

# MID- ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

May 2,3&4, 1997                      Sheraton Baltimore-North Towson MD  
(District meeting sponsored by Mason-Dixon Chapter)

Spring 1998                              Harrisonburg, VA  
November 5,6&7, 1999              Williamsburg, VA  
(Eastern Regional Meeting -host MAC)

### PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FOR SPRING '97 MEETING IN TOWSON, MARYLAND -

You may be interested in some early information about the Spring Meeting. The meeting will be at the Sheraton Baltimore-North in Towson. The hotel is adjacent to Goucher College campus and is attached by a walkway to Towsontown Center where there are restaurants in addition to department stores, including a Nordstroms. Registration starts Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. The Friday evening speaker is Jeff Beasley of Transplant Nursery speaking on **Native Azaleas**. A plant sale will consist of plants selected by Ed Reiley and grown at Harry Weiskittel's Marshy Point Nursery. A flower show is planned. There will be a bus tour of Marshy Point Nursery, Reichart garden, Ladew Gardens and Azalea Hortico (Deckert's). The Saturday banquet will be followed by a program by Jonathan Leonard of Sandwich, Massachusetts. Some gardens will be open Sunday morning.

**FALL MEETING-** The Joint Meeting of MAC, the Colonial Virginia Chapter of HSA and the Richmond Chapter of ASA had a good turnout of over 100 people in Richmond the weekend of September 27 to 29. The plant sales were great with the regular MAC P4M sale as well as a sale of hollies, seed, plant auction and visit to the Colesville Nursery where plants could also be purchased. We also saw the progress that has been made at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. We enjoyed learning about propagation from Mike Andruczyk and had two wonderful slide shows by Bill Bedwell of slides he took in Scotland. The national president of the Azalea Society of America, Steve Branerd, gave a good pep talk on recruiting new members. Dr. Lawrence Mellichamp had an interesting after dinner slide presentation for us on Saturday night.

### FALL FOLIAGE SHOW AWARDS -

Best Foliage & Best Indumented Rhododendron, John & LuDean Withers Trophy		
	'Barbara Hall', seedling	Paul James
Best Rhododendron, Non-Indumented, Rosette	'Scintillation'	Hugh Thompson
Best Evergreen Azalea, Rosette	'Tina'	David Lay
Best Lepidote Species, Rosette	<i>R. aberconwayii</i>	David Lay
Best Elepidote Species, Rosette	<i>R. yakushmanum</i> seedling	David Lay
Best Hybrid Lepidote, Rosette	<i>R. calostrotum x carolinianum</i>	Paul James

**DIRECTOR EMERITUS CERTIFICATES** - Certificates were given to **Austin Kennell** and **General Robert Porter** at the Fall Meeting following the election at the Spring Meeting to recognize their years of service to the Chapter.

**BRONZE MEDAL AWARD - Ron Brown** was awarded the chapter's Bronze Medal at the Fall Meeting. The award was in recognition of his many years of participation and service to our Chapter, organizing a meeting in Harrisonburg, having his garden on tour, his many donations of plants to our auctions and sales, and his terrific efforts at the James Madison University Arboretum in helping Dr. Norlyn Bodkin to establish rhododendron and azalea gardens there.

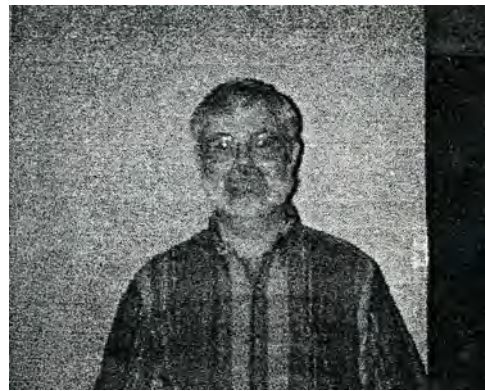
A special letter from Dr. Bodkin was read at the presentation.



Ron Brown receiving Bronze Medal Certificate.



Norma and Ron Brown.



Dr. Lawrence Mellichamp.

**DEATHS** - Former MAC member **Bob Coffey** died in September. Some members may recall Bob from our meetings held at his Poor Robert's Retreat in the Staunton area.

**Mrs. Mildred Price** of Chesterfield, Virginia died in July.

**BACK TO THE FORTIES** - *The following is another article in our series which was discovered by Dr. Doug Jolley and is from the July 1944 issue of The Home Garden pages 31-33. (Editor's note: This article uses petunias for demonstration, but hybridizing rhododendrons is not too different. Two main differences are rhododendron pollen sticks together in clumps and strands rather than being dusty like petunia pollen so that brushes can not be used. Rhododendrons are not annuals like petunias, but rather are woody plants and the cycle from a seed to a blooming plant is usually several to many years.)*

**The A.B.C. of Hybridizing** - by Orland E. White, Director, Blandy Experimental Farm

Crossing plants to produce new kinds is a very simple process that ten-year-olds can do so far as the operations involved are concerned, but most of the results will be - like snapshots- of interest mainly to the maker. Occasionally someone makes a real contribution. As far as the amateur is concerned, it's like betting on the horses- and perhaps that is what makes it exciting.

"Crossing" consists of transferring viable ("live") pollen from the flowers of the plant used as father to the receptive surface of the pistil in the flower to be used as the mother. Most flowers contain both male and female organs in the same flower. The male structure is the stamen and consists mainly of

small sacks of pollen dust. The female structure is the pistil. In many flowers this is a slender organ in the center of the flower. Simply put, it is a vase-like sack narrowed to a tube except at the base, often with either a sticky, fuzzy, or otherwise rough surface on the top end of the tube. The bottom of the sack contains the ovaries, full of plant "eggs".

#### HOW THE POLLEN ACTS

Pollen dusted on the mature surface of the pistil tops sends out a tube, which grows down the pistil neck, enters the ovaries, bursts, and allows the male element to unite with and fertilize an egg. This fertilized egg grows into a young plant which, with its surrounding structures, is called a *seed*.

If the plants crossed are too distantly related, the pollen may not send out its tube, or if it does, it may die before accomplishing its mission; or it may do its part, but the young embryo or immature plant may die in the seed. The seed will look all right, but never grow. There are also many other possible complications in an attempt to produce a hybrid. Even after the seed germinates, the young hybrids may be weak and starve to death.

With this introduction, if the amateur still has a fancy for trying a hand at plant breeding, using petunia as an illustration, let us see what is to be done. I have selected petunias because they are easily grown, there are numerous varieties that breed true, the time between seed planting and flowering is short, the ovary of a single flower under normal conditions produces many seeds, which are easy to grow. The flowers are large; the stamens-5 in number-are readily recognized; while the pistil is a simple puritanical structure with no extra furbelows to confuse one. When ready to receive pollen, its top is sticky. The dust-like pollen readily clings to its surface, when drawn in the early morning from its bursted stamen sacks.

There are innumerable contrasting characters in petunia, both in flower color and shape and in growth habit. The gambling is good, because so little is known about what happens in petunias when you cross this variety with that. so let us go through the operations involved in the gamble. The hundreds of varieties of petunias are believed to have come through hybridization of two species.

First you grow two varieties differing in one or more characters- say pink and purple flower color, or pink and white flower color, or fringed and non-fringed, or dwarf and tall. *Pick your varieties so that you have clear-cut character differences.* That is all that matters. They will bloom- being petunias.

#### MAKING THE CROSS

The time to cross them arrives. Late afternoon, you slit lengthwise, with a dissecting needle or a penknife, their nearly matured buds; pick off the unsplit stamen-sacks and throw them away; seal the bud with a small paperclip, or cover it with a glassine bag (such as cigars and peanuts come in), paper-clipping the bag at the base. Be sure you do not mutilate the bud any more than is necessary- that is always good surgery. A single slit will do the job in petunias or flowering tobaccos.

Next day, in the middle morning, the pistil will be found- if you have picked a bud of the proper maturity- ready to be pollinated; its top or stigma will be sticky. Take pollen from newly burst stamen sacks, from the variety you wish to be the father, by either using a small camel's hair brush or the stamen itself- if you are used to putting watches together! Unsack or unclip the flower to be used as mother, apply the pollen to the sticky surface, and cover again.

#### LABELING

Since you won't remember (though you think you will), attach a price tag label (the kind that getting wet won't affect) and write a legend something like the following: *Royal Purple x Rosy Morn. 7-2-44.* It is good practice to write the destined mother first and the paternal parent last. You can use varietal names or numbers as designations.

If you want to be sure, scientifically sure, of what the father of your hybrid is, you must protect with glassine bags the flowers you intend to use for pollen sources, since insects of various kinds, as they flit from flower to flower, are likely to be great pollen mixers. In protecting flowers from undesired pollination, protective devices must always be used that will not facilitate wilting, flower dropping, and molds.

The deed is now done, and when the seed capsule is ripe, you ought to have several dozen seed.

They are hybrid seed, each of which, in the lingo of the professional breeder, will produce an F<sub>1</sub> plant. If the varieties you used as parents were true breeding races, all your seeds will produce F<sub>1</sub> plants just alike except for the possible differences caused by environment.

If flowers of these F<sub>1</sub> plants are pollinated each with their own pollen, or with the pollen from one of their sister F<sub>1</sub> plants, seed will be produced. This seed will give rise to F<sub>2</sub> or second generation hybrid plants, some of which will be like the F<sub>1</sub> parents, some of which will be like each of the grandparents, and some of which will represent, in one plant, characters of *both* grandparents, and the F<sub>1</sub> parents; and perhaps also *some characters foreign to all these ancestors*.

This second generation is apt to be a very motley family, some of which, if self-pollinated, will produce offspring all like themselves, while others, even though self-pollinated, will produce families representing various degrees of diversity. Many of these new types or combinations can be made to breed true, in time, by selection, self-pollination and patience.

Petunias are annuals, commonly grown from seed; but they can also be grown *from cuttings*. In the latter case, any new form that develops may be kept going, without any tedious self-pollination and selection. F<sub>1</sub> iris and gladiolus hybrids, since they are commonly propagated by dividing the original plants, or by corms, produce plants like themselves, and thus immediately establish a fixed variety. This is true in general of flowering shrubs, perennials, bulbous and other asexually propagated plants- plants propagated not from seed, but from pieces (roots, stems, leaves- actual physical parts) of the parent plant.

Pollen of different kinds of flowers varies in its life span. The drier pollen is kept, within certain limitations, the longer it will live.

The more closely related plants are, the more likely they are to produce hybrids. *Varieties* within species readily cross. *Species* crosses are rather common. Crosses between *genera* are quite rare.

More extended accounts, in nontechnical language, of crossing and the associated phenomena involved in plant breeding, are found in "The Garden Dictionary." A very good book on the subject is "The Genetics of Garden Plants," by Crane and Lawrence, second edition.

**PRONOUNCING THOSE ACCURSED LATIN PLANT NAMES** - by Tom Hughes (This article is from the November Newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Chapter ARS and is used with the author's permission.)

In the last two thousand years the Latin language has been put to many uses, but it has not been employed as the language of ordinary people since the fall of the Roman Empire. It became the language of books and learning, of churches, monasteries, and universities, as people in the streets gradually developed dialects which became French and Spanish and Italian, Romanian, and Romansh. Three principal methods of pronouncing the "dead" language are in use today — the ecclesiastical pronunciation, the classical or German pronunciation, and the Oxford pronunciation, which sound the name Cæsar as Chay-zar, Kye-zar, and See-zar, respectively. The Oxford pronunciation has been adopted by most lexicographers, lawyers and scientists in the English-speaking world.

For us, the Oxford pronunciation should also be the easiest. The vowels are pronounced as in English, short and long, as in hat and hate, get and greet, bit and bite, cot and cote, and but and brute. (Strictly speaking, the diphthong "æ" is pronounced "ee", while the short "i" is also pronounced "ee" before another vowel.) The consonants are also given English values. There are no silent vowels. Every written vowel is pronounced.

In all this, most of us have difficulty with only two things: (a) where to put the stress and (b) how to tell whether a vowel is long or short.

(a) Stress. The stress is on the penult (next-to-last syllable) if that syllable contains a long vowel or the syllable is closed (i.e., contains a short vowel followed by two consonants). Otherwise the stress falls on the antepenult (the syllable before the penult). For instance, in the word *cumberlandense* the next-to-last syllable contains an "e" followed by two consonants, so the stress is on "DENS", and the word is pronounced "cum-ber-lan-DENS-ee." In the epithet *barbatum* the penult contains a long "a" so the word is pronounced "bar-BAY-tum".

(b) Vowel length. The only way to be sure is to know Latin. But many English words derived

from Latin will give us clues, and certain common word endings are quickly memorized (words ending in "atum" and "anum" have a long "a" and are pronounced "AY-tum" and "AY-num"). The genitive (possessive) singular final "i" is long and pronounced as the "eye" in "Mud in your eye!"; so Kingdon-Ward's rhododendron is pronounced "WARD-ee-eye", and Haines-Watson's is "wat-SON-ee-eye". (Note that the stress is on the antepenult in these last two cases.)

Also, proper names and other words or word parts taken from non-Latin languages often are not pronounced as if Latin but retain their original pronunciation; e.g., the Catawba rhododendron is pronounced cat-aw-bi-ENS-ee, and Père Soulié's rhododendron is pronounced "soo-lee-AY-eye". (Note: Many people, myself included, when the diphthong "ae" is used as the female genitive singular ending, pronounce it as "ay" rather than the more correct "ee"; e.g., I mispronounce Mrs. Forrest's rhododendron as "Roe-doe-DEN-dron clem-en-TIE-nay".) "Nuff said!—TH.

#### **FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC - by Jane McKay**

The garden has been put to bed this second week in November and all that remains to be done is rake leaves, shred leaves and compost leaves. Frost arrived late this year on November first. We were warned of frost early in October but fortunately it never happened. Maybe Mother Nature was being kind to us after Tropical Storm Fran (nee Hurricane Fran) dropped an 85 foot white oak across the garden. We had surprisingly little damage, but just finished the cleanup this week.

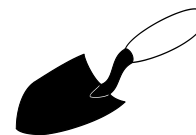
The colchicums were exceptionally lovely this fall, as was the Linwood azalea 'Opal', which was in bloom for more than a month. Of particular interest was *Stewartia malocodendron* which we purchased at a MAC seedling sale a year or so ago, courtesy of George McLellan. The leaves first changed to a deep bronze and ten days later faded to a beautiful pinkish mauve similar to the fall color of *Viburnum acerifolium*. We planted a dozen bulbs of *Crocus zonatus* in October and they are just coming into bloom undaunted by the frost. *Chrysanthemum pacificum*, attractive enough with white edged green leaves all summer is now blooming with tiny yellow flowers which are welcome in mid November.

We still have very little bud set on our very young rhododendrons, but we have had fewer voles this year and the deer have been behaving (so far). Our plants seem healthy and so do we so we consider it a very good year.

#### **THE GARDEN - by Sandra McDonald**

Hurricane Fran left us with lots of tidying up to do. Besides the debris which blew down from the winds, many shrubs were killed back on the tips of branches by salt spray and wind, making much pruning necessary and many decisions as to how hard to prune. The apple and pear trees still have green leaves from the new growth after the hurricane even though we have had light frost. A few deciduous azaleas and some evergreen azaleas also have new green leaves. I hope the plants will not be killed when the weather gets really cold because they do not seem to be in a dormant condition yet.

The first frost was late coming here, but fall has been cooler than normal. Autumn leaves have mostly fallen from the trees. It was peak color just before Thanksgiving. Witch hazels were a gorgeous yellow and the Japanese maples were good red or yellow depending on the variety. The great hybrid maple 'Cinnamon Flakes' had its usual good yellow turning to some pink. Evergreen azaleas still have beautiful colored foliage. Besides the usual green, there are some with glowing dark red and some with mixtures of red and yellow leaves. Azaleas are beautiful year round.



#### **REPORT OF DISTRICT NINE DIRECTOR, ARS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, OCTOBER 4, 1996, OCEAN SHORES, WASHINGTON - by Jean Beaudry, District 9 Director.**

The fall meeting was held in Ocean Shores, Washington. The beaches are very different from those along our coast. There were people riding horses, mopeds, and automobiles right at the water's edge. Everything was flat and it appeared that if you looked hard enough you might see to Hawaii. Here are some of the items that should be of interest to you. If you would like to have more information, please contact me.

1. It was agreed that the ARS will pick up the airmail costs for the next year for all our overseas members. This will be done through ISAL ( International Surface Air Lift). In this way these members will receive their Journal within a reasonable time of publication, not the 10- 12 weeks that has been reported. The additional cost will be paid by these members after this year.
2. There are two new chapters starting. One in Washington ( Gig Harbor) and the other in southern Connecticut. It hasn't been decided if the Connecticut Chapter will be in District 6 or 7.
3. Barbara Hall and Sonja Nelson are going to upgrade their computer capabilities. Sonja's upgrade will allow her to print our page layouts herself, saving one extra job from the printer.
4. The new Chairpersons of the Azalea Committee introduced themselves. They are Kath and Dave Collier from the Portland Chapter. They are recruiting additional committee members and would like to hear from you if you are interested in serving.
5. Changes in the By Laws included the following: 1) The offices of Executive Director and Secretary will now be split. The Secretary is an Officer, serves on the Executive Committee, and has voting privileges. The Executive Director will still have most of the responsibility for running the Society. 2) Payment for multiple years will be dropped. 3) There was discussion about eliminating future Life Memberships. Instead the Board voted to increase the Life Membership to \$1000. It was felt that this would generate additional money for the Life Member fund for those still interested in the opportunity. 4. The Electronic Media Committee will be made a standing committee and written into the ByLaws.
6. The Electronic Media Committee's report was very exciting. Sandra McDonald from the Middle Atlantic chapter is a member. They have a "draft" Homepage which should be functional in a few months. There will also be a Newsgroup for questions and a special Hybridizers Newsgroup. At the conference I attended a demonstration and was amazed. I will have information with me at your next chapter meeting.
7. Herb Spady reported that he is not receiving Hardiness Reports. After last winter we should be able to provide him with some good information.
8. Jay Murray, plant Registrar, asked for help in registering the many hybrids which have been in the trade for many years. She and Bob are going to provide me with a list of unregistered Gable plants which I will distribute to the Presidents of our chapters. In reviewing the list of some of the plants from Harold Greer's book I recognized three Gables: Double Dip, Maxecat, and Maxhaem Yellow. Maybe someone would like to begin with these.
9. Five copies of the new Guidelines for Flower Shows and Judging were distributed to the District Directors for each of their chapters. They will be mailed to the Presidents along with copies of the meeting Agenda and Minutes in the next few weeks.
10. A letter from Austin Kennell was read to the Board. In it he stresses that it is very important to retain the members we have and lists some suggestions.
11. An election was held for Officers for the next two years, starting after the May meeting in Vancouver. Those elected are: Bud Gehrlich from New York, President; H. Edward Reiley from Mason Dixon, Eastern Vice President; Lynn Watts, Seattle, Western Vice President; Gerald Nutter, Mass., Treasurer; Jean Beaudry, Potomac Valley, Secretary; Norman Todd, Canada, Director at Large; John Hammond, Scotland, Director at Large, ALT.
12. The next Board meeting will be held preceding the annual meeting on May 7, 1997 in Vancouver BC. The Board meeting following that one will be in the Fall of 1997 in the Allentown,PA area.

## 1996 Spring Flower Show Results

### Azalea Species

<b>Evergreen</b>	Blue	S.McDonald	R. nakaharae
	Red	R. Carter	'Wintergreen'
	Green	D. Jolley	R. nakaharae
<b>Deciduous</b>			
	<b>Light shades</b>		
	Red	D. Jolley	R. arborescens
	Red	D. Wheeler	R. calendulaceum

Deep shades	Blue	H. Wise	R. bakeri
	Blue	H. Wise	R. bakeri 'Camp's Red x R. bakeri'
	Red	D. Jolley	R. bakeri
	Green	D. Wheeler	R. calendulaceum
<b>Azalea Hybrids-Evergreen</b>			
White, h/h or double	Blue	S. McDonald	'Cape Cod'
White with blotch	Green	R. Carter	'Gresham'
	Green	R. Carter	'Glimp's'?
Pink, light, h/h	Blue	R. Carter	'Negligee'
	Red	R. Carter	'Wee Willie'
Pink, medium	Green	D. Jolley	R. nakaharae?
Orange-pink, h/h	Blue	S. McDonald	Wakaebisu
	Blue	R. Carter	Wakaebisu
Orange-red, single	White	R. Carter	'Red Fountain'
	White	R. Carter	'Polypetalum'
Orange-red, double	Red	R. Carter	unknown
Lavender, double	Green	R. Carter	'Storm Cloud'
Lavender with blotch	Blue	R. Carter	'Blue Moon'
	Red	R. Carter	'Rowgetsu'
<b>Azalea Hybrids-Deciduous</b>			
Pink	Blue	D. Jolley	unnamed Knaphill
Bi-colored	Red	H. Wise	R. arborescens x R. prunifolium
<b>Specimen Plants in Bloom</b>			
Azalea, evergreen	Green	R. Doggett	Satsuki
	Green	R. Doggett	unknown
<b>First-Time Exhibitors</b>			
Azalea, deciduous, yellow	Red	P. Little	R. calendulaceum
	Red	P. Little	R. calendulaceum
	Red	P. Little	R. calendulaceum
Azalea, deciduous, yellow-orange	Blue	P. Little	R. calendulaceum
	Red	P. Little	R. calendulaceum
	White	P. Little	R. cumberlandense
Azalea, deciduous, orange	Red	P. Little	R. cumberlandense
	Green	P. Little	R. cumberlandense
<b>Related Species</b>			
Kalmia latifolia	Blue	D. Jolley	'Bridesmaid'
	Red	D. Jolley	'Kaleidoscope'
	White	D. Jolley	'Ostbo Red'
	Green	D. Jolley	'Bull's Eye'
	Green	D. Jolley	unnamed

## Major Awards

Best Evergreen Azalea	Rosa Carter	'Watamatusu'
Best Deciduous Azalea	Park Little	R. calendulaceum
Best Novice Entry	Park Little	R. arborescens

## Perpetual Awards

Best Native Azalea Presented by Austin & Betty Kennell	Park Little	R. calendulaceum
Best Azalea - Richard & Mary Morris Clemmer Trophy presented by Mary Francis Cook	Rosa Carter	'Watamatusu'
Best In Show - Thomas F. Wheeldon Trophy presented by Kenneth & Sandra McDonald	Rosa Carter	'Watamatusu'
Sweepstakes Award	Rosa Carter	

**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 \$25 per year.

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

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