

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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Rhododendron Society

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

Oct. 17–18, 2003 Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, Bristol, VA
Apr. 30–May 2, 2004 Holiday Inn Express, Kilmarnock, 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>

GET READY FOR FALL MEETING 2003 IN BRISTOL, VA

by Jeanne Hammer

Mark your calendars for the October 17–19 fall meeting. Our headquarters will be the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites Convention Center, just north of Bristol, VA (exit 7 on I-81), with more meeting rooms than you can shake a stick at and reasonable lodging rates. There should be plenty of fall color and wonderful mountain views. Be sure to bring your hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes (and perhaps a walking stick), because on Saturday, Oct. 18, we will explore some of Grayson Highlands State Park, which is nestled into the adjacent Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area. The Mt. Rogers Area is the third jewel of the southern Appalachians, along with the Shenandoah National Park and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the Grayson Highlands State Park shares many of their charms.

Our fall meeting will start on Friday evening, Oct. 17, with talks by two M.A.C. members. Jim Brant, will describe a M.A.C.-sponsored project to document the diversity of the native azaleas of Gregory Bald. Parker Little will give a slide talk about the unusual forms of the native azaleas he studied on White Rock Mountain. (See Parker's article in the Summer 2002 issue of the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society*.)

On Saturday, after we arrive at Grayson Highlands State Park, one of the park rangers will give us an overview of the flora and natural history of the area, and we will eat a box lunch at the picnic shelter before setting out on a hike. We can choose from three hikes that all begin at Massie Gap in the Grayson Highlands Park. One option is the auspiciously named "Rhododendron Trail" (for the *R.*

catawbiense that grows in the area). This trail passes by Sullivan's Swamp (a bog or "seepage wetland" hosting a biodiversity of 26 species) and offers wonderful panoramic views from the meadows of Wilburn Ridge, kept open by the grazing of feral ponies. The "Cabin Creek Trail" features numerous waterfalls and cascades and some examples of big-tooth aspen at the southernmost limit of its range. The short but steep "Big Pinnacle Trail" offers 360 degree views of the Virginia Highlands, at the park's highest point (5,048 ft.) and passes through stands of *R. maximum*.

Our Saturday banquet speaker will be Joe Schild of Hixson, Tennessee, who is past-president of the Azalea Society of America and founding president of the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. He will talk and show slides about his experiences leading plant explorations in the southern Appalachians.

With the abundant rainfall this spring, we should all have some outstanding foliage this year on our rhodies. So, don't forget to bring cuttings of your most handsome examples for the fall foliage show and compete for those ribbons! Last but not least, the fall meeting will include a book sale, plant auction, and the annual and ever popular plants for members (P4M) sale. We will have M.A.C. past-President Frank Pelurie to thank for this year's desirable selections, which will include named deciduous azaleas, hybrid rhododendrons, and *Kalmia* cultivars.

DISTRICT 9 MEETING IN ANNAPOLIS

One hundred people (43 from MAC) attended the District Meeting in Annapolis April 24–27 at the Country Inn Suites. Harry Wise and Frank Pelurie started out Thursday evening with a humorous

presentation on propagation.

Friday two busloads of us visited the U.S.



Barbara Bullock telling group about the azalea collection. Photo by S. McDonald.

National Arboretum where we had expertly conducted tours of several areas, most notably the azalea garden and Asian Valley. The season was late so we saw the Kurume azaleas instead of later ones. The large dogwoods were beautiful in full bloom. Asian Valley was fascinating with many unusual plants including the dove tree in bloom. We also saw the Bonsai and Penjing Collection, herb garden, and Gotelli Collection. We had an excellent box lunch with exceptionally good herb bread. After visiting the various collections we stopped at FONAs Annual Plant Sale and had fun choosing unusual plants. Even the bus driver got carried away



Bill Bedwell at the National Arboretum. Photo by S. McDonald.

and bought some plants. The rains held off until we got on the bus to return to the motel.

Friday evening George McLellan gave his program on Castles, Gardens, and Rhododendrons in Scotland. Then we enjoyed a huge plant sale the

PVC had put together.

The Flower Show was open in the lower lobby.



Touring private gardens. Photo by S. McDonald.

Saturday we toured the Maggie West Garden, Carol Segree Garden and Bob and Rosa McWhorter Garden, as well as Londontown Gardens. These gardens were all lovely and different, but it was a little early for some of them and the rains came down during some parts of the tour. The famous tree peonies were not yet in bloom at Londontown, but we did attend a plant sale there and were also able to go through the historic John Brown house.

Saturday evening we boarded buses to go to Annie's at Kent Island where most of us had a wonderful seafood dinner. Scott Vergara, formerly



Touring the herb garden at the USNA. Photo by W. Przypek.

at the ARS Species Foundation, gave a talk on *Rhododendron* species. MAC gave out some awards after the dinner. (See below.)

Thanks to the core PVC workers and helpers who put on such a good meeting.

MAC held its business meeting and election of officers on Sunday morning. Officers and directors

elected were:

President Jeanne Hammer
Vice President Sybil Przypek
Secretary Joanne Ortiz
Treasurer Debby Sauer

Directors for term expiring in 2006:

William Bedwell

Dr. William Constable

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D.

NEW MAC AWARDS by Kenneth McDonald, Jr.

The MAC Honors Committee and Board of Directors have established with ARS policies two new awards to further recognize long time members who may have once received an ARS Bronze Medal Award. Quite often these members continue active service with additional contributions of time, effort and or resources which may not qualify for Silver or Gold Medals from the ARS.

These awards are Award of Merit to recognize significant contributions to the chapter's growth and operation and Distinguished Service Citation to recognize exemplary service to the chapter over time and in many capacities.

These awards were first presented at the Spring District 9 Meeting in Annapolis.

AWARDS AT DISTRICT MEETING

MAC gave our several awards at the District Meeting. in Annapolis, Maryland, April 26, 2003.

Donald W. Hyatt received the Bronze Medal Award in recognition of his many contributions of



Don Hyatt receiving the Bronze Medal from Ken McDonald. Photo by S. McDonald.

time and effort to our chapter.

Don has written articles for the *ARS Journal*,

developed his own Web site for native azaleas and a prototype for our chapter. He has given talks to our chapter and at our regional meeting in Williamsburg. He has supplied table favors, auction plants, and participated in panel discussions. He has been an active member and host for our Species Study Group and has participated in several of the Species Study Group trips.

For these things and his overall willingness to help when needed, we present with sincere appreciation this bronze medal, our chapter's highest honor.

David Lay received the Distinguished Service Citation, a new award.

He received our chapter's highest honor, the ARS Bronze Medal in 1988. He was chapter president 1985 to 1987. He deserves our great respect and appreciation for all that he has done for and contributed to our chapter.

He has for many years run the Plants for Members program as a contributor, propagator and grower, and was chairman of the chapter's huge plant sale at the 1988

Convention.

He has chaired several meetings at Windmill Point and one at Fort Monroe. He is always active and willing to help out or lend advice.



David Lay with his Distinguished Service Citation. Photo by W. Przypek.

For his exemplary service to our chapter over time and in many capacities we present this Distinguished Service Citation.

Jeanne M. Hammer received the Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of excellent work as chapter vice-president in helping to arrange the MAC 50th Anniversary Meeting at the Mimslyn Inn, Luray, Virginia, on May 3, 4, and 5, 2002.

Working with Judy and John Tole and many others you helped put together the Anniversary Meeting and program. You searched the library archives and visited Gladys Wheeldon and others to obtain old photos and memorabilia of the chapter's 50 year life.

We are grateful for your efforts that made this such a memorable occasion and hereby recognize you with this Certificate of Appreciation at this District Meeting.



Jeanne Hammer receiving the Certificate of Appreciations and holding a flashlight so that Ken McDonald could read it. Photo by S. McDonald.

Judith S. & John R. Tole received the Certificate of Appreciation in absentia in recognition of your chairing and arranging the MAC 50th Anniversary Meeting at the Mimslyn Inn, Luray, Virginia, on May 3, 4, and 5, 2002.

This encompassed much more planning and work than a normal meeting and it went off smoothly. Of special note were Judy's painted pottery tiles and the PowerPoint presentation of the chapter's history by John.

We are grateful for your taking on and completing what became a large project. For your willingness to participate and lead we recognize you with this Certificate of Appreciation at this District Meeting.

Gladys Jenkins Wheeldon received the Award of Merit in absentia.

She received our chapter's highest honor, the ARS Bronze Medal in 1980. She is our only surviving charter

member. She, with her husband Dr. Thomas Wheeldon, contributed much to the founding, growth, and excellence of the chapter.

She contributed many records of her own as well as of Dr. Wheeldon, Gladsgay Gardens, and of the Society to the University of Virginia Alderman Library. She also contributed photos and memorabilia and financial support for our chapter's 50th Anniversary celebration.

For her ongoing interest in the library and her significant contributions to the chapter's growth and continued operation over 51 years, we recognize her with this commemorative cup, the ARS Award of Merit, and our utmost admiration and respect.

NEWS FROM OARS (OFFICE OF THE ARS): DUES INCREASE

At the ARS Board Meeting in Olympia, several changes were implemented. The half year membership will no longer exist in 2004.

Dues have been raised to \$35 from \$28 for individuals and the family fee was raised to \$40. Your renewals will show these rates when you receive them this fall.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

Our garden this year has been the best ever. We were sure the drought would claim a lot of plants, but we lost only one rhododendron, one holly, and a few perennials so we have been lucky. For the first time all our rhododendrons bloomed well even though they set buds

very late. Strange as it may seem we are now complaining about too much rain. Most of May has been rainy. As I sit writing this on a Wednesday morning the forecast is for rain right through Monday. The growth on all plants and trees is phenomenal, we will be pruning forever. The good side is that we are not dragging hoses or paying large water bills.

The May issue of *The Avant Gardener* discusses the concept of whether or not to feed mature trees and shrubs. Cited is a report of research done by Ohio State University stating that fertilization decreases resistance to diseases and



Jane McKay

insects. Increased nitrogen makes a plant more attractive to pests, decreasing the production of natural defense chemicals. The research also showed that rhododendrons that were fertilized were highly susceptible to *Phytophthora* root rot. The suggestion was to fertilize plants only when newly transplanted and on young plants and using only low nitrogen slow release fertilizer. The conclusion is the organic mulch and their own litter is all that is needed to keep plants fed and healthy.

Another tidbit that may interest you: I needed to purchase some Orthene recently and found it was not available. What was available was Ortho's Bug Be Gone Japanese Beetle Killer.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

John R. Marshall, 1029 Rainbow Dr, Johnson City, TN 37601

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Sharon Collins reports that LuDean Withers is now home after hip replacement surgery and physical therapy and is doing pretty well.

REPORT FROM THE NORTHERN NECK by David Lay

It has been a busy spring here on the western shore of Chesapeake Bay and the rhododendron and azaleas had gloriously abundant bloom that held longer than usual because of the cool weather. The drought last summer and the fall undoubtedly stressed most plants and that often adds greatly to bud set. For the first time we had help from two very hard working Mexicans who spread mulch and edged beds and weeded for four days. Eight to ten foot Trude Websters, Anna Rose Whitney and Cadis were clearly the standouts this year. The only real downside was increased petal blight on azaleas due in part to rains in May. Rose Greeley and white and pale pink Glenn Dales seemed to be particularly hard hit. I didn't spray with Bayleton as we had been away before the rains came. Besides I think Bayleton is one of those chemicals you want to be around as little as possible. I have heard that there is a granular fungicide in development that will be equally effective. Keep tuned.

We had many more visitors than in



David Lay.

past years, and a crew of five from Atlanta spent two days filming for the HGTV show, *A Gardener's Diary*. It has aired for eight years Saturday afternoon, a wretched time slot as most serious gardeners are outside working and not "couch potato" in front of the tube at that hour. Erica Glasener, who does the interviews and conversational strolls through the garden, is charming and very knowledgeable. She has a graduate degree in horticulture and has been visiting gardens on the East and West coasts for years. HGTV seemed to focus on our deer fences, Trude Webster, the Japanese maples and Mary Lloyd's extensive perennial beds between the house and river. They told us their program is especially popular in Japan. The Lay garden will be presented within a year and we will get some prints of it. Perhaps we can show it at the chapter meeting in Kilmarnock next spring.

The week after HGTV we were part of a fund-raising tour for the Haven, which provides shelter and services for battered individuals in the Northern Neck. Over a two-day period they raised \$10,000 and more than 750 people tramped through the garden wearing down what passes for lawn grass and asking an enormous variety of questions--some very savvy but many off the wall. For example; why is that dogwood yellow? Answer: Because it is variegated. What is that obscene looking plant? Answer: A *Japanese arisaema* or a Jack-in-the-pulpit. Is it true Chinese stir-fry leaf gall? Answer: Perhaps, but I wouldn't want to try it!



Best in Show, yak x metternichii.

ASIAN PLANTS FOR

VIRGINIA GARDENS, a seminar, will be held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond Friday, June 27 or Saturday, June 28. Fee is \$30 for non-members. See www.lewisginter.org or call for more information about this **Branching Out** event.



Flower Show. Photo by W. Pryzpek.

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 \$35 per year.

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

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