

The Board of Directors meeting was held in conjunction with the Northeast Regional meeting in Princeton, N.J. At the beginning of the meeting Herb Spady, our new President, announced that we are the American Rhododendron Society, not a National Rhododendron Society as there is no "National" in our name. The rest of the weekend we had a good time reminding each other not to use the word "National". He was serious in his announcement so take heed if you are writing for the *Journal* or corresponding with other members.

The Regional meeting itself was certainly worth attending. It included a wide variety of speakers, an informative Breeders Roundtable, and a big Plant Sale. Those representing the East Coast met separately at the end of the Board Meeting to consider Middle Atlantic's offer to host an Eastern Regional meeting in 1999. All were in favor and agreed to support Middle Atlantic in their efforts.

Several of the Directors voiced concern that their Chapters had been denied permission to hold Flower Shows in public places such as shopping malls due to lack of adequate insurance. I don't think that District Nine has had that experience. It should be something to consider when planning such an event.

The Board voted to use only pH neutral paper in the *Journal*. There is concern that the more acidic paper will deteriorate over time. Since most of us keep our Journals "forever" we want to be sure they don't become brittle with age.

Herb Spady reminded us that for the hardiness ratings, we should NOT include plants which suffered from the drought this year. In addition, I want to encourage all to promptly respond to requests to fill out Hardiness Reporting forms for Ed Reiley. The Committee feels that this is invaluable data which needs to be evaluated.

Dick Brooks, Jean Beaudry, and Dick Cavender are the new Membership Committee. There has been one letter sent out to the Chapter Membership chairperson and Treasurer encouraging personal contact with those who have not renewed. This lets the members know that they are important to the Chapter and lets the Chapter know if there are

problems such as lack of transportation which can be solved.

While on the subject of membership, you should know that of 354 members in District Nine 106 have not renewed. Mason Dixon = 26; Middle Atlantic = 52, Potomac Valley = 28. Ask your Treasurer or Membership chairperson for the names of those not renewed and make a phone call.

Herb Spady is going to research ways for the American Rhododendron Society to enter the electronic data age. One of the requests given to me was to establish a "Web Site" for information about the ARS including chapters, gardens, etc. This should be the answer to that request.

The Long Range Planning Committee made a **suggestion that Districts identify themselves with a significant name. If anyone has thoughts let me know.** The idea behind it was that calling a District by a number alone does not reveal its location.

There was some discussion about seed being accepted by the Seed Exchange. Bud Gehrlich will request that George Woodward accept open pollinated species seed. It was also recommended that donors have some acknowledgment that their seed was received and how well it did in the orders.

The ARS Slide Library is being renamed the Slide and Video Library. The Shows and Judging Committee has a preliminary report which will be reviewed by the Board prior to publication.

A note about the next meeting in Oban, Scotland:

*To obtain a bank draft for \$2.00, call 1-800-424-2923 for Ruesch International in Washington, D.C. Ask for the international department.

Norman and I saw some old friends at the Princeton meeting who always work for the Philadelphia Chapters on the Philadelphia Flower Show. They are planning on doing a tribute to Joe Gable in the next few years and were looking for any information we in District Nine could share with them. We are sending them a copy of the notes Sandy Sanders had as a member of the Gable Study Group and will give them cuttings of our Gable plants next summer. If anyone can help them with notes, articles, cuttings, personal stories, please contact them: Bob Wilkinson and Judi Meade, 7516 Shaw St., Philadelphia, PA 19128-4141. Their phone number is (215)-482-9206. If it is inconvenient to contact them, please contact me. Thanks in advance for your help. It looks like we may have to arrange a bus trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show when this is done.

RHODODENDRONS ON THE INTERNET - by Sandra McDonald

Sites useful to people interested in rhododendrons continue to proliferate on the Internet. There are several different kinds of sites which can be useful. Many university libraries have their catalogs online; some botanical gardens are online; some herbaria are online; some organizations have web sites that are of interest.

The **Alderman Library of the University of Virginia**, which is the official repository for MAC and many ARS old records, can be accessed at the following URL: <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/>. You do need Ftp capability. Choose Virgo and other catalogs. Login as Connect Virgo. For terminal type it is probably safest to choose VT100. Do a keyword search with k=rhododendrons and you will be surprised at how much you find. The entries include many rhododendron books and some of the manuscript collection. It is great to be able to search the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia catalog without long distance phone charges!

For other sites, you can use one of the several search engines and find thousands of sites, but many of these are not very relevant. One place I found especially interesting was **List of WWW Sites of Interest to Botanists** at <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Biology/Docs/botany.html>. This site has a long list of herbaria and gardens that can be accessed, including the living collection at **Arnold Arboretum**. The herbarium at Harvard University is also online. The **Smithsonian Natural History Museum** has a site at <http://nsmnhwww.si.edu/departments/botany.html> where you can choose U.S. National Herbarium and then Type Specimens then choose Rhododendrons and you will find the isotypes (a specimen of the same collection as the holotype (the holotype is the specimen designated as the type for the species by the author of the species)) of many rhododendron species.

Rhododendrons at <http://haven.ios.com/~mckenzie/rhodo05.html> is a wonderful site for **Tyler Arboretum** which has many pictures available especially of the Swarthmore Dexters. A site which has links

to the Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens, the Pukeiti Menu, the Rhododendron Park Bremen (Germany) and the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden is **Other Rhododendron and Gardening Pages** at <http://www.mbark.swin.edu.au/yarranet/tourism/pages/rhodo/other.html>. There is a site by the APS Press for Diseases of Azalea (Rhododendron ssp.) at http://wwwnt.scisoc.org/apspress/common_names/azalea.html. There is another site for Problems of Rhododendrons at <http://coopext.cahe.wsu.edu/~lenora/rhododendron.html> which is at Washington State University. The University of Delaware has a site with many nice photographs at http://bluehen.ags.udel.edu/gopher-data2/.botanic_garden/shrubs/.htm. A Guide to Internet Resources can be found at <http://wwwolympus.net/gardens/point1.htm> where there are many gardening subjects from which to choose.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC CHAPTER OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Memberships and renewals should be sent to Ray Brush, Treasurer, PO Box 266, Madison VA 22727.

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

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