

MID- ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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Rhododendron Society

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 7-12, 1996	National Convention, Oban, Scotland
May 31-June 2, 1996	Brier Inn, Lewisburg, WV
(Be sure to note the corrected date above for the Spring Meeting)	
Fall, 1996	To be determined
Spring 1997	Harrisonburg, VA
Fall 1999	Eastern Regional Meeting -host MAC

FALL MEETING FUN - Our Fall Meeting was fun, though attendance was down a little possibly due to conflict with the Regional Meeting in New Jersey. Thanks to Sybil Przypek and Ray Doggett for organizing the meeting. Thanks also to Alice Doggett and Esther Jordan for taking care of the hospitality room; Rosa Carter and Dorothy Robinson for looking after the book sale; Debbie Sauer and Jane McKay for taking care of plant sale and auction proceeds and of course a big thank you to David Lay for the P4M plants. Grace Wilson and Bland Freeman manned the registration desk; Elmer Lapsley and Austin Kennell were auctioneers, assisted by Doug Jolley and Ray Doggett; Harry Jordan was bus captain and historian; Debbie Sauer organized the foliage show; Harry Wise organized a seed exchange; Walter Przypek organized a group to present slides of favorite plants; Frank Pelurie organized the Sunday morning propagation session. George McLellan presented slides from the Species Study Group's North Carolina mountain plants tour; Kunso Kim and Mike Andruczyk were tour guides for our visit to the Norfolk Botanical Gardens. Dick Mahone gave a talk about plants compatible with rhododendrons. Our Saturday evening speaker was Dr. Clarence Towe who gave a very good talk on native azaleas and a few other selected plants. Alton Hall managed the equipment for the talks. Thanks to everyone named above and everyone who worked to make the meeting a success, especially everyone who came!

Austin Kennell was the lucky winner of the drawing for the check to help with expenses at the Scotland Convention compliments of David Lay.

SPRING MEETING TO BE HELD MAY 31 - JUNE 2, 1996, BRIER INN, LEWISBURG, WV - by Frank Pelurie.

What's in store for those who attend the MAC-ARS Spring 96 meeting in Lewisburg, West Virginia?

Check your calendar, do not be like the meeting planners who have confused everyone including themselves. Thank goodness the manager of the Brier Inn in Lewisburg, where we plan to meet, kept a clear head, straightening us out as to our meeting date. Anyway, for sure, the dates are May 31 through June 2. That is the weekend after the Memorial Day holiday, and it is a few weeks after the ARS meeting in Scotland. There will be plenty of azaleas in bloom.

For those of you who have never been to Lewisburg, it is a rather small quaint community that has

so far been able to hold on to its charm and maybe even do some things to increase it.. Those of you who take the time to walk around the town will discover that the residents of Lewisburg are doing a good job of preserving some of the community's history. Like similar communities, the shops in the center of town tend to be upscale, with a few very good restaurants. Actually, the center of downtown Lewisburg is in an aging process. It is headed back into the 19th century. If you get in town check out the General Lewis Inn.

As part of the program Friday evening we are arranging for a presentation on the History of Lewisburg and the Greenbrier River Valley. Also, since at our fall 1995 meeting in Newport News, we ended with presentations and discussions on propagation, it seem like a natural progression to have some slides of some of the unregistered plants produced by MAC hybridizers. We need help from those of you that have some of these plants or pictures of the plants. **If you can help, call or write Doug Jolley or Frank Pelurie;** Box 69, Flatwoods, WV 26621, 304-765-2608 or 250 Dutch Ridge Road, Clendenin, WV 25045, 304-968-3793, respectively.

If all the plans come together, Saturday is going to be busy, interesting and fun. We currently have a tentative commitment for a trip across Kate's Mountain with the recently retired superintendent of Greenbrier State Forest. Those of you who take this trip will be educated and entertained. For those of you who do not know about Kate's Mountain, it is best known for its shale barrens flora that a noted botanist explored from the Greenbrier Hotel. At this point the problem is finding another knowledgeable trip leader for a second bus for the Kate's Mountain trip or offering one of many other possibilities. Next we will have lunch along the Greenbrier River, where you will be able to explore an ongoing landscaping project. We will have to hurry some because if things work out programs on water gardens and hostas will be starting at the nearby Greenbrier Nursery. But at this point I guess you could either continue to explore the gardens along the Greenbrier River, walk downstream to Bacon Falls, wander around the nursery or attend the programs at the nursery.

Saturday evening there will be the traditional and always enjoyable flower show, seedling sale, book sale, plant auction and banquet. But best of all, we have a wonderful person as a banquet speaker talking on a topic you should enjoy and want to get involved with and then, maybe we will have two speakers, who knows?

Sunday morning at this point is open. You could have brunch at the Greenbrier, a real eye opening treat, or hike or bike a portion of the Greenbrier River Trail, which is a ninety some mile railroad grade maintained and operated by the state. It can be very beautiful if the wildflowers or azaleas are in bloom along the river. Other options are to visit Beartown State Park and Droop mountain bog. One of my favorites is exploring the roadsides between Anthony and Lake Sherwood. Another possibility is to visit one of the box huckleberry sites which can be a little strenuous, or for the more adventurous a canoe trip on the Greenbrier River. If you will let either Doug or me know your interests for Sunday we will either make arrangements if there is a sizable group or get together information on your interest. I almost forgot at sometime during the weekend there will be a presentation on collecting, and storing pollen, and on how to pollinate.

Who likes ramps?

DECEASED MEMBERS - Mr. J. H. Chappell of Butner, NC passed away this fall. He was a long-time MAC member and he and his wife Lorraine attended most of our MAC meetings. The Chapter extends deepest sympathy to Lorraine.

Betty Berry Shoosmith, wife of Mr. A. J. (Bert) Shoosmith, of Chester, VA, passed away on October 17, 1995 at the age of 83. Bert has been a MAC member for many years and has been in the nursery business since 1912 when he started as a boy with his father. The Chapter extends deepest sympathy to Bert.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS - Welcome to the following new members:

Rajeev Agora WV Univ. College of Ag. & Forestry, 1090 Ag Sci. POB 6108, Morgantown, WV

26506-6108
Don & Britt Pierce 917 Beryl Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23464
Michael & Lisa Sanders 4204 Smithdeal Ave, Richmond, VA 23225
Patricia Yowell HCR6, Box 128J, Madison, VA 22722

TERRY SHEUCHENKO MEMORIAL COMMITTEE REPORT - by Toby Zakin.

We have determined that an appropriate location for a memorial to Terry is at the Children's Rehabilitation Center of the University of Virginia. Terry's daughter Janice received care there years ago. Also, it is a place that Terry remembered in her will.

We decided we would like the memorial to be a sundial and bench and possibly some plants. The decision to include plants will depend upon whether or not we are confident that they would be cared for without a continuing commitment by MAC chapter members. We are going to be able to purchase Terry's personal sundial from her estate's sale.

The timing of this gift turns out to be good for the Children's Rehabilitation Center as they are in the planning stage of a Living Memorial Garden. They have a concrete courtyard outside some patient bedrooms (about 50' x 100') that they want to make into a planted garden. Our memorial to Terry will be planned into the design. The Center has an arrangement with the Master Gardeners program of the Virginia Extension Service. The Master Gardeners take care of the plants at the Center, so we can include some plant material.

We hope to make a presentation this spring. **THEREFORE, MONETARY AND PLANT CONTRIBUTIONS CAN STILL BE MADE.** Please send any monetary contributions to MAC Treasurer Rosa Carter, 1033 Newkirk Dr., Richmond, VA 23224. Please mark your donation for the Terry Sheuchenko Memorial. If you want to make a plant contribution call or write to Toby Zakin, 3605 Raleigh Mtn. Trail, Charlottesville, VA 22903, phone 804-293-2369.

THE GARDEN - by Sandra McDonald

It's time to put the garden to bed for the winter again. Minor pruning of damaged or diseased branches, lots of raking and composting and redistributing the fallen leaves are the order of the day.

At the end of November our rainfall is still more than 7 inches below normal, though we have had some nice rains this autumn. Most of November was cooler than normal with a little warming near the end of the month. It seems as though the leaves are late in falling this year. Must be the weather!

Speaking of weather, the National Weather Service seems to be dividing our region diagonally the next 3 months along the mountains. South and east of the mountains the outlook is for warmer than usual temperatures and about average precipitation, while north and west of the mountains the outlook is for normal temperatures and above normal precipitation for December through February.

The *Camellia sasanqua* shrubs are really lovely this fall. The cooler weather suits them. There are a few sporadic flowers on azaleas and rhododendrons, but not as many as I would have expected after the hot and dry summer. Evergreen azalea 'Opal' which Gretchen Johnson brought to show at the Fall Meeting was beautiful. Evergreen azalea 'Dorset' is putting on its usual long-lasting fall display of salmon flowers. The flowers seem to last much longer in the cooler days of autumn than they do in the spring when hot days and petal blight can cut short the display.

With lots of gray days and a little rainfall, the yellow and red foliage of the Japanese maples, the yellow leaves of witch hazel trees and Japanese blood grass' red-tipped blades with the yellow-spotted leaved *Ligularia* were welcome spots of artificial sunshine in the garden. A few bronzy chrysanthemums and blue asters were nice accents. Many of the evergreen azaleas usually color-up for autumn and are doing so now, but they did not make the change in time for the Fall Foliage Show.

Some holly berries are a nice red and even yellow now, but the flocks of birds have already started

working on some of them and I fear the berries won't hold long into the winter, but will be gobbled up by the hungry birds. Don't get me wrong, I do like birds in the garden except when they eat the colorful berries too fast, plant too many wild cherry tree seedlings in the garden, or steal the labels off my plants, the stick labels out of my trays and use same to build their nests.

I was delighted to finally find the true name of my unusual flaking-barked maple tree at our Fall Meeting when Clarence Towe showed a slide of one just like it. My tree is an estimated 25 plus years old and I originally acquired it from Dr. Sidney Waxman at the University of Connecticut about 23 years ago. It has great yellow to pinkish orange fall color, trident rather velvety leaves and wonderful peeling bark in long fine strips or flakes. I had guessed that it might be *Acer griseum* (paper-bark maple) crossed with something else, possibly *Acer nikoense* from descriptions I had found of the plant, but was never sure until I saw Clarence Towe's slide of a tree called *Acer nikoense* x *A. griseum* 'Cinnamon Flakes', which he had taken at Dr. Waxman's planting.

If you say "erb, shouldn't you say "erbert"?"

AMERICAN FRONT YARDS - *Plants & Gardens News*, Vol 10, No 2, Summer 1995 issue (Brooklyn Botanic Garden) had an interesting article about redesigning the American front yard written by C. Colston Burrell. I was especially intrigued by this article because for years I had been thinking along similar lines as this garden designer and writer from Minneapolis, MN.

The article says that American design tradition has remained constant since the middle 1940's with "emerald green turf from lot line to lot line, a large shade tree off the corner of the house and a collection of sculpted or, worse, scalped shrubs lined up against the foundation." He traces the tradition to the early writings of the influential landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing in 1865. Downing promoted a national landscape aesthetic to a wide audience at that time.

Burrell is a native plant enthusiast and promotes their use in the landscape. He describes in some detail the "sameness" found in the landscaping of the suburbs, but then goes forward towards ecological goals, structure in the garden and species diversity. I like his ideas. The traditional front yard has a stranglehold on the American imagination. It promotes the paving of the landscape with asphalt for driveways and sidewalks, and then uses a monoculture of turf which produces a landscape devoid of biodiversity. As our suburbs grow with this sameness, our wild lands and wild creatures will disappear.

He says we need to maintain some biodiversity outside our parks and wilderness areas. We need to use more imagination and have biodiversity in our home landscapes to recreate habitats that our being lost.

He states that in nature plant communities are organized in vertical and horizontal patterns. Vertical patterns are formed by layers of vegetation from the top of the trees down to the wildflowers and ferns on the forest floor. Meadows and prairies have vertical structure also, going from tall grasses to low ground-hugging violets. The more complex the structure, the more species a site can support. The horizontal patterns develop from response to light, moisture and available space to grow, creating attractive patterns in the garden.

In using non-native species, we need to be careful that we do not select invasive species, and use only non-invasive species with our natives to form our biodiverse landscape.

NOTES OF MEMBERS - Barry Glick was scheduled to give the Ron Sidwell Lecture: 'American native plants with potential in Britain' at Pershore in England in October. He is the founder member of the North American Plant Preservation Council.

VEGETATIVE PROPAGATION OF DECIDUOUS AZALEAS BY THE HOME GARDENER - by Bruno Kaelin from December 1969 issue of Newsletter of NY Chapter ARS. Reprinted with permission

from Bruno.

Everyone who sees an Exbury Azalea for the first time marvels at its beauty and naturally desires one or more for his garden. These plants are not as yet a common garden item and are rarely found in the local nursery. One source of the plants is the Plant Sale held by the New York Chapter each spring and fall. Another is through propagation by cuttings from one's own plants or those of a friend. Such propagation has been somewhat difficult in the past, but the following method has been successful.

Briefly, the method requires that the deciduous azalea cuttings be taken in early June. The cuttings are treated with hormone, inserted in a flat filled with a mixture of peat and perlite. The flat with the cuttings is placed in a plastic bag and stored in a well-lighted place for eight weeks. The rooted cuttings are potted, fertilized, and placed under lights for six weeks and then planted outdoors for the winter. [Editor's note 12-3-95: Bruno says he no longer recommends planting the rooted cuttings outside the first winter, but rather prefers to use a cold frame for protection or grow the cuttings indoors under lights.]

Deciduous azalea cuttings, like those of rhododendrons and evergreen azaleas, require a moist atmosphere, light, and warmth in the medium to produce roots. These conditions can be obtained easily by inserting a flat containing the cuttings inside a plastic bag and sealing it. Drill three holes about 1/8 inch in diameter and one inch deep in each end of a four inch deep flat. Fill the flat to within 1/2 inch of the top with a mixture of three parts peatmoss to one part coarse builders sand or perlite. This medium should be moist but not saturated. One way to do this is to soak the medium and then press the excess water out of the medium similar to the way a boy makes a snow ball, then break up the balls. The medium should be tamped into the flat somewhat to remove some of the air pockets, but should not be overly compacted.

Take deciduous azalea cuttings early in the season before they are hard, about the first week in June is best. Cut off the lower leaves, leaving about five of the top leaves. Cut off the lower portion of the stem, leaving 2 1/2 to 3 inches below the lowest remaining leaves. After this, put the cutting into water to wash off insects, fungus spores, etc.

Use a dibble or pencil to push holes in the medium. Next, shake a cutting to remove the excess water, and dip the lower inch of the cutting into a rooting hormone powder. (It is best to put a little hormone powder into a small container to prevent contamination of your entire supply.) Cover about the lower inch of the cutting with the hormone powder. There is no need to wound a deciduous azalea cutting prior to coating with the hormone powder. Either Hormodin No. 3 powder or the 2% IBA in talc sold by the New York Chapter can be used. Insert the cutting into the hole in the medium, trying to avoid removing the powder during insertion. The cutting should be inserted up to the lowest remaining leaves. Now use the pencil to push the medium into close contact with the cutting. Insert the other cuttings leaving about three inches between cuttings in each direction. Record the name of each cutting and its location in a record book. After the cuttings are inserted, pour about a tablespoon of water around the stem of each cutting to make sure the medium and cutting are in contact.

Next, remove the hook-portion of three wire hangers, open to about rectangular shape, and insert into the holes previously drilled in the ends of the flat. Place the flat thus prepared in a large plastic bag and close tightly with a plant tie.

Leave the cuttings in until mid-August, eight or nine weeks after insertion. By this time a large mass of roots will have formed. Not all will be rooted and those which are not should be discarded because not enough time is left before winter to root and harden them off. Pot each of the rooted cuttings in a separate 3 1/2 inch pot. Potting, although breaking some roots, separates the plants, and allows for independent root development before wintering outdoors.

Place the newly potted plants under lights. A dual 40 watt fluorescent fixture with one warm white tube, and one cool white tube provides the intensity and color for good growth. Hang the fixture so the tubes are about nine inches above the soil in the pots.

When the rooted cuttings are first placed under lights, fertilize them with a half strength solution of

Miracid, 30-10-10. Give them another fertilizing in two weeks, using the same solution. The idea of the lights and fertilizer is to force the cuttings into new growth before winter. Without new growth during the season they are rooted, the cuttings, even though rooted, will not grow the following year.

In 4 to 6 weeks all of the cuttings should have made a good deal of new growth. [Editor's note: at this point Bruno used to plant out the rooted cuttings, but he no longer recommends that, but rather would suggest a cold frame for protection outdoors or continuing with the cuttings under lights indoors.]

This method was used successfully last year (1968). About 60% rooting was obtained. The over-winter survival was about 75% for the cuttings forced into growth last year, but was zero the preceding year when the rooted cuttings were not forced into new growth.

To conclude, I would like to urge each of our members to try propagation. It is both interesting and satisfying. If enough of our members try propagating and experiment with propagation techniques, many more rhododendrons and azaleas will enhance our spring landscape.

WINNERS OF 1995 FALL FOLIAGE SHOW (OUR FIRST ONE!) - Debbie Sauer, Chairman

Elepidote Rhododendron Species

- Best in Class: Unknown Yak (David Lay)**
 First Place: Yak Angel (David Lay)
 Second Place: R. fortunei (Walter Przypek)
 R. campanulatum (Paul James)
 R. Yak "Fawcett form" (Bill Bedwell)
 Third Place: R. hyperythrum (B. Bedwell)
 R. Yak "Mossman form" (B. Bedwell)

Azalea Deciduous Species

- Second Place: Kennel's Gold (W. Przypek)
 R. reticulatum x R. sanctum (George McLellan)

Azalea Evergreen Species

- Best in Class: R. linearifolium 'Segai' (W. Przypek)**
 Second Place: R. weyrichii album (Sandra McDonald)
 Third Place: Choptank (W. Przypek)

Azalea Evergreen Hybrids

- Best in Class: Keisetsu (W. Przypek)**
 First Place: Girard's Purple (Rosa Carter)
 Girard's Fuchsia (S. McDonald)
 Second Place: Southern Charm (W. Przypek)
 Unknown Rutherford (W. Przypek)
 Unknown seedling (W. Przypek)
 Coral Bells (B. Bedwell)
 Third Place: Chinsai (S. McDonald)
 Easter Parade (W. Przypek)
 Gumpo White (B. Bedwell)

- Honorable Mention: Sandra's Dwarf White (Sandra McDonald)

- Shichifukuju (W. Przypek)
 Hinode Giri (S. McDonald)

Lepidote Rhododendron Species

- Best in Class: R. racemosum (P. James)**
 Second Place: Gordon's carolinianum (P. James)

Elepidote Rhododendron Hybrids

- Best in Class (indumentum): Noyo Chief x Cindy Lou (P. James)**
Best In Class (non-indumentum) R. Cavalier (P. James)**

- First Place: R. Ken Janek x makinoi 'Nyman's Pink' (P. James)
 R. bureavii x Ken Janek (P. James)

- R. aberconwayi x Ruby Bowman (P. James)
 Winterthur Dexter, unidentified (B. Bedwell)
 Harry Wise seedling (P. James)

- Second Place: Atroflo (B. Bedwell)
 R. yak x metternichii (B. Bedwell)

- Vulcan (B. Bedwell)
 R. Danzel (P. James)
 Yak x Max 'Kehr's' (P. James)
 High Gold (P. James)

- Third Place: Ivory maximum x chartreuse decorum (S. McDonald)
 R. Caroline x fortunei LuShan (P. James)

Crete (P. James)
R. soulei x Idealist (P. James)
Noyo Brave (P. James)
Honorable Dick Steele seedling
(S.McDonald)
Mention: Yak x maximum (celeolatum?)
(W. Przypek)
Star of Spring (P. James)
R. pseudochrysanthum x Yak
(S.McDonald)

** Best in Show

Merry Christmas

and

Happy New Year!

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