

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XLVIII No. 3

September 2021

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

September 24-25, 2021

Roslyn Center, Richmond

October 23-24, 2021

2021 Virtual ARS Fall Conference

American Rhododendron Society

<http://www.rhododendron.org/>

ARS Store Order from Amazon thru this site

<http://arsstore.org/>

MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)

<http://www.macars.org/wordpress/>

UVA Special Collections

<http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/>

Old Quarterly Bulletins & JARS

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

Rhododendron Blog

www.rhododendron.org/blog/

MAC FALL MEETING

The MAC Fall Meeting is being held at Roslyn Retreat Center Friday, September 24 and Saturday September 25. We will have our meeting in the Gibson Room and are the only group meeting there. The meeting starts after 2pm on Friday and has Peggy Singleton as the featured speaker at 8pm. Saturday morning is our business meeting followed by a program by Doug Jolley about "Native Plants."

MAC members should have received a nice meeting notice package in the mail. The information is also posted on our website:

www.macars.org/wordpress/

Masks are in order for the meeting.

ARS VIRTUAL FALL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 23-24

Hosted by the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society in partnership with the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners

SATURDAY

Hartwig Schepker, Germany

Sichuan: A Plantsman's Paradise

Shannon Berch, BC

Living Soils

David Sellars, BC

From Rhododendrons to Rock Gardening

Don Hyatt, VA

A Walk in the Woods

SUNDAY

David Millais, UK

Conservation of Heritage Rhodos

Linda Chalker-Scott, WA

Landscape Mulches

Richard Dionne, QC

Growing Rhododendrons in Québec

Don Wallace, CA

Fragrant Rhododendrons



**The only requirement to attend is to
register with Mailchimp at:**

<https://mailchi.mp/9151e79e2a98/fall-conference-2021>

to receive background information, links, etc.

Conference details [HERE](#)

SAD NEWS: HAROLD GREER

Even though he was not a member of our chapter, I believe many chapter members knew Harold Greer and many ordered plants from his Greer Gardens Nursery in Eugene, Oregon. He was a world famous *Rhododendron* expert, nurseryman, and author.



Harold Greer

His wife Nancy pasted this on her Facebook page:

"Many of you may or may not know that Harold passed away 08/10/2021. He was working on the sprinkling system before last week's hot spell. He was working next to a shallow pond in our back yard and tripped and fell. His head hit a rock in the pond and it knocked him out and he drowned. He did not suffer and died in our garden. We will have a memorial service at a later date. I am doing OK. It has been such a shock! He died in a beautiful garden that he loved so much and that is where he wanted to be. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Research Foundation of the American Rhododendron Society or to The Rhododendron Species Foundation in Washington state. I will post when his memorial service will be on Facebook for you when a date is set. Thank you for all your prayers and love that some of you have sent to me already."

Nancy Greer

WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS September 2021 by Doug Jolley

May, June, July, August. Vanished.

One of many aspects that digital photography allows is that while editing, one can discover content captured not noted the moment of exposure. Such was the case involving a butterfly visiting a Pinkster Azalea. I was aiming for clear shots of frozen motion; not blurry wings as the butterfly fluttered from flower to flower. In editing I revisited the superb presentation to our chapter a few years back by Dr. Mary Jane



Eppes. She explained the pollination process for native azaleas. Here on my butterfly were its wings picking up pollen from one flower and moving on for it to be available to be deposited on another. Other photos through the native azalea season also illustrated that bees and other non-butterflies did not disturb the reproductive parts of the azalea flowers.



Butterfly with a little pollen on its wings visiting *Rhododendron periclymenoides*. Photo by Doug Jolley.



R. periclymenoides pollinator. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Our garden through this summer has been terrific. This marks eight or more years that a perimeter fence has kept the garden deer free. Unlike last May we avoided damaging frosty nights and the rhododendrons, azaleas and all companions bloomed unharmed. No massive frost blanket sessions this year!

As September approaches some of our wildflowers are producing impressive berry clusters. One that makes striking garden displays is Green Dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*). It is a member of the



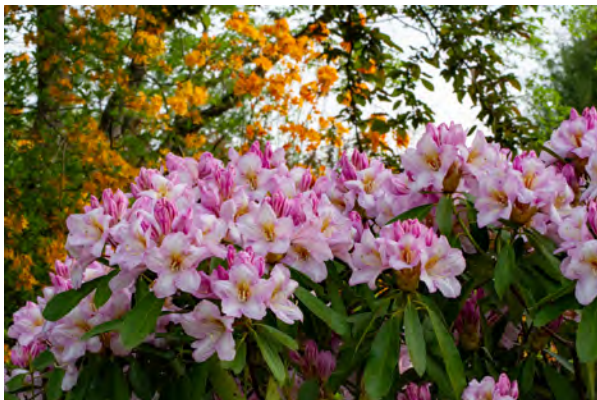
Arisaema dracontium. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Jack-in-the-Pulpit family and ours often exceed three feet in height. Following successful pollination colorful berry clusters brighten the areas in which they grow with green then ripening into bright red ornaments.



Native azalea seedling with *Rhododendron* 'Lowboy'. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Trimming, culling and garden editing continues and will pick up once autumn arrives. This was one fast summer!



Rhododendron 'Caroline'. Photo by Doug Jolley.



Yellow Lady Slipper and Shooting Star. Photo by Doug Jolley.



Kalmia 'Ostbo Red'. Photo by Doug Jolley.

IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is Sunday, August 15, 2021 as I sit down to write this article. For the past few weeks, the best words to describe our garden have been words that start with the letter “d”— dry, dusty, drought, droplets, drizzle, and finally downpour. I won’t list the other “d” words that might have been thought.

For maybe five weeks in a row, it would rain once a week in the Crozet area. At our house, only a few drops of rain, some were even droplets of rain, and at times even a brief drizzle was our best rain. It has been extremely hot and dry and at times dusty until this past Friday and Saturday when we had afternoon downpours both days.



So, what do our rhododendrons look like after our wonderful rain? Some look almost like they are ready for the leaf show at a chapter meeting while others look like someone took a blowtorch to the plant. These plants can be side by side in the garden. For some of the rhodos, just the new growth died. Now there are hundreds of 6 to 8 inch dead shoots that can be clipped out. It will almost be a fun project because the looks of the plant will be greatly improved after their removal.

A happy note from the garden is that several American boxwoods have recently produced 4 to 6 inch shoots of new leaves on what looked to be dead limbs and dead trunks. Maybe someday we will again have a boxwood hedge that you cannot see



What the drought did to some Rhododendrons. Photo by Margaret Willis.

through. Some small Green Beauty and Green Mountain boxwoods planted this summer appear to be fine with the limited rainfall.

At the beginning of summer, all our hostas got a once a week treatment of deer repellent that usually



Drought damage, one nice, another one dead? Photo by Margaret Willis.

worked well to protect them from the deer. As the summer progressed, I decided, that since it had worked in the past, I could do a once a month treatment of deer repellent for hosta protection. It did not work. We now have many clumps of hosta stalks. This past month I added some new plant beds that have hostas in them. I have been very consistent in spraying the new hostas weekly and will do so until frost.

So, where is the possible humor in this article? The second week of August we traveled to see relatives in southwestern Virginia and northwestern North Carolina for the first time in 18 months. On this Friday through Monday trip, the trunk of the car was packed. Too many clothes since we took too much because it had been so long since we had traveled and couldn't decide what to take. Also, although we had a couple of eating functions to attend, we weren't sure if our regular eating places were open so we took along an ice chest with food items. This left us only the back seat for possible plant purchases. On that Friday on the way into Galax, we stopped at a nursery and bought 13 two and a half quart size hostas at half price. Why 13? Because I asked Mrs. Willis (Margaret) to pick out all of the best hostas there. She kept handing me hostas and of course I couldn't resist. They filled almost exactly half the back seat and that half of the back seat floor. When we did a drive through at KFC

the next day, the cashier with great enthusiasm said, “What beautiful plants you have.” She was really happy to see the plants. Two days later on our way back to Crozet, we bought 3 three gallon size Japanese maples. That filled up the rest of the back seat and floor. Shortly afterwards, the younger daughter called us to say, “I am sure Dad has the car filled with plants.” My answer was “That is a silly guess. There is still room between your mother’s feet for at least one more plant.” That did not happen.

SPECIES STUDY GROUP MOUNTAIN HIKES JUNE 13 TO JUNE 19, 2021 by George McLellan

Our group was composed of some members of the Middle Atlantic and Potomac Valley Chapters, the Azalea Society of America, and the Jenkins Arboretum in Devon, Pennsylvania.



As a result of Covid 19 our Species Study Group has not been able to have our usual trips to the Southern Appalachian Mountains since June of 2019 to explore for our native azaleas. So it was with much anticipation that we planned our 2021 trip. Don Hyatt received a request from Steve Wright of Jenkins Arboretum in Devon, PA, for a group he put together of members of different arboreta to accompany us. They had permission to take cuttings for their collections from some of the best native azaleas we have found. It was an interesting job trying to co-ordinate 14 different individuals in up to 12 different vehicles on this trip.

We normally try to schedule the trip for the peak bloom season, but this year was a late spring in the mountains and we found that most of our spots were just beginning to bloom.

Sunday, June 13

The campground at Grayson Highland State Park had some very good *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, especially ones that generally are too early for us, but this year we saw them in full bloom. The *R. catawbiense* at Wilburn Ridge was starting to

bloom; it is always nice to see the large variations in color there.

Monday, June 14

We spent this day on the Blue Ridge Parkway south of Boon, N. C. at Moses Cone and Linville Falls. But the most interesting time was the late afternoon and early evening at Jay and Lindy Jackson’s place viewing their extensive collection of native azaleas. Once again the bloom was just beginning, but still it was very informative. Particularly interesting was one of the seedlings ‘Miss Lindy’, a beautiful light pink with some white that is very fragrant. (It has been in tissue culture by Vivian Abney of East Fork Nursery.)

Tuesday, June 15

We explored Roan Mountain starting at Carver’s Gap and hiked to Round Bald, Engine Gap, Jane Bald, Grassy Ridge Bald, and Grassy Ridge. The bloom was just beginning and many of our favorites were not in bloom, but the group was able to get good cuttings of some of the best *R. calendulaceum*!

Wednesday, June 16

We traveled to Asheville and got on the Blue Ridge Parkway and drove to Pisgah and explored the Southern Parkway before getting off at Balsam Gap; some of the group went to Mt. Toxaway. Don Hyatt and I went on to Wayah Bald to see how the doubled *R. calendulaceum* plants were doing. Wayah Bald was severely burned in the wild fires of December 2016 and the doubles were hurt, but are now coming back from their stumps. They looked healthy, but it may be a few years before they will bloom again.

Thursday, June 17

The group split up. Charlie Andrews took over the arboretum group and spent most of the day on Wayah Bald, while Don and I took the rest of the group to Hooper Bald.

Hooper Bald proved to be the highlight of the trip, even though it was in early bloom. The people of Graham County, N.C. have been doing a marvelous job in making the bald one the PREMIER places to see *R. calendulaceum* in the wild. The one quarter mile gravel path from the parking area was in top shape with fresh gravel and as we walked up we heard a weed eater going and found Revonda Williams cutting weeds and the tall grass for paths



George McLellan on Hooper Bald with 'Best Red'. Photo by Don Hyatt.



'Hooper Pumpkin'. Photo by Don Hyatt.



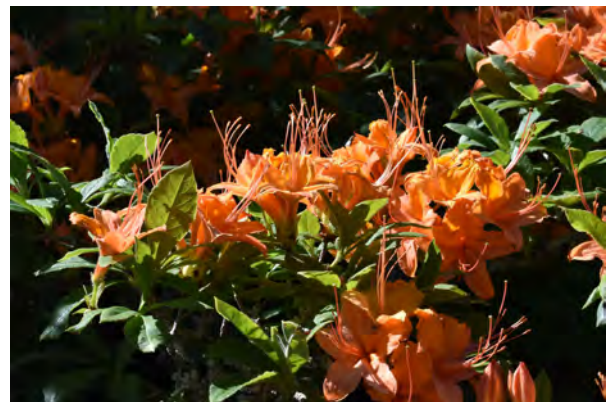
Rick Bauer and George McLellan on Hooper with 'Second Best Red'. Photo by Don Hyatt.



Barbara Bullock and Carol Segree with 'Hooper Orangesicle'. Photo by Don Hyatt.



Barbara Bullock and Rick Bauer with 'Hooper Pumpkin'. Photo by Don Hyatt.



'Hooper Orangesicle'. Photo by Don Hyatt.

around the azaleas. Revonda is Hooper Bald's angel. (Her father and her uncle grew up on Hooper Bald which is named for their ancestor Doctor Enos Hooper.) The bald has some of the best forms of large flowered *R. calendulaceum* we have found. There are hundreds of azaleas, many over 10 to 12 feet tall which always seem to have a profusion of bloom when we visit. The color range is yellow, gold, pumpkin orange, orange red, some good reds, and many combinations of the colors.

Since we have been working on the bald, the quantity of seedlings that appear each year to bloom has been amazing. It is a pleasure to see new blooms appear each year.

Don and I stayed on the bald until about 4:00pm expecting Charlie to bring the rest of the group to show where the best of the azaleas were located. But we had to get back to Franklin for dinner. The group did make it to Hooper later, but had less than an hour, and they did not know where the best plants were.

They all said that this was the best display of *R. calendulaceum* that they had seen and were sorry they did not get to take cuttings of the best. Many offered to come back and help at some time.



George McLellan enjoying the view from Hooper Bald. Photo by Don Hyatt.



'Second Best Red'. Photo by Don Hyatt.

This is one of the best places to see our natives in the wild. It is a short 1/4 mile hike on a good path,

and if you come when Graham County has their Azalea Festival in June, you can get a guided tour.

Tour attendees were Don Hyatt, George McLellan, Rick Bauer, Carol Segree, Barbara Bullock, Joe Miller, Halit Kardak, Charlie Andrews, and Dale Berrong who are members of one or more ARS and ASA chapters. The arboreta group included Steve Wright (Jenkins Arboretum), Patrick Thompson (Davis Arboretum at Auburn University), Olivia Kirkpatrick (Tyler Arboretum), Vick Piatt (Mt. Cuba Center), Julia Eppes (Mt. Cuba Center), and Ethan Kauffman (Stoneleigh Garden).

DEATHS

Patricia Stubbs, wife of longtime member Kendon Stubbs, died on June 16, 2021. Pat attended MAC meetings around Charlottesville with Kendon. She was from Brooklyn, New York and had a lifelong career in education first teaching kindergarten students and



Patricia Stubbs.

later working at the Piedmont Virginia Community College in the library. She retired in 2003 as Director of the Learning Lab.

BITS AND PIECES

Any member not receiving the R & A News that Dave Banks sends to all ARS members should be sure that Dave has your current email address. Send it to him at dfbanks@earthlink.net. Past issues of R & A news can be viewed at <https://rhododata.online/>.

ARS is trying something new to try to interest younger people. Next Generation Podcasts at https://www.rhododendron.org/next_gen_podcasts.htm is an example of what may be found: podcasts sharing personal stories about lives enriched through growing, exploring, and researching Rhododendrons.



Remember all photos can be seen in color and ENLARGED at MACARS.ORG.

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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