

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXVII No.3

September 2001

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

Nov 2-4, 2001	Donaldson Brown Conference Center, Blacksburg, VA
May 3-5, 2002	The Mimslyn, Luray, VA , Our Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration
Oct 2002	Holiday Inn, Bluefield, WV

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

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

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

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

FALL MEETING 2001 by Sandra McDonald

Frank Pelurie is planning a good meeting for us
November 2 to 4, 2001, at the Donaldson Brown



Donaldson Brown Hotel & Conference Center at VPI.

Conference Center at VPI in Blacksburg, Virginia. Some of the highlights are a P4M (Plants for Members) sale of twenty selected evergreen azalea cultivars which have been growing at Paul James' place and therefore hardy, and some

rhododendrons and other things. Some interesting auction plants have also been mentioned. David Lay will be donating old copies of *Horticulture Magazine* from the 1950s and 60s. Ben Morrison was editor for part of this time. He also has some old ARS Quarterlies.

Talks will include a Friday night talk and slide show by Bill Bedwell of West Coast gardens he visited at the Convention. On Saturday Dr. Erik Nilsen will talk about vireyas and breeding and Harry Wise and Frank Pelurie will do a propagation workshop. George McLellan has some slides to show of the new species *R. eastmanii*.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

In central Virginia, May, June, and most of July were dry, but July 29th brought a wonderful rainy day leaving behind just under four inches of much needed rain. Almost overnight everything perked up; even the lawn looked good. The second week of August brought a decent rain, but now nearing the end of the month we are dry again.

This year in our garden the first plants to show the effect of drought have been the deciduous azaleas, some drooping so severely I thought we had lost them.

The early *Rhododendron arborescens* and *R. arborescens* × *R. prunifolium* hybrids had smaller than usual flowers that dried up fairly rapidly. The *R. prunifolium* and later blooming *R. arborescens*



coming into bloom early to mid August have normal size and length of bloom.

I've noticed quite a bit of lace bug damage to the azaleas on top of the hill in front of the house. Of course this also happened last year so I should have sprayed earlier, but I have been trying to cut down on the use of pesticides. But sometimes I have to give in and spray. We were lucky this year with petal blight. We had very little which was fortunate since again I did not spray. I'm not sure whether I'm trying to be environmentally friendly or am I just lazy — a little of both I suspect. Another “benefit” of not spraying is that Wally and I are covered in chigger bites.

Another problem we have is stem borer. At this time of the season you will notice stem borers make the new growth wilted. You will also see a brownish area approximately a half inch long on the stem with a few pin holes. Cut that growth off, and you will find the borer in the stem. I usually walk around the garden several times each week clipping off these stems and destroying the borer. If unchecked next year the borer will go down the stem and destroy the branch and possibly the plant.

Most of the color in the garden now is supplied by the variegated foliage of hostas and pulmonarias and by annual impatiens, begonias, lantanas, caladiums and coleus. Of these, coleus seems to be most drought and tree root tolerant. Next year I plan to up the number of coleus I plant and use fewer impatiens which also need more fertilizer.

Recently while doing some research for the New York Chapter's 50th Anniversary (2001) I came across the following in the minutes of the 1965 Annual Meeting of the ARS held in New York. (Vol 19 No.3)

“The following resolution was offered by the members of the Middle Atlantic Chapter, “The people of Virginia were most happy and pleased with the meeting and were pleased that the damn Yankees could do so well.” (My chuckle of the day.)

This year some phone area code numbers are changing. Part of 804 in central Virginia will change to 434 and in southwest Virginia some will change from 540 to 276. **Since you will be receiving renewal requests shortly please circle your area code if it has changed when you mail in your renewal. If you are a life member or paid up for 2002 with an area**

code change, please call me at 434-589-9630 or drop me a note at 3 Cobbs Ct, Palmyra, Va 22963.

BOOKS

Below is a listing of books that MAC Book Chairman, Therese Brents has and will be bringing to the meeting.

All About Azaleas, Camellias, and Rhododendrons
Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Camellias
American Horticulture Society Flower Finder
Bernard E. Harkness Seedlist Handbook, Second Edition
Best of Fine Gardening: Perennials
Best of Fine Gardening: Shrubs and Trees
Better Homes and Gardens Step-By-Step Landscaping
Better Homes and Gardens Step-By-Step Successful Gardening: Shade Gardens
The Book of Rhododendrons
Botanical Latin: Fourth Edition
Burpee American Gardening Series: Water Gardening
Camellias
Camellias
Christopher Lloyd's Garden Flowers
Classic Roses
Clematis: The Genus
Coincide: The Orton System of Pest Management
Collecting, Processing and Germinating Seeds of Wildland Plants
Color In Your Garden
Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses
Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases
Complete Book of Shrubs
Contribution Toward Standardization of Color Names in Horticulture
Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons
Creative Propagation: A Grower's Guide
Daylilies For The Garden
Dead Snails Leave No Trails
Deer Proofing Your Yard and Garden
Dictionary of Plant Names
Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs
Diseases of Trees and Shrubs
Edinburgh Journal Of Botany, Volume 47, No. 2
Evening Gardens
Explorer's Garden, The
Foliage Garden
Fragrant Gardens
The Garden in Autumn
Garden Lighting
Gardening in the Shade
Gardening Success With Difficult Soils
Gardening With Native Plants of the South
Gardening With Native Wild Flowers
Growing Bulbs: The Complete Practical Guide
Growing Plants From Seed
Hardy Trees and Shrubs
Hemerocallis: The Daylily
Hollies
Horticulture in a Southern Garden

Hosta Book, The, Second Edition
 How To Identify Flowering Plant Families
 How To Identify Rhododendron and Azalea Problems
 Illustrated Encyclopedia of Orchids, The
 Illustrated Encyclopedia of Roses, The
 Kalmia: Mountain Laurel and Related Species
 Lavender: The Grower's Guide
 Lilies: A Guide for Growers and Collectors
 Magnolias: A Gardener's Guide
 Malcolm Hillier's Color Garden
 Native Shrubs and Woody Vines of the Southeast
 Natural Enemies Handbook
 Natural History of Medicinal Plants
 New Flowers
 Ortho Home Gardener's Problem Solver
 Outwitting Deer
 Peonies
 Perennial Combinations
 Photographing Plants and Gardens
 Plants For Problem Places
 Plants For the Future: A Gardener's Wishbook
 Plants For Water Gardens
 Plants That Merit Attention Vol. II: Shrubs
 Plants That Merit Attention Vol. I: Trees
 Poppies
 Random House Bulbs
 Random House Perennials, Vol. 2 Late
 Random House Book Of Shrubs
 Rhododendron Hybrids, Third Edition 2000
 Rhododendron Species Volume II: Elepidotes
 Rhododendron Species Volume III: Elepidotes Continued
 Rhododendron Species Volume IV: Azaleas
 Rhododendrons
 Rhododendrons in America
 Rhododendrons in the Landscape
 Rock Garden Plants: A Color Encyclopedia
 Rock Gardening
 Sedum
 Simple Fountains For Indoors and Outdoors
 The Smaller Rhododendrons
 Southern Living 1995 Garden Annual
 Success With Rhododendrons and Azaleas
 Successful Southern Gardening
 Taylor's Guide to Shrubs
 Taylor's Guide to Water-Saving Gardening
 Time-Tested Plants
 Tough Plants For Tough Places
 Trilliums
 Vireyas: A Practical Gardening Guide
 Water Features For Small Gardens
 Water Gardening: Water Lilies and Lotuses
 Water Gardening In Containers
 Water in the Garden
 Waterscaping
 Wild Orchids Across North America
 World of Magnolias
 Year in Trees: Superb Woody Plants for Four-Season Gardens

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

David Bell,
 Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Steve & Rae Hinderliter,
 Poquoson, VA 23663
 J. R. Lockerman, Jr., ,
 Penhook, VA 24137
 Evelyn Parker,
 23662
 Linda Reynolds,
 VA 23225
Change of address:
 Michael Breiding,
 Morgantown, WV 26505

RHODODENDRON AND AZALEA BOOK COLLECTION AT U.VA.

Jeanne Hammer submitted this list of books added to the collection at the University of Virginia Library.

Books added in fiscal year 2000-01:

Barrett, Clarence. *History of the Rhododendron Species Foundation: genesis of a botanical garden*, Eugene, Oregon, 1994.
 SB413 .R47 B28 1994

Berry, Paul E., Holst, Bruce K., and Yatskievych, Kay [volume editors]; Julian A. Steyermark, Julian A., Berry, Paul E., and Holst, Bruce K. [general editors]. *Flora of the Venezuelan Guayana*, St. Louis: Missouri Botanical Garden; Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1995-

Chamberlain, David [et. al.]. *The genus Rhododendron: it's [sic] classification & Synonymy*, Edinburgh: Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, 1996.
 QK495 .E68 G46 1996

Cox, Kenneth N. E. (Kenneth Nicolas Evan), 1964-. *Rhododendrons: a care manual*, San Diego, CA: Laurel Glen Pub., 1998.
 SB413 .R47 C6235 1998

Cox, Kenneth N. E., *Rhododendron & azaleas*, London: Hamlyn, 1998.
 SB413 .R47 C69 1998

Dunmire, John R., McCausland, Jim, and the editors of Sunset Books. *Azaleas rhododendrons, and camellias*, 2nd ed., Menlo Park, California:

Sunset Books, 1999.
SB413 .R47 A9 1999

Francis, Richard. *Growing rhododendrons*, New South Wales: Kangaroo Press, 1997.
SB413 .R47 F72 1997

Guomei, Feng, editor. *Rhododendrons of China*, Beijing, China: Science Press, 1988.
SB413 .R47 R535 1988

Hawthorne, Linden [photography by Peter Anderson]. *Rhododendrons*, London; New York, NY: Lorenz Books, 1999.
SB413 .R47 H39 1999

Luteyn, James L. *Ericaceae the superior-ovaryed genera : Monotropoideae, Pyroloideae, Rhododendroideae, and Vaccinioideae P.P. Part 2*, New York: Published for Organization for Flora Neotropica by the New York Botanical Garden, 1995.
QK495 .E68 E75 1995

NEWS OF MEMBERS AND THE DISTRICT

Merle and Maggie Aitken's garden was featured with an extensive writeup in the May 14th edition of the *Charleston Daily Mail*. There were many beautiful pictures of azaleas blooming in the garden and Merle and Maggie were in a couple of the photos. Merle tried to get a plug in for MAC ARS, but it became “a regional rhododendron society” in print.

On September 16, the **Mason-Dixon Chapter** is having a special plant auction at the home of Helen and Gilbert Myers, 323 North Springdale Road, Westminster, Maryland. The auction will be plants from the late Paul Litzau and some Van Veen plants.

ASIAN BEETLES IN RICHMOND AREA

The *Richmond Times Dispatch* reported in late June that the Asian ambrosia beetle (*Xylosandrus crassiusculus*) had been found in the garden of a Richmond Master Gardener. Many trees must be cut down as a result. The Asian beetle is hasn't been found so far north before although it was been found in Georgia, North Carolina, Louisiana, and east Texas. The

beetle generally attacks fruit-bearing trees or trees that have been brought in from other countries, but this time they attacked dogwoods, redbuds, poplars, maples and hollies.

The beetle leaves up to 1 ½ inch spaghetti-like strands of sawdust protruding from the trees and shrubs in which it bores. After boring into the tree, the beetle leaves an ambrosial fungus on which they feed, which clogs the tree's water-conducting tissue killing the tree quickly.

More information can about this pest can be



Figure 1. Infested branch showing "toothpick" spines at beetle entry sites.

found at the following sites:

<http://www.ento.vt.edu/Facilities/OnCampus/IDLab/NewPests/AsianAmbrosiaBeetle/aab.html>

<http://www.ceris.purdue.edu/napis/states/mo/news/aabeetle-0008.html>

<http://www.aces.edu/departments/ipm/ambrosia.htm>

<http://www.bugwood.caes.uga.edu/factsheets/99-010.html>

This is a serious pest and if found should be reported to your local extension agent.

MAC AUGUST BOARD MEETING

Your Board met in Charlottesville on August 18th to review future meeting plans for the next two years, including our 50th Anniversary celebration next May 3–5 in Luray. We also worked on a policies of the board document to guide the board members and reviewed the proposed budget for our next fiscal year. The new officers are President, Frank Pelurie; Vice President, Jeanne Hammer; Secretary, Joan



Treasurer Debby Sauer, President Frank Pelurie, and Past President Alton Hall. Photo by Sandra McDonald

Ortiz; and Treasurer, Debby Sauer.

HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL 25, 2001, ARS BOARD MEETING extracted from Jean



Judy and John Tole. Judy is chairman of the May 2002 Spring Meeting. Photo by Sandra McDonald.

Beaudry's minutes by Sandra McDonald

The March 2001 membership list is available from Executive Director Dee Daneri (11 Pinecrest Dr, Fortuna, CA 95540-9203) for \$3 to cover mailing cost for members who wish to have one and did not receive one as a result of being a committee chairman, director or officer of ARS.

ARS membership was 5171 on April 25.

The Executive Director has been pursuing grants, but needs a development committee to help. As a result of one grant Editor Sonja Nelson has new equipment that will enable her

to do more *Journal* preparation in house.

Ed Reiley gave a report on District Director recommendations for use of the Swisher Bequest money. There was no consensus, and he recommended that the Board set some policies to handle this and report back at the November Board meeting. The policies should cover the management of the Endowment Fund (Swisher or combined), the establishment of criteria for expenditure of earnings from the (Swisher or combined) Endowment Fund. It was recommended that a five member committee be appointed by the President. A motion was approved to move the Swisher money to the Endowment Fund.

MAC SPECIES STUDY GROUP

by Sandra McDonald

Twelve members of the MAC Species Study Group met on Saturday, August 25, at the home of Ken and Sandra McDonald in Hampton. George McLellan had new slides of *Rhododendron eastmanii* from his trip to South Carolina this spring. Several members showed slides of native species taken this spring and summer on a trip to the mountains of Georgia and North Carolina. Don Hyatt brought a beautiful watercolor painting he painted of *R. prunifolium*. If you would like a closer look at his painting, he has a photo of it



Species Study Group meeting. Front, left to right: George McLellan, Ken McDonald; back, Don Hyatt, Sybil Przypek, Debby Sauer, Mike Andruczyk; standing Jim Brant. Photo by Walter Przypek.

posted on his Web site:

WORKING WITH MY DISSECTUM MAPLE by Bill Bedwell

A technique I have used on the dissectum form of Japanese maples to force them to gain some height is to cut the uppermost branch back



Don Hyatt holding his watercolor painting of *R. prunifolium*. Photo by Sandra McDonald

to where the arching sort of levels. (The branches sort of start out from the trunk in a slightly upward direction and then arch and grow mostly in a horizontal manner so I am talking about cutting at a bud near where the arch begins which may be several inches to one side of the short trunk.). I have also put in a stake and loosely fastened one or more upward and arching branches to grow more upright before letting them resume their natural growth habit. I have sort of felt my way along with the maples, but it is working. I have never read any instructions on this, but some of the maple books may have suggestions.

When I planted 'Waterfall' about twenty years ago, I did not provide enough space for it to spread out so I started pruning back top branches to an upward arching shoot and that would send it vigor to grow more strongly in a more upright position, while retaining the natural character. Then next winter I pruned it again, selecting a branch angled to curve in a counter-clockwise direction. Of course clockwise or counter clockwise makes no difference, but all of the upward branches must be trained to spiral in the same curving direction. Result has been a spiral

of branches going gradually up and it may soon get over my head. In the meantime this has allowed the lower branches to be maintained shorter without the upper branches shading them too much. In pruning back the side branches, I have tried not to discourage the "waterfall effect" of that variety. I don't know how long this will last before I have to re-route the paths but it has worked so far.

When I toured the Jane Platt garden in Portland, Oregon years ago, I noticed a large 'Waterfall' that was planted on a bank at the back of the garden and allowed to fully develop the "waterfall" effect. That was the best way to position that variety in the landscape so that the natural waterfall effect of its growth could be most effective. I did not check, but there may have been more than one plant originally that grew together to form a big "waterfall."

Waterfall is a beautiful medium green variety that looks ferny and cool in the spring and summer and turns a beautiful butter yellow in the fall. It is actually prettier, in my opinion, than the reddish varieties — I have 'Ever Red' (*Nigrum*) and 'Garnet' — but they are lovely in spring and fall. "Waterfall" was a variety selected in Maryland and grows well here. The green and light green dissectum maples, in my opinion, always fit into any landscape, while the reds must have the right location to really show off. For example, the reds don't offer much contrast to a pine needle mulch and the effect is pretty dull. The reds also get dull in the summer no matter how much they retain some color. I now have two other green varieties that I am getting started, but these are lighter green and much slower growing and I wonder if I will live long enough for them to really be showy, but only the young plants fit my budget. I wish I had bought more of them years ago.

Pruning or training a dissectum Japanese maple has had an unexpected effect on me. It has required me to get to know the plant more intimately than many other plants. I have to study its growth and try to figure out what and where to prune so that I don't destroy the natural beauty. It has made me realize that this may be part of the satisfaction of training a bonsai specimen. You develop a special intimate relationship with the individual plant. It is different from pruning back a rose bush or overgrown azalea because the effects of your pruning and training lasts for years. It helps create and mold the individual character of that individual plant.

The biggest mistake that most of us make when planting the slow-growing dissectum form of *Acer palmatum* is not selecting a landscape site that can be altered over the years to allow them to grow wider by gradually removing other plants around them. An old plant that has been allowed to spread out can be really gorgeous, but not many of us can afford \$10,000 or more to buy a full grown specimen. We plant the young ones in a cramped area where they are lovely for about ten years before they outgrow it. It is best to refer to some of the maple books to try to find out how an individual variety grows and what growth habit it may have. The trouble is so many of the varieties have not been grown long enough to find this out.

So my advice to younger gardeners is to go ahead and try some anyway and form your own intimate relationship with them. But don't admit that to anyone or they will think you are as nutty as you think I am after reading this.

TIDBITS FROM WEEKLY NMPRO E-MAIL *The following news items are from July and August issues of the electronic newsletter.*

Maybe lucky bamboo isn't so lucky. Asian tiger mosquitoes, known to carry Dengue fever and encephalitis, have been discovered at a Los Angeles wholesale nursery in containers of imported lucky bamboo. The containers held 2-3 inches of water, which facilitated mosquito breeding, according to Los Angeles Times. Lucky bamboo, *Dracaena sanderiana*, has become a popular imported pot plant. All new incoming shipments of the plant will be held at port and inspected. 7/2

Growers who use Bt can increase its effectiveness by paying attention to the time of day the product is applied and noting the pest's life stage, said Julie Henderson, Georgia IPM specialist. Bt remains active longer if applied late in the day, during the evening or on cloudy days. The younger the insect, the more effective Bt is likely to be. Not only are the younger pests more likely to ingest the product, but they are smaller and therefore do less feeding damage to plants before the Bt toxin kills them. jhender@holonet.net. 7/2

Penn State is patenting a new "smart" fertilizer that acts as a phosphorus buffer, holding levels of this element at constant levels in soils and media. This action greatly reduces phosphorus runoff and has also proven beneficial to plants, said co-developer Jonathan Lynch. Plants grown with this fertilizer had greater root growth, leading to improved transplantability, drought tolerance and less stress during shipping. This granulated fertilizer can be used in containers or fields. jpl4@psu.edu 7/17

Northeastern and Midwestern growers who dealt with one of the largest armyworm infestations in decades last month should get ready for another round. Another batch of caterpillars should be ready to hatch late this month or in early August. Earlier this year, the pest defoliated fields from Maine to Missouri. Source: ABC News. 7/24

APHIS declared an additional 28 counties in IL, IN, MI, OH, WV and WI infested by gypsy moth. The entire state of Michigan is now regulated for the insect. The pest attacks more than 500 species of trees and shrubs. As a result of this interim rule, the interstate movement of certain material will be restricted, such as *Malus*, *Populus*, *Tilia*, *Betula*, *Picea*, *Quercus*, *Pinus*, and *Salix*. (301) 734-8247; <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> 8/7

Riverside County, Calif., officials banned sewage sludge as fertilizer. Orange County Sanitation District had been sending more than 1/3rd of its biosolids to Riverside County. About 40% of biosolids are used as fertilizer throughout the U.S. While the U.S. EPA supports the use of biosolids, it asked the Nat'l. Academy of Sciences to review potential health risks. (909) 955-1000; <http://www.co.riverside.ca.us> 8/14

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 \$28 per year.

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

Sandra McDonald, Ph.D., Editor
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Hampton, VA 23669