

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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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>

FALL MEETING '99 INSERT INSIDE

This is our big one! As most of you have heard MAC is hosting the ARS Eastern Regional Meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, November 5 - 7, 1999. **This meeting will take the place of our regular Fall Meeting.**

Be sure to come and give your support and volunteer your help to make this meeting a resounding success. To volunteer call Ray Doggett at 804-642-9190. There are many slots open in which you can volunteer an hour or two of help.

There will not be a separate mailing for the meeting. The meeting announcement is enclosed with this newsletter. There was also one in the summer issue of the *Journal*.

Look over the excellent program. Do notice that there is a Foliage Contest and a Photo Contest so bring your best rhododendron or azalea foliage to show off and check through those nice slides and photos you have of rhododendrons and azaleas. Sharon Collins will again be in charge of the Foliage Show.

Doug Jolley is in charge of the photo contest. Get your reservations in and don't forget to check the boxes for Photo Contest or Foliage Contest if you want instructions. The categories for the Photo Contest are:

- Closeup of truss or spray
- Closeup of foliage
- View or landscape
- Artistic or creative expression

Print sizes are minimum 5" x 7" to a maximum of 11" x 16". Photos must be mounted on a backing and/or matted. (No frames please.) Backing should

not exceed 1/4" in thickness.

Labels will be provided. Two entries per category will be permitted. Please do not enter winning photos from previous ARS contests.

When you send in your registration with the Photo Contest Box checked, you will receive instructions and a post card to reply to Doug Jolley for the number of entries you are planning.

Find those photos now so you will have time to get your enlargements made.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Welcome to new members:

Robert Craddock, Hardy,
VA 24101

Robert Reisweber,
Williamsburg, VA 23185

James Smith,
Fredericksburg, VA 22407

Corrections to February Roster:

Grace Wilson, Millwood, VA 22646

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

The long drought continues to plague much of the nation but in our little patch of central Virginia more than five and one half inches of rain have fallen over a ten day period beginning July 18th. I've taken advantage of the time saved from watering and having the plants in a turgid condition to propagate some rhododendrons, azaleas, *Pieris*

and a few winter hardy camellias. As I wandered around the garden trying to decide which plants to take cuttings from I thought it would be nice to know what the members would like to see at our Plants for Members sale. If you have a 'wish list', as I do, let me or David Lay know, and maybe we can make a few *wishes* come true.



Jane McKay

On the down side, while we were in New York late in June a large branch fell from one of our trees and landed on the fence that surrounds the garden popping open a gate. We arrived home to find two deer, a buck and a doe, munching away. From the amount of plants nibbled we can only assume that they had been at it for several days. The prime delicacy seems to have been daylily buds. Of the dozens of daylilies scattered throughout the garden not one bud was left. Every *Uvularia* both *perfoliata* and *sessilifolia* (native here and almost a groundcover since the garden was fenced) was chewed. Most *Hosta* and nearly all deciduous azaleas were defoliated. The hostas we know from past experience will come back stronger than ever next year. The deciduous azaleas are already sending out new growth, though I doubt they will set buds this year. Surprisingly lilies and *Impatiens* were untouched as were roses, evergreen azaleas and rhododendrons. All in all not too bad, everything will recover.

By the time you read this you will have received your summer issue of the *Journal* containing the registration form for the MAC Eastern Regional Meeting that we are hosting. We hope you are not only planning to attend but will volunteer to help make this a memorable meeting - Give us a call!

FOX IN THE GARDEN by Bill Bedwell

I saw a fox. In my garden. A former neighbor who lived the equivalent of about 1.5 city blocks away used to put out food for some foxes she discovered in the neighborhood, including a white one, but she died last fall and the foxes and stray cats have had to find other food. I hope they have discovered the urban development of voles that populate my garden and lawn.

Bill Saunders who lives about the same distance away as the other neighbor but straight back behind my garden and through the woods said the fox couple had some offspring. Bill used the correct term for fox babies but I can't remember it. I hope

they will curb the growing number of rabbits and voles.

The little critter I saw was quietly walking along about 15 feet away, apparently not expecting a gardener spraying at dusk. The only other exciting thing I saw in the garden while spraying was a three-floret truss on 'Purple Splendor'. Not really exciting, except it was the only thing in bloom, since I have almost exclusively a spring flowering garden.

I almost forgot there actually was something significant in bloom — the beautiful white flowers on *Hosta* 'Royal Standard'. Many years ago I planted two plants of this and they have multiplied to many plants that make a beautiful show in August. This variety seems to be immune to voles, probably because it is cheap and they like only expensive newer varieties. The only other hosta they have not eaten is a wide leaf green species with lavender flowers that I grew from free seeds from a neighbor. Much too cheap for the little pests. It is even seeding itself with no vole destruction. Yes, I hope the foxes enjoy voles! Dusk is a good time to notice textures in the garden. Foliage patterns and differences in color seem to stand out in the late summer dusk. I know dusk is too late to be spraying, but I like working that time of day, just like morning people like early morning. I have not yet succeeded in becoming a morning person, but I hope to so I can better cope with working in the garden in the hot summer. At this point, early morning is still my best time for sleeping. Also, my allergies seem worse in early morning so it seems better to sleep through it!



Bill Bedwell

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.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Austin Kennell is recovering from his heart surgery. He is on quite a few kinds of medication plus a B₁₂ shot. He says he is making a lot of doctors and pharmacists happy! It's great to see that Austin is getting his sense of humor back.

ANOTHER JUNE TRIP FOR THE SPECIES STUDY GROUP by Sandra McDonald

Species Study Group members George McLellan, Jim Brant, Ken and Sandra McDonald, and Don Hyatt and Bill Bedwell went chasing the wild azaleas again. Four of us (George, Jim, Ken and I) started out on Saturday, June 19, 1999, at Grayson Highlands and White Top Mountain in the western part of Virginia.

On Sunday we headed for Roan Mountain on the Tennessee-North Carolina line and started up the trail from Carver's Gap about 10:00 a.m. The bloom and our timing were almost perfect this year for Roan. The *R. catawbiense* was at peak and so was *R. calendulaceum*. Gray's lily was just starting to bloom. We were fortunate to be able to go all the way out on Grassy Ridge this time and the massive field of *R. catawbiense* was magnificent. We ended up that evening in Spruce Pine, North Carolina.

We spent Monday enjoying the Blue Ridge Parkway with lots of *Kalmia*, *R. calendulaceum* and some *R. maximum*. We stopped at several interesting spots and looked at Mt. Mitchell and other mountains and went up to Craggy Gardens. This day was a nice respite from the climbing on Sunday and our climb up Gregory Bald on Tuesday.

Monday night found us in our old familiar motel in Townsend, Tennessee, so we could get an early start up Gregory the next morning. But the best laid plans of mice and men . . . We were up and out to Cades Cove for our early start. However, in spite of our planning ahead and calling the Park Service about what time Parson Branch Road would be open, it was not open when it was supposed to be. Some other people were there also waiting to get through the chained off road. Eventually, we found the Park Service people and one of them was able to unlock the chain and let us in about 7:45 a.m.

We hiked up Gregory from Parson Branch Road

on the Hannah Mountain Trail. It was the first time in about 20 years that I had been up the trail because Parson Branch Road had been closed for a long time due to bridge wash outs, etc. This trail is shorter and a little easier than the Gregory Ridge trail we had to use more recently.

Of course George and Jim were way ahead of us getting to the top, but we had plenty of time when



R. cumberlandense near the Cherochala Skyway. Photo by Sandra McDonald.

we did arrive. The azaleas were in peak bloom. There were other rhododendron people there and even a bug man trying to find new species of insects. He was wearing white and smoking a brown cheroot to try to keep some insects away, but we didn't have any trouble aside from a few little flies.

After we got down from Gregory, we drove out Parson Branch Road (it is one-way) and drove on quite a long ways through some thunderstorms to Franklin, North Carolina.



R. catawbiense in the foreground and mountains in the distance in a scenic view on the Roan hike.

Don Hyatt had to give final exams to his classes while we were climbing Gregory, so he and Bill Bedwell joined George and Jim for a short time a couple of days later, and we never met up with them. Don and Bill climbed Roan and Gregory themselves and had quite an adventure which you

may yet hear about.

Wednesday morning we headed for the new Cherochala Skyway which was a first for us. We were hoping to find a lot of *R. cumberlandense*, a plant we still needed for our slide shows. We certainly did not see much of it along the highway. We saw a bit of *R. calendulaceum*. We stopped to hike up to Hooper Bald. There were some lovely old *R. calendulaceum* along the trail. When we got to the top we just saw a meadow.



After a bit of exploring off in the other direction we found some very nice *R. calendulaceum*. After this short hike, we got back

George McLellan, Jim Brant, and Ken McDonald on Hooper Bald. Photo by Sandra McDonald.



Part of trail between Round Bald and Grassy Ridge. *R. calendulaceum* is in the distance in front of the evergreen trees. Clouds are rolling in from the distance.

on the road and drove to the end of the Skyway. Coming back we saw a few small plants that looked like they might be *R. cumberlandense* up on the cliffs. So we stopped at an overlook and hiked up an old blocked off road and found some very nice *R. cumberlandense*.

We stopped at the Bald River Falls where the Bald River drops into the Tellico River. Magnificent! Finding *R. cumberlandense* and then seeing the falls made a nice ending for our trip.

THE GARDEN by Sandra McDonald

Do you still have a garden after this summer? The

heat and drought set records all over the east coast this summer.

About all most of us could do was try to keep plants watered so they would not die. The mosquitoes seemed extra bad this year in spite of the drought. Whenever I needed to go outside I found I had to wear jeans, a long-sleeved shirt and a bug net over my face. If I didn't do that I would come in with several more mosquito bites after every trip out to turn the water off or on or move the sprinklers around.

We have been watching Hurricane Dennis for days. Yesterday and today the winds were blowing 20 to 45 mph as it sat a good ways off shore. We have only had a small amount of rain with it. Damage here was minimal with only branches and twigs down and some local power outages and street flooding. I think it's over.

MEMORIAL

Dr. Gustav Mehlquist, retired Professor in the Plant Science Department who taught plant breeding, biosystematics, and other horticulture and plant genetics courses at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT, died on August 28, 1999 at the age of 93. He hybridized and named several rhododendron hybrids as well as several other kinds of plants. He spoke to the MAC many years ago at a meeting in Williamsburg. He was very active in ARS and some other plant organizations. He received the ARS Gold Medal.

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.

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