

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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Rhododendron Society

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September 2023

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

MAC Meeting Oct 7, 2023, Roslyn Center, Richmond
ARS Conference Oct 19-23, Florence, OR
District 9 Meeting Apr 29-30, 2024, Annapolis, MD

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/

FALL MEETING SEPTEMBER FALL MEETING - by Doug Jolley

Our Chapter Fall Meeting will be held on October 7, 2023, at the Roslyn Center, Richmond Virginia. This will be a one-day meeting. Two speakers are scheduled to address our group. Don Hyatt will share new rhododendron hybridizing efforts and results. It has been too long since Don has spoken to our chapter, and we look forward to his presentation.

Chapter President Doug Jolley will provide a tribute to the MAC Chapter in the form of acknowledging plants that are the foundation of his and Davetta's rhododendron garden in central West Virginia. Plants that have been obtained over the decades from meetings, other members and Rhododendron Society friends provide year 'round interest to this garden.

Treasurer Debby Sauer will update members on MAC gifts and contributions. The Chapter annually donates funds and hands on assistance to many organizations and projects.

We will have lunch at the Roslyn Center during the day.

Book Sales and a Plant Auction will also be conducted. Rhododendron themed 2024 desk photo calendars will also be included to the book sale offerings.

Registration forms and meeting schedules will be forwarded to the membership in a separate online distribution.

WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS, SEPTEMBER 2023 by Doug Jolley (*photos by Doug Jolley*)

This summer our garden was hacked! It was not by a skilled internet thief but a doe deer and her fawn. We have been deer free since our fence was erected 10 years ago! It is daily that multiple deer go by the garden. This time a doe was in the garden.



Upon my approach it ran but I failed to see its escape route or point. The next day this occurred again. The search for a void in or damage to the fence began. After some possible entry access corrections were completed, the deer and this time a young one was in the garden the next day! After additional examinations, dozens of



zip ties, addition fencing and posts all was set. During what now has become a week of intrusions, dozens of hostas and dozens of daylilies were the first culinary casualties. Mass casualties! Borders of dwarf hostas vanished. It took three days but an 8-

foot in circumference Blue Cadet Hosta clump was finally consumed. Annuals became the next target. Thankfully the vegetables and woody ornamentals had not been bothered. The deer also entered the open end of



R. prunifolium

our shade house, ransacked multiple flats of different upstarts and proceeded to break through the enclosed end of the structure upon exit.

Finally, after nearly two weeks of dreading to even look outside, Davetta finally saw the mother and offspring casually exit through a (seemingly invisible to us) flaw in the deer fencing. She mended the void and this immediately ended this episode.

Since the Spring Meeting our garden has been watered by ample rainfall. Hand watering of anything not under roof has not been necessary. Summer native azaleas have been blooming profusely. *Rhododendron prunifolium* has been a sight to behold.

An early August visit to Cranberry Glades provided a bit of a floral surprise; at least to me. Along the boardwalk and the immediate general area, many *Rhododendron maximum* were in pristine flowering condition. Not past prime or remnants



R. maximum on Aug.8, 2023.

but beautiful trusses! I can't remember being anywhere in West Virginia in August and encountering rhododendron flowers in such nice condition.

After a slow early summer start, we have had very generous numbers of butterflies to enjoy.

Our Chapter is holding a one-day fall meeting on October 7 and it should be a great chance for MAC members to get together and enjoy a great meeting schedule.

IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

It is a Friday at 5 pm on September 1, 2023, as I sit down to write this article. We have not had a good rain in over two weeks and the last mowing was over two weeks ago. Where there is grass, it is short, neat, crunchy to walk on, a dull green to brown in color, and partially



covered with yellow and brown tulip poplar leaves. To some folks it might look like a series of dots on a quilt. So what else has neat colors in the garden today? There is a five foot tall rhodo near our kitchen door that has various leaf colors—dark green, dull green, yellow, dull yellow, and brown. Is there a pattern here?

Now to report on my ongoing battle with the deer to try to save the hostas on the property. I am clearly winning the battle about 5% of the time. To try to win the battle, I spray with liquid deer fence once a week for a month and then spray once every one or two weeks for the rest of the summer. I am never sure which group of plants need it weekly until it is too late. I still can't understand how the deer can eat something that smells as badly as the sprayed plants. Last month, to show the deer that I have not given up on planting hostas, I put in five small hosta beds near the garage with three to six hostas in each. Since I see these every day, I remember to water and spray as needed. Margaret (Mrs. Willis) likes the new hostas but feels my plant placement is unique.

Under good news, we came home from a fairly recent MAC chapter meeting with three small pots of Gable's Early Bird. Two of those have grown like weeds—both are around 18 inches tall and bushy. Another area of the garden has a bed with at least ten

rhodos purchased at the chapter meetings. We have never come home from a chapter meeting without new rhodos to try.

So where is the humor in this article? In late July, we owned three lawnmowers: a zero turn riding mower, a 22-inch self-propelled mower, and a broken 22-inch mower which after multiple breakdowns was being saved for parts. (Does the last qualify for unrealistic expectations? If it has broken several times, why save it for parts?). The riding mower broke first. Before it could be picked up for repairs, the self-propelled broke. On the bright side, they could pick up both mowers at the same time. The not-so-bright side, they were backlogged three weeks. I asked one of the grandsons if he would like to be employed mowing for us using his family's 22-inch push mower. He mowed one of the areas and two days later came back to mow the second area. Thirty minutes into that job his mower breaks down. With four broken mowers, I decided it would be wonderful to have the whole property as a nature area until the riding mower was repaired. It only took four weeks for that to happen.

On the day the riding mower was returned, I am so, so excited to be able to start mowing. I had not been mowing fifteen minutes when I rounded a boxwood and hit a boxwood stump that in my mind had not been there four weeks ago. The mower stopped. It would not move when pushed; it would not move when the stump was removed; it would not start when the key was turned. I have set a world record for wreaking a riding mower and facing another four weeks without it. After some serious prayer time, I remembered to disengage the mower blades and the mower worked fine for my entire three and a half hour mowing session. Of course, with no recent rain no mower has been needed.

A WILD WACKY SEASON by George McLellan
(Photos by George McLellan)

Since 1988 with the arrival of spring, thoughts arise of an annual trip to search for and see our native azaleas in bloom. With many years of experience we can set up a time table of what we want to see and where and when it will occur.



The timing begins with the start of spring, is it early or late, etc. For me the start begins when I see



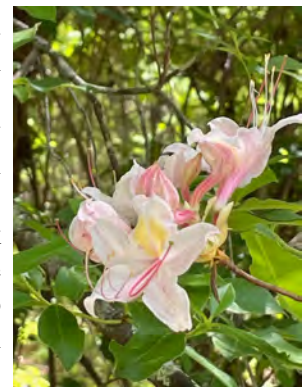
Barbara Bullock and *R. flammeum*

the first blooms of *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* (our naturalized *Narcissus*) in the woods and along the road sides in Gloucester County, Virginia. This year

the first blooms began appearing by the sixth to ninth of February, by far the earliest I have ever seen them. So the schedule of bloom was moved up.

Our first trip would be in late April, around April 17th to April 25th, when we went to the ARS-ASA National Convention in Atlanta. We expected to be able to see *Rhododendron flammeum* and *R. canescens* in bloom in mid Georgia, but it had bloomed very early and was passed bloom.

A group of us took time off from the convention and drove to Callaway Gardens on April 20. We saw some *R. flammeum* in bloom, but



R. colemanii

what I really wanted to see was *R. colemanii* (the Red Hills azalea). Ron Miller wrote an article in *The Azalean Winter* 2009 stating that the best place to view *R. colemanii* is Callaway Gardens. We were not



Carol Segree and *R. colemanii* at Callaway Gardens.

disappointed.

There are hundreds of plants along the roadside and in the woods; huge 12 ft to 20 ft. tall plants both pinks and whites.

We saw some very beautiful plants with fragrant flowers in different shades of pink and whites edged in pale pink with yellow blotches. This is the best place to view the Red Hills Azalea.

On the last day of the meeting I was recruited to drive Ralf Bauer to see



Pink *R. colemanii* at Callaway Gardens.

some stands of native azaleas in the Atlanta Area. The most interesting was at the Chattahoochee River National Area near Roswell. This is



Possible *R. flammeum* hybrid.

the southernmost and lowest altitude location for *R. calendulaceum* to be found. The plants were in full bloom on April 22.

On the way home we went up to the Blue Ridge Parkway to see *R. vaseyi* in bloom. Most years we see the bloom in this area in mid May. We wanted to show the group from Jenkins Arboretum what we call the "Red Vaseyi". The bloom was just starting, but we did find one "Red Vaseyi".

At the end of May after the MAC meeting I joined with Karel Bernady to search for bloom of *R. prinophyllum* in West Virginia. We went to Dolly Sods on May 22 only to see a few blooms. Usually



R. prinophyllum at Mt. Baker in Pennsylvania.



R. periclymenoides in Oakland, MD.

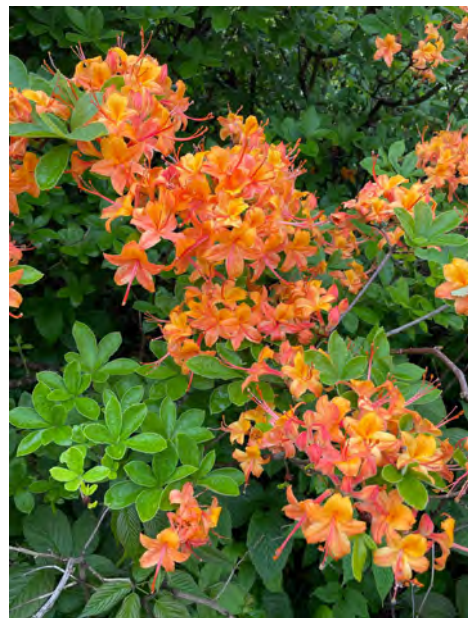


Don Hyatt looking at a good orange *R. calendulaceum* on White Top.

the best time to see bloom on Dolly Sods is around mid June, but this year top bloom would be early June. After seeing that we were a little early Karel drove to Mount Baker in Pennsylvania where he thought there would be bloom and we found some excellent bloom and an especially excellent bright red *R. prinophyllum*.



Karel Bernady looking at a good red *R. calendulaceum* on White Top.



R. calendulaceum on White Top.



Spectacular *R. calendulaceum* on White Top.



Good yellow *R. calendulaceum* on White Top.



Brilliant red *R. calendulaceum* on White Top.

On the way back to West Virginia we found an area of excellent *R. periclymenoides* along the roadside near Oakland, Maryland, where we found good pale pinks and an excellent white.

That left us with the most anticipated trip of the season, White Top Mountain and its *R. calendulaceum* found along the Appalachian Trail. This is the second highest mountain in Virginia and is located in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. It is an easy drive from Marion, Virginia, to a forest service road up to the parking lot for the A.T. Trail at about 5,000 ft. The azaleas are along the trail which follows the 5,000 ft contour of the top and are easy to see and study.

Since the year was so early, we went to the mountain on June 7. It was a cold 42° F, wet and windy with no bloom. We retreated to Mountain City, Tennessee, and visited Jay and Lindy Jackson. They informed us that it had turned very cold at the high levels and everywhere things were shut down. We would have to reschedule.

At last on June 23 we found White Top in full bloom. The azaleas were excellent and we found good reds; multi colors yellow turning orange and finishing red; good oranges, tangerines, pumpkins fading to rose; golds; and fine yellows, pale to deep.

This will become a place to study especially for me since it is easy on my old bones and even easier than Hooper.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mark and Kathy Gunnell, Frederick, MD
Scott Hemler, Williamsburg, VA

*****YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION*****

Fifteen of our MAC members do not have email addresses listed in our records. If any of you do have email addresses now, it would be a help to us to have your email address and you would receive Chapter Meeting Notices and Newsletters several days sooner than getting them in the mail. We are having a more difficult time getting this material out to members now. Dave Banks is presently in rehab because of a broken bone and I am having a difficult time keeping up. You can send the information to Sandra McDonald or David Banks at the email addresses listed on the back page of this newsletter.

ARS's Potomac Valley Chapter to Host District 9 Meeting in Annapolis April 28-30, 2024

Plans are under way for a three-day meeting at the Country Inn & Suites in Annapolis. The hotel has given us a special rate of \$99 per night since we plan to arrive on Sunday night and leave on Tuesday. Expect good food, excellent talks, and beautiful gardens, an opportunity to share memories with our rhododendron friends. The Chapter is planning a great plant sale with many rhododendrons, azaleas, and companion plants to satisfy our unrelenting need to acquire new varieties. The Marshy Point azaleas will be featured in this sale.

Our speakers are Don Hyatt and Tony Dove. Don will talk about the Marshy Point azaleas, which were hybridized in Maryland. Tony, the original designer of the landscaping at Historic London Town & Gardens, will talk about its history and the development of his own nearby garden.

Tours will begin with Historic London Town & Gardens, a 23-acre park and museum that overlooks

the South River. The Potomac Valley Chapter has established memorial gardens there for Gray Carter and Jean Beaudry. We look forward to showing you these special sites. There is a mile-long walking trail among ornamentals and native plants. In addition to their rhododendrons and azaleas, there are many camellias, magnolias, and hollies.

Among the private gardens on tour will be Hidden View Farm owned by Richard Bradshaw. This 100-acre wooded estate has a 10-acre fenced garden that includes a large pond with water features, a massive camellia collection, azaleas, a redwood forest, hollies, and a vast collection of ornamental trees, shrubs and companion plants.

The suburban gardens of Rosa & Bob McWhorter and Carol Segree will complete the garden tours. The McWhorter garden is a mature landscape under a tall canopy of trees with many winding paths among the plantings. It features large evergreen and deciduous azaleas, as well as an extensive rhododendron collection. The McWhorters have many rare Dexter and Cowles hybrids that came from the Sandwich Club distributions on Cape Cod and also some exciting new plants Bob raised from the Seed Exchange.

The Segree garden is a diverse landscape with both sunny and shady areas. Carol has wooded paths among mature rhododendron and azalea plantings. She has added significant stonework in recent years including retaining walls and a second patio with a fountain. She is now refining her collection keeping only the best rhododendron and azalea cultivars while adding new introductions and choice companion plants like camellias, evergreens, Japanese maples, flowering trees, and perennials.



**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.

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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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