

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXV No.2

May, 1999

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

November 5,6&7, 1999 Radisson Fort Magruder Inn, Williamsburg, VA
(Williamsburg is the Eastern Regional Meeting: host MAC)
May 5,6 & 7, 2000 Charlottesville, VA

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

R & A News <http://members.aol.com/randanews/news.html>

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

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

SPRING MEETING REVIEW - by Doug Jolley

Middle Atlantic Chapter members assembled in Roanoke, Virginia, on May 14,15, and 16, for their Spring Meeting. Friday evening MAC treasurer Ray Brush shared highlights of his and Betty's trip to New Zealand. The gardens visited and the rhododendron and azaleas growing in them were outstanding. Next, Doug Jesse from Greenbrier Nursery's new Roanoke Center reviewed "must have" cutting edge plants now available in the nursery trade. Hybridizers have transformed many mundane groups of shrubs into an array of colors, shapes, and sizes. Doug's presentation certainly made the next day's stop at the nursery an anticipated part of the itinerary. Finally George McLellan reviewed his trip south to photograph early blooming native species.

Saturday was sunny but cool, a perfect day for touring. A special thank you goes out to Ama and Allen Childress for welcoming us to their garden. The thousands of iris, borders of hosta and columbines, and bed after bed and border after border of shrubs, trees and perennials seemed endless.

Greenbrier Nursery's new Roanoke Horticultural Center is overwhelming! Literally everything from the smallest annual to the largest tree can be found there. As for garden supplies and gifts: they are all there.

Our final stop was at Paul and Barbara James. A RHODODENDRON SHOWCASE! Paul has rhodos, azaleas, trees, and plants of every description growing in a mountain setting. We all thank the Jameses for their hospitality.

Sandra McDonald took our group half way around the globe to the Republic of Korea. Her presentation included an overview of the peninsula and Cheju

Island culturally and horticulturally. A Buddhist bell even rang out to add an oriental flavor.

The book sale, plant sale, and auction were all successful.

The election of new officers was conducted Sunday morning. Alton Hall and Frank Pelurie will assume the presidency and vice-presidency. Joanne Ortiz and Ray Brush will remain as secretary and treasurer. Sybil Przypek will assume Frank's director's seat. Ron Brown, Walter Przypek, and Bill Bedwell will be directors through 2001.

Remember — our chapter is hosting the Eastern Regional Meeting in November. Registration



New Visitors Center at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden which will be on the tour at the Eastern Regional Meeting this fall. Photo by Sandra McDonald.

material will appear in the summer issue of the Journal. See you all in Williamsburg!

SEEDLING SALE AND AUCTION

The seedling sale at our Spring Meeting took place

at Paul James's garden after the garden tour. In addition to the material that our regular donors brought, there were many very special plants that Frank Pelurie brought that George Ring had started. These were many special white or 'album' forms of many of the Japanese species azaleas grown from seed from Hideo Suzuki. This special sale brought in \$561 which will be sent to the Rhododendron Research Foundation.



Rhododendron weyrichii f. *album*. A Japanese 3 leaf azalea. Photo by Sandra McDonald.

Many special plants were also in the auction including many more from George Ring.

AFTER MEETING TOUR TO GEORGE AND HELEN RING'S

Quite a large convoy of vehicles drove out to the Ring's on Bent Mountain on Sunday morning after the meeting. George and Helen were very gracious in showing us around their beautiful new home and grounds where George's rhododendrons and azaleas get rigorously tested for cold hardiness. It was a beautiful spot on top of the mountain.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Welcome to new members:

Jim Brant, Gloucester, VA
23061

Amarilis Childress, Roanoke,
VA 24018

Elizabeth & Claude Collins,
Roanoke, VA 24017

Lynn Jennings, R 1, Thornton, WV 26440

Robert McWhorter, , Gambrills,
MD 21054

Frits Morsink, , Chesapeake, VA
23328-5046

Bonnie Pratt, , Charleston, WV
25314-1004

Marcus Simpson, , Columbia, MD
21045

John F. Smith, VA 24171

Corrections to February Roster:

Ron Brown: phone

Martha Derthick: phone

Mavis Haywood: ,
Tampa, FL 33618-4745, phone

Dr. John Neal: e-mail jjneal@gamewood.net

Charlie & Marjorie Patterson: e-mail

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Austin Kennell had triple by-pass surgery on March 8. His recovery has been slow. The doctors said it could take 6 months to a year for him to be back to normal. You can drop him a note at 88 Windhaven Lane, Afton, VA 22920. He always enjoys hearing from his MAC friends.

Sybil Przypek had two separate surgeries this spring and is back to normal already. Sybil was also given a special award on April 23, 1999, by the York County Master Gardeners for her work with the group in creating the York County Learning Garden.

David Sauer is doing well after major surgery. He seemed almost back to normal at our Roanoke meeting.

WELDON DELP

Rhododendron hybridizer Weldon Delp died on March 10, 1999, at Autumn Grove Care Center in Harrisville, Pennsylvania. Many MAC members saw a big collection of Weldon's plants growing at Paul James's garden at our Roanoke meeting. Weldon hybridized hundreds or possibly a thousand hardy plants for Pennsylvania and other cold climates. He is survived by his wife Ginny and two daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

DEATHS

Debby Sauer's father died in February, then her mother died at the end of April. Deepest sympathy is extended to Debby and her family.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC - by Jane McKay

As I write this in mid March we are facing what I feel is the most critical part of the gardening year. In central Virginia right now the garden looks good but late freezes especially in April can cause havoc.

Over the winter most of my gardening is done in the basement watering, feeding, pinching, and potting the cuttings I stuck last summer and fall. When we lived in New York all of my propagating was done out of doors.



Jane McKay

Evergreen azalea cuttings were taken in mid July and rhododendrons in September. I rarely use a hormone on azaleas but I do use Dip N Grow on rhododendrons. The cuttings were placed in flats in 1/2 peat moss and 1/2 perlite, placed in plastic tents and put inside a Nearing frame. The simplest way I can describe a Nearing frame is a cold frame set in the ground with a slanted roof, the opening facing North to let in plenty of light but no sun. Azaleas rooted in 6 weeks, but using this method rhododendrons did not root until late the following spring or early summer.

One of my priorities when we built in Virginia was a basement, and that is where I now do all my propagating. The cuttings are still stuck in flats and tented, but now they go under fluorescent lights that are on 16 hours out of 24. The azaleas take approximately one month and the rhododendrons three or four months. I still stick the evergreen azaleas in July and most elepidote rhododendrons in September or October. If I have a problem with rooting fall cuttings of rhododendrons the next year I try them in July. I have been most successful with *fortunei* or hybrids containing *fortunei* and other early blooming elepidotes by sticking them in mid to late July. I have not mentioned lepidote rhododendrons or deciduous azaleas as I have not tried them lately. So try propagating. It can be an inexpensive way to increase your garden, have extras to share with friends or give to Plants for Members to raise money for our chapter.

A little background for anyone who purchased '*hyperythrum* × *metternichii*' at last fall's P4M sale, the ARS Seed Exchange number is 90-917. The seedlings were grown by Frank Arsen and a single plant was given to me by Frank. All the plants I propagated came from this selection. The large white flowers bloom early.

ANOTHER DROUGHT YEAR by David Lay

Here in the Northern Neck on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay we have had one of the driest springs on record after a mild winter with nominal rainfall. We had less than 1/2 inch of rain in April and nothing measurable for the first fifteen days of May. On May 19 we received 1/4 inch.

Coming on the heels of an extremely dry summer and fall last year, the garden is already beginning to show stress and we have had to water perennial beds and all shrubs planted in the past year. The lawn in the sandier soil down near the river has stopped growing and has begun to take on a late summer look. New growth has stopped on the six to eight foot rhodos which suffered badly last year. If rain does not arrive soon we will have to begin watering or lose them.

Flowering this spring has been irregular. Some

rhododendrons have been spectacular. The Dexters and Gables have performed well. Trude Webster, Anna Rose Whitney, and some West Coast big-truss plants have fewer blooms than normal. Stress of drought seems to encourage bud set, and East Coast hybrids are better able to handle the stress of our climate extremes. It also seems that the tallest rhodos handle the lack of water less well than the more low growing and compact yaks.

The same is true of lower-growing azaleas. Bloom on many tall, old Glenn Dales has been irregular. Ben Morrison and Rose Greeley have been as showy as ever, but Anna Kehr, Ambrosia, Dream and Helen Close have fewer flowers than usual and considerable dieback. I am not sure, but it may be that I was less conscientious watering azaleas than rhodos. I tend to view azaleas as almost weeds since we have Glenn Dale seedlings everywhere; some have even volunteered in the cracks of old railroad ties.

The older I get the less willing I am to coddle choice new cultivars. Pulling hundreds of feet of hose, and constantly repairing leaking faucets and sprinklers gets old fast on five acres. As we age we should probably be content with the plants that thrive best in our mid Atlantic climate, particularly the myriad of shrubs and understory trees now available. We should avoid being hybrid rhodo and azalea fanatics. There are fine native azaleas and plants native to the eastern U.S. and from the similar climate of eastern Asia that make a spectacular display with very little effort. We should seek them out and plant them instead of the latest hybrids from those glossy West Coast catalogs.

As I write this the American and Chinese fringe trees are in glorious bloom and shrub, dogwood, *Magnolia*, *Corylopsis*, and *Pterostyx corymbosa* (epaullette tree) and *Pterostyx hispida* put on a great show. *Fothergilla* and the similar Alabama native *Neviusia* (Alabama snow wreath) are finished, but several lovely native American *Zenobia* with pendulous, scented lily-of-the-valley-like flowers are just coming into bloom. All these are great and very easy companion plants to mingle with your rhodos and azaleas.



David Lay

REPORT OF DISTRICT NINE DIRECTOR FOR April 27, 1999 ARS BOARD MEETING by Sandra McDonald

I attended the ARS Board of Directors meeting in Bellevue, Washington, on April 27, 1999.

- The Society is in the midst of a membership drive called Campaign 2000. All the chapters are being encouraged to seek new members for their chapters and the Society. The Society is operating at a deficit of over \$5,000 and needs more members to get back into the black. Donations were way down from previous years.
- The Society has an opportunity to have chapters purchase general liability insurance for \$140 per chapter per year if enough chapters sign up. The chapters must pay the premiums. (This premium is below what the Middle Atlantic Chapter presently pays.)
- The ARS roster is online (password protected) for specifically designated chapter officers to access their chapter rosters. The Board voted to save printing expense for the regular ARS roster in hard copy and have it available in .txt format from Dee. Members who still need a printed copy will be able to contact Dee Daneri, the Executive Director, and get printed copies if they need them
- The name change committee for ARS has been disbanded.
- An 18 month membership for new members joining in the late spring should be available after the Board has a second vote on the issue. There has been a problem with keeping members who join for 6 months and then get a renewal notice.
- The Society's web page has been responsible for over 40 new memberships.
- A written report from Jay Murray, Registrar of Plant Names, reported she had received 196 new applications and all but three have been completed.
- Betty Spady is receiving positive feedback for the electronic "R&A NEWS". Visit the site at <http://members.aol.com/randanews/news.html> and read what is new in ARS. There is an amazing amount of material on her site. The Shows and Judging Book is also on the "R&A NEWS" site. ARS has its own web site at <http://www.rhododendron.org>. There are some problems with the plant database online there, but they are being corrected.
- Lynden (Lyn) Watts of Bellevue, Washington, is the new ARS President. H. Edward Reiley

remains Eastern Vice-President. Mike Stewart of Sandy, Oregon, is the new Western Vice-President. Jean Beaudry of Bethesda, Maryland, is Secretary, and Tim Walsh of Eureka, California, is Treasurer. The Executive Director is Deanna Daneri, 11 Pinecrest Drive, Fortuna, California 95540-9203, e-mail deedaneri@aol.com.

- Minor changes were proposed for the By-Laws, the following being the major change: "Petitions for nominees may be submitted by twenty-five or more members or by any chapter, and must be delivered to the Nominations chairman by no later than ten days prior to the fall board meeting in the year of election. Any nominees proposed by petition of the membership shall be included in the chairman's fall report to the Board. Notice of this procedure and the offices to be voted on that fall shall be published annually in the spring issue of the *Journal ARS*." A second reading will be required at the Fall 1999 Board Meeting before the changes can take effect.

The next Board Meeting will be on November 5, 1999, at 9 a.m. in Williamsburg, Virginia.

THANK YOU LETTER RECEIVED FROM RSF FOR MAC DONATION

December 15, 1998
Middle Atlantic Chapter, ARS

We have received a check of \$1,000 from F. Raymond Brush, treasurer, in payment of your pledge toward our endowment challenge. We are very pleased to hear from you, and we accept this check on behalf of the Middle Atlantic Chapter, ARS. (We didn't have an address for Mr. Brush, so am sending this to you.)

It is really gratifying to have so many ARS chapters get behind RSF and support us in this way. Having each dollar matched is incredible, and has really helped us "come of age" financially. We have a long way to go, but our financial struggle the past few years has been a heart ache. Everyone works so hard, especially the staff. It is discouraging when they have to forgo improvements because there are no funds.

We feel that RSF is becoming an even greater asset to those in the Rhododendron world. Our curator, and now co-executive director Steve Hootman has traveled to many ARS chapters showing slides of his trips and bringing plants to sell. He is a good representative for us in the field. If your chapter is interested in having him as a speaker, he is planning a trip to Virginia next spring, hoping to

speak at a few ARS, chapters while there. RSF has been offered a 22 acre site for a possible satellite garden at Locust Grove, Virginia, by a Mr. Gordon Barker. He is not a member of ARS but perhaps some of your members know him? Or have seen his property? Any help along these lines would be appreciated. Mr. Barker feels that there is a need to have a display garden on the east coast for as many species *Rhododendrons* as possible.

Again, please accept our gratitude!

Sincerely,
 Honoré Hacanson, President
 Rhododendron Species Foundation
 P.O. Box 3798
 Federal Way, WA 98063-3798

NOTE FROM A LONG TIME MEMBER

I received my MAC newsletter, but notice that the zip code is incorrect as well as my new phone number.

I always enjoy reading the newsletter and am happy to see the names of some of the old timers like Bert Shoosmith, Dr. Stepka, and John Withers. The Society has come a long way and I am sure Dr. Wheeldon would be proud of how MAC has progressed. I keep in touch with Mrs. Wheeldon by phone and mail.

Your Christmas ice storm must really have been bad and probably separated the "men from the boys" in plant life. But it breaks your heart to lose lovely plants that have given you so much pleasure. I know when we get cold snaps in Tampa, the tropical plants look like you poured scalding water on them.

Much to my sorrow, azaleas and rhododendron are not plants that you see here very much. At my former home, I did have some nice azaleas, but nothing exotic –'Formosa' (which Dr. Wheeldon used to call 'cabbage variety'), 'Mrs. Gerbing', 'Duc de Rohan', and for a while some Gumpos did very well. I brought 'Sagittarius' down from Bob Coffey's one year, but they wanted a bit more cold weather and you could never tell when they were going to bloom. I had one 'Duc de Rohan' that was not without a bloom for 18 months. Needless to say, gardening in Florida is not like Virginia.

One of these days I hope to make a meeting.

Sincerely,
 Mavis Haywood, CPS

ONLINE NEWS

The ARS Flower Show Book by Eleanor Stubbs is available online for downloading. Get it at: <ftp://members.aol.com/spadherb/showbk.txt>

Anyone who is not receiving notices of when new issues of the R&A Newsletter come out, please send

your e-mail address to <bettyspady@aol.com> and she will add you to the list.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE FALL MEETING

Ray Doggett needs volunteers to help with the Eastern Regional Meeting in Williamsburg on November 5-7. The Eastern Regional will take the place of our regular Fall Meeting. Contact Ray at 804-642-9190 or write him at 8106 Terrapin Cove Rd., Gloucester Point, VA 23062 if you can help out.

A SELECTION OF RHODODENDRON SPECIES FROM VIRGINIA, KENTUCKY AND WEST VIRGINIA

This is taken from a talk by Parker Lewis Little at the Middle Atlantic Species Study Group Meeting at the Chamberlin Hotel on November 22, 1998. [Ed.]

Parker Lewis Little enjoys seeking out new native azaleas, rhododendrons and hollies. He brought some beautiful native azalea sprays to the Spring Meeting in Lewisburg, WV, in the spring of 1996 and won many ribbons. He has been exploring White Rock Mountain in Monroe County, West Virginia, for a number of years, but has also done some exploration of other areas. Below are some of the exceptional plants he has found.

Virginia

Rhododendron atlanticum

May 7	Super Truss	21 flowers in truss	Henrico County
May 7	White Spice	very large corolla, extremely fragrant	Henrico County

Rhododendron perichlymenoides

April 20	Pink Spider	very numerous corolla lobes	Hanover County
April 24	Fancy Purple	typical corolla	Hanover County
May 5	Giant Shell	very large corolla 64 flowers in truss (possibly <i>atlanticum</i> cross)	Hanover County

Rhododendron catawbiense, from an isolated relic population near James River State Park, 400 ft elevation

May 4	Fripled translucent form		Buckingham County
May 4	Translucent Shell		Buckingham County
May 9	Purple Trumpet Form	a very large trumpet form	Buckingham County

Kentucky

Rhododendron cumberlandense from an isolated relic population at 1,500 ft elevation

June 3 and October 15	Red Glow		Knox County
June 20	Late Red Trumpet Form	similar to <i>R. prunifolium</i>	Knox County
May 30	Salmon Glow		Knox County
May 25	Orange Pink		Knox County

West Virginia, Greenbrier County

Rhododendrons of White Rock Mountain

White Rock Mountain is only six miles long and rises to 3,140 feet high. Rhododendrons are somewhat isolated by dry shale barrens to the east of the mountain, a water gap to the north, a karst plateau to the west and southwest and a valley to the south. Isolation may be the cause for the unusual corolla forms.

Rhododendron maximum on White Rock Mountain

July 13	Mountain Purple	typical corolla form	2,300 feet
July 10	Giant Shell	unusually wide corolla (2 1/3 ")	2,400 feet
July 10	Pink Butterfly	corolla lobes widely separated	2,400 feet
July 10	Superior Giant	very wide corolla	2,400 feet
June 30	Enchanting Shells	very wide corolla	2,450 feet
July 1	Mountain Butterfly*	2 1/4 " corolla	2,400 feet

Rhododendron maximum occurs up to 2,700 feet.

* 'Mountain Butterfly' corolla lobes are lavender-pink, narrow, twisted, widely separated, and elongated, with upcurved edges.

Rhododendron calendulaceum on White Rock Mountain

Low elevation yellow forms:

May 31	Gold Giant	2 1/4" wide corolla	2,200 feet
May 23	Salmon Blush		2,200 feet
May 28	Mountain Gold	corolla has transparent areas	2,400 feet
June 15	Frippy Wonder	bi-color	2,400 feet
May 28	Mountain Melody		2,400 feet
May 28	Mountain Passion		2,450 feet

Rhododendron calendulaceum on White Rock Mountain

May 25	Fiery Star		2,450 feet
May 25	Pink Gold		2,450 feet
May 15	Frippy Giant	Corolla 2 1/2" wide	2,660 feet
May 24	Mountain Giant	Corolla 3" wide (33% larger than the key maximum of 2" across)	
May 20	Enchanting Eve		2,800 feet
May 15-June 3	Wavy Pink	Probably a natural hybrid with <i>R. periclymenoides</i>	2,900 feet
May 15	Orange Ridge		2,850 feet
May 24	Fox Fire		2,900 feet

'Mountain Gold', 'Mountain Passion', and 'Enchanting Eve' have won blue ribbons in the MACARS Flower Show.

From May 10 to June 15 *Rhododendron calendulaceum* can be found in bloom and occurs up to 3,140 feet.

From May 1 to 15 *Rhododendron prinophyllum* can be found in bloom and occurs down to 2,800 feet.

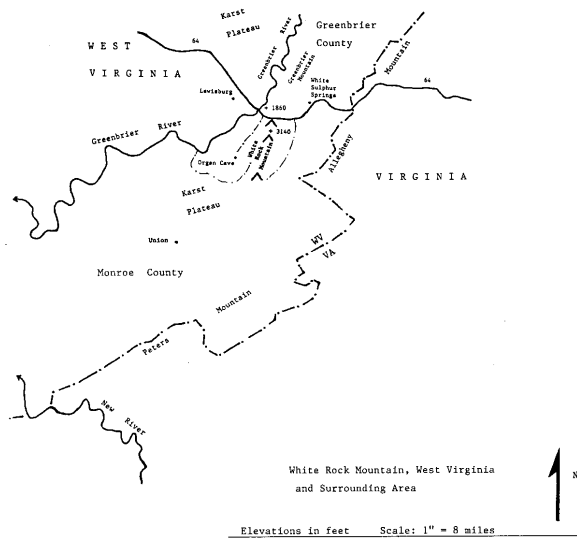
May 15 *Rhododendron periclymenoides* is only at 2,900 feet. Three azalea species occur at 2,900 feet.

LOCKED FLOWERS OR LOCKED BUDS ON AZALEAS AND RHODODENDRONS

by Bill Bedwell.

[A discussion took place among several of us about this problem which has been more noticeable in recent years. I had noticed it on a few different plants for several years. My plants had either been recently planted, were in a dry spot, or had other root damage as a result of hard cutting back. The problem also turned up at the Norfolk Botanical Garden and I was asked about it. There was some concern it might be another fungus disease. Bill sent me the following e-mail telling of his experience with it. Ed.]

I do not recall ever reading about this, but it is my term for a phenomenon that I noticed years ago on plants that had only been in the ground for a few years. The flowers start to open and then appear to be locked in the partly unfolded position, perhaps with a few open flowers in a truss. I noticed that when I watered them, they often resumed the opening



White Rock Mountain in West Virginia

process, unless they had gotten petal blight while suspended in the partly open stage.

As a former rose enthusiast, I thought initially that it might be thrips, which cause that problem in roses. But then I noticed that it mostly occurs in dry periods on plants that have not had four or five years to become fully established. The only plants affected this year were those planted in the last several years—big plants that I moved. The drought never got severe but it was bad enough to bother these plants.

NOTES FROM THE WEEKLY NMPRO

* 10% of the world's tree species are threatened with extinction, according to a report by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and World Wildlife Fund. According to the report, 259 species are in the

U.S., including 2 species of oak in Texas, a yew in Fla., a cedar in Ga. and 27 Hawaiian species. The U.S. ranked 12th of all nations with threatened trees.

* Botanists John and William Bartram will receive recognition for their work in establishing the oldest existing botanical garden in the U.S. when a commemorative stamp is issued this week in Philadelphia. John Bartram (1699-1777), with the help of son William (1739-1823), introduced about 200 native American plants and propagated innumerable natives and exotics. The stamp features a reproduction of a hand-colored engraving of *Franklinia alatamaha* by William Bartram.

* The Japanese cedar longhorn beetle has been found in a new wood product, northern white cedar posts. Damage from the pest, *Callidiellum rufipenne*, was found this spring in cedar posts at a garden center in Stamford, Conn., where the beetle previously had been found infesting live arborvitae trees. This was the first time the beetle had been found in cedar posts and represents a potential new method of spread.

* Hoping to stop the Asian longhorn beetle from spreading, N.Y. officials created a 7 1/2 —sq.-mile quarantine area around Bayside, Long Island, where more than 150 infested trees were discovered 2 months ago. Newsday reported that the Dept. of Ag. and Markets also expanded 2 other quarantine areas set up in 1996, after thousands of infected trees had to be destroyed in Brooklyn, Queens and on Long Island. Under the quarantine, wood taken from trees for any use must be inspected by state or federal inspectors before it can be moved out of the affected areas.

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 Ray Brush, Treasurer, PO Box 266, Madison VA 22727.

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
Mid-Atlantic Rhododendron News and Notes
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Hampton, VA 23669
