

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XLIX No. 1

February 2022

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 4-8, 2022

ARS Spring International Convention, Vancouver,  
Washington

**American Rhododendron Society**

**ARS Store Order from Amazon thru this site**

**MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)**

**UVA Special Collections**

**Old Quarterly Bulletins & JARS**

**Rhododendron Blog**

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

<http://arsstore.org/>

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

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

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

[www.rhododendron.org/blog/](http://www.rhododendron.org/blog/)

### NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

MAC Members,

As we begin planning for our Spring Meeting, please provide any ideas or suggestions you have for locations, programs/tours, speakers, etc. We definitely want to provide a meeting that you would like to attend.

Contact Theresa Brents [tbrents@gmail.com](mailto:tbrents@gmail.com)

Or any other Board Member.

### IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is January 18, 2022 as I sit down to write this article. It is 8 a.m. and 28 degrees F with snow turned to ice over 99% of the property. This is the result of our second snow storm which was on January 16. The first snow storm was January 3 with seven inches of heavy, wet snow. The power company noted that of its 45,000 customers in the area 22,000 were without electricity. In Crozet, the power outage lasted from zero hours to six days. We were without power for 27½ hours—but who was counting? We do keep thinking about buying a generator.



What observations can be made in the garden after these two snow storms? The first snow storm

caused at least twenty trees to lose limbs. Some of the limbs were basically half of the tree. We have had about twenty hours of labor so far in picking up limbs. Some limbs were taken to our big pile at the bottom of



Bent and broken branches from the heavy snow. Photo Margaret Willis.

the hill and others limbs had to go into three new limb piles close to our driveway. We have two tree companies that will help with the next level of cleanup—eventually.

The only neat part of the limb cleanup is that the oldest grandchild (Ava, 22) and I got to work together picking up limbs for parts of three days. Ava has been working for us since age three. Now she is a faster worker than Grand Dad (and maybe stronger).

Before the first snow storm, many of the Japanese maples had kept their dead light brown to pale reddish



Tightly curled Rhododendron leaves. Photo M. Willis.

leaves much longer than usual. With the coming of the snow, they dropped about 90% of those leaves in a three to five day period.

The two snow storms brought a few interesting observations. While looking at the twigs of multiple Japanese maples, there were the colors of brown, green, red, orange, and purple. Only the orange was highly visible from a distance—possibly the Orange Dream Japanese maple. One morning when we did our walk it was 20 degrees F and almost all the rhododendrons had slightly to extremely curled dark green leaves. A seven foot tall evergreen azalea was weighted down by the snow. Not fun to see. However, getting to see where the wet snow had transformed some boxwoods turned out to be a treat. We couldn't decide if our yard boasted a snow covered elephant or a snow covered mammoth. Both considered quite rare in Crozet. Another morning while in the house, we noticed another, not quite so rare, sight: Five small deer were browsing their way down our driveway. The lead deer briefly tasted something on the limb pile, then on a Japanese maple, then on a boxwood, then stopped and started eating like crazy on some azaleas. When two others joined it, I tried to get the window open to yell at them. Of course, I couldn't open the window so I just had to mutter instead of yell.



Hungry deer. Photo by M. Willis.

So where is the humor in this article? Over the Christmas break, I got a call from Sarah, the older daughter. She and the oldest grandson (Stuart, 19) wanted to work that afternoon helping me with yard work. I quickly asked what time they wanted to start and how long could they work. They had a 2½ hour block open. I had recently purchased a truck load of mulch. I decided for the three of us to mulch only Japanese maples that afternoon. I mulched the first tree by myself for an example of what I wanted. Without comment, the two of them added more mulch to the depth they wanted and redid my sort-of-circular bed into a real circle. I went on and did the second tree by myself, trying this time for perfection. Again it was not to their level of perfection. For the rest of the day, I pretended they did not need my help and stayed out of their way. They did a nice job but they used almost all of my mulch.

**DEATH** Ann Watson Mangels passed away on December 31, 2021. Ann and her husband Bill had many years of service in ARS. Ann was our District 9 Director in 2009 and 2010 and then served as Eastern Vice-President and then President of ARS. Ann received the ARS Gold Medal in 2021. Ann was born in 1941 in Baltimore and was a legal secretary

before her marriage to Bill. She became a realtor later on as her sons got older.

Ann's husband Bill served as District 9 Director before Ann did, so we were fortunate to have both of them come to many of our MAC meetings and get to know them.



Ann Mangels

Ann's memorial service was streamed from the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd on January 15. Many people were also in attendance at the service.

#### WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS February 2022 by Doug Jolley

One way to view Snowy Owls is to travel to Minnesota or Ontario or Great Lakes shores. The time frame most generally is in December through February. Snowy Owls travel southward in the winter and in years of food scarcity great numbers head southward. Another option is to visit the just south of Richmond, Virginia garden of MAC member Bill Bedwell.



In mid-January this year, I joined my nephew, brother and sister-in-law for a Minnesota bird trip. Upon returning home I sent a few photos captured on the trip to Bill and a few other folks. Imagine my surprise to read Bill's reply that he had a snowy owl in his own garden! It did not stay long but what a treat that must have been!



*Ilex opaca* with snow. Photo Doug Jolley.

Things have been quiet on our garden here in central West Virginia. Weather was very mild through December. Since the new year though we have had true winter. Single digit nights on occasion, a ten-inch snowfall, some minor high water and multiple snowy days.

I always enjoy walking beneath our American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) after a snowfall. Deep green foliage, bright berries, new fallen snow, and a bright blue winter sky makes for a beautiful sight.

Tree trunks in winter can become interesting garden features. Thirty-five plus years ago one of the Dawn Redwood trees Davetta and I planted grew as a globe in shape. A few attempts to root cuttings failed and our unique shaped tree just got bigger and bigger. Finally, some of the main branches began to grow upward. The lower portion of the trunk is now over four feet across. The trunk and lower limbs are covered with lichens. I wonder if Spanish Moss could be introduced ?



Snowy Owl. Photo by Doug Jolley.



Dawn Redwood. Photo by Doug Jolley.

Punxsutawney Phil says “Six more weeks of winter.”

Stay warm.

**INVASION OF THE SQUIRRELS** by Sandra McDonald.

Squirrels have been a nuisance in my yard for a long time because they dig in my flower pots to store their nuts for winter. In doing so they often dig up or pull out small plants that are growing in the pots. If I don't notice their digging in a day or two, the small plants dry up and die. They also dig in the yard to bury nuts around new plants I have put in since they prefer to dig in the disturbed and loosened soil.



Squirrel nest.

When I take my morning walk around the neighborhood I used to see about half a dozen squirrels. Lately if the weather is nice and not rainy, too cold, or snowy, I usually see a dozen or more squirrels. They are on the increase. With eight

mature live oaks, willow oaks and a couple other kinds in my yard and a couple more next door, they have plenty to eat. Evidently the



Two squirrel nests in 'Cinnamon Flakes' maple.

acorn crop has been too good recently.

Earlier this winter I counted four squirrel nests in the front yard and one in the back yard. About a week ago I noticed more nests. There were eight nests in the front yard and three in the back yard.

Besides digging up my plants, the squirrels cut off small branches with their teeth to build their big, messy nests. One has even been trying over the last two years to build a nest under



my porch roof. I am positive of this because I saw how the squirrel was getting to the area, carrying the small branches up there. I put a temporary stop to that by putting a roll of netting in the spot where it had been trying to build the nest. That stopped



Squirrel nest in *Camellia sasanqua*.

it last year. A squirrel started building the nest in the same place this month after throwing down the netting. That is one determined squirrel.



Squirrel at the neighbor's.

The squirrels here don't hibernate, but do stay in their nests when the weather is bad.

A couple of weeks ago I noticed a large number of holly (*Ilex integra*) cuttings scattered all around by the holly tree. The squirrels were at it again. It must have been more than one squirrel to do so much pruning. I realize that cicadas make a lot of twigs drop from having the eggs laid near the branch tips. The cicadas tend to prefer oak trees here and the cuttings fall off much earlier than January.

The squirrel clipping trees problem is not unique.. This link leads to an article about a tree that the squirrels



pruned. *Ilex integra* clippings lying on Vinca .

**From Walter Reeves, *The Georgia Gardener***

<https://www.walterreeves.com/insects-and-animals/squirrel-clipping-maple-twigs/>

Q: I have an old budding and flowering tree in south Georgia that is being severely “twigged back” by gray squirrels. On any given morning or evening there may be as many as 10 squirrels who are cutting the twigs to eat the buds and flowers. I would say that they have cut off more than half of the twigs. My concern is that this damage might result in the death of the tree.

A: Wow! I can’t say I’ve ever heard of ten squirrels attacking one tree. It looks like a maple to me. I don’t think that the squirrels “pruning” will kill the tree, but it can certainly stress it and cause some strange looking new growth in the spring.

My only suggestion is that you live-trap the squirrels and relocate them a couple of miles away. Surely they will find wild trees to gnaw on other than yours.

### **RALF BAUER’S ZOOM PRESENTATION**

Ralf Bauer gave a fine Zoom presentation on *Rhododendron austrinum* on the Gulf Coast on January 30<sup>th</sup>. There were people watching on 126 different computers, phones, etc. With the spouses and friends gathered on some of the computers or TVs, there were well over 126 total!



Part of the audience for Ralf’s talk as seen on my computer screen.



Speaker Ralf Bauer.



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

**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.

**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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