

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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

Vol. XXVI No.2

May 2000

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

Sept 29 – Oct 1

Elkins, WV

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

R & A News <http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html>

American Rhododendron Society <http://www.rhododendron.org/>

U VA Science & Engineering Libraries <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm>

FALL 2000 MEETING OF MAC ARS by Frank Pelurie

MAC's Fall 2000 Meeting will be held in Elkins, West Virginia, September 29 through October 1, at the Graceland Inn and Conference Center located on the campus of Davis & Elkins College.

Last year this was peak fall foliage color for the mountains of West Virginia. Dolly Sods was absolutely gorgeous with the large areas of contrasting deep red colored blueberry leaves, the occasional green windswept conifers and the many

will be held Saturday evening and where you will most likely eat many of your meals, very different and enjoyable. Also, those of you who request and are lucky enough to get lodging in the few rooms in the Inn will be pleasantly surprised. All of the other rooms at the Conference Center are standard motel type. The overall cost for the weekend should be low as we have been given very good prices from the Graceland Inn and Conference Center.

There will be two programs Friday evening, one of them being on Japanese maples by Paul James. I'll work on Paul to include something about rhododendrons and azaleas for you purists. Saturday there will be field trips to interesting places, and a banquet speaker in the evening. And as usual, there will be the book and seedling sales, Plants for Members, and Plant Auction.

Further meeting, registration and lodging information will be mailed about the end of June. For those of you who need meeting information before then; contact Frank Pelurie, 250 Dutch Ridge Road, Clendenin, West Virginia 25045, telephone (304) 968-3793, e mail : franklin.pelurie@worldnet.att.



Graceland Inn

rocks. And while there you can even collect some *R. prinophyllum* seed. net .

You will find Graceland Inn, where our banquet



Dr. Gillenwater's garden



Dr. Gillenwater's garden



Elmer Lapsley, Ken McDonald, and Dr. John Neal

MAC SPRING 2000 MEETING

MAC members enjoyed a wonderful weekend in Charlottesville May 5 – 7. Bob and Jay Murray presented a program at Alderman Library on Friday

evening showing how the Database of Rhododendron Hybrids and Cultivars worked. This was the first time most of us had seen the program. Kendon Stubbs and Sharon Difibaugh told us about the highlights of the Rhododendron Collection and some choice examples were on display for us to see.

Saturday morning we had a short business meeting at which Sybil Przypek, Bill Bedwell, and Dr. John Neal were re-elected as Directors. Ray Brush wants to be relieved of at least part of the Treasurer's duties so Jane McKay will take over the membership renewals since she is already Membership Chairman.

Saturday was a warm day of garden tours to the Gillenwater, Hirsch, Derthick, and Peters gardens. We had not seen the Hirsch garden before and were very impressed with the lovely setting and large rhododendrons, including some 'Ashes of Roses' dating back to Dr. Wheeldon's days. Martha Derthick had built a unique and wonderful modern house overlooking Warren Cloud's old garden and had renovated the garden. We had a lovely picnic lunch at Pavillion Seven on the Lawn at the University of Virginia.

We all learned a lot about dwarf conifers from Maude Henne's talk at the Saturday evening banquet.

On Sunday morning Sandra McDonald presented a talk and slide show to the Species Study Group. Various gardens in the area were open for visitors for tours on Sunday.

Thanks to Jeanne Hammer and Toby Zakin for their work in organizing such a fine meeting.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

What a wonderful spring we are having, in our garden – no late frosts, several good rains, and even the deer are leaving us alone. The dogwoods in central Virginia have been outstanding this year. We have had dogwoods blooming in our garden for a full month.



Truss show winners. Photo by Walter Przypek.

Last year's drought is evident in a few places, some azaleas have fewer flowers, buds were not frozen they just never formed. A few rhododendrons have fewer flowers in the truss, again never formed. Overall the bloom is good. *Rhododendron* 'Dexter's 'Champagne' is gorgeous and fragrant. I love fragrance in the garden so in addition to viburnums and lilacs I try to grow as many fragrant rhododendrons as possible. In addition to *R.* 'Dexter's Champagne' we grow several *R. fortunei*, *R.* 'Helen Everitt', *R.* 'Emil Hager' and *R.* 'Skyglow'. We also grow *R. canescens*, *R. viscosum* and *R. arborescens* Jane McKay for their fragrance.



A few years ago after a visit to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, I decided I had to try to grow pitcher plants. I obtained seed of *Sarracenia purpurea* (from North American Rock Garden Society Seed Exchange) and germinated them in a very wet peat and perlite mix topped with dried sphagnum moss. In the spring, not having a bog, I dug a hole, lined it with plastic, and filled it with a wet peat and soil mix. The *Sarracenia purpurea* have spent three seasons outdoors and are doing fine. This year they have sent up big fat

buds. I'm anxiously waiting to see them bloom. It's always fun to try something different.

As many of you know General Robert Porter passed away on April 22. Wally and I attended his very moving memorial service. Though the eulogies stressed his outstanding military career, where he rose to the rank of four star general, the many ways he served his community, his church and his love for his family, throughout was

mentioned his love affair with rhododendrons. The alter of the church was even decorated with rhododendrons. He was interred in his garden at Middle River Farm along side his wife. Bob, as he wanted to be known, was an outstanding gentleman. He will be missed.

TO PRUNE OR NOT TO PRUNE OLD AZALEAS by Bill Bedwell

I spent all day yesterday in one section of garden trying to make the paths passable and to remove dead stuff and a volunteer grape vine that was trying to cover several azaleas and crossing the path. The vine got away from me last summer – I did not notice how rampant it had become. My plan was to take it on during the winter when I could better see where to cut the tendrils that were wrapped around the azaleas – but now the azaleas are coming into bloom earlier than expected and I am trying to remove the grapevine without disturbing the flowers.

In addition to the grapevine, ice and snow had bent over some sections of one large boxwood into the path. It was really difficult to move around. In no time this section of the garden had become a jungle. I cut the entire boxwood back to 2 feet and exposed the lovely azalea, 'Hampton Beauty' to full visibility. It was growing between two boxwoods

and the top has spread or bent out into the path. It is now about 12 feet wide by 8 feet tall, almost in full bloom and really spectacular. The color looks good with the boxwood foliage so it still has one as a backdrop. I may divert the path around it by removing an azalea on the other side. 'Hampton Beauty' is too spectacular to prune. It takes many years to get a plant this beautiful so why cut it off. The azalea on the other side is not that beautiful. May the best azalea win!

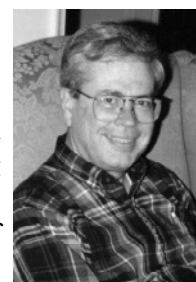
Some azaleas can become gorgeous shrubs when left to grow on their own without pruning, but too often we do not have them in a location where they can do this. In addition to the large plant of Hampton Beauty, I carefully removed the grapevine from a clump of three 7-foot-tall 'Coral Bells' azaleas in full bloom. Originally the plants were spaced 3 feet apart to form a group, and there was space for them to develop into a nice single clump, but I did not realize they would grow so large and look so magnificent when they got that big. Now they don't have enough space to really display it.

'Coral Bells' is also competing for space available between two large boxwoods and a path on another side so they have not developed full width. The large plants only look good when they develop naturally. If you do annual pruning to keep them within a space you can easily destroy the gracefulness of their shape and end of with gum ball variations that I think are ugly, but some people must like because I see it so often.

It takes great talent in pruning and constant diligence to keep azaleas within a small space while retaining an attractive and graceful shape. Rosalie Nachman has always done this with complete and amazing success. You would never know her plants have been pruned. My only method has been to do little or no pruning for many years and then completely cut the plant back to about 12 to 18 inches as soon after flowering as possible. Azaleas will re-grow from such drastic treatment, but many varieties of rhododendrons are likely to die (but not all varieties). Very light fertilizer may be okay after the pruning, but why force the plant to grow excessively. If there is enough rain during the summer, the new growth will be rank and may require some additional pruning, in mid-July, but supplemental pruning later than July may not give enough time to produce flower buds.

I have not done much of this secondary pruning as a follow-up to drastic pruning in May so it is best to experiment lightly or ask someone who has. I did supplemental pruning of rank new growth the following spring after flowering, but I think you may get better looking results by cutting some of the rank growth the first of July to force branching. If you don't prune the rank growth that follows drastic pruning, I have noticed that it calms down naturally the second year, and even more the next year, so only the rankest shoots may all the follow-up pruning you need.

The other technique I have used to make large azaleas fit their space is one I observed in a garden on Long Island. I selected one or two trunks and removed the side branches but left the natural twiggy growth at the top. If you select more than one trunk, consider selecting one that is shorter than the other, but this is a matter of personal taste and how it looks in the specific setting. An informal garden seems to require one shorter than the other instead of the more formal two trunks of equal height.



The remaining plant was cut back to about 12 inches so the eventual effect was a new bushy plant growing low and one or two trunks towering above with a bushy plant on top of the trunk. I did this with Kurume azaleas, mostly 'Snow', because the Kurumes generally have a very artistic type of growth that works well with this effect. Also, if you don't prune the growth at the top of the trunk it will continue on with normal short growth each year, instead of rank growth caused by pruning. I suspect 'Coral Bells' will work well too, especially because the growth on top of the trunk will be slow. But the whole plant of 'Coral Bells' is so artistic with age it is best to find a location where it can show it off.

With young plants, we tend to judge azaleas by their flowers and get excited over each new variation. One of my favorites for flowers has always been the Pericat azalea, 'Dawn'. The plant is not an attractive grower and tends toward rank growth, instead of the more attractive dense twiggy growth. It has never shown any sign of developing an attractive plant on its own. Part of the problem may be it is occasionally subject to some winter

injury so the rank growth may come out below the winter kill. Pruning to shape it is a must. Beautiful flowers, unattractive plant.

The first evergreen azaleas I planted in my garden were the old Kurume varieties that were widely available in the mid-60s. Then I got excited about the Glenn Dales and all of the other new groups that followed plus the fascinating Satsukis. Rabbits and petal blight eventually discouraged my enjoyment of the Satsukis and some of their derivatives, but I still enjoy those I have when conditions are good. But it has occurred to me recently that after all these years that 'Coral Bells', one of those original Kurume azaleas I planted in the garden, could be the prettiest shrub there if I give it more room.

I think it is about time to remove another boxwood and fully enjoy the rare beauty of a large old plant of 'Coral Bells'.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

The storm that hit Charlottesville on May 13, just one week after our Spring Meeting, did a lot of damage at Kendon and Pat Stubbs' home and garden. Major trees are down everywhere on the garden and house. His rare rhododendrons and azaleas were smashed including his 30 year old yak. His Japanese garden is devastated. What was a shade garden is now a sun garden. The dining room and the library of the house were severely damaged by a tree.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER:

Frances Boninti, ,
Charlottesville, VA 22901

DECEASED MEMBERS

J. Russell Parsons

Associate member J. Russell Parsons from Hurlock, Maryland, died March 1, 2000, in hospice care. Russ came to many of our MAC meetings. There will probably be an auction of his plants this fall at a Mason-Dixon Chapter meeting. Deepest sympathy is extended to his family.

Gen. Robert W. Porter, Jr.

Retired Army General Robert William Porter,

Jr., a four star general and former commander in chief of the U.S. Southern Command, died April 22, 2000, in Charlottesville. He was 91. General Porter was active in his community and church, helped found the library in Madison, Virginia, and was recognized as Tree Farmer of the Year in 1995. He had many beautiful rhododendrons and was very generous in his donations to MAC auctions. He served on the MAC board for many years. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his daughter Celia Dollarhide of Alexandria who is a MAC member and to sons Henrik and Robert W. Porter III, daughter Susan Walker, and the extended family.

NEWS FROM NATIONAL

ARS has a colorful, new membership brochure. Contact your Chapter President, Alton Hall, or Membership Chairman Jane McKay to obtain a brochure if you know of anyone you think would like to join ARS. Better yet, bring an interested friend along to the Fall Meeting at Elkins, West Virginia.

"A Guide to Planting & Care" of Rhododendrons and Azaleas, a colorful brochure about rhododendron culture is also available.

You should have received an ARS decal to place on your car window in the last newsletter. The decals and the new membership brochures were funded through the generosity of Dr. John and Ann Root of Bellingham.

1999 MAC Flower Show

Classes and Subclasses

Rhododendron Species

Elepidotes (non-scaly series)

Blue	Sandra McDonald	<i>R. metternichii</i>
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Rhododendron Hybrids - Elepidote

White

Blue	Kendon Stubbs	'Sappho'
Red	Austin Kennell	Unnamed Ashville Dexter
White	A. Kennell	Unnamed Pride Seedling
	Bruno Kaelin	'County of York'
	A. Kennell	Coxe 3A

Yellow, light shades

Blue	A. Kennell	J.S.A.
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Pink, light

Blue	Rosa Carter	'Calsap'
Red	A. Kennell	'Pink Tipp'
White	Rosa Carter	'Janet Blair'
Green	Rosa Carter	unknown
	A. Kennell	'Powell Glass' × <i>R. yakusianum</i>

Pink, medium

Blue	Bruno Kaelin	'Anita Gehnrich'
Red	Bruno Kaelin	'Wheatley'
White	A. Kennell	'Bravo'
	A. Kennell	Morris seedling
	Glenn Kauffman	'Kalinka'

Pink, medium with prominent blotch

Blue	Rosa Carter	'Scintillation'
Red	A. Kennell	'Tom Everett'
White	Bruno Kaelin	'Todmorden'
	A. Kennell	'Ben Moseley'
	G. Kauffman	'Gigi' × 'Wissahickon'
	Rosa Carter	Unknown
	A. Kennell	'Old Copper'
	Sandra McDonald	'Great Eastern'
	A. Kennell	Dexter 'Pink Glory'
	Rosa Carter	unknown

Pink, deep

Blue	A. Kennell	Unnamed Pride Seedling
Red	Bruno Kaelin	'Nearing Pink'
White	A. Kennell	'Cynthia'
	Rosa Carter	unknown
	S. McDonald	'Buschmann's Plum' (unregistered name)
	S. McDonald	'Nathan Hale'
	S. McDonald	'Sir James'

Rose, rose-red or crimson

Blue	S. McDonald	Unknown Dexter
Blue	Jeanne Hammer	'The General'
Red	A. Kennell	'Big Catmar'

1999 MAC Flower Show

	Toby Zakin		'Nancy of Robin Hill'
	Bruno Kaelin		'Glenda Farrell'
Yellow-pink			
	Bruno Kaelin		'Mary Belle'
Blue-purple, lavender blue			
Blue	Bruno Kaelin		'Blue Peter'
Red	A. Kennell		'Virginia Delp'
White	A. Kennell		'Dexter Purple'
	Jeanne Hammer		'Flashback'
	A. Kennell		<i>R. sutchuenense</i>
Blue-purple, strong purple			
Blue	Jeanne Hammer		'Grape Wine'
Red	Rosa Carter		'Roseum Elegans'
White	Rosa Carter		'English Roseum'
Green	Gretchen Johnson		'Roseum Elegans'
	Gretchen Johnson		'Catawbiense Boursault'
Red, vermillion or blackish			
	Gretchen Johnson		'Henry's Red'
	Glenn Kauffman		'Blinklicht'
Rhododendron Hybrids - Lepidote			
Blue	Bruno Kaelin		<i>R. carolinianum</i> × <i>R. augustinii</i>
Azalea Species			
Evergreen			
Red	Bruno Kaelin		<i>R. kiusianum</i> 'Komo Kulshan'
Deciduous			
Blue	Ray Doggett		<i>R. nudiflorum</i>
Azalea Hybrids - Evergreen			
White			
Blue	A. Kennell		Unnamed Pride Seedling
Red	J. Hamner		'Pleasant White'
White	S. McDonald		Unknown
	S. McDonald		Unknown
	William Constable		'Green Glow'
Orange-pink			
Blue	J. Hamner		'Jean Garrett'
Red	A. Kennell		Unnamed Pride Seedling
White	J. Hamner		'Linwood Salmon'
	S. McDonald		Seedling
	A. Kennell		'Flamingo'
Pink, medium			
Blue	William Constable		'Arcadia'
Blue	S. McDonald		'Teepee'
Red	T. Zakin		'Nancy of Robin Hill'
White	T. Zakin		'Kehr's Rosebud' or 'Gable's Rosebud'
	B. Kaelin		'Tara'
	R. Carter		'Greenwood Orchid Beauty'
	S. McDonald		Unknown Gable
Lavender-purple			

1999 MAC Flower Show

	Blue	Kendon Stubbs	'Lady Locks'
	Red	B. Kaelin	'Elsie Lee'
	White	T. Zakin	'Pixie Petticoats'
		T. Zakin	'Terry'
		B. Kaelin	'Chanticleer'
Salmon			
	Blue	R. Carter	'Fascination'
	Red	A. Kennell	'Apple Jack'
Azalea Hybrids - deciduous			
Yellow			
	Blue	R. Carter	'Girard's Yellow PomPom'
		B. Kaelin	'Sweet Christie'
		A. Kennell	<i>R. calendulaceum</i> ?
Bi-colored			
	Blue	Kendon Stubbs	<i>R. calendulaceum</i> pink and yellow
	Blue	J. Hamner	'Windsor Daybreak'
	<u>Red</u>	R. Carter	'Peach Glow'
	White	B. Kaelin	'Tutti Frutti'
Orange			
	Blue	Kendon Stubbs	'Gibraltar'
	Red	R. Carter	'Girard's Orange Jolly'
		A. Kennell	'Gibraltar'
Pink			
	Blue	S. McDonald	Seedling
	Red	R. Carter	'Girard's Pink Delight'
	White	R. Carter	'Home Bush'
Grown from ARS Seed Exchange			
Azalea - deciduous			
	Blue	K. Stubbs	<i>R. sanctum</i>
		K. Stubbs	<i>R. sanctum</i>
Novice Exhibitors			
Rhododendron - elepidote			
	Blue	Theresa Brents	'Mars'
	Blue	John Neal	'Cynthia'
	Blue	T. Brents	'Nepal'
	Red	T. Brents	'Party Pink'
	Red	T. Brents	Unknown
	White	T. Brents	Unknown
	White	T. Brents	'Hallelujah'
	Green	T. Brents	'Blue Peter'
	Green	T. Brents	'Trilby'
	Green	T. Brents	'Spring Frolic'
		T. Brents	'Janet Blair'
		T. Brents	'Apollo'
		T. Brents	'Mist Maiden'
Azalea - evergreen			
	Blue	T. Brents	Unknown
	Red	T. Brents	Unknown

1999 MAC Flower Show

	White	T. Brents	'Treasure'
Azalea - deciduous			
	Blue	T. Brents	Unknown
Related Species - Ericaceae family			
Kalmia latifolia			
	Blue	R. Carter	'Osto Red'
	Red	T. Zakin	'Freckles'
Class Winners			
Best Rhododendron Species		Sandra McDonald	<i>R. metternichii</i>
Best Rhododendron Hybrid - Elepidote		Sandra McDonald	Unknown
Best Rhododendron Hybrid - Lepidote		Bruno Kaelin	<i>R. carolinianum</i> × <i>R. augustinii</i>
Best Azalea Species		Ray Doggett	<i>R. nudiflorum</i>
Best Azalea Hybrid - Evergreen		Rosa Carter	'Fascination'
Best Azalea Hybrid - Deciduous		Kendon Stubbs	<i>R. calendulaceum</i> pink × yellow
Best Entry Grown from ARS Seed Exchange		Kendon Stubbs	<i>R. sanctum</i>
Best Novice Entry		Theresa Brents	'Mars'
Best Related Species		Rosa Carter	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> 'Osto Red'
Perpetual Awards			
Best Rhododendron - D. D. Withers Trophy		Sandra McDonald	Unknown
Best Native Azalea		Ray Doggett	<i>R. nudiflorum</i>
Best Azalea - Mary Morris and Richard Clemmer Trophy		Rosa Carter	'Fascination'
Best In Show - The Thomas F. Wheeldon Trophy		Sandra McDonald	Unknown
Sweepstakes Award		Sandra McDonald	

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 \$28 per year.

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

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