

# MID- ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 31-June 2, 1996                      Brier Inn, Lewisburg, WV  
September 27-29, 1996                  Richmond, VA  
(Joint meeting with Azalea & Holly Societies)

Spring 1997                                  Towson-Hunt Valley area of Maryland  
(District meeting sponsored by Mason-Dixon Chapter)

Spring 1998                                  Harrisonburg, VA  
Fall 1999                                        Williamsburg, VA  
(Eastern Regional Meeting -host MAC)

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER -** By Ray Doggett

Much is happening! But the Osprey are back in our creek - Spring is here!!

While planning your trip to West Virginia for May 31, move your departure date to May 30, Thursday, and plan to be at the James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA for the dedication of the Sandra and Kenneth McDonald Garden. Over 500 McDonald plants! Be there at 2: p.m.

And speaking of Harrisonburg, we had planned to have our Spring '97 meeting there. But since Mason-Dixon Chapter is sponsoring a DISTRICT meeting for all three chapters (including Potomac Valley), we will postpone our visit to JMU/Harrisonburg until Spring 1998. Mason-Dixon has made arrangements for many nice plants for Spring '97, and plan to meet in the Towson-Hunt Valley area. There will be more on this meeting after West Virginia.

At our Fall '96 meeting in Richmond, Dr. Lawrence Mellenchamp will be our principal speaker! Debbie Sauer has heard him and talked with him. He plans to show slides of some new, some old and other happenings on Rhodies. He is a very good speaker, so you will want to be there September 27, 28 and 29. This will be a joint meeting with the Azalea and Holly societies.

Fall '99 will be our EAST COAST REGIONAL MEETING. Our principal speaker will be Tony Avent, who is knowledgeable, humorous and well worth your being there. This meeting will be in the Williamsburg area.

### **REVISED APPLICATION FORM FOR REGISTRATION OF RHODODENDRON AND**

**AZALEA NAMES** - These revised forms are available from Jay W. Murray, Registrar of Plant Names, 21 Squire Terrace, Colts Neck, NJ 07722 or from our Chapter President C. Ray Doggett, P O Box 629, Gloucester Point, VA 23062.

If you have a new seedling you think worthy of registration and distribution, contact either of them and get a form to register it. By registering your plant, you avoid name duplication and confusion of plants. There is no longer a fee for registration of rhododendron and azalea plant names.

### **A NEAT WAY TO PROPAGATE NATIVE AZALEAS** - from Frank Pelurie

At the MAC ARS Fall 1995 meeting in Newport News, Virginia on Sunday, November 12, Dr. Clarence Towe, the featured speaker for the weekend, gave this tip on how to propagate some of the more difficult to propagate native deciduous azaleas.

Carefully start to remove soil from around the base of the plant while searching for one of the plants roots. The root should be larger in diameter than a pencil. Once such a root is found, proceed to trace the root away from the plant until the diameter of the root is the size of a pencil, about 1/4 of an inch. At this point sever the root. There are two options now: 1) Take the root end not connected to the plant and position it so that about one inch of the severed root extends out of the soil. Leave the root in place until new growth is established. At that time dig the root and transplant; or 2) Dig around the severed portion of the root so that it can be removed. Pot the root by placing it in a near vertical position and leaving about 1 inch of the root above the soil.

This little more painstaking work and could take anywhere from a few months to a year to get a clone of the plant, but it is better than attempting to dig a large special plant and losing the entire thing, as so often happens.

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THE ONLY TIME TO LOOK DOWN ON SOMEONE IS WHEN YOU'RE HELPING HIM UP

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**NEWS OF MAC MEMBERS** - The Richmond Times-Dispatch had a photograph of **Marshall and Vetric Jones** of Chester, Virginia, who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on February 4. Congratulations Marshall and Vetric!

### **FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC** - by Jane McKay

This winter has been one we would all like to forget, but unfortunately its evidence will be with us for quite some time. Did the birds and animals know what was coming? The bluebirds and the robins stripped the berries from *Ilex verticillata* in November, earlier than usual and the deer nibbled the conifers two days before the January blizzard. The past two winters the conifers remained untouched and last year we had berries on the *Ilex* until February. Broken branches and sore backs were the main result of the January blizzard. Early February saw the temperature drop to -12 degrees F, but fortunately for the garden we had a 12 inch snow cover. Most of our plants are young so were protected but the hollies and rhododendrons that are older and taller clearly show where the snow line was. We are hopeful that the rhododendrons will recover as the growth buds still look green. The hollies are a different story. The tops of most of the Koehneana hybrids will have to be cut back. Late February saw a warming trend; *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconite), *Iris danfordiae* and *Iris reticulata* joined *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Arnolds Promise' in bloom and *Rhododendron dauricum* album opened a few flowers. Early March arrived with temperatures fluctuating from highs near 70 degrees F to three nights with lows of 10 degrees F. A group of rhododendron seedlings, spending their first winter outdoors (R. Clara Raustein x Sandra's yellow - cross made by Walter Przypek) that were snow covered during earlier severe weather were now fully exposed. Approximately 50% of these seedlings were damaged. Hopefully something wonderful will come from those remaining. Would a dandelion yellow, with magnificent deep green foliage, that could take -20 degrees F in winter and 90 degrees F plus in summer during a severe drought be too much to ask? Oh well, without optimism we wouldn't be gardeners.

### **REPORT OF DISTRICT NINE DIRECTOR , FEBRUARY 1996** - by Jean Beaudry

I recently received a package from Frank West containing the surveys (only 33 for all of District Nine) which were filed out by our district in the Fall of 1994. The survey of the entire ARS which was

inserted in the Fall Journal had such a small number of returns that it was not used. Frank and Hank Shannon did think that there might be some information important to the various districts in the small number of responses and sent them to the District Directors. After reviewing them I agree. I have picked out a few overall items which I think will be helpful to everyone in the District which I will list in the rest of this report. I also have separate lists to share with each of the Chapter Presidents which describe how your members feel about local chapters and the Society as a whole.

1. There were 125 written suggestions from the responders for the entire survey. I will provide the Presidents with a complete list. The following are a few to which I think we should all give some thought:

- \*Better growing instructions from local nurserymen
- \*Attract younger new members and pay attention to them when they join
- \*Relate more to the beginning novice
- \*More interactive events like study groups, workshops, and plant sales
- \*Follow thru with new members to see that they come back
- \*Assign new members to senior members to encourage the involvement and retention of the new. Appeal to new gardeners.
- \*The most involved members of a chapter tend to make a closed group that needs to open up for reticent new members.
- \*Have a species talk or “how to” demonstration before slide show talks at chapter meetings.
- \*Start a wanted column for exchange of seeds, scions, ideas, articles
- \*Remind older members not to be clique-ish
- \*Make sure of good chapter leadership and communicate regularly; keep non-attenders in mind.
- \*Encourage local nurseries to stock plants that grow well
- \*Chapters need more talks by local members about local gardens and varieties that succeed locally (or not) and local garden visits
- \*Spotlight available new plants in nurseries
- \*Plan chapter garden visits where senior members visit new members’ gardens and offer suggestions and advice
- \*Provide a better welcome to new members
- \*Provide more “how to” programs for chapter study groups
- \***Don’t let Barbara Hall leave-ever!**
- \*This last was written by Terry Sheuchenko.

2. “Good Doers” for District Nine compiled from 33 respondents:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Hybrids</u>	<u>Deciduous Azaleas</u>	<u>Evergreen Azaleas</u>
R. yakushmanum	Scintillation	R. bakeri	Coral Bells
yak. “Mist Maiden”	Janet Blair	R. calendulaceum	Rose Greeley
yak. “Ken Janek”	Cadis		Williamsburg
R. carolinianum	Caroline		Louise Gable
R. dauricum	GiGi		Rosebud
R. mucronulatum	PJM		Vespers
	Windbeam		Elsie Lee
	A. Bedford		Nancy of Robin Hill
	Nova Zembla		Ben Morrison
	County of York		
	Mary Fleming		

Brown Eyes  
 Trude Webster  
 Cynthia  
 Tom Everitt  
 Vulcan  
 David Gable  
 Champagne  
 Jean Marie de Montague  
 Calsap  
 Anna Hall  
 Wheatley  
 Ellie Harris  
 Ben Moseley

Frank West ended his letter to me by touching upon something I mentioned in my last report. He suggests that we **give some thought and discussion in each of the Chapters to naming our District.** Just to get you started on suitable names consider the geographical location --Middle Atlantic, Nations Capital or a famous plantsperson --Thomas Jefferson, George Washington. If you have a suggestion pass it along to your President.

I will be attending the Society meeting in Oban Scotland in May. If you have anything you would like included in my Report or brought up for discussion at the meeting please contact me.

**COMMON PESTICIDE SHELF LIFE** - This information was obtained from the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Plainview, NY and was printed in the February 15, 1996 issue of *American Nurseryman*.

<b>Pesticide</b>	<b>Shelf Life</b>	<b>Breakdown Symptoms</b>
Di-syston	2 years	None
Diazinon	5 to 7 years	None
Dursban	2 years	Will not mix with water
Imidan WP	2 to 3 years	Will not mix with water
Malathion WP	Indefinite	Decomposes under high temperatures
Mavrik	2 years	High temperature storage can produce small amounts of hydrogen cyanide
Methoxychlor WP	Indefinite	Not applicable
Sevin Flowable	Several years	Settles, separates
Sevin WP	Several years	Powder will not mix with water

**NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN TO TAKE PART IN CHINA TRIP** - Information from the Norfolk Botanical Garden Newsletter, March/April 1996.

The North American China Plant Exploration Consortium comprised of The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Jamaica Plain, MA; The Holden Arboretum, Kirtland, OH; Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA; The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, IL; United States National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.; and University of British Columbia Botanical Garden, Vancouver, BC is planning a 42 day expedition starting in September 1996. Kunso Kim, Curator of Plant Collections at the Norfolk Botanical Garden (and also a MAC member) has been invited to join the expedition. The Garden has previously tested many plants for expeditions in the 1950's and 1960's and have many mature specimens.

Being located near the convergence of the Atlantic Florida Current and the Chesapeake Bay, the

Norfolk Botanical Garden can grow many plants indigenous to zones 4 through 8A. The Garden will display horticulturally significant plants collected during this expedition. Then after an evaluation period, the plants will be introduced for the benefit of the horticulture and nursery trades in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina.

The Garden is especially interested in collecting unique broad-leafed evergreen, herbaceous and ornamental plants from temperate climates of the world.

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THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM IS TO CALL THINGS BY THEIR RIGHT NAMES.

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### **MORE INTERESTING WEB SITES FOR THOSE WITH ACCESS TO THE INTERNET -**

The International Camellia Society Home Page is:

[http://www.med-rz.uni-sb.de/med\\_fak/physiol2/camellia/home.htm](http://www.med-rz.uni-sb.de/med_fak/physiol2/camellia/home.htm)

Another site of interest, EXTONET, contains data sheets on most pesticides in a readable format that includes toxicity to humans and mammals, how fast the chemicals degrade, what they degrade into, whether they leach into the ground water and other helpful information.

Extension Toxicology Network files are maintained at Oregon State University with information from Oregon State; U. California, Davis; Michigan State University; and Cornell University:

<http://ace.uce.orst.edu/info/extoxnet/>

### **THE GARDEN - by Sandra McDonald**

It has been a long cold winter this year. Every time the temperature got up into the 60's or 70's we thought spring was here at last only to have our hopes dashed by another cloudy, rainy spell, followed by a sunny cold high. Spring seems to have come in about 10 days or so later than usual this year. In early April the *Camellia japonica* was beautiful, unharmed by the colder winter temperatures. The scaley rhododendrons such as 'Mary Fleming' and many other Nearing rhododendrons and *R. keiskei* seemed to be about normal. *R. hyperythrum*, *R. metternichii* and some of the other early rhodos were also about on time, but the evergreen azaleas were late.

*Helleborus orientalis* put on a beautiful show this year. I have a few plants from Ron Brown and George McLellan who both have a special interest in them and also some I have grown myself from seed. There are lovely whites with green markings, some dark purplish red ones, and some lighter ones. The flower of each clone is different from the others and they are fascinating and make great companion plants with rhododendrons. They also bloom before there are very many other plants in bloom and the blossoms last a very long time.

The ice storm in mid winter seemingly protected the camellias. The gardenias were hurt though. Many gardenia leaves turned brown from winter burn right after the ice. Overall, the winter was not too hard on the garden here in the coastal area and flower buds on rhododendrons and azaleas seem not to have been noticeably damaged.

The garden was a bit neglected this winter because there were not very many good days to get out and dig. We did manage the necessary pruning of ice damaged tree limbs. I have been very restrained this year in ordering new things to try in the garden because of the Scotland trip. I try to be content with little things I have been growing on, looking for likely spots for them.

Spring finally came in with a bang about 10 days to two weeks late. Evergreen azalea 'Dayspring' usually blooms very early, sometimes with bloom in March or even earlier. This year it did not start until about April 20. 'Precocious Pink' started ahead of it. Some early azaleas that usually have their blossoms damaged by hot sun were later this year and were protected from sun burn on the blossoms because the dogwoods under which they grow had their leaves advanced enough to shade the

azaleas. *Rhododendron hyperythrum* and its hybrid with 'Loderi King George' were wonderful this year with no damage at all.

Spring is so gorgeous that it is a shame to leave it for the Convention in Oban, but we are sure to see wonderful things over there also. I know there will be lots of slides taken and the chapter can surely look forward to a slide show from someone who took the trip!

The amount of lawn to mow in our yard is getting smaller and smaller. Ken has been looking for a new lawn mower to do it because the old one finally gave out. Once he gets the mower started, it takes very little time to mow the lawn anymore. It used to take quite a long time. That is one advantage to having a lot of plants!

There seems to be a bit of common wisdom that a bad winter kills lots of insects, so I was taken aback by a recent article in our newspaper datelined Richmond that said "An unusually harsh winter won't reduce the number of insects that will bug us this summer, scientists in Virginia say." Entomologists say mosquitoes will still be bad. "Insects have existed on the planet millions of years, and they have certainly adapted to overwintering in the conditions we have had," said Ames Herbert, a Virginia Tech entomologist.

The article said insects prepare for winter by converting body fluids to glycerol, a type of antifreeze. They also hibernate in the ground and are insulated by snow and debris. Virginia had an average temperature that was 1.6 degrees below normal in Richmond and 2.1 degrees below normal in northern Virginia. A spring freeze can kill insects if they don't make it to shelter in time, but it can also kill the good insects such as ladybugs and praying mantises, so it is not too helpful.

**GREGORY BALD ARTICLE IN SPRING 1996 JOURNAL** - Please notice the wonderful spread that *Journal* editor Sonja Nelson gave the article by George McLellan and Sandra McDonald in the spring *Journal*. The cover photograph is from our trip and the article starting on page 90 has many more photographs. This article is somewhat different from the one that appeared in the newsletter, so you may enjoy reading about Gregory Bald again.

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NEVER TRUST A MAN WHO SPEAKS WELL OF EVERYBODY - John Churton Collins

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**DOGWOOD ANTHRACNOSE IN THE NATIVE DOGWOODS** - extracted from January 1996 issue of *The Market Bulletin*.

The dogwood anthracnose is caused by the fungus *Discula destructiva* and is affecting flowering dogwood trees in much of the Eastern United States. The first symptoms to appear are small purple leaf spots which enlarge to form large tan spots and necrotic blotches. The fungus moves from leaves to twigs to stems causing them to die back and eventually makes a canker on the main stem. The tree dies over a period of three to five years. Dogwood anthracnose was first found in West Virginia in 1985 in Preston County and by 1989 and 1990 a disease survey showed the disease present in 55 counties. The disease was spreading east to west with the 9 western counties still seemingly uninfected.

Dogwoods growing next to streams and lakes seem to be more susceptible to it, possibly because of high humidity. Dogwoods on South slopes showed worse infection above 460 meters. Trees growing in full sunlight usually suffered less than trees in the shade.

Some supposedly disease resistant dogwoods have been found in nature and may protect the trees from the fate of the American chestnut.

**BIOCOMPATIBLE FUNGICIDES** - extracted from May 1996 *the Avant Gardener*.

Antitranspirants have been found to control powdery mildew on roses and zinnias. Recently USDA research in North Carolina showed that antitranspirants are effective against dogwood

anthracnose.

The new horticultural oils are proving valuable for combating powdery mildew on woody and herbaceous ornamentals and are also useful against some insect pests. They appear even more effective when combined with bicarbonates. In Israeli tests, a combination of horticultural oil and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) controlled powdery mildew attacking euonymus. The same combination was effective in Louisiana in controlling black spot on roses.

Horticultural oils should be used at the rates recommended on the labels. Antitranspirants have been used at the rate of 3 to 4 teaspoons per gallon of water. Some experiments have used a 2% solution of sodium bicarbonate, but a 0.5% solution would be safer and less likely to burn foliage.

**FEBRUARY 10TH BOARD MEETING A FORTUNATE DATE** - The MAC Officers and Board of Directors met in Charlottesville on February 10th, one of the few non-snowy or icy Saturdays of the mid-winter. Ron Brents had arranged facilities for the meeting at which the Board discussed and worked on arrangements for future MAC meetings and took care of other business such as accepting Rosa Carter's resignation from the office of Treasurer because of her health and Ray Brush's taking over the office. Sybil Przypek will be handling the office of Secretary that Ray vacated in order to be the Treasurer.



Ronny Brents



Ken McDonald, Bill Bedwell and Rosa Carter chatting at Board Meeting.



Rosa Carter passing along Treasurer's instructions to Ray Brush.

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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