

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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Rhododendron Society

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

April 30 - May 2, 2021

On-Line Zoom Meeting

American Rhododendron Society

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MAC SPRING MEETING WILL BE REPLACED BY ZOOM MEETING by Theresa Breints

Due to continuing concerns about Covid-19, the MAC Spring Meeting scheduled for the weekend of April 30-May 2 at the Roslyn Center in Richmond will be replaced by a Virtual Zoom Meeting during that same weekend. Steve Krebs and Connor Ryan of the Leach Research Station will co-host a presentation and Karel Bernady will present a video program, Rhododendrons Eclectic, 3 short topics on our favorite genus. Details on registration, program times, and log-in information will follow as soon as arrangements are completed.



Ox blood lily flower, not foliage. Photo by George McLellan.

IN A WOODLAND GARDEN, ZONE 7, TIDEWATER VIRGINIA, by George McLellan

When walking in the garden in the last week of December, I reflected on some of the plants that gave me the most pleasure last fall:

Encore Azaleas provide their best color in the cooler days of fall with some in bloom for six weeks or more with no petal blight. They can be combined with other fall blooming plants providing interesting color echoes or combinations.

Some nice combinations:

‘Autumn Monarch’ or ‘Autumn Embers’ or ‘Autumn Debutante’ with *Lycoris radiata* (red spider lilies)

‘Autumn Rouge’ with *Rhodophiala bifida* (oxblood lilies)

‘Autumn Carnation’ with *Colchicum* (a type of autumn crocus)

‘Autumn Amethyst’ or ‘Autumn Twist’ with *Camellia sasanqua* ‘Sparkling Burgundy’

All these plants do well in the woodland garden and the bulbs are pest proof.



Lycoris radiata and Encore Azalea 'Autumn Debutant'.
Photo G. McLellan.



Lycoris radiata flowers. Photo G. McLellan.

Another pest proof woodland tuber that appears as other plants go dormant in October is *Arum italicum* (Lords and Ladies). This is the plant that unfurls its arrow-shaped highly variegated leaves of different shades of green and white/silver patterns for winter.



Colchicum. Photo G. McLellan.

In my garden I have several normal forms such as *Arum italicum* subsp. *italicum* 'Marmoratum'; 'Pictum'; 'White Winter'; 'Pam Harper'; 'Green

Leaf', etc. plus many seedlings of the above. It is always a treat to see a new seedling appearing in the garden with a new leaf pattern. (*Arum* leaves last a long time in water and are sought after by flower arrangers.)



Lycoris and *Colchicum*. Photo G. McLellan.

Last but not least are the fall blooming camellias which start in late September. One I like very much is the very hardy new *Camellia* 'Yume', but that is a whole new subject for another article.



Camellia 'Yume'

IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is January 23, 2021 as I sit down to write this article. The outside temperature is 30° F and at 7 am the morning walk is still to be done by Margaret and me.



We have now been under house arrest for nearly a year with parole allowed once a week for grocery curbside pickup and church service provided we are masked and stay socially distanced. In the fall we were allowed to visit garden centers under those conditions also.

We have the smallest number of plants in pots waiting to be planted that have been here in the last twenty years. My reason for not planting those is that I like looking forward to seeing what is available to plant. Since it's hard to shop for new plants in the

winter, if I plant those, I won't have any plants to look forward to planting.

What treats has the garden provided since I last wrote three months ago? In late November after the Japanese maples had lost 99% of their leaves, we got our first treat. There was a morning fog that wet the leafless maple limbs forming droplets at the end of the branches. By the time of the morning walk, the droplets had frozen. When the sun hit the frozen droplets, you could see rainbow colors. It was a WOW! of visual delights.

The second treat of that time period was seeing the largest and oldest green leaves of one group of evergreen azaleas turn yellow overnight. The entire plant was a very pretty pale yellow. In the next few days, other evergreen azalea leaves turned yellow, orange, and red. I cannot remember having seen such a late display of fall color in our evergreen azaleas. I do remember buying one azalea thirty-plus years ago for its fall leaf color.

A third treat for us in November, December, and January has been providing food for our local deer and rabbit population. Not sure which of these animals have decided to reduce in size by 50% recently planted clumps of dwarf mondo grass. The clumps have been clipped to almost ground level. I know the nine or more deer from across the road come to see us in groups of 2, 3, or 4. I have only seen the rabbits as single units. Other folks on our side of the road continue to put out containers of corn for the deer. Maybe I could put corn around the mondo grass. Anything to help our local deer and rabbits I am sure would be appreciated by them.

So where is the humor in this article? Our oldest grandchild, Ava, was home Christmas break from college. Ava has been helping us with yard work since she was two or three. She has always provided excellent help over the years and has also provided ideas on landscape design from time to time. Last week we (appropriately masked and distanced although we were outside) were at Ava's parents' house. Ava said, "Grand Dad, come look at the beautiful ferns you gave us last year." With pride I looked at a row of about ten ferns that indeed look quite nice to me. Then Ava said, "I am sure you will be able to give us the needed ferns to complete the design." I said, "I'll see what I can do." I quickly mentally calculated fifty ferns at \$15.95 per fern would be about \$800. I'm sure Ava didn't realize how many I thought it would take or

the cost. Ava then said, "Grand Dad." I said, "Yes." She said, "Thank you. I wish I had time to help you plant them but I have to go back to college."

WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS February 2021 by Doug Jolley

Our local groundhog, French Creek Freddie, did not see his shadow on Groundhog Day. Davetta and I are ready for spring! Freddie resides at the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Game Farm in nearby French Creek. Freddie is not the celebrity that his colleague in Punxsutawney, PA is but his shadow watching is just as foolproof!



This will (knock on wood) be at least the seventh year of having no deer peruse the garden. The winter has been uneventful weather-wise, and plants are set for a super spring and early summer season. Barring a repeat of last year's devastating May frost we are ready to enjoy the garden's offerings.



Deciduous holly 'Sparkleberry'. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Our deciduous holly did escape the May freeze and *Ilex verticillata* 'Sparkleberry' was outstanding this fall. Birds do not generally feed on these berries until after early winter. A scarcity of other offerings I think makes these berries more attractive. The same applies on our American Holly as well.

Like clockwork in early January, our Oriental Witch-hazel announced its flowering with a yard filling fragrance. One winter chore performed by

native azaleas is to offer perches for birds visiting nearby feeders.



Oriental witch-hazel. Photo by D. Jolley.



Oriental witch-hazel. Photo by D. Jolley.



Yates Second Best x Mrs. H. Yates. Photo by D. Jolley.

has occurred so this report is minimal. The mild weather has allowed for chores to be completed and now we are watching the daylight lengthen and waiting for Covid to go away and for spring to arrive!



Weeping Hemlock. Photo D. Jolley.



Remember all photos can be seen in color and ENLARGED at MACARS.ORG. Click on Newsletter on left panel.

As of mid-February, our lowest temperature has been around 12 degrees. Lots of rain, one four-inch snowfall on Christmas Eve and that sums up winter. Really little in the way of horticultural excitement



Tufted Titmouse on deciduous azalea.. Photo D. Jolley.



Goldfinch on deciduous azalea. Photo by D. Jolley.

Memberships and renewals should be sent to our Membership Chairman Jeanne Hammer at 231 N Robinson Dr, Macon, NC 27551.

Annual membership dues are \$40 per year.

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

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