

American Rhododendron Society





American Rhododendron Society

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 ARS On-line Journals: <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>
 ARS Archives: <http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/>

Society's Purpose

To encourage interest in and to disseminate knowledge about rhododendrons and azaleas. To provide a medium through which all persons interested in rhododendrons and azaleas may communicate and cooperate with others through education, meetings, publications, scientific studies, research, conservation and other similar activities.

Membership Benefits

- Chapter affiliation with scheduled meetings
- *Journal American Rhododendron Society* published quarterly
- Annual convention and regional conferences
- Seed exchange
- Listing of registration of names and descriptions of new rhododendron hybrids published in the Journal

To Join the Society

Membership categories:

(January 1 – December 31)

Regular	\$40.00
Commercial	\$90.00
Sustaining	\$75.00
Sponsoring	\$150.00
Life single	\$1,000.00
Life family	\$1,500.00

You can join the ARS through your local ARS chapter (check the website www.rhododendron.org for chapter contact info) or by sending a check or money order directly to the Executive Director of the American Rhododendron Society at the above address. Checks must be in US funds. Make checks payable to the "American Rhododendron Society." Membership includes one year (4 issues) of the *Journal American Rhododendron Society* and affiliation with the chapter of your choice. **To receive the winter issue of the Journal, renewals must be postmarked no later than Dec. 1.**

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From the President



Don Smart
Carnation,
Washington

First of all I want to thank the members of the Middle Atlantic Chapter for hosting our ARS fall Board meeting. The hotel was comfortable and convenient and the service was great. I had not been to Richmond, VA, before and the tour through part of the city on the way to the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and Acer Acres Japanese maple nursery was much appreciated. I was amazed at how many maples from the nursery they could pack into one of the tour buses.

As this was my first Board meeting as your president, I was somewhat apprehensive, but I can report that the folks you have elected to represent you on the

Board are a great group of people who are dedicated to working together to both maintain and improve your Society. I appreciate their hard work and their making the effort to attend Board meetings. I also appreciate all of the Society members who make the effort to come to fall regional conferences. These along with the spring conventions are wonderful social gatherings and educational opportunities about our favorite genus and other gardening subjects.

I will pass on several items that were acted on at the recent Board meeting and you will see more about actions of your board elsewhere in the Journal. I had reported in the last *JARS* issue that there was to be more discussion on how the ARS money granted to the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) was to be used. The Board voted to allow the \$5000 grant to be used as needed by FONA's "Save the Azalea and Boxwood Collections" fund. You can get more information about this collection and fundraising efforts at <http://savetheazaleas.org/>, which is maintained by Steve Henning, President of the ARS Valley Forge Chapter.

The Board also discussed the possibility of having only one "face-to-face" ARS Board meeting per year, which would be at the spring convention. There are many people who are concerned or have difficulties with the expense of traveling twice a year and this is a consideration of many when asked to fill a position on the Board as either an officer or a district director. Because of today's technology, we are exploring other ways of discussing and acting on pressing issues that may come up between spring conventions. I will leave it at that, but one of my concerns is that if we discontinue fall Board meetings, will that cause a decline or even a discontinuance of fall regional conferences. Something to think about and I would like you to talk about this within your chapters and districts so your District representatives can better discuss this at the next Board meeting in Asheville, NC, next May.

As I write this, American Thanksgiving is only a week away, with Christmas not far off either. I wish you all a wonderful and warm holiday season!

From the Executive Director



Laura Grant
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Beautiful fall weather in Richmond, Virginia, contributed to a most enjoyable gathering of gardening friends, October 2011 Conference and a Board meeting.

It takes a lot of volunteer power and devotion to organize a Convention and Conference. These members spend sometimes several years of planning and many hours on the phone and computer. To all of those involved, I would like to express my appreciation for your hard work.

Within our chapters, we have those

devoted members that you can count on, year after year, to do the volunteer work. They are the pillars of our Society. It is important to recognize them and let them know their work is appreciated. A Bronze Medal award is truly nice way to say "Thank you for your service." Our Policies of the Board outline the criteria for Bronze Medal awards as follows:

9.5.3 Bronze Medal. This award is delegated entirely for grant by local chapters and is initiated as the chapter governing body directs. The engraved medal, which is a part of the award, must be purchased by the chapters from the Society. It is awarded for outstanding contributions by individuals or couples to the chapter, which may include accomplishments of the recipient(s) outside the chapter consistent with the goals of the Society. The honoree(s) must be member(s) of the Society.

The medals can be purchased from our office.

Public education is a big part of our Society's mission. We had published several brochures on rhododendron and azalea culture, in the past. They were all available to our chapters and general public, free of charge. I was asked to make a wish list of those items that we should reprint and need the funding to do it. The donors will be duly acknowledged on the publication.

They are: "Fundamentals of Rhododendron Culture," (8½ x 11), "Rhododendrons & Azaleas Planting and Care" and "Vireya" (tropical rhododendrons).

If you know any individual or organization that would like to finance any of these three brochures, please let our office know.

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Cover Photos

Clockwise from top left: Azalea Garden at Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC, by Marilyn Haynes; *R. vaseyi*, spring 2011 by Colby Feller; *R. 'Leitmotif'* by Christina Woodward; *R. 'Neat-O'* in the background behind *R. de-gronianum* sp. *yakushmanum* × *R. pseudo-chrysanthum* in the garden of Dick and Karen Cavender by Dave Eckerdt.

Mr. Congreve, the Mount Congreve Estate and the Development of a World Renowned Irish Garden

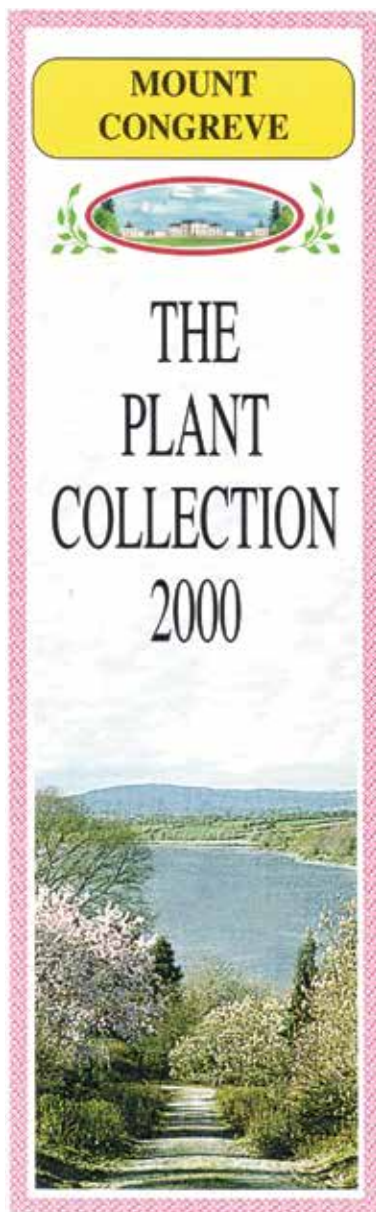


John M. Hammond
Starling, Bury, Lancashire
England

Photos by the author unless otherwise noted



Ambrose Congreve at 100 years old in the Walled Garden. Photo by Joe Cashin, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland.



The 112-page catalog of The Plant Collection, containing around 8000 different plants and trees.



Looking back across the parkland to the Georgian facade of Mount Congreve House.

Introduction

On the edge of Kilmeaden, five miles west of Waterford, where the rolling hills of south-east Ireland overlook a bend in the valley of the Suir, is one of the wonders of Ireland, an immense, magical and impressive garden of 110 acres (44.5 ha) set among the dark green fields of the 700 acre (288.3 ha) Mount Congreve estate. Over the years the Scottish Chapter has been fortunate to visit many wonderful gardens, yet for many members our 2004 visit to Mount Congreve remains in the memory as one of the highlights of all our tours. As the enormous, elaborate entrance gates on the Old Kilmeaden Road were opened by Michael White, the Head Gardener, allowing us to run quietly in convoy up the main drive, suddenly, the sound of crunching stones told us that the tyres were leaving their mark in the perfect pattern-raked small gravel along the front of the 300-year-old Georgian family seat. And, we immediately became all too aware that we had entered another world, another time and another place.

Ambrose Christian Congreve was born April 4, 1907, the son of Major John Congreve (1872-1957) and Lady Helena Blanche Irene Ponsonby (1878-1962), a daughter of the Eight Earl of Bessborough. The most distinguished members of the Congreve Family were not gardeners but were William Congreve (1670-1729), the dramatist who also held several public posts, and Sir William Congreve (1772-1828), who invented matches and the first rocket weapons. Congreve rockets were used by the Royal Navy in both the Napoleonic Wars and at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1807, and in the bombardment of Fort McHenry in the U.S. in 1814 that inspired the fifth line of the first verse of the United States National Anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*: "And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air." After Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1927 Ambrose Congreve joined Unilever, working for them in both England and China until 1936. He was fascinated by the ancient cultural and philosophical

traditions of China throughout his life. He married Marjorie, daughter of Dr. Arthur Graham Glasgow of Richmond, Virginia, in 1935 and joined the board of Humphreys & Glasgow the following year. Arthur Glasgow had founded the firm in partnership with Alexander Humphreys in 1892, their business being the erection of gas manufacturing plants and equipment. That this venture was successful is clear from the marketing of a gas works for Shanghai in 1896, probably the first process plant to be sold to China, and H & G plants were installed all over the world.

He enjoyed a long and remarkable life, being an accomplished industrialist, having served his country during the Second World War and achieved worldwide renown as the creator of a paradise garden surrounding his family seat at Mount Congreve. Whereas the Georgians devoted their energies to creating impressive landscapes, Mr. Congreve, as he was respectfully known in horticultural circles, spent a lifetime amassing a magnificent collection of flowering shrubs and trees.

The Development of Mount Congreve Garden

It was no accident that Lionel de Rothschild named one of his most famous early rhododendron crosses 'Lady Bessborough' after one of Mrs. Lionel de Rothschild's life-long friends. Three other clones in the same cross were also given names connected with the family — 'Roberte', the Christian name of Lady Bessborough herself, whilst 'Montreal' and 'Ottawa' recognise Lord Bessborough's term as the Governor General of Canada. In the early 1920s, Lionel de Rothschild, then senior partner at the private bank of N.M. Rothschild & Sons, was creator of the famed Exbury Garden on the Solent, with its acres of rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and other ornamentals planted amidst oak woodland sloping down to the Beaulieu River. The Bessboroughs attended Lionel's first house-warming

party in May 1922, when they were able to tour the initial plantings in the garden and this led to Ambrose Congreve, in his youth, enjoying many visits with his parents and grandparents. Exbury was then in the course of being extensively transformed by an army of garden staff in the years following Lionel's purchase of the 2,600 acre (1052 ha) estate in May 1919. Mr. Congreve said of Lionel de Rothschild in an Irish Times interview in July, 2010:

"He never mentioned it, but I know he had 100 gardeners, and there were another 100 or so who came in from the estate. And that didn't include contractors. So he made this garden in a very short space of time. He bought other people's gardens and transplanted rhododendrons as tall as this room. I would say that in the mid-1930s he was the best gardener in the world."

With Lionel as mentor, Mr. Congreve developed an early love of gardening that was inspired by Lionel's landscaping expertise and plantings, which provided much of the foundation for the later development of Mount Congreve with its woodland sloping down to the River Suir (pronounced "Sure"). During WW II, Ambrose Congreve served in Air Intelligence for Plans, followed by a period in Bomber Command, and then was transferred to the Ministry of Supply. He was extremely saddened by the sudden death of Lionel de Rothschild in January 1942, and acquired various mementoes of his gardening mentor during the sale of contents of the Rothschild's town house in Kensington Palace Gardens. After the war he returned to the helm of Humphreys & Glasgow, for which the 1950s and '60s were prosperous times; there were major contracts in the U.S.A. and with the British Gas Board for plants producing gas from coal and oil, and under Ambrose Congreve, H & M successfully diversified into petrochemical engineering. In the 1970s and early 1980s, following the discovery of North Sea oil and gas, coupled with a downturn in the chemical industry, the business declined as H & G

was a relatively small company in a global market with much bigger players. In 1983 the firm was sold to a Dallas, Texas, based concern; meanwhile, Mr. Congreve retired and was able to devote as much time as he chose to his gardens at Mount Congreve.

It is said that Mr. Congreve commenced laying out his garden with planting his first *Magnolia campbellii* at the age of 11, just after the end of the First World War. Prior to this date, Mount Congreve was still the great white Georgian house constructed in 1725 by John Congreve, with its pair of wings so reminiscent of Irish country houses, to accommodate the services and servants needed by the Congreve Family, with a garden of three terraces between the house and the river Suir. Between the terraces and the river lay a steep wooded bank with picturesque winding walks under large holm-oaks (*Quercus ilex*), beech and sweet chestnuts. In the years between the two world wars, he occasionally spent time with his father planting in the woodlands. However, the family also spent part of the year at their Winkfield Manor Estate in Ascot, Berkshire. It was not until 1955 that he began in earnest to make clearings in the woodlands to create the necessary dappled shade needed for the rhododendrons, including many groups of large-leaved species, to flourish. Shelterbelts of large hardwood trees were planted around the garden perimeter to provide protection from the prevailing winds. With the arrival in the early-1960s of Herman Dool (pronounced "Dole") from Holland, Mr. Congreve had found a "green-fingered" kindred spirit and together they spent 39 years laying-out and developing the gardens. In 1965 the house was completely gutted and expanded into a palace and since that time the 110 acre (45.5 ha) garden, with a full-time staff of 35, has become one of the fullest planted in the world. In a letter written in the late 1970s Ambrose Congreve explained his way of approach:

" . . . plants should not be scattered

about a garden, and repetitions of the same mixtures should be avoided. Therefore, if you plant three *Rhododendron thomsonii* or twenty, plant them together in a group to make a bold colour effect, and if you can introduce an element of surprise so much the better. Woodland gardens should not have all their secrets exposed from one or two vantage points, and even formal gardens are more effective when there is an element of concealment of one part from another."

Many Irish gardens are hidden from the view of the house, and Mount Congreve is no exception. So, when driving up to the house, in its traditional parkland setting with many mature hardwood trees, there is no hint of its colourful gardens residing in the woodlands beyond.

All shrubs and trees are planted in groups of at least six; however, wherever possible Mr. Congreve insisted on planting no less than 25 of each variety, and some in greater numbers. Almost every shrub that can grow in the fairly mild climate of south-east Ireland has been tried, and the numbers are as stunning as the garden itself. There are over 3500 varieties of rhododendron, 600 types of camellia, 300 varieties of magnolia, added to which are 250 types of Japanese maple, 600 conifers, 250 climbers and 1500 other plants. When it came to planting Asiatic magnolias, Mr. Congreve wasn't satisfied with planting two or three *Magnolia campbellii*; in 1969 he planted over 80 in a group running along the banks of the river, where they appear to be protected from the March frosts. These magnolia seedlings had been raised at Mount Congreve from seed he had arranged to be collected in China. In addition, there are large plantings of *M. campbellii* var. *mollicomata* and *M. sprengeri*, so standing on the upper terraces there is a wonderful view looking down on hundreds of flowering species, and their hybrids, stretching along the Suir. In the same way the rhododendrons are planted in large groups of the same species or hybrids, including most of the recent new species and cultivars. For example, there

are many large groups of *Rhododendron sinogrande*, whose creamy-white trusses light up the woodland glades in March or April, and, there is one group of no less than 50 *R. macabeaenum* whose volume of large yellow trusses is difficult to perceive. These rhododendron beds, up to twenty yards (19 m) wide are fronted by wide borders of smaller hybrids and species azaleas. The diversity of material is staggering—where else would you find a collection of hostas disappearing into the distance along half a mile (0.8 km) of pathway? There are hydrangea species and cultivars by the hundred, extensive planting of clematis on tripods some 10 ft (3 m) tall or climbing up oak trees in the woodlands, and bulbs massed by the hundreds of thousands for spring flowering. Around ten years ago, Mr. Congreve escorted a visiting group of ladies to one of the more spectacular views in the garden and then, having given them an introductory talk, left them to make their own way around the garden. Several hours later he heard cries for help. Upon investigation, he found the ladies had become totally disorientated and were lost amidst the complex of paths.

There have been many structural alterations carried out in the woodland. Large rocks in an old quarry have been carefully dynamited to form streambeds for an artificial waterfall that cascades down the cliff face to the three pools below. The area around the waterfall has been laid-out to showcase all types of water-related plants to reflect the creative and artistic talents of its creators. Elsewhere in the woodland, a high south-facing wall is pierced by a Chinese-style moon gate, whilst at the foot of the 100 ft (30 m) cliff is a Chinese pagoda, resplendent in Chinese red, yellow and green, which has been erected on an old quarry site that has been dynamited, then planted with alpiners. Stone was extracted from the quarry by local stonemasons to construct the flights of steps that tempt the visitor to explore further into the depths of the woodland. Running the length of the woodlands along the banks of the river are the well



Ambrose Congreve at 100 years old relaxing in the Walled Garden on one of the curious wheelbarrow seats of 18th century design. Photo by Joe Cashin, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland.



As the eyes start to adjust to the view out across the Suir Valley, the great swathes of flower colour of the azaleas begin to register, often hundreds of yards long.



The Courtyard at the front of Mount Congreve House.



There are rhododendrons to be seen at virtually every turn in the woodland; here a large *Rhododendron arizelum* lights up the hillside.



In the midst of the woodland there is breathtaking glimpse across the Water Garden.

concealed tracks of the Waterford and Suir Valley narrow-gauge railway which operates in the summer season along the scenic alignment of one of Waterford's abandoned railway lines. Throughout the garden the plant collections are interspersed with conifers, whose upright spires in groups of three, five or more, provide both separation and structure amidst the ornamentals. Amongst the specimens are the incense cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*), Brewer's spruce (*Picea breweriana*), weeping Nootka cypress (*Chamaecyparis nookatensis* 'Pendula'), the Japanese umbrella pine (*Schiodopitys verticillata*), Wisselii Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Wisselii'), the smooth Arizona cypress (*Cupressus glabra*), and the blue Wellingtonia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum glauca*). There are also many rare and unusual deciduous trees to catch the eye of members with a dendrological interest.

An avenue runs down from the House to the Walled Garden where magnolias, rhododendrons, pieris and bluebells provide ascending colours in white, coral, crimson, and blue leading to a gateway that opens to reveal a vast four-acre (1.6 ha) walled kitchen garden sloping down gently from a large 18th century ornamental greenhouse, with a pair of central lawns with two herbaceous borders against each wall that are a riot of colour in spring, summer and the fall. The greenhouse, its small window panes reflecting construction techniques in an era prior to the availability of plate glass, has been completely restored and contains rows and rows of potted fuchsias, lilies, amaryllis and nerines which are taken up to the house to decorate the rooms. Here can be found a couple of the curious 18th century design, gaily painted "wheelbarrow seats" that are placed in many areas of the gardens; their wheeled design enables them to be moved around to take advantage of sun or shade. With few exceptions, most of the other great horticultural masterpieces of the past have become neglected and have fallen into decay for want of financial support, but the walled kitchen

garden at Mount Congreve is a most impressive example of how such a garden can be cared for in a highly organised and manicured way up to the standards of the R.H.S. Chelsea Flower Show. A second gateway leads into another Walled Garden, which is surprisingly angular and has a large pond with waterlilies. Around the perimeter is a range of foliage plants together with a collection of over 100 different forms of Japanese iris given by Sir Peter Smithers from his beautiful garden on Lake Lugano on the border between Switzerland and Italy. But this is not the end of story, as another gateway leads to a third Walled Garden which is now devoted to an extensive state-of-the-art plant propagation facility where many plants from the garden are produced commercially, mainly for the wholesale export market. It was established to help defray some of the costs of maintaining the garden. In one corner are frames in which grows rows of young rhododendron seedlings bred by Mr. Congreve, part of his programme to develop late-flowering plants in colours other than white.

Mount Congreve in Recent Years

Over the past 20 years or so, Mr. Congreve continued to extend the gardens, directing operations with his head gardener Herman Dool and his assistant gardener Michael White, who came to Mount Congreve 25 years ago. Together they have extended the garden at the rate of around an acre (0.4 ha) per year, and one of the additions is a new rock garden laid out on a sunny upper plateau. Mr. Dool was awarded one of the highest honours possible in Holland by the Dutch government in recognition of his achievements at Mount Congreve, an extraordinary event for an expatriate. Sadly, Herman Dool passed away a few years ago.

Mr. Congreve was justly proud of the wondrous creation he masterminded, and his outstanding staff that looked after his garden. The collection is superbly maintained on a scale that is barely imaginable. During their flowering season,

rhododendrons and azaleas are irrigated once a fortnight and when it is over, every single shrub is deadheaded. Maintaining the rhododendrons is a major task due to the need to be vigilant and deal with any pest or disease problems that may occur in the closely planted groupings. Amongst the cultivars are a number of Mount Congreve hybrids, which includes an early yellow-flowered rhododendron from the propagation programme.

As our tour of the garden reaches its conclusion, having only traversed a few of the 16 miles (24 km) of pathways, we make our way back to the House. We are reminded by Geraldine Critchley, Mr. Congreve's long-time Personal Assistant, that he requested we join him for lunch, and so we are greeted at the courtyard entrance by some of the 35 "indoor" staff who make up the entourage that take care of him. A lavish lunch is set out in silverware across the enormous Dining Room table, calling to mind the succession of fine *chefs de cuisine* Mr. Congreve has employed across the years, including Albert Roux who went on to co-found the Le Gavroche restaurant in London. Three Chapter members were invited to take lunch in the beautiful Library where Mr. Congreve, a tall, slender man with a full head of snow-white hair, sits comfortably at his desk. "We're only four miles from the sea as the crow flies," says our host, "which together with the nearby River Suir helps to explain the [garden's] relatively mild climate." The walls are insulated by hundreds of leather-bound books, while the unmistakable cherry-coloured buckram covers of an old Burke's Peerage edition peeps out from a table behind his chair. On the floor is a large box of thick, bound catalogues that record the entire plant content of his garden. "Would you like one?" he offers.

A glimpse of the Edwardian era is reflected in the duties of his staff, including the chauffeur whose task it was to take the two Rolls Royces out each morning and run their engines for half an hour to keep them tuned for when Mr. Congreve came to Ireland. Mr. Congreve divided his time

on an annual cyclic pattern, and is said to have spent seven weeks each spring at Mount Congreve, following which he would return with his entourage to his large house in the St. James's district of London in time to visit the Chelsea Flower Show. As the days in the autumn got shorter, he would depart with his entourage to Barbados for the winter, returning to London for a short while before it was once again time to enjoy springtime in Ireland.

To mark the occasion of his 100th birthday in 2007, Mr. Congreve planted a Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*), the oldest fossil of which dates back 90 million years, which had been presented to him by his 70 staff. Across the path from where this was planted is a 100-year-old Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) from California that was planted by Princess Mary Louise of Hanover and Cumberland when Ambrose Congreve was christened in 1907. At his 100th birthday lunch, he recited what he referred to as a Chinese proverb:

"To be happy for an hour, have a glass of wine.

To be happy for a day, read a book.

To be happy for a week, take a wife.

To be happy for ever, make a garden."

In Conclusion

It was for his unique garden, on a scale rarely seen since the 18th century, that Mr. Congreve earned global renown, including the award of some 13 Gold Medals for displays of plant material from the garden at the RHS Chelsea Show in London. It an odd way it somehow seemed appropriate that given his love of gardening, he should be taken ill during the time he was in London earlier this year whilst planning to make his annual visit to the Chelsea Show, and subsequently passed away on the night of Tuesday, May 24. He had celebrated his 104th birthday in April. His wife Marjorie passed away in 1995, and there were no children of the marriage. In 1965, Ambrose Congreve was invested with a Commander of the

Order of the British Empire (C.B.E.) for services to horticulture. He held an honorary doctorate awarded by Trinity College, Dublin, and had been awarded a Veitch Memorial Medal by the R.H.S., where he served as Vice President. Ten years ago he was awarded a medal for having "The Greatest Garden in the World" by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, an honour he very much appreciated. The "folie de grandeur," as he once described his garden, is to be transferred to the ownership of the Irish State, to help ensure that his garden masterpiece will remain well cared for and intact.

As we say our goodbyes to Geraldine Critchley and the car tyres once more begin to cut channels through the carefully patterned gravel, a member of the "outside" staff has already begun to wield his rake and remove all traces of our visit. It is as though a time machine has swung into action as we are transported back to our own everyday world. Many Scottish Chapter members will remember their visit to this spectacular garden for the rest of their days. However, the value of such extraordinary and rare collections in private ownership cannot be overestimated, as they demonstrate what the possibilities are for the growth of plants in any particular climate. Such collections, and that at Mount Congreve is a supreme example, are often regarded only as ornamental, but this is far from the truth, as they are national assets that will be extremely unlikely to be made again due to punitive taxation and a lack of individuals with the vision and ability to carry through a major planting project of such great size and perceptive complexity. This garden will test the resilience and capabilities of the National Trust of Ireland, to whom it has been bequeathed with a generous endowment to sustain its upkeep. At the time of writing, all staff have been retained to look after the garden, as it will take some time for the transition to national ownership to be completed. There is no garden in Ireland that is currently maintained to the standards set by Mr.

Congreve. The upkeep of the garden will tax the abilities of the Irish National Trust, as the large groups of plants are in urgent need of being carefully thinned to enable the better specimens within the groupings to expand and grow more gracefully, and this alone will be a major operation.

Ambrose Christian Congreve maintained the traditions of the Edwardian era whilst running a business empire with operational bases in both London and New York, yet he did not have the elitist "autocratic" approach that many of his illustrious peers had, and he is fondly remembered by many of his staff as a thoughtful, considerate, logical and charming gentleman. These attributes will also be remembered by many in the horticultural world who were fortunate to cross his path, enjoy his legendary hospitality, or have had the opportunity of visiting his remarkable garden. If you are travelling to Ireland with the aim of visiting gardens, then this garden is an incredible destination that will amply repay a journey to Waterford.

John Hammond is a member of the Scottish ARS. Chapter.

Note: Joe Cashin, credited with photos on pp. 3 and 6, freely permitted the photographs of Ambrose Congreve to be used, as he visits Mount Congreve many times in open season and is well known to the garden staff.

Are you a Rhodoholic?

The Nine Stages of Rhodoholism:

1. See flowers at Big Box Store
2. Start collecting hybrids
3. Join Rhododendron Society
4. Start collecting species
5. Become obsessed with foliage
6. Buy bigger property
7. Start growing species from seed
8. Make expedition to China
9. Shave head and become a Buddhist Monk (to live amongst beloved rhododendrons)

Linkage of Valuable Traits from *Rhododendron saxifragoides* in Complex Hybrids

Erik T. Nilsen
Blacksburg,
Virginia



General summary
Tropical *Rhododendron* species and hybrids in Section *Shistanthe* (vireyas) have a great potential for horticulture because of their dramatic flower size, colors and fragrances. However, many species and resulting hybrids are leggy which makes them unsuitable for house plants or long term greenhouse growth. Thus, dwarf vireya species are used for hybridization to yield smaller more compact plants. One dwarf species that has proved successful in this endeavor is *R. saxifragoides*, which naturally inhabits high alpine bogs in Papua and New Guinea. While serving a year at the University of Hawaii as the G.P. Wilder Chair in Botany, Sherla Bertelmann and Richard Marques showed me a group of hybrids at the Pacific Island Nursery that were derived from a cross made by Oswald Blumhardt between the dwarf *R. saxifragoides* and the large hybrid shrub (*R. macgregoriae* × *R. latum*). I studied the hybrid plants at the Pacific Island Nursery to determine the effects of *R. saxifragoides* characteristics on the hybrid plants and possible linkages between several vegetative characteristics and flower colors. As expected, the hybrid plants had vegetative characteristics that were intermediate between the vegetative characteristic of the two parents. However, height of the hybrid plants (a result of distance between leaf nodes) was controlled mostly by *R. saxifragoides*. The smallest hybrid plants

had the smallest and most linear leaves. Stomata were found on both leaf surfaces in 50% of the hybrid plants and this is a unique characteristic of *R. saxifragoides* leaves. However, the number of stomata on hybrid plants was relatively low compared to both parents, which means these hybrid plants will tolerate less water than the parents. Flower colors of the parents ranged from bright yellow (*R. laetum*) to yellow-orange (*R. macgregoriae*) to bright pink (*R. saxifragoides*). A pink flower color was most abundant in the hybrids and this color was more common for shorter plants. In sum, *R. saxifragoides* provides a strong dwarfing character in hybrids, with the shortest plants in the hybrid population having small thin leaves and likely pink flowers. Crosses with *R. saxifragoides* have already yielded several named hybrids and are expected to yield many more in the future.

Introduction

It is well known that vireyas, now known as species in Section *Schistanthe* (Craven 2010), could have dramatic success as house plants because of their varied and beautiful flowers (Argent 2006). Although little is known about the ecology of most vireyas, they are tropical species with very little cold tolerance, which makes them useful for horticulture applications in gardens only in sub-tropical and tropical climates. In more temperate climates,

they have to be protected indoors from below freezing temperature. However, vireyas have broad horticultural appeal because vireya flowers are dramatic, most vireyas hybridize relatively easily, propagation by cuttings is effective and flowers can be produced relatively quickly after hybridization (2-3 years). Although there is high potential for vireyas in the horticultural trade, many species have a tendency to become leggy and woody which makes them inappropriate for overwintering in greenhouses or as house plants. Judicious pruning can help to some degree, but it would be better to breed bushiness into hybrid vireya plants.

There are several possible species that have been used as sources for bushiness traits for vireya hybrids, among which *Rhododendron saxifragoides* has been the most promising. Fundamental work by Oswald Blumhardt using *R. saxifragoides* to impart bushiness produced many interesting hybrids such as 'Saxon Dawn', 'Saxon Blush' and 'Saxon Bonnie Belle'. Many more hybrids using *R. saxifragoides* as a pollen or seed parent have been registered since the Saxon hybrids were released (Callard 2010). The more we know about useful traits of *R. saxifragoides* and how those traits are imparted to hybrids, the more valuable this species will be for developing interesting, potentially marketable plants.

R. saxifragoides is an alpine cushion plant native to high elevation sites of the Papua and New Guinea mountains (Argent 2006). This species is found in high light sites and often in boggy habitat. Leaves are relatively small, held vertically and have stomata on both leaf surfaces (Nilsen 2007). Flowers are red, campanulate, single and held above the foliage on top of a long pedicel. Hybridizers prize the short stature trait and the long

Table 1: Comparative common trait conditions for the three parents of the hybrid between *R. saxifragoides* and (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt.

Trait	<i>R. saxifragoides</i>	<i>R. macgregoriae</i>	<i>R. laetum</i>
Leaf area	small	intermediate	large
Number of leaves/node	many	intermediate	few
Internode length	short	intermediate	long
Stomata location	both surfaces	bottom surface	bottom surface
Inflorescence	solitary	15-20 flowers	6-8 flowers
Pediceal length	long	short	intermediate
Flower color	red	yellow-orange	yellow

Table 2: Correlations between quantitative vegetative and stomatal traits measured for F3 hybrid plants of *R. saxifragoides* and (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt. Correlation coefficients are above the middle diagonal and P values are below the middle diagonal. Significant correlations ($P \leq 0.10$) are shown in bold type. Node length = distance between leaf whorls; Leaf area = average area (cm²) per leaf; Leaf l/w = average ratio of leaf length and leaf width; Leaves/node = average number of leaves per whorl; St density = average density (#/mm²) of stomata; Abax st = average density of stomata on the abaxial leaf surface.

Trait	Node length	Leaf area	Leaf l/w	Leaves/node	St density	Abaxial st
Node length		0.545	0.006	-0.133	-0.0584	-0.028
Leaf area	< 0.001		-0.053	-0.316	-0.233	-0.188
Leaf l/w	0.968	0.682		0.386	-0.215	-0.174
Leaves/node	0.333	0.021	0.004		0.0343	0.0117
St density	0.730	0.100	0.130	0.823		0.878
Abaxial st	0.857	0.186	0.222	0.939	<0.001	

pedicel characteristics of *R. saxifragoides* in their hybridizing efforts. It is well known that these useful traits from *R. saxifragoides* are carried into hybrids, but little is known about the linkage among the useful traits in hybrids or to what extent the small stature of *R. saxifragoides* is expressed in hybrids with particularly leggy species.

While in Hawaii as the G.P. Wilder Chair in Botany, I was introduced to an interesting group of hybrid plants that Richard Marques and Sherla Bertelmann had grown to maturity at the Pacific Island Nursery, Ke'aau Hawaii. Originally, Bill Moyles received seed of an F2 (second filial generation) cross between (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) × *R. saxifragoides* that was made by Oswald Blumhardt. Bill Moyles grew plants from this seed and selfed them. His offspring (F3 generation) of the F2 cross were grown to maturity at the Pacific Island Nursery by Sherla Bertelmann and Richard Marques. Two of the parental species of the seed parent for the original cross made by Oswald Blumhardt are known to be particularly woody and leggy (*R. macgregoriae* and *R. laetum*). In contrast, the pollen parent for that cross (*R. saxifragoides*) is known to have very short stature. In fact, there are dramatic differences in vegetative and floral traits among these three parental species (Table 1). After observing the F3 plants (I will call this group of plants the F3 hybrid population), I thought that this was an excellent system for probing the expression and linkage of useful *R. saxifragoides* traits in a complex hybrid. Sherla and Richard had grown all the seedlings to maturity and had not done any selection of individuals with favorable traits. A few of the original seedlings had died, but the original F3 hybrid seedling population was generally intact. Thus, this group of plants represented the variation in *R. saxifragoides* traits likely to occur in seedlings of a cross with particularly leggy vireya species. Therefore, in the F3 hybrid population of plants, I 1) determined what proportion of the F3 hybrid seedlings had stomata on both sides of the leaf

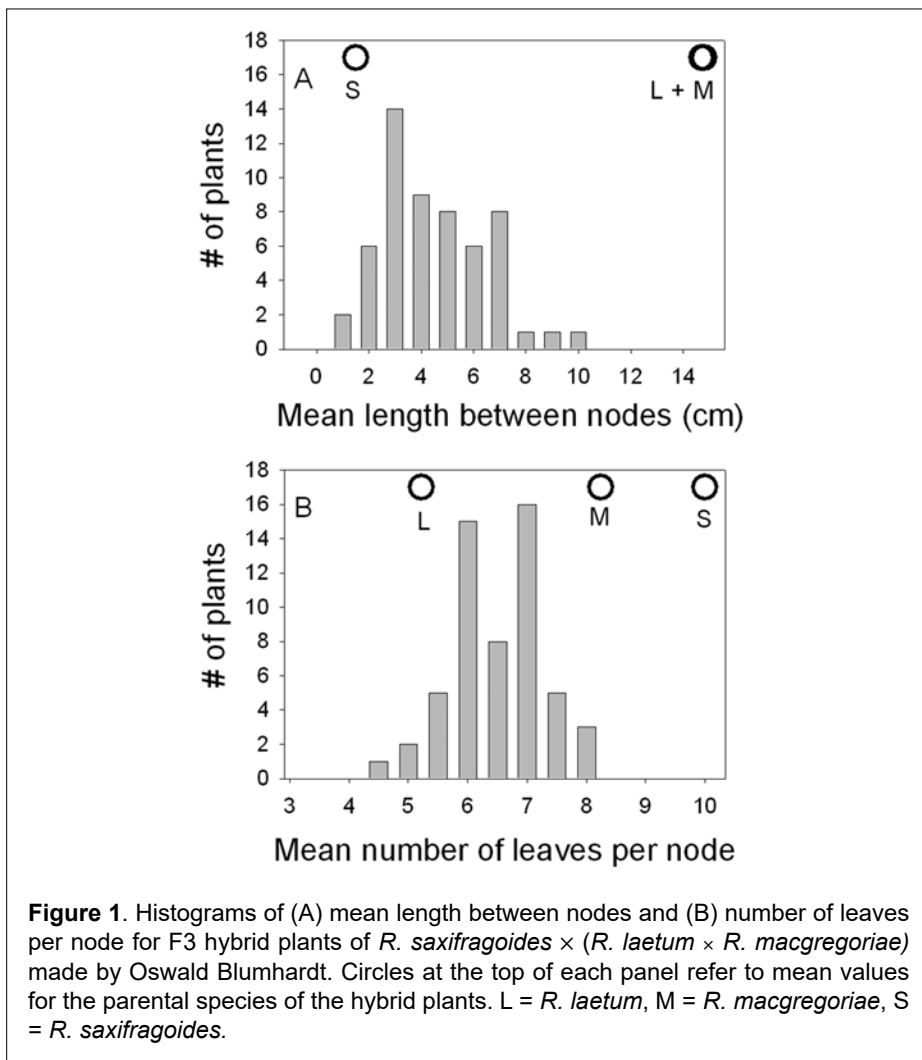


Figure 1. Histograms of (A) mean length between nodes and (B) number of leaves per node for F3 hybrid plants of *R. saxifragoides* × (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt. Circles at the top of each panel refer to mean values for the parental species of the hybrid plants. L = *R. laetum*, M = *R. macgregoriae*, S = *R. saxifragoides*.

(trait of *R. saxifragoides*), 2) determined the expression of bushiness and leaf traits of *R. saxifragoides*, 3) determined if the bushiness and leaf traits were linked or sort independently of each other in the F3 hybrid population, and 4) determined if there was a linkage between vegetative traits and flower color.

The design of my experiment was to measure bushiness traits, leaf traits, and flower color of all plants of the F3 hybrid population and compare those values to the mean and variation of these trait values for the parent species. The results of this work provide an estimate of how much variation in heritable traits can be expected in a hybrid population crossed with *R. saxifragoides*. Also, the results of the study can be used to estimate the linkage between leaf traits, bushiness traits,

and flower color in a complex hybrid with *R. saxifragoides*.

Methods:

Each plant in the F3 hybrid population was labeled with an individual identification number using numbered bird bands. Plant number was considered the experimental unit for all statistical analyses. The mean and variation of internode length, the number of leaves in each leaf whorl, the size (leaf area), and leaf shape (length/width) of each leaf plant was determined. Also, five leaves from each plant were collected to measure stomatal density on adaxial (top) and abaxial (bottom) leaf surfaces. Similar measurements were made on *R. macgregoriae* and *R. laetum* growing in the same location as the F3 hybrid population. Measurements of *R.*

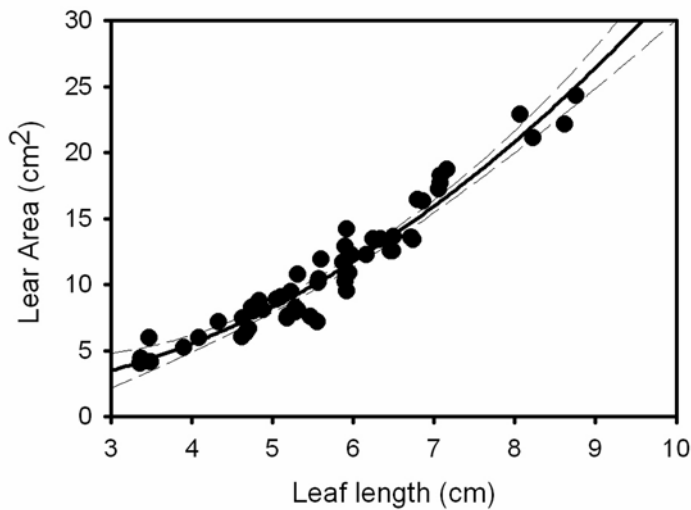


Figure 2. The relationship between leaf area (cm²) and leaf length (cm) for F3 hybrid plants of *R. saxifragoides* × (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt. The solid line is the second order regression through the data and dashed lines correspond to one standard error on each side of the regression. R² = 0.938. The corresponding equation for the regression line is: Leaf area = 1.630 – 0.45(length) + 0.35 *(length)²

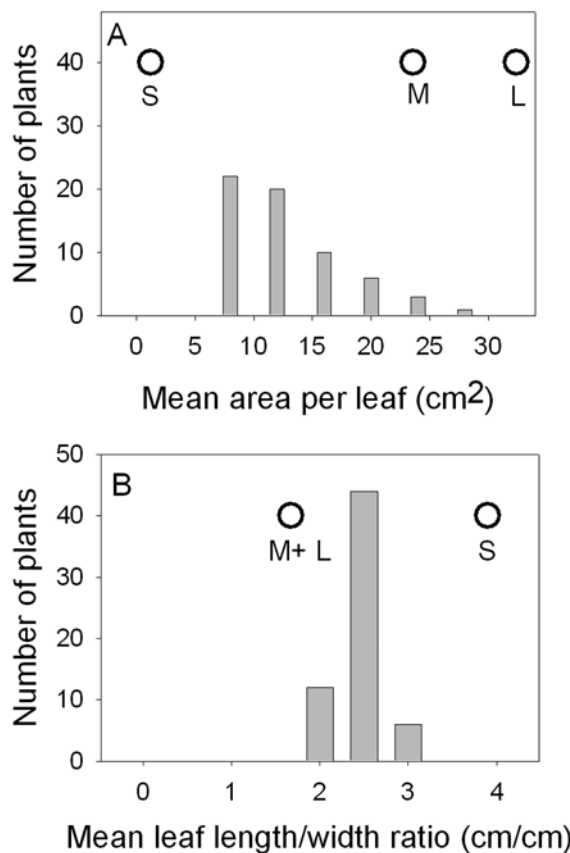


Figure 3. Histograms of mean leaf area and mean leaf length/leaf width for F3 hybrid plants of *R. saxifragoides* × (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt. Leaf length / leaf width represents leaf shape and the higher the ratio the more linear the leaf shape. Circles at the top of each panel refer to the mean values for parental species of the hybrid plants. L = *R. laetum*, M = *R. macgregoriae*, S = *R. saxifragoides*.

saxifragoides vegetative traits were made on a small plant at Mitch Mitchell's garden in Volcano Village, Hawaii, at 1207m elevation. Our measurements for each species represent the accessions obtained by Mitch Mitchell from the Rhododendron Species Foundation for his garden and vegetatively propagated at the Pacific Island Nursery. Some additional variation in morphological traits within species might be expected when examining a broader sample of accessions growing in other conditions. Flower color was recorded for each plant if it flowered during the observations (Photo 1).

Results:

Plant bushiness traits: The distance between nodes (internode length) and the number of leaves per node were the two bushiness traits measured in this study. *R. saxifragoides* had an average internode length of 1.5 cm ± 0.5 (mean ± 2 standard errors of the mean), while that for *R. laetum* and *R. macgregoriae* was 14.7 ± 4.4 cm and 14.8 ± 4.6 cm respectively (Figure 1A). In general, the internode lengths of *R. laetum* and *R. macgregoriae* were ten times larger than that of *R. saxifragoides*. The mean internode length of the F3 hybrid plants was 3.98 ± 0.88 cm. There was a normal distribution of internode lengths among the F3 hybrid plants with a median of 3.5 cm (Figure 1A). The mean and median internode lengths of F3 hybrid plants were more similar to that of *R. saxifragoides* than those of either *R. laetum* or *R. macgregoriae*. The differences in internode length resulted in differences in total plant height such that plants with long internodes were taller than plants with short internodes (Photo 2).

The mean number of leaves per node for *R. saxifragoides* was 10.0 (estimated from personal observation) while that of *R. macgregoriae* was 8.24 ± 1.20 and that for *R. laetum* was 5.22 ± 0.42 (Figure 1B). The mean number of leaves per node for the F3 hybrid plants was 6.34 ± 0.38. F3 hybrid plants had a normal distribution of leaf number per node among individuals

with a median value of 6.4 (Figure 1B). The median leaf numbers per node for F3 hybrid plants was intermediate between that for *R. macgregoriae* and that of *R. laetum* (Figure 1B).

Leaf traits: *Rhododendron* leaves have consistent shape which usually results in a good regression between leaf dimensions and leaf area (Nilsen and Webb 2005). There was an excellent second order regression ($R^2 = 0.938$) between leaf area and leaf length for the F3 hybrid plants (Figure 2). This relationship was used to determine the mean leaf area on F3 hybrid plants at all nodes. The mean leaf area of *R. saxifragoides* was $1.24 \pm 0.14 \text{ cm}^2$ while those for *R. macgregoriae* and *R. laetum* were 23.6 ± 7.26 and $32.4 \pm 2.87 \text{ cm}^2$ respectively (Figure 3A). Therefore, the leaf areas of both *R. laetum* and *R. macgregoriae* were over 20 times larger than that for *R. saxifragoides*. The mean leaf area per leaf of F3 hybrid plants was $10.7 \pm 0.20 \text{ cm}^2$. There was a truncated distribution of mean leaf area per leaf among F3 hybrid plants at 7.0 cm^2 . The number of plants in each unit leaf area category gradually decreased from 7 cm^2 to 27 cm^2 (Figure 3A). The median leaf area per leaf of F3 hybrid plants was 9.47 cm^2 , in-between that of *R. saxifragoides* and the other two species. The average leaf length to width ratio for *R. saxifragoides* was 3.9 ± 0.85 , while that of *R. laetum* was 1.67 ± 0.08 and *R. macgregoriae* was 1.67 ± 0.10 . These results indicate that *R. saxifragoides* has a more linear leaf shape than either *R. laetum* or *R. macgregoriae*. The mean leaf length to width ratio for F3 hybrid plants was 2.17 ± 0.01 . There was a normal distribution of leaf length/width for F3 hybrid plants with a median of 2.13 (Figure 3B). Therefore, leaf shape of F3 hybrid plants is more similar to those of *R. laetum* and *R. macgregoriae* than to that of *R. saxifragoides*.

Stomatal traits: Mean stomatal densities for *R. laetum* and *R. macgregoriae* were 231 ± 36 and $361 \pm 48 \text{ mm}^{-2}$ respectively, and all stomata were located on the abaxial (bottom) leaf surfaces,

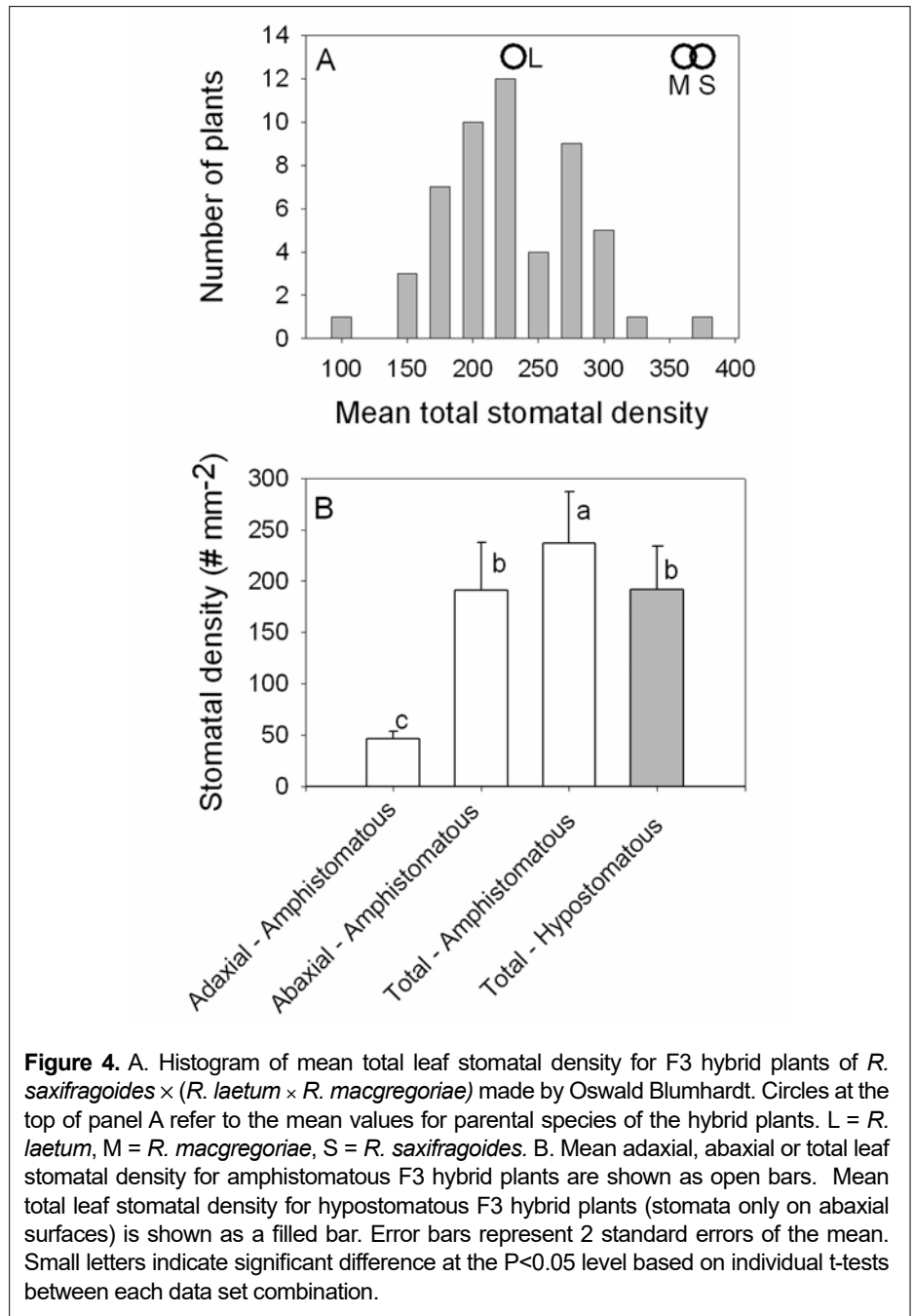


Figure 4. A. Histogram of mean total leaf stomatal density for F3 hybrid plants of *R. saxifragoides* × (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt. Circles at the top of panel A refer to the mean values for parental species of the hybrid plants. L = *R. laetum*, M = *R. macgregoriae*, S = *R. saxifragoides*. B. Mean adaxial, abaxial or total leaf stomatal density for amphistomatous F3 hybrid plants are shown as open bars. Mean total leaf stomatal density for hypostomatous F3 hybrid plants (stomata only on abaxial surfaces) is shown as a filled bar. Error bars represent 2 standard errors of the mean. Small letters indicate significant difference at the $P < 0.05$ level based on individual t-tests between each data set combination.

making these species hypostomatous. Leaves of *R. saxifragoides* had stomata on both the abaxial and adaxial leaf surfaces, making this species amphistomatous. The mean stomatal density on the abaxial and adaxial leaf surfaces were 241 ± 36.5 and $133 \pm 19.5 \text{ mm}^{-2}$ respectively, resulting in a total leaf stomatal density of $376 \pm 30 \text{ mm}^{-2}$. Therefore, the abaxial surface stomatal density was approximately twice the adaxial surface stomatal density for *R. saxifragoides*. Mean total stomatal density

for F3 hybrid plants was $215.3 \pm 2.3 \text{ mm}^{-2}$, similar to the stomatal density of *R. laetum* (Figure 4A). There was a normal distribution of stomatal densities in the hybrid population with a median of 207 mm^{-2} (Figure 4A). The amphistomatous trait was identified in 55% of the hybrid plants. The stomatal densities on the abaxial surfaces of hypotomatous and amphistomatous plants were not significantly different (t-test, $p > 0.10$). However, there was a significant difference

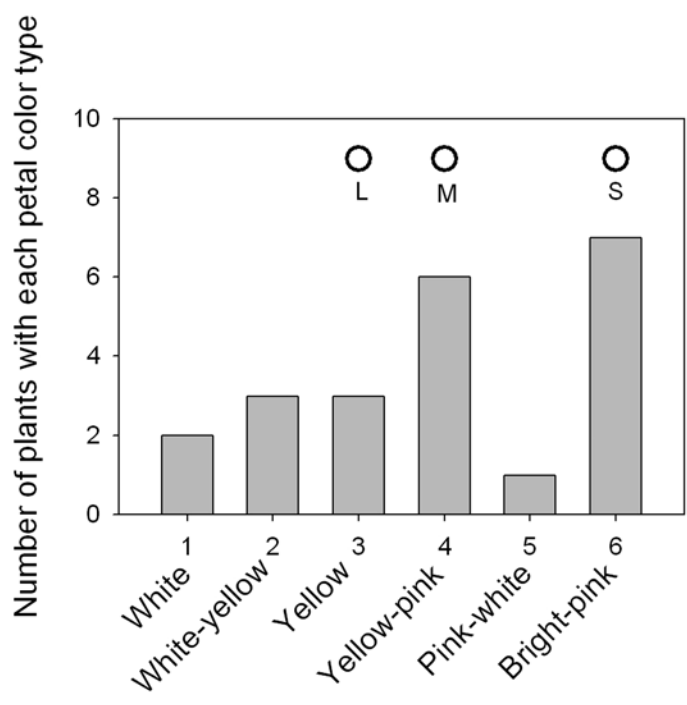


Figure 5. Histogram of petal color for F3 hybrid plants of *R. saxifragoides* × (*R. laetum* × *R. macgregoriae*) made by Oswald Blumhardt, which flowered during the experimental period. Circles at the top of each panel refer to mean values for the parental species of the hybrid plants. L = *R. laetum*, M = *R. macgregoriae*, S = *R. saxifragoides*.

(t-test, $p < 0.001$) between the total stomatal density of amphistomatous hybrid plants (238 mm^{-2}) versus hypostomatous hybrid plants (192 mm^{-2}), which was entirely due to variable adaxial stomatal density (Figure 4B). The mean adaxial stomatal density for amphistomatous F3 hybrid plants was 46.3 mm^{-2} , only 35% of the mean adaxial stomatal density on *R. saxifragoides* leaves. Thus, adaxial stomatal density of hybrid plants averaged only 24% of abaxial stomata density on the same leaf.

Flower colors: Approximately one half of the plants flowered during the time period observations were made. In general, flower colors were bright-pink, light-pink, yellow, orange, cream, and white. Colors were ranked in the following way based on the floral colors of the parents: 1) white; 2) white-yellow mix (cream); 3) yellow; 4) yellow-pink mix (orange and coral); 5) white-pink mix (light-pink); 6) bright-pink. Among F3 hybrid plants that flowered, pinks were the most frequent color, followed by a yellow-pink mixture

(Figure 5). Therefore, there was a greater influence of *R. saxifragoides* on general flower color than that of *R. macgregoriae* or *R. laetum*. (Photo 3).

Correlations among traits: There was a highly significant ($P < 0.001$) positive correlation between leaf area and the internode length of F3 hybrid plants (Table 2). Therefore, leaf area per leaf significantly decreased as the internode length decreased. Leaf area per leaf in F3 hybrid plants was significantly ($P = 0.021$) negatively correlated with the number of leaves per node. The leaf length to width ratio was significantly ($P = 0.004$) positively correlated with the number of leaves per node. Therefore, the leaves became more linear (higher l/w) as the number of leaves per node increased in F3 hybrid plants. All of these significant vegetation correlations indicate that these vegetative traits are linked during the hybridization process. Consequently, plants with the smallest internodes tended to have the largest number of small, narrow leaves

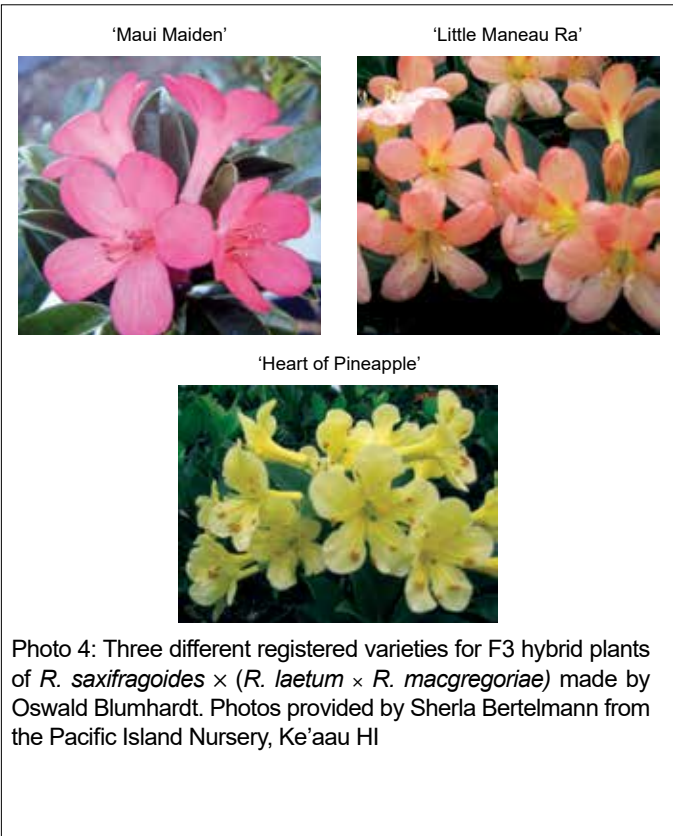
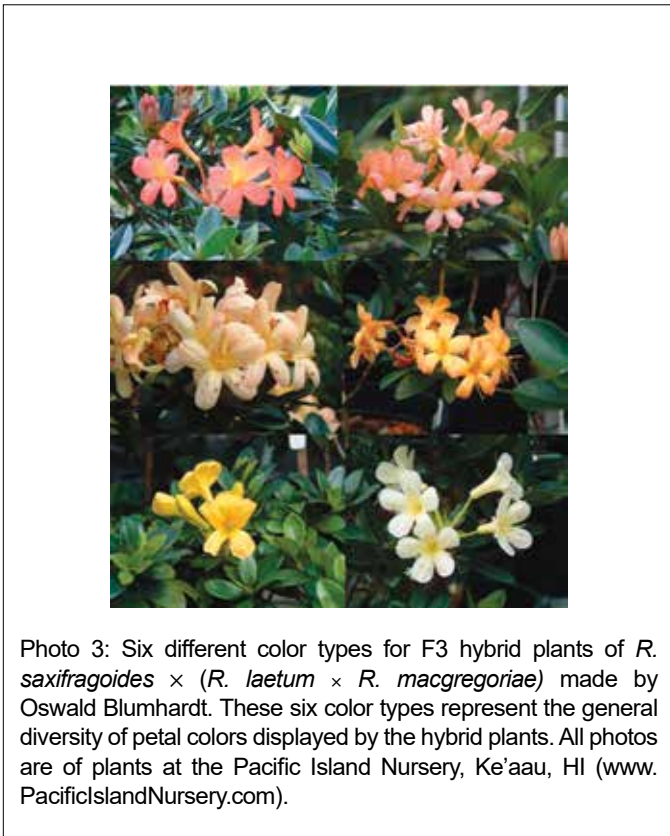
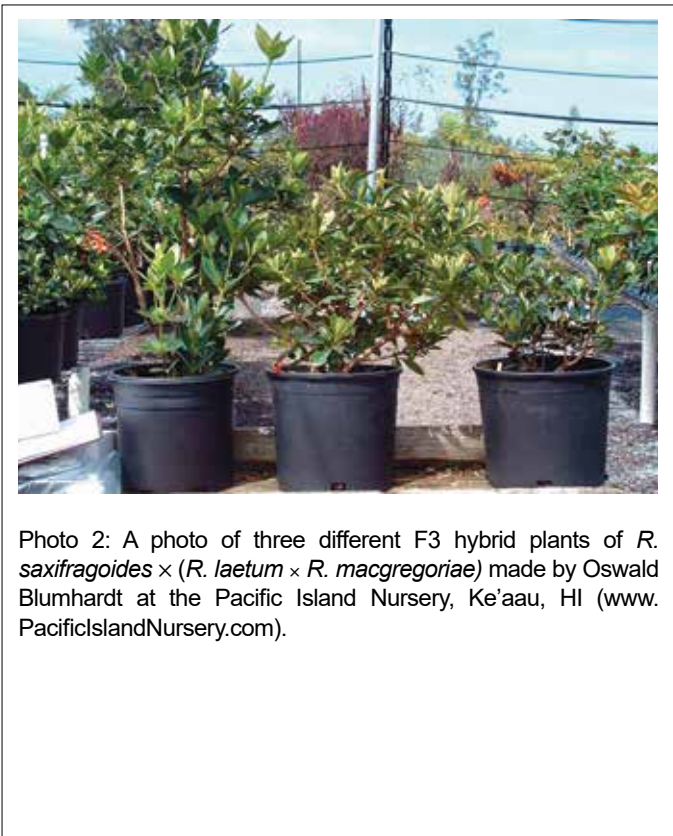
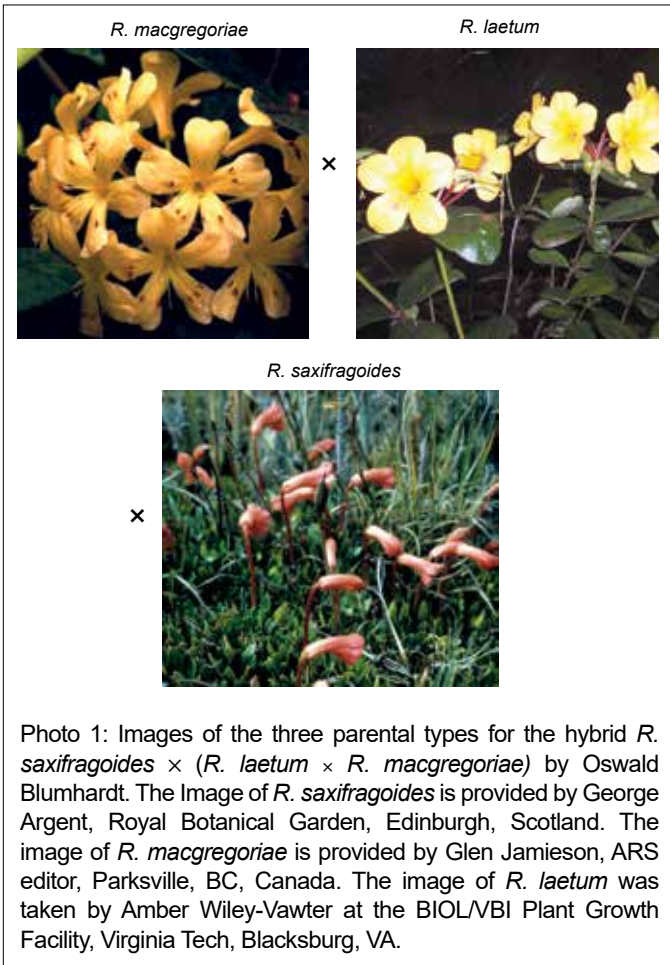
per node. The total number of stomata was auto-correlated ($P < 0.001$) with the number of abaxial stomata because abaxial stomata make up most of the total stomata calculation. Total leaf stomata was marginally significantly ($P = 0.100$) negatively correlated with leaf area. Therefore, there was a trend for stomatal density to decrease as leaf area increased for F3 hybrid plants. When hybrid plants were grouped based on whether they were amphistomatous or hypostomatous, there were no significant differences in leaf size, leaf shape, or bushiness traits between the two groups. Thus, the amphistomatous trait is not linked to other vegetative traits of *R. saxifragoides*.

Flower color was significantly, positively correlated ($P < 0.05$) with leaf area, but flower color was not correlated with any other leaf or bushiness traits. Therefore, the contribution of pink to the flower color increased as leaf area increased in F3 hybrid plants. This result is opposite to what would be expected if flower color was linked to vegetative traits because if they were linked, we would expect more pink flowers as leaf size became smaller; *R. saxifragoides* has small leaves and pink flowers.

Discussion:

The mean values for quantitative traits in *Rhododendron* hybrid populations usually are intermediate between the parental traits (Ma 2010, Tagane 2008). In general, the F3 hybrid population in this study followed the overall trend for quantitative traits in hybrid *Rhododendron* populations. For instance, mean leaf area, mean number of leaves per node and mean leaf shape of F3 hybrid plants were intermediate between those of the parents. Moreover, 55% of hybrids were amphistomatous. Therefore, the average vegetative traits of hybrids made between *R. saxifragoides* and other larger vireyas would be expected to be intermediate between the two parental types. However, internode length was dominated by *R. saxifragoides* in this particular cross

(Text continued on page 16.)



indicating that short stature has an exceptionally strong expression in the offspring of crosses with *R. saxifragoides*. Also, flower color was dominated by the pink coloration of *R. saxifragoides*, which also indicated strong *R. saxifragoides* expression.

Some evidence for trait linkage was found among vegetative traits. The shorter F3 hybrid plants had significantly smaller and longer leaves than taller (plants with longer internodes) F3 hybrid plants. As a result, there is evidence for linkage among quantitative vegetative traits related to bushiness, leaf size and leaf shape. Therefore, when making a cross with *R. saxifragoides*, one can expect that the shortest plants in the F3 seedling population will have the smallest leaves with the most linear shape.

Stomatal traits of the F3 hybrid plants are important because these traits influence water use patterns by F3 hybrid plants. In general, the higher the stomatal density, the higher the maximum leaf transpiration rate will be if all else is held constant. Thus, plants with high stomatal density and stomata on both leaf surfaces will use water quicker than those plants with low stomatal density. *R. saxifragoides* is adapted to high light sites with ample water supply (Argent 2006). Plants of high light environments are more likely to be amphistomatous than plants that inhabit lower light environments (Hetherington 2003). The amphistomatous trait was carried in 55% of F3 hybrid plants, but adaxial stomatal density was intermediate between parental types, resulting in low adaxial stomatal density on amphistomatous hybrid plants. In fact, total leaf stomatal density was relatively low for F3 hybrid plants compared to both parent species. Amphistomatous leaves on F3 hybrids would increase water use and help to cool leaves during high light conditions in comparison to hypostomatous F3 hybrid plants (Nobel 1999). However, due to the generally low stomatal density in F3 hybrid plants, the added water loss for

amphistomatous plants may not cause much of a problem for horticultural uses of these hybrid plants. There was no evidence of linkage between vegetative or floral traits with amphistomatous or hypostomatous condition.

Our study indicated that when using *R. saxifragoides* in a hybrid cross, the hybrid population will have relatively short stature with intermediate leaf traits. There will be a tendency for the shortest plants to have the smallest and most linear leaves. Also, hybrid plants will require less water than *R. saxifragoides*. A dominance of pink and pink related colors will be found in the offspring even when one of the parents has a strong yellow flower. However, some whites and other color combinations will be found at low frequency in hybrid populations.

This F3 population has already resulted in several named varieties. For example, 'Maui Maiden' is a short growing plant that has red-purple buds that develop into brilliant pink flowers, 'Kilauea Kid' produces many trusses of orange flowers, and 'Hawaii Sunrise' has dramatic yellow flowers (Photo 4). I am sure that many other registered varieties are on the way from this F3 population and several have potential for development into house plants.

Acknowledgements:

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Mayor Bloomberg's Backyard – Opportunities and Challenges of the Urban Garden

Colby Feller
New York, New York



Photos by the author

My father Bruce and I have long discussed using *Rhododendron vaseyi* in an urban setting, believing that they would be resilient, good performers and offer something new to the surrounding environment. They are native, deciduous azaleas with a narrow, upright, irregular habit, growing from five to fifteen feet (1.5 - 4.6 m) tall. The flowers are appealing and unique, appearing before the new foliar growth. They lack the tube of most azaleas, with petals joined at the base, creating a more open flower form. Colors range from pink to pure white, with greenish-yellow or white throats and spotted lobes. Fall foliar color ranges from a striking red to maroon. The flowers are not fragrant, although it has been reported by some that they attract butterflies and hummingbirds, a possibility to which I will alert the gardeners.

During my brief career, in both public parks and with private design and installation firms in New York City, I have most enjoyed working in, and for, the public sector, sharing the beauty of plants with the general public. My design philosophy is influenced by my formal education in environmental geography, as I seek plants that are eco-sensitive and to explore the ways in which human societies conceptualize and interact with their environment. Man-made parks in an urban setting and the plants that exist within them, can serve as the nexus of these interactions. They can also provide opportunities to explore correlations between a plant's native habitat, and that of created, urban, public spaces.

Potential sites for a test garden in the City of New York are endless, but it was important to assure that it would be enjoyed by the public. After installing a conifer test garden on the rooftop of the New York City Parks and Recreation headquarters in Central Park earlier this year, it was time to come back down to street level. How to “top” the Park's HQ? How about the “Mayor's Backyard”? I was introduced to Patricia Nadosy of the Carl Schurz Park Association last fall. This Park surrounds Gracie Mansion, the official residence of the Mayor of the City of New York since 1942. Patricia and the volunteer gardening committee reacted to the proposal with much enthusiasm and assurance that there were great areas within the Park for *R. vaseyi*, and they were eager to try new native plant material. This urban test garden will be of special interest because of the conditions it presents. While many believe urban settings are effortless, with milder climates and smaller spaces, the challenges are formidable. Plants in an urban site contend with soaring summer temperatures, compacted soil, unnatural sunlight patterns, mechanical damage from snow removal efforts, salt, urban wildlife, and last, but not least, people and their pets. The challenge is the identification of plants that are rugged, durable, relatively inexpensive to install, can be maintained with minimal care (e.g., few public parks have irrigation systems), and can tolerate a variety of poor soils lacking in nutrients. It is hopefully anticipated that our *R. vaseyi* test planting will survive these challenges and achieve the design goals for color, flower, seasonal interest, and the creation of habitat to promote biodiversity.

Carl Schurz Park, on the upper eastside of Manhattan, covers 14.9 acres (6 ha), consisting of shaded, winding paths, numerous elevation changes, rock outcroppings, and areas of open lawn that descend to a wide “East to West” walkway

for pedestrian traffic. The park was created in 1896, designed by Calvert Vaux, and was substantially renovated in 1939 when the FDR Drive, the most active thoroughfare in Manhattan, was constructed. To assure that it would not be visible from the surrounding neighborhood, grade changes were made to create a waterfront promenade built atop the roadway with views of the East River, Hell Gate, and Wards Island. The soil in the garden areas was largely generated from the project and consequently contains construction debris and silt from the East River.

Upon seeing the Park and potential sites, and communicating with garden staff, the “S” Hills were chosen because they are fenced and have volunteer zone gardeners tending them. They are named for the original gardeners, Scott and Susan, and are now tended by Judy Howard and Susan Bernstein, both founding gardening committee members. Interesting light differences between Susan's south hill and Judy's north hill add an additional variable to this “test” of *R. vaseyi*'s performance in a city park. These hills border the path at 87th St. where the gardeners are creating a natural/woodland setting.

My father and I completed the installation of the *R. vaseyi* test planting on the “S” hills in November, under the watchful but enthusiastic eyes of the zone gardeners and Gardening Committee members, including the Park's gardener. The plants were sited, three on each slope, among a wide variety of suitable companions in a densely inter-planted context. Soil was a heavy, sandy loam consistency, which, along with the steep grade, is expected to provide adequate drainage. A high, hardwood canopy offers dappled summer shade. The installation provided the added opportunity to demonstrate appropriate planting techniques for the benefit of interested spectators. Offering a running dialogue



Installation, autumn 2010.



R. vaseyi, spring 2011.



R. vaseyi, spring 2011.



Carl Schurz Park, on the upper eastside of Manhattan, spring 2011.

as they worked, we illustrated the steps necessary to prepare the root system of container grown material for planting and such other important matters as the preparation and depth of the receiving hole and the need to plant “high” to stimulate a shallow and wide root growth pattern.

Well-established and nicely budded plant material for the test/display installation was obtained from two sources through the generosity of the New York ARS Chapter. Three specimens were purchased from Whitney Gardens in Brinnon, WA—bench grown, rooted cuttings taken from a tissue culture, source-plant distribution made some time ago by

the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, WA. Three additional plants were obtained from RareFind Nursery in Jackson, NJ—container grown seedlings, produced through the controlled pollination of the Nursery’s venerable stock plant of *R. vaseyi*. The admittedly modest scale of this display/test installation reflects the restraint typically imposed upon urban gardeners who are compelled to work within comparatively small spaces, and judiciously limit the addition of new plant material.

How the *R. vaseyi* will fare in the challenging, urban environment of Carl Schurz Park will help determine its applicability in similar situations, and may

provide the impetus for the expansion of test and display installations of this kind in other public parks in New York City. The placement of these beautiful, deciduous azaleas in an area highly visible to pedestrian traffic is intended to kindle interest in, and appreciation of, this and other members of the genus. Of further instructional value to Park visitors is the fact that these plants are among a growing number of stunning, native varieties that may, at the end of the day, represent a wiser choice for gardeners than their exotic competitors.

Colby Feller is a member of the New York ARS Chapter.

The Saga of Herman

John M. Keshishian, MD
McLean, Virginia



Photo by the Author

Editors note: *This article by an ARS member is not about a rhododendron, but as someone who has traveled to a few exotic places myself, I can appreciate the saga described, and the challenges involved! It shows that in one's travels, whether for rhododendrons or not, it often pays to note what is unusual around you, as it may even benefit science.*

Many years ago, I was in Guatemala with some colleagues. Dr. Francis Robicsek, noted surgeon, archaeologist and fine arts specialist, and I were heading up an expedition to a long deserted Maya temple site located deep in the Péten Jungle of Guatemala, as we conduct Mayan archaeology on our occasional hegriras [= a religious retreat, meaning to get away from the stress, etc., of the real world and meditate, or just go off and have a helluva good time].

On this occasion we were in a beat-up old VW van rattling along deeply rutted roads, some passable, some needed by-passing using loggers trails. We were rumbling along at a high altitude in cloudy, foggy, nasty weather, thru a mountain pass, when blooey, we blew a tire. This required off-loading supplies, leveling the van with stones and branches and laboriously changing the tire, swapping the blown one for a seriously worn spare.

We were tired, exhausted and in a foul mood. We retreated to the jungle edge, sat on the soft mossy turf, and pulled out food and drink to restore our spirits. At that moment, the fog suddenly parted and a huge bright ray of sunshine burst through. One ray shone on a clump of flowers



Begonia heracleifolia.

growing out of a huge mass of leaves. I had to investigate, and trotted over to examine this plant.

There were large fan-shaped leaves, the largest measuring four to five inches (10-13 cm) across, deeply incised and carved. I could only relate their appearance to a Japanese maple, and an *Acer palmatum dessicatum* variety came to mind at the time. It had upright leaves and fuzzy and greenish to red splotches along the stout fleshy stem. The blooms were a delicate pink to bright red, all held on a tall sturdy stem and waving gently in the breeze. I had no idea what this plant was, but I decided I wanted to have a go at collecting it. I wanted to have it and grow it at home! Now before you folks say anything, be advised that I was a documented collaborator for the U.S.

National Arboretum and carried a pass and tags, so getting this home was not a problem, but would I be able to propagate it? I grabbed a tire iron and a small shovel and dug out a chunk of root. It was fleshy; I had a notion I could get it home, but not for another week or so. I wrapped it in moist towels, then in my "used" underwear and this was all tucked into a plastic bag.

Fast forward to our return to the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and cleared thru the US Department of Agriculture agents. This chunk of root material went thru the Plant Health Inspection Service and was cleared; I think they did checking to make sure it was not carrying critters, but what the heck, it was only a hunk of root.

Well, fast forward again! After several weeks in pure water, this chunk of root

developed tiny roots, then bigger roots. I still opted to keep it in a water bath, from time to time dropped in a few crystals of Miracle Gro and let it get larger, firmer roots. Now the dicey part, transferring it from the incubator to the real world. I have a method that usually works for these situations. At a given time of my choosing, I begin to ladle spoonfuls of fine potting soil cum milled sphagnum into the container, and eventually the whole root system gets covered. Then the whole mass is lifted out and transferred into a regular pot, and I'm not ashamed to admit that I use a plastic, not a clay, pot.

Okay, now I had a plant. But what the heck was it?

I hid myself and the plant to the U.S. Botanical Garden's offices just across the South Capital Street Bridge. By now the plant had grown large, about large *Geranium* size, and the plant experts there scratched their chins and finally declared it a species of *Begonia* which they'd never seen in cultivation and not in existence here in America. Huh? Yep, that's what they said. Further, they named it the star begonia, *Begonia heracleifolia*, because its leaves have pointed lobes suggestive of stars. This was all beyond me. They asked for and I proudly gave them a root cutting. They smiled, I smiled and we were all happy. We filled out information forms

and I left proud and happy to know that I was being listed as the "discoverer."

Again, fast forward to a time when someone in my household left the plant outside to freeze and die while I was away. I went to the aforementioned Botanical Garden and asked for a root cutting, please? I was given the equivalent of a "Bum's Rush," with them declaring that this was a national treasure and the discovery by a noted botanist! "Huh", said I. "That's me!" "No way," they stated, and not until the Director was back would they give me a root cutting of the plant. They didn't believe I was that person, the one who'd given it to them in the first place.

Well, "Never mind," said I, as I'd also given a small cutting to a friend, Lucy Garret, and she gladly gave me a chunk of "Herman," the name I'd now given the plant, and so he was resurrected.

Again, another fast forward to a bright sunny day when I was hosting some visitors from Dallas. The Botanical Gardens had one of their usual exhibits, so we decided to visit. This time it was centered on begonias, but the place was also ablaze with orchids, bromeliads, chrysanthemums and all the usual lovely plants they have on display. We'd endured the guards' search for weapons and other ridiculous imagined insults. We were

moving from one area to another, when lo and behold, there before us stood a huge pot holding my "Herman"! I mentioned casually to our guests that I'd discovered and brought this plant here. After the chortling and laughter subsided, I walked over to "Herman" and displayed the name tag, and my name as having "introduced" it. End of laughter!

To date, I've made cuttings and rooted small "Herman" plants and distributed them to friends, who all love "Herman."

"Herman" loves a sunny window, gentle watering, a dose of fertilizer from time to time and asks nothing in return. From time to time I trim large shaggy leaves off, especially the dying ones, and "Herman" thrives, draws admiring glances and gracing our family room in McLean. Few believe it's a *Begonia*, but it is!

On other forays into the Péten jungles, I've retrieved and brought back chunks of orchids with their cute little yellow dancing blooms, bromeliads and assorted vines. Many have been displayed at the Botanical Gardens, and may still be there. However, owing to the Security checks and other impediments, I rarely go there these days.

John Keshishian is a member of the ARS Potomac Valley Chapter.

ARS Program Library

The ARS Program Library provides programs on DVDs that chapters can purchase for use at their meetings. These DVDs are viewed with the digital projector, with a computer or DVD player, or viewed on a television set with the DVD player.

Chapter members may borrow from their chapter library, and make a copy, or purchase personal copies.

The DVDs currently available:

- Garden Walks 2006 - Gardens visited during the joint convention of the ARS and Azalea Society of America in Rockville, Maryland.
 - Frank Fujioka's Program - May 2006 Societe Bretonne Du Rhododendron in France.
 - Elepidote Hybrids in Central New Jersey - Hybrids selected by the Princeton Chapter Study Group. Narration by Jerry van de Sande.
 - Arunachal Pradesh, India - Ron Rabideau's trip, narration by Ron Rabideau.
 - The Zurich Garden - A narration by the garden's creator, Dr. William M. Zurich.
 - Rhododendrons at the Golden Gate - 2007 Annual Convention with narration.
 - Rhododendrons in the Wild West - 2008 Annual Convention in Tulsa with narration.
 - A Spring Walk in Walters' Woods - Spike & Kay Walters' garden in Western PA.
 - Nepal: Our Ultimate Rhodo Flowering Experience! - Narration by Ian Chalk, Australia.
 - Oban, Scotland ARS 1996 Convention Revisited - Narration by Win Howe.
 - Lendonwood Garden - Len Miller's garden in Grove, Oklahoma. DVD produced by Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service. Available on VHS and DVD for \$15 each.
- New DVD: Charles Feryok on Pruning. Chuck, retired horticulturist living in central NJ, discusses pruning principles and demonstrates as he walks about a small NJ garden.

Rhodography – the Photography of Rhododendrons!

Dave Eckerdt
Salem, Oregon



Photos by the Author

Unsure of my direction upon retirement, my wife, Pat, presented me with two items: a rocking chair and a new DSLR camera of my choice. The rocking chair is crafted from mango wood and is a beautiful piece of art; I look at it often with sincere appreciation. The camera on the other hand rekindled a neglected interest and sent me out in search of new garden wonders to photograph. Along the garden path I have gained some photography insights I hope might be helpful.

There are as many camera models as flavors of ice cream. Over my lifetime I have spent considerable research in personal taste trials before concluding that Rocky Road is the perfect ice cream. I determined to be equally thorough in my camera selection. I bought several camera comparison magazines and I searched the Internet for camera reviews. I found the reviews at dppreview.com and the customer product reviews at amazon.com to be my least biased sources of product information. I made a short list of potential camera candidates and headed off to my local full service camera store. The store arranged to have all three models available to me at one time so I could do a hands-on comparison. I had decent knowledge of the pros and cons of each camera before going to the store but I needed to feel each in my hand, operate the controls, and get a sense of how easily each camera might be to work with. My focus was to be photography and I wanted a camera designed to do that single function well. My primary camera

didn't need to take videos; I didn't want a cat that barked. Once I made a tentative choice I considered and decided upon the next model up because I knew the more serious I became the sooner I would want those extra pixels and capabilities. I was amazed at how soon that next level came. I also own a compact camera that I carry everywhere for unplanned opportunities. It is intentionally the same brand and thus uses the same system of controls and protocol. My intent is that through daily usage the buttons, menus, and controls will become intuitive so I will be ready for each photographic moment.

What you should expect from your camera gear depends on the purpose of your photography. I'm a garden guy; my camera lens is most often focused on garden settings ranging from overall impressions, to plant combinations and profiles, to macro photography. I shoot outdoors so I don't need a studio photographer's array of lighting, fixed length lenses, or support staff. I rarely do sport or wildlife photography so very long lenses usually don't go in my kit. Neither do I have to master the techniques of capturing the image of a moving target. I give garden talks and my photos move from camera to computer storage (and its critical backup storage), to a monitor, and then selectively to PowerPoint slide presentations, and occasionally to magazines or a printer.

Sad movies and my own bad photos make me want to cry. A bad photo is an opportunity lost; it is Mona Lisa without a smile. Excited about my new camera I resolved to invest time to improve my

skills. There are two distinct skill sets in photography. The first set is artistic, the second set is mechanical. Artistic skills include composition and creativity. Artistic skills are nuanced and subjective. They are personal skills not easily taught or shared with fellow photographers. Mechanical skills include equipment choice, operation, maintenance, image storage, and preparation. Mechanical skills are practical, objective, and readily transferable. Competence in the mechanical skills seems to be a prerequisite for artistic development and I have formed a set of personal rules toward that end. Like a puppy learns at obedience class I have learned these rules by disappointment and reinforcement. Disappointment when ignoring the rules leads to a poor image and reinforcement when following my rules catches a potential problem before it becomes a mistake. I don't, however, make rules for others. I tried that at home one time and I still have the scars. Here follow some personal mechanical rules that work for me.

Many important books go unread; your camera manual may be among them. There are vicious rumors spread by women that guys will neither ask for directions nor read manuals. I do read and re-read my camera manual. It is dog-eared, yellow highlighted, and heavily annotated. The manual resides not in a drawer at home but in my camera bag where it is available for immediate reference. Some camera manufacturers provide only a DVD rather than a paper copy of the manual, a frustrating bother. If so, print and carry



Berg's *R. augustinii* in the garden of Mike and Maria Stewart.



R. 'Neat-O' in the background behind *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushimanum* X *R. pseudochrysanthum* in the garden of Dick and Karen Cavender.



R. 'Rae Berry' in foreground, *R. davidsonianum* 'Seranande' in the background in the garden of Pat and Dave Eckerdt.

your own copy. At home are third party guidebooks specific to my camera model. These are always better illustrated, expand upon the sparse user's manual, and often approach the camera's capabilities from a more user-friendly view.

The shutter button is there to be used. Each time I press that button I am hoping to capture a perfect photo. In reality I seldom get things right on the first try, marrying Pat some 45 years ago being the rare exception. When I perceive a phenomenal photographic possibility I will take a dozen or more shots, varying my camera angles, exposure and depth of field. After all, even overpaid baseball players get up to seven chances to hit a home run each time they go to bat. If I finish a photo day with a dozen presentation quality photos of which one or two are frame-able quality I consider the day a great success.

I am an eight percent photographer. In general for each 100 images I shoot, I will delete two-thirds on my first review. I will delete half of the remainder upon my second review and another half of those yet remaining on my third review. *Sunset Magazine* sent a professional contract photographer to our garden to capture an image of our laburnum archway. The photographer took over two hundred photos from which he chose five to submit to *Sunset*, the *Sunset* editors in turn selected one. Shoot with zest, keep the best, and delete the rest.

I admit to having a double standard here. I am a garden generalist but I publicly acknowledge *Rhododendron* as my favorite genus. Among the many rhodys in our garden is *Rhododendron flinkii*. I love the beautiful orange-brown indumentum on its few remaining leaves; I even love its name and enjoy pointing *flinkii* out to garden visitors as a rarity. The plant struggles and if I find a better specimen I will replace it, but until then it stays. If my *flinkii* were a photograph I would already have deleted it.

Most camera lenses come with an attachable hood and I use mine unfailingly. The hood helps keep dust and moisture

off the lens as well as significantly reducing lens flare caused by indirect sunlight. The hood also offers your lens a good measure of protection should it encounter a rigid obstacle. I recently visited Kyoto, Japan, and was discouraged to find cameras banned from many of the temples. The reason for the restriction was not so the temples could sell more postcards but rather preventative against the incessant damage caused by cameras scraping against centuries old surfaces. Hoods are created specifically for each lens, and with up to five lenses in my gear bag at any one time I have found it handy to mark each black hood with a permanent silver marker so the correct hood quickly goes to its matching lens.

Thanksgiving evening, family and friends gathering from afar, the aroma of turkey coming from the oven, and the power goes out. Power failure in the garden can also ruin a good day. I always carry an extra fully charged camera battery as well as a fresh stock of AA and AAA batteries for my accessories. I use my viewfinder rather than the camera's LCD display for composing my shots. The LCD display is a huge drain on a camera battery and to moderate this drain I set display review time to the shortest setting. The LCD is very unreliable in determining the quality of a captured shot. I just want a quick peek to see that the image is neither a blown out over exposure nor a black hole. Since I am taking multiple photos I can be patient in waiting to see these images later on a large monitor. I also set the camera to a one-minute sleep mode to conserve power. A half press on the shutter button brings it back to instant readiness.

Carrying spare memory cards goes hand in hand with power conservation. A full memory card leaves a photographer only four options, the first and worst being to bag the camera for the rest of the day. The second option is to rely on your LCD to review your captured images and then delete those you suspect to be duds. This not only further drains away battery power but also steals away your valuable

shooting time. A third option is to carry a laptop or other media storage device to which you can download your photos and then start anew by reformatting your memory card. The best option is to carry spare memory. I use a hard-shelled travel case, about half the thickness of a pack of cigarettes, offered by Digital Foci. It safely and securely holds four compact flash cards and four SDHC cards. When I place a new card in the camera I put the full card I removed into the case face down as a visual reminder not to reuse it before it is safely downloaded.

I take all my photos in raw format rather than the universal JPEG format. Raw does take more storage space on your camera chip and in your computer's memory; it takes more space because it is retaining more detail. A JPEG photograph can be likened to reading a Readers Digest condensed book. A book editor has decided what detail can be omitted while still hoping to give the reader the essence intended by the author. In JPEG format your camera's "brain" is discarding and interpolating data and giving you an expurgated version of what your camera saw. Raw format records your image just as the camera's sensor "sees" it and allows you to make your own photo decisions when you process the image on your computer. You may be well satisfied today with your scaled back photo, but the loss is permanent and unavailable in future should that photo turn out to be the treasure you hoped for when you took it. If it is a good JPEG photo it could perhaps have been amazing with the extra detail captured in raw format.

When I started carrying along a tripod I felt an empathy with leashed dogs. I felt tethered, my freedom restricted. I have now come to accept that a photographer without a tripod is like an acrobat without a safety net. Using a tripod improves my photos in two ways. Firstly, of course, it gives me the steadiness necessary to capture the sharpest possible image. But equally important, it slows me down. It forces me to pay better attention to what the camera

is seeing. Many of the better camera lenses now offer a feature called “image stabilization” or “vibration reduction,” a benefit worth the extra dollars paid for the lens. Even with this feature a useful rule of thumb if you are handholding states that your shutter speed needs to be at least as fast as the numerical equivalent of your lens size. Simply put, if you are using a 50mm lens in normal daylight you should be relatively safe without a tripod if your shutter speed is 1/50th of a second or faster. 1/200th of a second for a 200mm lens, etc.

Access to great gardens and intriguing plants is critical to my photography. I am indeed fortunate in being able to step out our front door directly into a two-acre collector’s garden. But even with this resource I am always looking for new plant wonders and access to private gardens. There are several legal ways to gain access to the gardens you want to see. Many organizations use garden tours as fundraisers and we are regular ticket buyers. We also belong to several garden clubs with Open Garden programs and we attend study weekends where garden visits are part of the event. This gets me through the garden gate and should the garden be photo promising I will ask the hosts if it would be possible to return on a less crowded day. Groveling here is acceptable. Pat and I realize how important one’s time is and we always consider it a very nice compliment when folks choose to spend some of their time in our own garden. Likewise I find fellow gardeners most gracious in allowing me further access to their gardens. I explain that I do garden lectures and would like the opportunity to perhaps use photos of their garden in my talks. I always offer to send a DVD of all the “keeper” shots taken in their garden and I always try to have this in their hands quickly. The DVDs are appreciated and frequently result in invitations to return and referrals to other great gardens. Herein lies one of a photographer’s most important rules: never show the bad stuff. First impressions do matter. One or two bad photos in a

batch not only leave an indelible blotch on your audience’s impression of you as a photographer but more importantly it is a slight to your host’s garden.

Once through the garden gate I face the possibility of the terrible too-s: too wet, too windy, too sunny, or too dark. These significant hurdles are often manageable with camera adjustments, accessories, and post processing software. The most fatal of the too-s, however, is too careless. It is terribly discouraging to download your photos and find a batch jinxed by bad camera management.

During any photo series I will be working through my camera’s controls trying for that perfect result. But before I move on the next opportunity I need to step back to the beginning. I need to approach a new photo series knowing my camera setup and not merely responding to however I last left it. Taking a few seconds to review my camera settings has prevented countless regrets. Like a pilot’s preflight checklist I have a mental liturgy of camera checks that I call upon before each photo series. These are my laws: **MILAWS (Mode, ISO, Lens, Aperture, White Balance, Shutter speed)**.

Do you like the thought of getting out of the family sedan and driving a sports car with a very responsive manual transmission? Taking your camera out of automatic mode and into a more creative control mode is even more fun. My camera is routinely set to manual mode to allow the greatest degree of control over the images I hope to capture, but I might end a session with any of five modes selected. Before I begin again I must know how my camera is programmed.

ISO controls your camera sensor’s sensitivity to light. ISO is the digital equivalent of what was called ASA when film was the primary photographic medium. A higher ISO number allows the camera to record an image in lower light, but higher sensitivity can also result in a grainier image. Photographers using film might choose a roll of 100 ISO for daylight or a 400 ISO for indoor or deep

shadows. Your digital camera allows you to choose your ISO setting from a dial or menu. I begin with ISO set as low as the camera will allow, then adjust it upward as conditions warrant..

Your lens often has its own controls and I check to see whether the lens is set for manual or auto focus, that IS (Image Stabilization) is on if I am hand holding and off if I am using a tripod, and I check the lens itself to be certain it is clean and dry.

Aperture controls my depth of field, determining how much of my view will be in focus. A small aperture number will make the object on which I am focused crisp while blurring the forefront and background, a result known as “bokeh” and pronounced like a bunch of flowers, “bouquet.” Increasing my aperture number will bring more of what the camera is seeing into focus. In general I am starting with a small aperture number for a flower, a large aperture number for a landscape.

Your camera doesn’t have your brain’s memory in knowing what true white looks like. It needs your help. The **White Balance** adjustment lets you tell your camera what the light environment is so it can correct for aberrations. White Balance left on “Auto” frequently results in heavy gold overtones when photographing indoors under tungsten lights, or bluish snow when photographing outdoors on winter days. When I am outdoors I set **White Balance** to “Cloudy” even on a sunny day because it adds vibrancy to the color palate. Like my other settings, I need to know before my first photo that my white balance is correct for my situation.

Shutter speed is last on my checklist. Aperture, ISO, and Shutter speed are the three legs of the exposure triangle. Changing any one impacts the other two. Having chosen my aperture and selected my ISO I now check to see that the shutter speed will be adequate for my shot. If it is too slow for the shot I want I may use a tripod, a flash attachment, or revisit my ISO and aperture settings.

There are many setting combinations and at times they can become muddled. Before I arrive at my shooting location and once or twice during the day I will go into my camera's menu and "clear all settings." Just as a nice wine can cleanse our palates between courses of a meal, frequently clearing my camera settings lets me start the next photo series refreshed. Finally, and firstly, before leaving home I pull out my camera, check that the "shoot without card" option is turned off, and take a picture of something: my cat, my toes, anything at all. This confirms that both the battery and the memory chip are in the camera and not left behind in a charger or downloading device.

With mechanical skills under control there are many ways to improve your

artistic skills. Check out the full term photography classes offered by your local community college. Browse through the photography magazines at a good newsstand or bookstore and subscribe to the one you like the best. Read a good general photography book. Two that I have found particularly valuable are *The Digital Photography Book* by Scott Kelby (2006, 2007 and 2009) in three small volumes and *Understanding Photography - Field Guide* by Bryan Peterson (2009). Join a local camera club! You will find the members just as sharing as those in your Rhody chapter, and finally take your camera out of automatic mode, experiment, and have fun.

* = not registered.

Dave Eckerdt is a member of the Willamette ARS Chapter. This is a summary of a talk he gave at the 2010 Fall ARS Convention in Vancouver, WA.

References

- Kelby, S. 2006. *The Digital Photography Book*. Vol. 1. Peachpit Pr., USA: 219 pp.
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- Kelby, S. 2009. *The Digital Photography Book*, Vol. 3. Peachpit Pr., USA: 240 pp.
- Peterson, B. 2009. *Bryan Peterson's Understanding Photography Field Guide: How to Shoot Great Photographs With Any Camera*. Watson-Guptill Pub., USA: 400 pp.

ARS Website Adds 2012 Rhododendron of the Year List and BLOG

On the ARS website, under the "Plant Data" menu you can see the 2012 "Rhododendron of the Year (ROY)" Awards for each North American ARS region. There is also an extensive database of both species and hybrid rhodies with detailed information and pictures of many of them.

The ARS has also launched a BLOG "Everything About Rhododendrons" at: <http://www.rhododendron.org/>www.rhododendron.org/blog>.

If you do not know what a BLOG is, it is short for "Web LOG." It contains articles on various subjects written by chosen members of the ARS. This new feature is designed to act as a public forum for all things rhodie and should provide a nice variety of viewpoints and different levels of information. Recent posts include one on "Deciduous Azaleas" and another on "Pruning." The great thing is that you can comment on the articles with additional information

or ask questions for the authors. Bob Weissman, the ARS webmaster, is also

looking for additional authors that may want to submit articles for the BLOG.

'The Pink Ribbons' Rhododendron Update

(Modified from the November 2011 Macrophyllum, the newsletter of the Siuslaw Chapter)

Gene Cockeram
Florence, Oregon

[In *JARS* 64(3) (Summer 2010, P. 163), Gene had an article describing his successful effort to dedicate the Rhododendron 'The Pink Ribbons' to raise funds in support of breast cancer research. Here is a progress report on the fund raising.]

I just wanted you to know that the 'The Pink Ribbons' has brought in \$1,955.00 to date, which has subsequently been donated to the Peace Harbor Hospital and to the Komen Foundation. This is in just the first year of this rhododendron being released. The money was raised with the help of all that contributed to the project, the quilt, the raffle, raising of the plants, the first dozen t-shirts, and to all of you that helped in any way, thank you.

Gene Cockeram is a member of the Siuslaw Chapter.

Awards

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

Bronze Medal: Dr. James Browning

Jim, you have been a long term member of the Society and this chapter. You have served us as President, Vice-President, and Director. As program chairman, you brought many distinguished speakers to our meetings. You have helped organize the annual truss shows, at which you have been a judge, and at times Head Judge. You revised the truss show schedule and renamed the awards, and contributed generously to our plant sales. You were a Charter Member of the Pittsburgh Study Group and shared your expertise in that endeavour. You purchased a great many of Lanny Pride's hybrids to save them from extinction and became an expert on those plants. You have been a guest lecturer on these plants at many meetings as well as the Fall Conference of the Society. You share your considerable knowledge readily and have been a host of several meetings. You are a constant winner at truss shows. For all of these gifts that you have given us, it is with great pride that we present this, our highest honour.

Bronze Medal: Dr. Mark Konrad

As a charter member, you were our first Treasurer. Since then, you have served as Vice-President and President. A prolific hybridizer, you have shared plants and have held numerous visits to your garden. You continue to share plant knowledge in your many articles in our Chapter's quarterly journal. In recognition of your efforts on behalf of this Chapter, and as the longest continuous member, we present this award with our profound respect and appreciation.

VICTORIA CHAPTER

Bronze Medal: Ann Widdowson

The Victoria Rhododendron Society is pleased to bestow its highest award, the Bronze Medal, to Ann Widdowson in recognition of her many contributions to the VRS.

For the 2005 ARS convention, Ann took on responsibility for finances as part of the Registration team, and undertook many other tasks during event. Since 2006, Ann has been Treasurer of the VRS. She is an active participant and coordinates sales data for the annual Spring Show and Sale. She and husband Tom have provided storage space for the club's Show supplies, which saves

the club significant costs. They have frequently hosted the VRS annual picnic in June at their home with its impressive garden. Ann is also an active member of the VRS Propagation Group.

It is with great pleasure that we award Ann the ARS Bronze Medal to recognize her outstanding service to the Victoria Rhododendron Society.

Bronze Medal: Theresa McMillan

The Victoria Rhododendron Society is pleased to bestow its highest award, the Bronze Medal, to Theresa McMillan in recognition of her many contributions to the VRS.

Since joining the Society in 1999, Theresa has volunteered in every spring Show and Sale. For the 2005 ARS convention, she was part of the Registration team, and undertook many other tasks before and during event. Theresa joined the VRS Board in 2006 as Secretary and for several years she also organized the tea/coffee break for the monthly meetings. In December 2007, when our newsletter editor was unable to continue due to illness, Theresa took on the editorial task, and the newsletters she has produced with the help of the Newsletter Committee have been first class. She also continued on as Secretary of the board until recently and continues service as a Member At Large.

It is with great pleasure that we award Theresa the ARS Bronze medal to recognize her outstanding service to the Victoria Rhododendron Society.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC CHAPTER

Award of Merit: William F. Bedwell

We thank you for your many accomplishments and services both to the American Rhododendron Society and to our Middle Atlantic Chapter. We present this Citation and small trophy in recognition of your many years of service and significant contributions to the Chapter's growth and continued operation.

There are many stars in the A.R.S. whose activities and accomplishments are known to all, but you are a rare individual who has quietly helped keep the A.R.S. and your Chapter functioning well for over four decades. You have served as Chapter President, Meeting Organizer and Chairman, Budget and Finance Committee Co-Chair, and Awards and Honors Committee Chair and on the Society Plant Rating (ROY) and Nominating Committees. You have attended many Society meetings and virtually all of our Chapter meetings. And received its Bronze Medal in 1985.

As a major participant in our Middle Atlantic Chapter and the American Rhododendron Society you devoted much personal time and effort and your contributions have gone on for so long that they are too many to catalog here.

However, they are welcomed and appreciated by all who have worked and shared time with you at meetings, and on hikes and tours.

Presented this 21st day of October, 2011, in Sandston, Virginia.

Don Smart, ARS President
Lloyd Willis, MAC Chapter President



William Bedwell (left) receiving his Award of Merit from Lloyd Willis (center) and Don Smart (right).

Middle Atlantic Chapter Awards

Ken McDonald, Jr.
Hampton, Virginia

More ARS members should learn about a seldom used award in ARS that was brought to light when William F. "Bill" Bedwell was presented the Middle Atlantic Chapter Award of Merit on October 21, 2011, at the ARS Eastern Regional meeting in Richmond, Virginia (see Awards). The award was presented by Chapter President Lloyd Willis and ARS President Don Smart, and was well deserved by Bill for his many years of highly dedicated services to his Chapter and the Society.

It appears that many people may not be aware of this award so a brief explanation is in order. About a decade ago, a Middle Atlantic Chapter member asked what we could do to recognize and compliment some long time active Chapter members who had already received our Bronze Medal many years earlier, then kept up with their outstanding contributions and dedication to various Chapter activities, often with increased intensity, but who might not otherwise qualify for Regional (Silver) or Society (Gold) level awards.

The ARS Policies of the Board (POB) states:

"9.5.2 Citation for Service/Award of Merit.

These awards may be granted to an individual, group of persons or organization that would not otherwise qualify for medal honors. The recipient(s) need not belong to the Society. In chapters, the award may be initiated as its governing body directs. For the Society, the award may be initiated by the President or Board of Directors and shall be approved by a majority of the Board. The award shall consist of a text briefly describing the reason for it, written in calligraphic or other appropriate script, and delivered at a suitable ceremony/meeting."

On investigation, the above little used ARS POB provisions were found and adapted into our Middle Atlantic Chapter's POB as follows:

"7.2.3.11.3: Award of Merit (AM) to recognize significant contributions to the Chapter's growth and continued operation.
7.2.3.11.4: Distinguished Service Citation (DSC) to recognize exemplary service to the Chapter over time and in many capacities."

Also for many years our Chapter has on occasion made the following award in addition to its Bronze Medals:

"7.2.3.11.1.1: Certificate of Appreciation (CA): to recognize a one time or an on-going contribution. (My words; not a quote from my Chapter's POB.) "

In addition to Mr. Bedwell, the AM

has only been presented by our Chapter to Gladys Wheeldon in 2003 and to John B. Buschmann in 2004. To date, four very selective DSCs have been awarded.

Around the time of our recent meeting, two recipients of the DSC, David Lay and John B. Buschmann, passed away suddenly. This emphasized the importance of recognizing during people's lifetimes their long service and many contributions that can be highlighted by these Honors awards.

Throughout the American Rhododendron Society, more members should become familiar with these additional awards to recognize those long serving and hard working Society and Chapter volunteer members who quietly go about keeping our Chapters and our Society functioning. It is to be anticipated that other Chapters and the ARS Board will see the many possibilities in this regard. A more wide spread implementation of these awards can help to retain members, and the resulting publicity and recognition will be of benefit to our entire ARS and may even help attract new members, as they show our on-going willingness to recognize the exceptional support many members provide.

Ken McDonald, Jr., is a member of the Middle Atlantic Chapter.

In Memoriam

Ray Brush

Forrest Raymond Brush, 90, of Charlottesville, Virginia, died July 4, 2011, after suffering a fall. Ray served in the Army in Europe during World War II. After returning home he attended Michigan State College and received both BS and MS degrees. He worked for the USDA, and eventually joined the American Association of Nurserymen where he was quite active. He and his wife Betty moved to Madison, VA, in 1986 after his retirement, and then to Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge in 2004 where Ray became a Master Gardener. Ray was MAC Secretary from 1993 to 1996 and treasurer from 1996 to 2000. Ray received the MAC ARS Bronze Medal in 2001.

John Buschmann

John B. Buschmann, 88, US Air Force, retired, of Bear Garden Farm in New Canton, Virginia, died on October 22, 2011. John was a P51 Mustang fighter pilot, and later a test pilot and flight instructor. At Bear Garden Farm, he was an active farmer who participated in several organizations. He was into conservation and was helping to restore both American chestnut trees and blue birds. John was a great source of support for Middle Atlantic Chapter (MAC) both through financial contributions and his educational efforts promoting the culture of rhododendrons, including several workshops at Bear Garden Farm. He was very social and often was often found talking about his favorite plant and animal conservation projects during the MAC social hours. John served on the MAC board of directors in the mid 1980s. He received

the MAC ARS Bronze Medal in 1990 and the Award of Merit in 2004.

Etta Lois Cook

My dear sweet friend, Etta Cook, was a founding member of the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society. She was a tireless volunteer in every aspect of the club's breath. Etta started collecting rhodos in Victoria, B.C., in the '60s. Among those, '[Delph's] Full Moon' and 'Carita Golden Dreams' from John Henny, and a real beauty, Hawk Group from Cumerfolds, all of which were transported by horse trailer to her present garden Craigends in Duncan B.C. Her generosity knew no bounds and in 2005 was one of the hosts for the ARS Garden Tour. Her pastries were devoured by folks on the tour buses. She was a key organizer for the (Continued on next page.)

In Memoriam

(Continued from page 27.)

ARS conference in Duncan, 2000, and was a regular at ARS conventions. She was awarded the ARS Bronze Medal in 1994. Etta had the good fortune to have her namesake on an unregistered Lloyd Gilmore sister seedling of 'Sooke Clouds'* ('Jedax × *R. pachysanthum*) × 'Parksville Sunset'* ('Paprika Spiced' × 'Jeda'). One of her greatest joys was receiving this rhodo named after her.

* = unregistered.

Peter Lewis

David Lay

David Lay, 80, of Weems, VA, died on October 20, 2011. He grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He graduated from Groton School and received his degree from Harvard College. He was a career officer with the Central Intelligence Agency, specializing in East Asian political affairs. He was stationed in the Far East for several years where he had his family with him. David was a bibliophile and liked to play chess. In the mid-1970s, David moved his family from Alexandria, Virginia, to the Northern Neck where he opened Northern Neck Nurseries, specializing in azaleas and camellias. He joined MAC in this time frame, and his first meeting was in the fall of 1978 at Poor Robert's Retreat. He was an avid plantsman and was active in many plant societies. David and his wife Mary Lloyd had a beautiful garden that even appeared in a TV gardening documentary. They welcomed visits to their garden for many meetings and even hosted two luncheons during MAC tours. David grew plants for the chapter's "Plants for Members" (P4M) program for about 20 years, starting about 1983. He was chairman of the huge plant sale at the 1988 convention.

David had served on the MAC board and was its president from 1985 to 1987. He contributed many articles to the MAC newsletter, and received the MAC ARS Bronze Medal in 1988 and the MAC Distinguished Service Citation in 2003.

Jane McKay

Jane McKay, 76, of Palmyra, Virginia, died suddenly on November 15, 2011. In 1992, Jane and her husband Wally moved down to Palmyra from New York where they had been long time members of the New York Chapter. Wally had retired from the US Postal Service. Jane was an associate

member of MAC from about 1988, and later moved her primary membership to MAC from the NY Chapter.

Jane was interested in azaleas, rhododendrons and other plants from about the 1960s, when she would attend NY Chapter meetings with her father. Jane worked at Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico in the early days of her marriage, when Wally was stationed in New Mexico in the service. She knew many of the well-known rhododendron people in NY from that era. Jane served a term as New York Chapter president, and was awarded the Bronze Medal by the NY Chapter. Jane was also active in the Holly Society of America in both the chapter in New York and later in the Colonial Virginia Chapter. She belonged to several other plant societies.

Jane served as Registrar for the 1999 Eastern Regional Meeting hosted by MAC which drew 257 attendees. She was on the MAC board of directors for many years and also served as Membership Chairman for 13 years. She wrote a column in our chapter newsletter which was popular with the membership. Jane received the Certificate of Appreciation from MAC in 2004 and the Bronze Medal from MAC in 2008.

John Smith

John Smith, 84, of Stuart, Virginia, died on November 7, 2011. He was a graduate of Emory University with a BSc degree in mathematics. He served with the Merchant Marines, and had retired as a cryptologist with the National Security Agency where he had worked from 1950 through 1985, then later as an encryption consultant for E-Systems. He loved growing azaleas and rhododendrons and was a Master Gardener, in addition to being a member of MAC since 2000.

Harry R. Wright

On November 3, 2011, the North Island Rhododendron Society lost a dear friend and a pillar of the rhododendron community. Harry R. Wright, long-time member of the ARS, advocate for the genus *Rhododendron*, plantsman, hybridizer, gentleman and mentor to many, passed away at his home in Courtenay on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. A man of many talents yet great modesty, he was the recipient of the ARS Bronze Medal in 1995 and the ARS Silver Medal in 2009 for his contributions and accomplishments.

Harry fell in love with rhododendrons

when he moved to the Pacific Northwest in the 1970s. His enthusiasm resulted in the development of a 1.5 acre (0.6 ha) lot in Courtenay with his beloved wife and partner Gwen. "Haida Gold Gardens" is known as a showpiece of rhododendrons and companion plants, and has been the location of countless garden tours and charity events throughout the years. Visitors are welcome and time is always taken to enjoy a "walkabout".

A founding member of the Comox Valley Horticultural Society, his increasing interest in rhododendrons resulted in the formation of the North Island Rhododendron Society in October, 1984. Its President for 14 years over its history, Harry was always active on the Executive and a driving force within the club. He supported and encouraged members from the Qualicum/Parksville area to form their own Chapter and in 1989, the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society came into being.

Harry began hybridizing in the late 1980s and among the many rhododendrons he developed are the Courtenay Five ('Courtenay King', 'Courtenay Queen', 'Courtenay Princess', 'Courtenay Lady' and 'Courtenay Duke'), 'Iona Cee', and most recently, 'Forbidden Plateau' and 'Beaufort Gem' which pay tribute to his home in the Comox Valley. He waited until he developed a rhodo demonstrating both beauty and lovely scent before giving it the name of his wife, 'Gwendolyn Wright'.

In 1993, Harry started documenting those rhododendrons that grew successfully in District 1 and made this list available in the form of a booklet entitled "Rhododendron Varieties in BC."

Harry wanted the public to enjoy rhododendrons as much as he did. He was instrumental in the development of both the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden in 1997 and a special Vancouver Island Hybrids bed which opened in 2007. His hybrid 'Courtenay Lady' was chosen as the City of Courtenay's official plant, and May is proclaimed yearly there as "Rhododendron Month."

As ARS Director for District 1 from 2004 to 2006, Harry worked tirelessly to promote ARS goals and to support Chapters within the District. He encouraged Chapters to work closely together through sharing speakers, facilitating cross-Chapter visits and garden tours, and sharing of gardening ideas. He strongly supported initiatives throughout the District and was looking forward to helping develop a species garden here on

In Memoriam

(Continued from page 28.)
the Island.

Harry was always willing to share his knowledge about rhododendrons and brought many a novice into his caring

circle. He had a gift for making everyone feel welcome and included. Community and fellowship were of utmost importance, and Harry and Gwen would naturally be circulating and chatting, introducing newer members to others, connecting those with

similar interests, smiling and laughing, and generally making people feel at home. No one they met would be a stranger for long!

We celebrate Harry and his contributions to the Society, while knowing that he will be truly missed.

Western Regional Conference, Sept 21-23, 2012 Coast Bastion Inn, Nanaimo, B.C. “Rhodos in Paradise – Destination Vancouver Island”

Come, let us welcome you to paradise, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, style! From September 21-23, 2012, the Nanaimo Chapter of the ARS with the support of many other District 1 chapters will be your host for the 2012 ARS Western Regional Fall Conference.

Let us provide you with an extraordinary sensory experience. Stay at our Nanaimo conference hotel, the newly renovated Coast Bastion Hotel with views of the city's scenic waterfront from every room. Taste some of the best of what west coast cuisine has to offer with the meeting's specially prepared catered meals and at

the many nearby restaurants. Listen to an exciting slate of presenters who will entertain, educate, and stimulate you through a wide range of topics among which include “Dwarf rhododendrons for containers and small gardens,” the fascinating “Stories of the Milner Gardens” with its royal connections and “The Greig's Contributions to Collectors” presentation. Have a chance to tour some exquisite gardens both local and up island and on the final day of the conference, visit and lunch at the famous Milner Gardens and join Steve Hootman for a guided tour of some of the intriguing plants found there in that beautiful world

class garden and woodland. Definitely not to be missed! The ARS Board meeting, a hybridizer's round table, and an open forum discussion with the ARS's Executive Director Laura Grant will all be integral components, along with a carefully adjudicated plant sale and photo contest.

We are eager to share our gardening paradise with you. Reserve the dates of September 21 – 23, 2012, for this opportunity to network with other keen gardeners! Watch for registration information on the web and in the 2012 spring and summer JARS issues.

Early Chapter Shows

Chapter shows from April to May 1, 2012. Shows during May 2012 will be listed in the spring issue.

No admission charge unless noted.

CASCADE – Early Rhododendron Sampler; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sat., April 21, 2012; Wells Medina Nursery, 8300 NE 24th, Medina, WA 98039 (425-454-1853; Don Smart.

EUGENE - Spring Rhododendron Show and Awards Banquet; Sat., April 21; Mookie's Northwest Grill, 400 International Way, Springfield, OR. Afternoon flower show judged by attendees, foliage exhibit, no-host dinner, speaker, plant auction. For details: www.eugene-chapter-ars.org. Contact Ted Hewitt.

EUREKA – Rhododendron Show and Sale; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sat., April 28, and 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Sun., April 29; entries received 6 to 9 p.m., Fri., April 27, and 7 to 9 a.m., Sat., April 28; St. Bernards School, Miles Hall, Henderson St., Eureka, CA; Mary Marking.

MASON-DIXON - Annual Show and Sale; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sat., May 12; Carroll County Agricultural Center in Westminster, MD; judged truss show and sale of a wide variety of rhododendrons, azaleas, and companion plants. www.mdrhododendron.org.

MOUNT ARROWSMITH - MARS Truss Show

and Rhododendron Sale; 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sat., April 21; Parksville Curling Rink, Parksville, BC Canada; Glen Jamieson.

NORTH ISLAND - NIRS Truss Show and rhododendron Sale; 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sun., May 6; Komox Band Hall 3320 Comox Road, Comox BC, Canada; Nadine Boudreau

NOYO - 35th Annual John Druecker Memorial Show & Plant Sale; 7 to 10 a.m. Sat., May 5, submit entries, open to public 1:30 to 5 p.m.; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sun., May 6, open to public; Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, 18220 North Highway One, Fort Bragg, CA 95437.

SCOTTISH - Scotland's National Rhododendron Show; Show open: judging commences at 10.00hrs, show open 12.00hrs - 16.00hrs, Sat. 28th April 2012; Community Hall, Gargunnoch, Stirling, Scotland; On Sun. 29th April 2012 there will be a programme of garden tours in Central Scotland. William Campbell.

SIUSLAW - Early Flower Show and Plant Sale and Bonsai Exhibit; flower show open to public no charge after judging, 1 to 5 p.m., Sat., April 14, and Sun., April 15; Florence Events Center, 715 Quince, Florence, OR 97439, tel: 541 997-1994; plant Sales, open to the public, south side of the building from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The public may bring flower trusses for judging on Saturday from 7 to 9 a.m. Ribbons and trophies will be

awarded. It's a great time to ask questions, find books and information and enjoy azalea and rhododendron blooms; Sandra Jensen.

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON - Southwestern Oregon Rhododendron Show; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat., April 28, and 12 noon to 4 p.m., Sun., April 29; Pony Village Mall, North Bend, OR 97459; Pete Baumer.

VANCOUVER - Vancouver Rhododendron Society Annual Show and Sale; 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sat., May 5; Park and Tilford Gardens, 333 Brooksbank Avenue, North Vancouver, BC, Canada; Tony Clayton.

Board Meeting

The ARS Board of Directors meeting will be held at 9 a.m., Fri., May 4, in the Foxfire Room of the Crown Plaza Tennis and Golf Resort, Asheville, NC, during the joint convention of the American Rhododendron Society and the Azalea Society of America.

ARS Board of Directors Meeting, Oct. 21, 2011

The Board of Directors accomplished a lot during their October 21, 2011, meeting in Richmond, Virginia. The following is a summary list of decisions and assignments made at that meeting.

APPROVED MOTIONS (Unanimous):

--Save the Azalea and Boxwood Fund: Change the wording on the ARS Grant to Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) from the "endowment fund" to the "Save the Azalea and Boxwood Fund."

--Bylaws and Policy Update Motions:

- Approve the modification to Policies of the Board (POB) 2.2.3 with minor changes. The motion clarifies the number of votes for various membership classes.

- Accept the rewrite with changes as noted on **Recognition Awards and Honors Committee (POB 9.5.7).**

- **Updating of Position Descriptions:** work continues on bringing the position descriptions up to date in the POB.

--Grant Proposal: Digitizing of Additional ARS Journal Volumes 36 – 54 (19 years).

--Ad Hoc Committee Reports: Future of ARS Board Meetings. Board members asked that the POB be made clear regarding the requirement for holding only

one Face-to-Face (F2F) meeting each year, and allow electronic meetings. There are several topics related to this report and additional discussions at the next meeting will help clarify when, how, etc., any of these actions will occur.

--Ad Hoc Committee Electronic Journal.

A motion was approved to pay for a review of the copyright statement in the Journal and to also pay for Sonja's additional time formatting one issue of the Journal for the Beta testing of a potential electronic format. An electronic copy of the Fall issue and a "cheat sheet" for using Adobe Reader will be sent to District Directors for their review and testing

ASSIGNMENTS:

--ARS Planning Document (Case Statement): Glen Jamieson was asked to help create a summarized version that will be sent to the Editorial Committee for review and the Directors before the next meeting. The summarized version will eventually be printed in the Journal and be available on the ARS website.

--Research Proposal: Exploring and potential leveraging of partnerships.

District Directors were given an assignment to collect information about

partnership activities in their area.

--COMMITTEE TRANSITIONAL PLANNING:

Board members discussed the need for committee transition planning. In the next status report, committee leads should list who is on their committee. **Kath Collier** to send a reminder. Vice Presidents (**Bruce Feller** and **Bob MacIntyre**) were also asked to solicit brief description of their mission and current membership from each committee under their jurisdiction and forward this information to the Journal Editor as the basis of an article or articles.

--ARS AWARD RECIPIENTS: **Glen Jamieson** will work with others to compile a list of recipients.

--ARS BLOG. District Directors were encouraged to become familiar with the ARS BLOG and to disseminate information to their Chapters about it.

--Seed Exchange. There was a request to put an article in the Journal regarding the Seed Exchange activities. **Glen Jamieson** indicated that this is in progress.

--All District Directors were reminded to send **Laura Grant** the results of Chapter elections.

Kath Collier, ARS Secretary



ARS Board of Directors (and others). Back row: John Brown, Karel Bernady, Nick Yarmoshuk, Glen Jamieson (JARS Editor), Don Hyatt, David Collier, Dan Meier, Bob MacIntyre (Western Vice-president), Tim Walsh, Larry Coleman, Marvin Fisher. Front row: Shirley Rock, Sally Perkins, Kath Collier (Secretary), Don Smart (President), Bruce Feller (Eastern Vice-president), Laura Grant (Executive Director), Ann Mangels, Bill Mangels (Treasurer).

Election of District Directors

In accordance with Article IX, Section E of the Bylaws, the chapter presidents in ARS District 4, 5, 8, and 9 served as their districts' nominating committees. These committees have proposed the following nominees. The nominees are automatically certified as having been elected. The three-year terms of all who are elected will commence at the adjournment of the Society's annual meeting to be held in Asheville, NC.

DISTRICT 4

District Director

William (Bill) Hennig

Bill Hennig joined the Siuslaw Chapter ARS when he moved to Florence in late 2005. He has been a Siuslaw Chapter board member, then Chapter Vice President, and Chapter President in 2010. He is currently immediate past President. Bill has been very active in the Chapter and has been responsible for plant sales at the Siuslaw Chapter flower shows. Bill is an associate member of two other District 4 ARS Chapters, Eugene and Southwestern Oregon. He served with valor on the District 4 ARS Committee on District Finances. His initial goals for his term as District 4 ARS Director are to work with the District Chapters to further educate the general public on the genus *Rhododendron* and work with the Chapters to develop plans for recruiting new members and retaining our current ones. The future of ARS is dependent on increasing our membership.

District Director Alternate

David Collier

Dave Collier is a member of the Portland Chapter ARS. At the local, regional and Society level, Dave has been past vice president, president, past president Portland Chapter, Alternate Director District 4, July 2009 to May 2011, and Director District 4, May 2011 to June 2012. Other ARS activities:

- Portland board member (16 years), active member 20 years
- Finance Committee chair (6 years); web team committee member
- Assistance with chapter newsletter and marketing group
- Rhododendron show judge (Portland and other District 4 shows) (about 14 years)
- Show support (logistical, clerk, sales, assisting demonstrators, etc.)
- Show exhibition (several ribbons and one trophy at ARS shows)

•Participation in educational activities (help with Home & Garden Show booths, setting up displays (and winning ribbons) at the state fair, helping presenters at the shows and at the chapter meetings)

•Garden support (deadheading, booth, transporting and setting up sale plants, potting plants, etc.)

•Support for several ARS conventions and western regional meetings (logistics, sales, printing, communication support).

•Assistant and participant at the Clackamas Community College, Rhododendron Grower's Forum

Other horticultural organizations:

•Past treasurer of the Greater Portland Iris Society (3 years); active member 8 years

•Past treasurer of the Oregon Orchid Society (3 years)

•Show co-chair for the Oregon Orchid Society (2 years)

•Host Garden for the 2006 International American Iris Society tour

•Member of the Night Crawlers Garden Club, National Garden Club, Inc. (charter)

•Owner and manager of Collier's Nursery (we propagate rhododendrons for the chapter sales)

•Past owner and manager of Seed'em Weed'em Nursery, Gresham, Oregon

•Member of the Hardy Plant Society of Oregon, vendor at the spring plant sales (8-10 years)

•Presented talks on rhododendrons, azaleas, propagation, grapes, orchids, travel programs (rhodo conventions) to the Portland Chapter, as well as other garden clubs in the Portland area, and District 4 area chapters.

•Provide logistical support to the L.C. Skinner Progressive Designers Guild (National Garden Clubs, Inc.) (exhibits and speaker support, plus other help to judges)

•Has won several ribbons for rhododendrons and azalea entries and educational displays (3) at the Multnomah County Fair

Dave received the Portland Chapter ARS Bronze Medal for 2001. From other horticultural organizations Dave has received:

•Exhibitor ribbons, Greater Portland Iris Society

•Several ribbons for rhododendrons and azaleas displayed at Multnomah County Fairs

When he begins service as District 4

Alternate Director, Dave believes that his 20 years of active ARS membership and 16 years on the Portland Chapter Board can be put to good use at the regional level. Having a directorate team at both ends of District 4 could increase the representation opportunities in the District while minimizing overall costs. Overall, I think it could be fun.

DISTRICT 5

District Director

Tim Walsh

Having been born and raised in possibly the best place in the US to raise rhododendrons, it took a visit to my sister in Eugene, Oregon, in about 1988 to "discover" my passion for the genus and gardening in general. On maybe my tenth visit to Westgate Gardens Nursery I was asked to join the ARS where I became chapter president within a couple of years before being asked to be ARS treasurer in 1997 and remained until 2004. [Tim has served as District 5 Director since 2009.]

District Director Alternate

Richard Jones

Dick Jones has been involved in the ARS for about 25 years. Like many ARS members he initially got interested when he won a ribbon at the 1985 Noyo Chapter Show. Since then he has held all chapter offices, chaired the Show and Plant Sale, and has been writing the chapter newsletter for the last ten years.

As the person responsible for judging at the chapter show and getting speakers for the monthly programs Dick's worked with people from other No. California chapters. Additionally he worked with several District 5 members organizing and putting on the 2007 ARS Convention in the Bay Area. He organized the post convention field trip to the North Coast.

He is a retired high school science teacher. Besides his interest in gardening, Dick actively pursues photography and cooking. He and Anne, his wife of 48 years, live in Fort Bragg, close enough for frequent visits with their two daughters and two grandchildren in the Bay Area.

DISTRICT 8

District Director

Steve Henning

When Steve moved from Oregon to Pennsylvania, nurseries he found had limited selections. He took orders for good varieties for colleagues at work and

Election of District Directors (cont.)

went to wholesale nurseries to pick up young rhododendron liners each spring. In 1972, in quest of more good varieties he went to the Philadelphia Flower Show. He found the ARS display and joined the Valley Forge Chapter. Since 1974, he has been to most ARS Conventions and also conferences in New Zealand, Scotland and Germany. When the 1976 ARS Convention was at Valley Forge, Steve was heavily involved.

In the 1980s Steve created his website, *Henning's Rhododendron and Azalea Pages* (rhodyman.net) which answers questions he had when he joined the ARS. The website grew and is now one of the most popular gardening websites. He collects books on rhododendrons and azaleas and created an online Rhododendron and Azalea Bookstore in 1989. All proceeds benefit the ARS and Species Foundation.

In the fall of 2010, he learned the National Arboretum planned to remove their Glenn Dale Azaleas. He created the *SaveTheAzaleas.org* website to raise public awareness of the pending destruction of these azaleas. The website went viral and got results when the National Arboretum publicly announced in February 2011 it cancelled its plans and invited the ARS and other stakeholder groups to meetings at the National Arboretum. ARS President, Ted Stecki, and Steve represented the ARS. Don Hyatt represented the Azalea Society.

Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) started a "Save the Azalea" drive that has raised over a million dollars to assure the preservation and maintenance of the azaleas.

In 2007, Steve and Darlene received the Bronze Medal. In 2009, he became Chapter President. Steve's other interests include Boy Scouts, Rotary, photography, and travel. Since installing a deer fence, his interest in gardening has been renewed. "I can even grow hostas now."

District Director Alternate

Michael Martin Mills

Michael Martin Mills, immediate past president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, tends a two-acre garden in the city of Philadelphia with his partner Randy Dalton (a grandnephew of Joe Gable). Michael has been involved in numerous chapter activities, from plant sales and propagation to tours and exhibits at the Philadelphia International Flower Show. In 2009 he was treasurer for the ARS Northeast Regional Conference, "Rhododendrons in Penn's Woods." Michael was the editor of the chapter's popular handbook "Rhododendrons & Azaleas: Care & Culture," and for many years he was a weekly garden columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer. He was awarded the Bronze Medal in 1999.

DISTRICT 9

Director District

Donald W. Hyatt

Don Hyatt joined the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS in 1968 but shifted primary membership in the early 1970s to the

Potomac Valley Chapter after it formed. He has continued as an Associate Member in all the chapters of District 9. Don holds a Bachelors degree in Horticulture and a Masters degree in Computer Science, and although professionally a high school mathematics and computer science teacher for 33 years, he has maintained a life-long interest in plants.

After retiring in 2002, Don has enjoyed having more time to pursue his varied horticultural interests including the study of native azaleas and rhododendrons in the wild. He has served as president of the Potomac Valley Chapter, was co-chair of the 2006 Joint ARS/ASA Convention, and has received both the ARS Bronze and Silver Medals. He previously served as the District 9 Director from 1985-88.

District Director Alternate

Dr. David Banks

Dave Banks joined the Potomac Valley Chapter of the ARS about 1984 and has been growing azaleas and rhododendrons since circa 1973. He has a Bachelors degree and Ph.D. in Chemistry, and is retired from the State Department. During his last posting overseas he and his wife Virginia were members of the Dutch ARS chapter and enjoyed the friendship of many Dutch and Belgian rhodo fanciers. Since leaving the Netherlands they moved to Williamsburg, VA, and changed from Associate Members of the Middle Atlantic Chapter to Members. Dave has served on the MAC Board and has been the MAC webmaster since 2005.

Late Journals

If you as an ARS member do not receive your journal **one month** after the normal mailing period, please notify Executive Director Laura Grant and she will mail you one from her office. This notice is for all members, including Canadian and off-shore members.

You should wait to receive your journal up to the following dates:

Winter issue: March 1

Spring issue: June 1

Summer issue: September 1

Fall issue: December 1

See the inside front cover of a recent journal for Laura's email address, phone number, and mailing address.

The reason for late journals is not entirely clear but probably is due to slow processing at local post offices.

Rhododendron Calendar

- 2012** ARS-ASA Annual Convention, Southeastern Chapter ARS and Vaseyi Chapter ASA, Asheville, North Carolina. Joint convention with Azalea Society of America, May 4-7. Board meeting
- 2012** ARS Western Regional Conference, Nanaimo Chapter, British Columbia, Canada. Rhodos In Paradise, Destination Vancouver Island. Coast Bastion Inn, Sept. 21-23, Nanaimo, BC. Board meeting
- 2013** ARS Annual Convention, Olympia, WA/Tacoma, WA area, dates to be announced. Board meeting.
- 2013** ARS Eastern Regional Conference, RSC Atlantic Region, Oct. 4-6, Dartmouth, NS Canada
- 2014** ARS Western Regional Conference, District 2, Everett, WA (dates to be announced). Board meeting.

Rhododendron of the Year Awards, 2012

Northeastern Region



'Cinnamon Bear'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Weston's Pink Diamond. Photo by H. Greer.'



'Narcissiflorum'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Abigail Adams'. Photo by T. Huisman.

Mid Atlantic Region



'Janet Blair'. Photo by C. White.



'Windbeam'. Photo by E. Philp.



'Aromi Sunny-side-up'. Photo by D. Hyatt.



'Sandra's Green Ice'. Photo by S. McDonald.

Southeastern Region



'Nestucca'. Photo by E. Philp.



R. minus var. *minus*. Photo by H Greer.



R. calendulaceum. Photo by H. Greer.



'Coronado Red'. Photo by R. Clifton.

Great Lakes Region



'Brown Eyes'. Photo by G. Cerini.



'Bluenose'. Photo courtesy RareFind Nursery.



'Klondyke'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Pale Lilac'. Photo courtesy RareFind Nursery.

South Central Region



'Solidarity'. Photo by D. Hyatt.



'Floda'. Photo by S. & J. Perkins.



'White Find'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Carrie Amanda'. Photo by C. Bird.

Northwestern Region



'Lem's Monarch'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Blue Baron'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Nifty Fifty'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Hino-crimson'. Photo by D. Hyatt.

Rhododendron of the Year Selections, 2012

Ray Smith
ARS Plant Awards Committee Chair
Glenwood, Maryland

The ARS Plant Awards Committee has selected the Rhododendron of the Year awards for 2012. Because of climate differences, the committee selects plants for seven regions: an elpidote, a lepidote, a deciduous azalea and an evergreen azalea. The Vireya/Swisher Award is given to a vireya rhododendron.

The first criterion is that the plant performs well in the region, even for a novice. The plant has to exhibit good form, foliage and flowers, to prove itself cold and heat hardy for the region, and to show resistance to pests and diseases. In addition, the plant must be available in the nursery trade and the name registered by the International Cultivar Registration Authority.

NORTHEASTERN REGION

'Cinnamon Bear': Elepidote Rhododendron (*R. yakushimanum* 'Koichiro Wada' × *R. bureavii*). One of the best foliage plants available; a dense and compact grower, with a rounded, well-branched habit; grows to about 2' in ten years and around 4-5' x 5-6' in 23 years; 5" long deep green leaves with a heavy cinnamon-brown indumentum underneath and tomentum on top to match; fuzzy new growth is a whitish-cream; early midseason bloomer, with light pink buds, opening white with strong purplish red spotting on dorsal lobe, held in dome-shaped trusses of about 20 wavy-edged flowers; hardy to -15°F; the Cecil Smith hybrid is the signature plant of the Cecil and Molly Smith Garden south of Portland, Oregon.

'Weston's Pink Diamond': Lepidote Rhododendron (PJM Group (s) × *R. mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink'). One of the earliest rhododendrons to bloom, often a week or more before 'PJM'; has 8-12 frilled, double purplish-pink flowers

per truss; a vigorous and well-branched upright plant, reaching 6' in ten years and hardy to -15°F; excellent fall coloring as the fragrant, yellow-green leaves turn to brilliant reds, oranges and yellows persisting for several weeks; loses many of the leaves but the foliage that remains at the tips of the branches is mahogany colored for the winter; the best location is in full sun in an area that avoids the late spring frosts; 1964 hybrid by Ed Mezitt of Weston Nurseries.

'Narcissiflorum': Deciduous Azalea (unknown). A great abundance of fragrant, double lemon yellow flowers in a ball-shaped truss; a well-branching plant with an upright habit; tall grower (to 6' in ten years) with mildew resistant foliage and good fall color; this popular late midseason bloomer is a vigorous plant hardy to -15°F; hybridized by Rinz in Germany in the mid-19th century; received the Award of Merit and the First Class Certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society; sometimes incorrectly listed as 'Narcissiflora.'

'Abigail Adams': Evergreen Azalea ('Royal Pillow' open pollinated). Midseason bloomer with a wide spreading mounded shape, growing wider than tall; wavy-edged, deep purplish-pink flowers cover the plant and are some of the largest found on evergreen azaleas; a vigorous plant growing to 3-4' in ten years, reaching as high as 8' eventually; hardy to -15°F and does well in shade or sun; with enough sun, the glossy green leaves turn orange-red in the fall; Ed Mezitt/Weston Nurseries hybrid named for the Abigail Adams Historical Society of Weymouth, Massachusetts.

MID ATLANTIC REGION

'Janet Blair': Elepidote Rhododendron (Dexter hybrid × Unknown). A vigorous plant with large trusses of frilled, light pink flowers with a golden bronze flare on the upper petal; hardy to -15°F and heat tolerant, and an excellent parent plant with some fragrance; well-branched, with

a mounding habit and glossy green foliage, growing to 6' in ten years; sun tolerant, but also does well in partial shade; a Leach introduction of a Dexter hybrid formerly known as 'John Wister.'

'Windbeam': Lepidote Rhododendron ('Conestoga' hybrid). A very hardy (-25°F) and reliable early midseason bloomer with lovely wavy-edged, apricot pink flowers, fading to white flushed with salmon, held in ball shaped trusses of 8 flowers; growing to 4' in ten years with small round aromatic foliage that turns bronze-green in winter; a Guy Nearing hybrid, received the ARS Award of Excellence in 1973.

'Aromi Sunny-side-up': Deciduous Azalea (*R. austrinum* (s) × 'Golden Sunset'). Vivid yellow funnel-shaped flowers with a vivid orange-yellow blotch, moderately scented, held in a flat truss of 8-16 flowers; blooms early midseason and hardy to -5°F and probably below; strong yellow-green leaves, growing to 6' x 3-4' in ten years; developed by Dr. Gene Aromi and his wife Jane in Mobile, Alabama, as part of their program to improve heat tolerance in large flowered, fragrant, deciduous azaleas.

'Sandra's Green Ice': Evergreen Azalea ('Elsie Lee' (s) × 'Anna Kehr'). Heavy-flowering plant known for its very high petal count; fully double 2-2½" flowers with wavy-edged lobes, pale yellow or yellow-green at the base shading to white towards the margins; the center fades as the bloom ages; a robust grower but remaining compact in habit, hardy to -5°F or below; blooms early midseason and reaches about 3½' tall and somewhat wider in ten years; impressive plant in flower and nice looking year round with its good dark green foliage; grown and selected by Sandra McDonald from seed sent to the ARS Seed Exchange by Don Hyatt.

SOUTHEASTERN REGION

'Nestucca': Elepidote Rhododendron (*R. fortunei* × *R. yakushmanum*). Large, frilly 5" white flowers with greenish-brown spotting in throat, held in dome shaped trusses of 12-15 flowers; a compact, spreading plant habit with glossy, dark green foliage; tolerates heat and sun, and hardy to -10°F; midseason bloomer grows to 3' in ten years; hybridized by Francis Hanger, former Curator of the Royal Horticultural Society Garden at Wisley; seed sent to John Henny of Brooks, Oregon, one of the ARS' early presidents, and this seedling given to Cecil Smith of Newberg, Oregon.

***R. minus* var. *minus*:** Lepidote Rhododendron. A compact to straggly heat tolerant shrub, normally around 4' in ten years, but up to 10' or more in the native habitat; has varied habits over its rather extensive native range in the woods, on the mountaintops, along streams, and rocky cliffs and ridges in the Carolinas, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama; funnel-shaped flowers, white to pink or purplish-pink, sometimes with greenish spots, held in a truss of 4-12 blooms; hardy to -15°F with midseason blooms; first described in 1792 by explorer Andre Michaux, the name (*minus* meaning smaller) may come from its having smaller leaves than *R. maximum*.

***R. calendulaceum*:** Deciduous Azalea. One of the most spectacular native shrubs of the Appalachian Mountains, described by William Bartram in his book *Travels* as "certainly the most gay and brilliant flowering shrub yet known"; often called the Flame Azalea, it ranges from southern New York southward through the Appalachians to north Georgia, growing in open oak woods, on mountainsides and slopes, and along the stream banks; in late May and June, entire hillsides are covered with brilliant color, leading Bartram to say "we are alarmed with the apprehension of the hill being set on fire"; larger than most natives, the funnel shaped flowers, 1½-2½" across, occur in a wide range of colors from light lemon yellow through deeper

yellow, to gold and orange, and orange-red to rich scarlet red, some with broad contrasting blotches; the long-lasting clusters of blossoms appear at the ends of the branches as the leaves are unfurling and are particularly attractive to Ruby-throated hummingbirds; a naturally occurring tetraploid that does not hybridize easily with most of the other natives; difficult to propagate from cuttings, but very easy from seed; an upright spreading shrub or small tree growing to 6' in ten years, occasionally reaching as high as 15', and hardy to -20°F; French botanist Andre Michaux gets the credit for first describing and naming *R. calendulaceum* in 1795; many years earlier, though, John Bartram and his son, William, found them and sent specimens back to England; even earlier, in 1749, Cadwallader Colden mentioned finding them in southern New York.

'Coronado Red': Evergreen Azalea ['Chikyu-no-haru' (s) × 'Surprise' (Glenn Dale)]. Has 2-3 single, funnel-shaped flowers of an intense, deep red, 3" across, held in a domed truss; strong yellow-green, semi-glossy leaves; squat, spreading habit, growing to about 4' x 4' in ten years; an early midseason bloomer and hardy to -5°F; a James Harris hybrid.

GREAT LAKES REGION

'Brown Eyes': Elepidote Rhododendron (possibly a *R. fortunei* hybrid). Excellent, all-around plant with wavy-edged, funnel-shaped pink flowers with a golden brown or bronze flare on the upper lobes; an upright grower with a spreading habit and deep green foliage; heat tolerant and hardy to -20°F, blooms midseason; a large growing plant like most of Dexter's, reaching 6' or more in ten years; a Dexter hybrid named by Paul Bosley.

'Bluenose': Lepidote Rhododendron (*R. augustinii* hybrid (s) × *R. dawricum* Sempervirens Group). Very floriferous early season bloomer with light violet flowers fading to a very pale purple; 3 to 5 funnel-shaped flowers held in a lax truss, with the color tending to vary slightly from year to year; an upright growing

plant, reaching about 7-8' with the same width in 16 years; the scaly leaves start out yellow-green, maturing to a moderate olive green; extremely hardy (to -25°F), but said to be prone to bark splitting on the trunk if the winter sun hits it; the term "Bluenose" has been used as a nickname for Nova Scotians since the late eighteenth century and was a common name for fishing boats, including the famed Nova Scotia based Grand Banks fishing and racing schooner of the 1920s and 1930s; a Canadian hybrid from Ontario by Joseph Brueckner.

'Klondyke': Deciduous Azalea (unknown). Fragrant midseason bloomer with vivid orange-yellow buds opening into large trusses of deep golden-yellow flowers; its mildew-resistant foliage is a striking bronze when new, turning mahogany in the fall; plant has an upright growth habit, reaching 4-5' in ten years; winner of the English Award of Garden Merit; a Knap Hill hybrid hardy to -20°F.

'Pale Lilac': Evergreen Azalea (*R. kaempferi* × *R. yedoense* var. *poukhanense*). Sometimes referred to as 'Pride's Pale Lilac,' perhaps the hardiest of all evergreen azaleas, the flower buds reportedly surviving winters as low as -28°F in Illinois and -31°F in Ontario; lovely funnel-shaped pale lilac flowers on a plant with an upright spreading habit, growing to 6-8' in height, with an orange fall color; a Joe Gable hybrid purchased as an unnamed plant by Orlando Pride in the early 1930s; would be an excellent hybridizing choice for those seeking hardier azaleas; Pride said it "roots like privet . . . grows like a weed and if it were a good red, would be worth a fortune."

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

'Solidarity': Elepidote Rhododendron (*R. yakushmanum* × 'The Honourable Jean Marie de Montague'). A heavy, midseason bloomer whose red buds turn into 3" flowers of red, pink, and white, changing as they mature; has large dome-shaped trusses of wavy-edged flowers and excellent dark green foliage with a very

Rhododendron of the Year (continued)

Southwestern Region



'The Honourable Jean Marie de Montague'.
Photo by H. Greer.



R. davidsonianum. Photo by H. Greer.



'Washington State Centennial'. Photo by H. Greer.



'Rosebud'. Photo by H. Greer.

Vireya/Swisher Award



'Cyril'. Photo by S. Bertelmann.

light tan indumentum; a heat and sun tolerant plant hardy to -15°F, maturing into a beautiful 5-6' plant in ten years, perhaps a little wider than tall; named by hybridizer Hank Schannen's mother for the Polish labor movement, turning down the opportunity to have it named for herself, saying "No one will buy a rhododendron called Wanda Pipchinski."

'Floda': Lepidote Rhododendron (*R. keiskei* × a pink form of *R. mucronulatum*). One of the earliest plants to bloom, with a spreading plant habit, reaching 3' x 4' in ten years; 2" white flowers, marked with pink stripes radiating through each petal and an orange-yellow blotch on the dorsal lobe; the funnel-shaped, wavy-edged flowers are held in flattened, ball-shaped trusses and appear pink from a distance; a semi-evergreen plant with smooth, glossy leaves and a fabulous red fall color, hardy to -25°F; hybridized by Philip Waldman, owner of the now closed Roslyn Nursery on Long Island.

'White Find': Deciduous Azalea (a selection of *R. vaseyi*). A selected form of the native American species *Rhododendron vaseyi*, commonly called the Pinkshell azalea; has white buds, which open to clear white flowers with greenish-yellow spots on the dorsal lobe; has light green leaves and reaches 4-5' in 8 years; the selection, found growing wild by Russell Harmon, is more free-flowering than the species and makes an excellent garden plant, lovely in

combination with the species; *R. vaseyi* is uncommon in the wild and found only in the mountains of western North Carolina; named for George S. Vasey who discovered it in 1878; hardy to -15°F with an open and upright growth habit, eventually reaching up to a height of 15'; variable fall color but with enough sunlight can be spectacular in shades of scarlet and brick red; one of the first species to bloom in the spring, with the flowers appearing before the foliage; the species can be seen in bloom in shades from white to pink and even red along the Blue Ridge Parkway in early spring.

'Carrie Amanda': Evergreen Azalea ('Elsie Lee' (s) × 'Marian Lee'). Single 2½" wavy-edged white flowers with a strong purplish pink border; the earliest bicolor to bloom; the colored margin is unstable in young plants; low and spreading, has a very compact habit, 24" x 24" in ten years; hardy to -15°F; Henry R. Schroeder hybrid from Evansville, Indiana.

NORTHWESTERN REGION

'Lem's Monarch': Elepidote Rhododendron ('Anna' (s) × 'Marinus Koster'). A midseason bloomer, vivid red in bud, opening white with vivid red margins and two narrow rays of red spots on the upper lobe; 16 wavy-edged flowers 5" across, held in a large, tall, domed truss; hardy to -5°F and growing to 6' in ten years, covered with large, dull olive green leaves; some do not distinguish between this and sister seedling 'Pink Walloper,' but they are registered separately with slight descriptive differences; a Halfdan Lem hybrid.

'Blue Baron': Lepidote Rhododendron ('Gletschernacht' × 'Waltham'). Early flowering Ed Mezitt/Weston Nurseries hybrid combining the flowers of 'Gletschernacht' with the hardiness of 'Waltham'; wavy-edged flowers, vivid violet in bud, opening light violet inside while remaining vivid violet outside; as many as 20 of the near blue flowers are held in a domed truss composed of multiple buds; hardy to -10°F, shiny green

foliage in summer turns bronze in winter; compact growing in a mounded shape, reaching about 2' in ten years; protection from winter winds and sun is advised for this plant, one of Mezitt's later hybrids, from a cross made in 1981.

'Nifty Fifty': Deciduous Azalea (Unknown (s) × 'Knap Hill Yellow' × 'Klondyke'). Large frilled bright yellow blooms with a vivid orange-yellow throat, reaching 4½" across, held in a large ball-shaped truss of 13 flowers; hardy to -15°F and a midseason bloomer with an upright, spreading habit, growing to 3' in ten years; hybridized by Ivan & Robertha Arneson of Canby, Oregon and named by the Portland Chapter of the ARS in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the American Rhododendron Society.

'Hino-Crimson': Evergreen Azalea ('Amoenum' (s) × 'Hinodegiri'). Kurume hybrid widely planted throughout the United States; sun tolerant plant, compact and low to medium growing, often with a mounded habit; the small, vivid red flowers in a lax globular truss hold their color well; has glossy green leaves becoming dark red in autumn; blooms early midseason and is hardy to -10°F; a Vermeulen hybrid from New Jersey that received the Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1974.

SOUTHWESTERN REGION

'The Honourable Jean Marie de Montague': Elepidote Rhododendron (*R. griffithianum* hybrid). One of the best red rhododendrons, with strong red blooms and dark red spotting in the dorsal throat held in a compact domed truss; has a dense habit with large, heavy deep green leaves; hardy to -5°F, the midseason bloomer tolerates both heat and sun and grows to 5' in ten years; often shortened to 'Jean Marie de Montague' or even 'Jean Marie,' developed in Holland by C. B. van Nes & Sons in the early Twentieth Century; received the Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1989.

***R. davidsonianum*:** Lepidote Rhododendron. A large upright or spreading,

open growing plant, may become leggy and need occasional pruning; funnel-shaped, clear white to pink or lavender blooms, often with a darker blotch or spots, held in small loose clusters of 3-7 flowers; does well in sun or part shade and hardy to 0°F; grows to 6' in ten years, reaching 10' when mature; has shiny dark green v-shaped leaves densely covered with small brown scales on the underside; has been shown to have resistance to *Phytophthora* root and crown rot; best known form of this early-midseason bloomer is *R. davidsonianum* 'Ruth Lyons,' with lovely clear deep pink flowers; native to Southwest China, particularly Sichuan province where it is quite common in a wide variety of habitats ranging from 6,000' to 11,500'; introduced by E. H. Wilson in 1908, named for Dr. H. W. Davidson, a Quaker missionary in China.

'Washington State Centennial': Deciduous Azalea (*R. occidentale* × *R. cumberlandense* × 'Santiam'). Deeply ruffled flowers in a ball shaped truss of 10-12 flowers in midseason; the delightfully fragrant 3½" blooms are highly variable, changing color as they open and age; the orange-red buds open a pale orange-yellow with pink-edges and a golden-yellow dorsal lobe, softening to white with a glowing blotch of vivid yellow on the upper petal; an upright, open grower, reaching 5' in ten years; a very pretty leafy bush even when not in bloom; the glossy large mildew resistant leaves retain their shine through fall, resulting in striking fall colors of red, burgundy, and yellow; hardy to -10°F; a Frank Mossman hybrid, chosen by the Washington State Centennial Commission to honor 100 years of statehood.

'Rosebud': Evergreen Azalea ('Louise Gable' × 'Caroline Gable'). This Joe Gable hybrid derives its name from the opening buds' resemblance to rosebuds; deep purplish pink, double hose-in-hose flowers in late midseason; a slow grower, with a dense, spreading habit, reaching 4' in 25 years; glossy green leaves and hardy to -10°F; received the Award of Merit

in 1972 and the First Class Certificate in 1975 from the Royal Horticultural Society; often confused with the taller and faster growing 'Lorna', a Gable hybrid from the same cross.

VIREYA/SWISHER AWARD

'Cyril': (*R. leucogigas* (s) × *R. konori* × *R. laetum*). Large, richly fragrant flowers of 4" or more held in a long-lasting truss; creamy white to pink ruffled flowers with red markings differ with the seasons and conditions, with more sun making the flower more pink; an upright, bushy grower with large sturdy leaves, slowly growing to 4' x 4' in 16 years; one of many Peter Sullivan/Strybing Arboretum hybrids.

Nursery Sources for ROY Plants

The nurseries that advertise in this issue of the journal carry many of the Rhododendron of the Year plants. See their advertisement in the back pages of this issue of the journal.

2011/12 ARS Rhododendron Photo Contest

In *JARS* 65(4) on p. 210, the rules for the 2011/12 ARS Rhododendron Photo Contest were provided. All photos submitted must have been taken between January 1, 2011, to July 31, 2012. Entries must be received by midnight PST, July 31, 2012. All entries should prominently feature either rhododendrons, azaleas and/or vireyas in the composition.

Competition categories are:

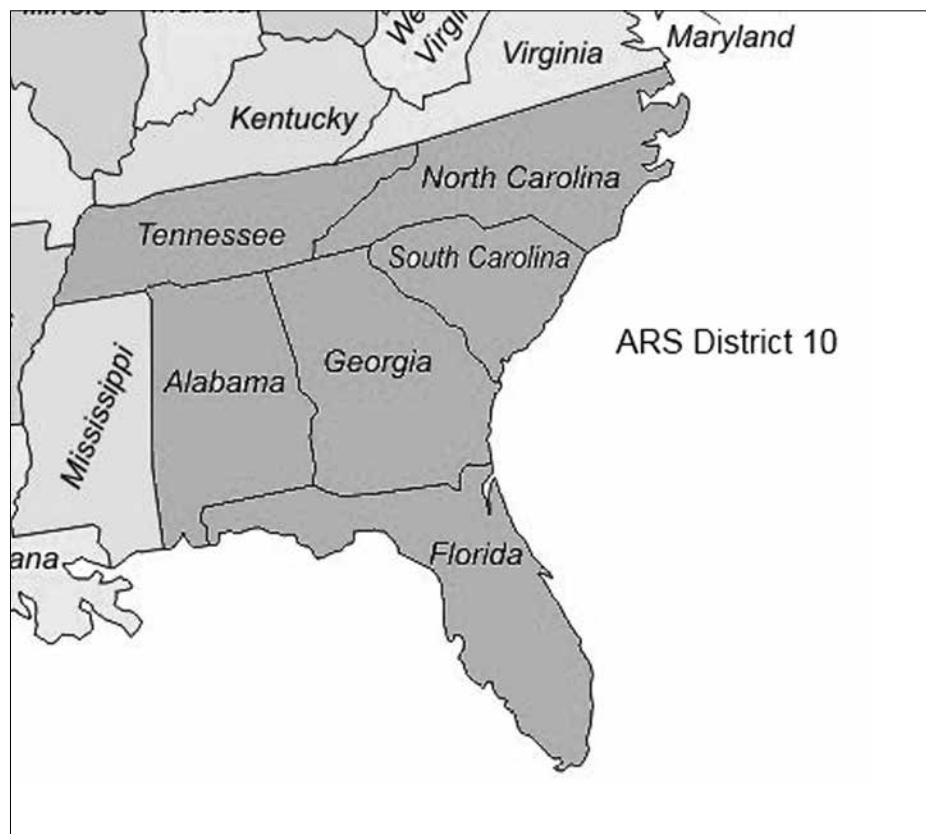
- 1) Flower, truss or spray;
- 2) Plant in bloom;
- 3) Landscape or plants in the wild;
- 4) Foliage;
- 5) People, Insects, or Animals; and
- 6) Other, for creative or artistic effects of any kind that involves these plants. This could involve the use of software products like PhotoShop.

ARS District 10: An Overview

Ken Gohring,
Marietta,
Georgia



John Brown,
Cleveland,
South Carolina



ARS District 10 spans several of the states of the Southeast, including all or parts of Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida (Figure). Presently there are five ARS chapters located in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, with a total of 202 members as of November, 2011: Azalea, centered around Atlanta, GA, 71 members; Piedmont, around Charlotte, NC, 29 members; Southeastern, around Hendersonville, NC, 70 members; Tennessee Valley, around Signal Mountain, TN, 24 members; and William Bartram, around Easley and Greenville, SC, eight members. The area includes several climate zones ranging from 10a (30 to 35° F, -1.1 to 1.6° C) in Florida to 6b (-5 to 0° F, -17.8 to -20.5° C) in northern Tennessee and North Carolina. The area includes portions of the southern Appalachian Mountains and extends south through the Piedmont Plateau to the plains of southern Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Florida.

Rhododendron growing conditions vary significantly throughout the district. The mountainous areas are conducive to growing most broadleaf temperate

rhododendrons, while the warmer conditions of more southern areas make growing these rhododendrons more challenging. However, all of the native American rhododendrons and azaleas, with the exception of the ones endemic to either the west coast or northeast US and eastern Canada, grow naturally in District 10. Rhododendrons found in the district include the magnificent *R. catwabiense*, which thrives in the mountainous areas of western North Carolina, the northern parts of Alabama and Georgia and portions of Tennessee and South Carolina in addition to areas further north; the prolific *R. maximum* in similar locations at lower elevations; and the highly variable *R. minus* from the mountains to northern Florida, where the rare variety *chapmanii* can be found in a few areas. Over the years, the native rhododendrons of District 10 have been used extensively in the hybridizing of superior rhododendron forms, such as

the group of rhododendrons labeled “Iron Clad,” which are mostly *R. catwabiense* and *R. maximum* hybrids. These desirable species have both excellent heat tolerance and cold resistance properties, and attractive blooms. *R. minus* has also been used significantly in hybridizing programs. The natural range of the District’s native azaleas extends from the northern parts of Florida to the mountains of North Carolina. Species bloom times range from late March through the summer to early fall, and flower color ranges from white to red, including yellows, pinks and oranges. In many areas where species have overlapping bloom times and are located in close proximity, natural hybrids occur, producing flowers with combinations of colors. In fact, most natural populations of native azaleas exhibit some evidence of cross-pollination, in some cases even between species with significantly different bloom characteristics, likely due

to microhabitat variability.

Another feature of District 10 is the extensive planting of Asian evergreen azaleas, which are found in virtually all southeastern state cities. Many of these plants grow in the East only in the warmer climates of the South, and plantings can be spectacular when there are mass plantings. In the northeast states, broadleaf rhododendrons are used extensively in landscapes around residences, and the same practice exists throughout the South, only with evergreen azaleas rather than rhododendrons.

District 10 has numerous gardens that feature rhododendrons and other attractive plants. Several of these gardens will be part of the 2012 ARS spring convention in Asheville, NC. Others that are frequently visited are Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, GA; botanical gardens in both Atlanta, GA, and Birmingham, AL; the Hamilton Rhododendron Garden in Hiwassee, GA; Van Landingham Glen at UNC, Charlotte, NC; the Reflection Riding Arboretum in Chattanooga, TN; the Magnolia Plantation and Garden, Charleston, SC; and the Bellingrath Gardens, Mobile, AL. Some of these could be visited before or after the ARS convention. There is an old southern saying that "if you die and are going to heaven, you will have to go through the Atlanta Airport." Perhaps your trip to Asheville will bring you through Atlanta, GA, and if so, visiting some of these gardens may be a possibility, especially if you are driving from Atlanta to Asheville. A diversion to Hiwassee would add only a one-half hour to travel time; the South Carolina Botanical Garden, located in Clemson, SC, which is just off one route to Asheville from Atlanta, offers both a variety of native plants and a large collection of day lilies and camellias, and the gardens in Charlotte, SC, are only 125 miles (201 km) from Asheville.

The Appalachian Trail commences in north Georgia and winds north through the mountains on its path to Maine. Numerous areas along the trail feature

attractive populations of native azaleas and rhododendrons. Some of these sites include Tray and Blood Mountains in Georgia; Gregory Bald in Smokey Mountain National Park near the trail; and Wayah Bald, Hooper Bald, Copper Bald and Roan Mountain in North Carolina. Other outstanding sites include Mt. Cheaha, AL; the Red Hills of South Alabama and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Areas in north Georgia feature lowland *R. calendulaceum*, which will be in bloom in early May at the time of the 2012 convention. The other mentioned sites at higher altitudes will have azalea bloom times in early to late June.

Over the years, many widely recognized plant scientists have made District 10 their home. At the 2008 Azalea Society of America national convention in Asheville, three distinguished men were honored for their work, parts of which were performed after moving to North Carolina. These were Chauncey Beadle, whose work was done at Biltmore Estates; August Kehr, who after serving with the US Department of Agriculture retired to Hendersonville, NC, where he did extensive work on rhododendron and magnolias; and Henry Skinner of the Morris Arboretum and the National Arboretum, renowned native azalea explorer, who retired to the Asheville area. Some others in the District who have made significant achievements include Fred Galle, author of two seminal works, *Azaleas* and *Hollies: The Genus Ilex*; and Clarence Towe of Walhalla, SC, author of *American Azaleas*. Russ and Velma Haag of western North Carolina produced a large number of hybrid broadleaf rhododendrons; James Harris of Lawrenceville, GA, produced a large number of outstanding evergreen azaleas; Gene Aromi developed numerous deciduous and evergreen azaleas; and both George Beasley of Lavonia, GA, and S. D. Coleman of Ft. Gaines, GA, did outstanding work with native azaleas.

Well-known azalea academics include Tom Raney of NC State and Kathleen Kron of Wake Forest University, and both

August Kehr and Fred Galle have served as past ARS presidents.

Rhododendrons and azaleas are a significant part of the ornamental horticulture industry of the South. Mobile, AL, is recognized by many as the "Azalea Capital" and is home to a large number of evergreen and native azalea nurseries. A nursery pioneer in this area was Tom Dodd, who specialized in native azaleas and camellias, and other productive nurseries of note include the Lazy K Nursery of Pine Mountain, GA (native azaleas); the McCorkle Nursery, Dearing, GA (evergreen azaleas and other ornamentals); the Transplant Nursery, Lavonia, GA (rhododendrons, azaleas and companion plants) and the East Fork Nursery, Sevierville, TN (native and evergreen azaleas, conifers and other ornamentals).

We urge you to attend the Asheville convention and if time allows, visit some of our gardens, nurseries and natural areas. Our last annual convention was in Atlanta in 2002, and attendees at the convention fondly remember our southern hospitality. That same friendly spirit will prevail again in Asheville.

**See page 31
for the registration
form and activities
at the ARS/ASA
Annual Convention
in Asheville, North
Carolina,
May 4-7, 2012**

So You Want to Judge a Rhododendron Show!

Kath Collier
Boring, Oregon



Judging a rhododendron show can be *fun, rewarding, and educational...* but at first it can be a bit intimidating for the student or newly appointed judge. The good news is that there are several ways to go about the judging process, and some commonly practiced principles and techniques that even new judges can employ. Processes, principles, and techniques used will vary by chapter and perhaps even by show. Thank goodness there are show schedules!

The show schedule is critical to judging and exhibiting. Schedules are often referred to as the “law of the show” (Hamel 1982) because they describe not only the classes, but often terms, and judging criteria. For instance, the schedule may indicate that “only entries that have been groomed may be eligible for a trophy” or that judges cannot take away more than 30 percent from the overall score for poor grooming. A schedule may also include a scale of points that would serve as a checklist for evaluating different aspects of an exhibit (such as size, color, maturity, leaves, grooming, etc.) and the point value for those aspects.

The show schedule may also outline some basic expectations when it comes to judging. Most shows use teams of judges and clerks to evaluate the exhibits. While the number of judges used may vary, the teams are typically made up with three judges (which makes judging fairly easy; where does a team of two go if they can't agree?). Judges are usually assisted by one to four clerks. Their duties include noting the number of entries, noting the winners, placing ribbons, picking

up exhibits for the judges to examine, rearranging exhibits, and running other errands. One of the best ways to get familiar with judging is to work as a clerk for a couple of years and watch what goes on. Fortunately, learning how to judge is relatively easy, particularly if you are very familiar with the plants being judged. You already know, at least generally, what a beautiful flower looks like. Understanding a bit of judging etiquette and process is all you need to do a good job in judging!

Avoid the appearance of conflict of interest. Judging etiquette can improve the integrity and quality of the show and make the judging process more enjoyable. It can also increase participation in the show and avoid a lot of conflict. Example: some judges do not step out of the judging process of a class when they or someone from their immediate family have entries in that class. By not doing so, they may give the impression that the judging is somehow rigged or unfair. Should this situation occur (and it seems like it does at least once for every judge during a show), another judge may be able to step in temporarily from another team (and sometimes from among the clerks), or the show chair may appoint a special judge just to help teams with this problem.

There are other judging etiquettes that are often considered standards in flower shows, such as being **courteous** during the judging process, **encouraging** other team members (particularly inexperienced or student judges) to share their thoughts, and **withholding top awards** when necessary. Judging standards should also discourage behaviors that might be deemed as unfair,

unprofessional, or unbecoming. This might include bullying and arguing (yes this sometimes does happen even among the best of friends!), preferential treatment, inappropriate removal of exhibits, and other avoidable misunderstandings.

Another relatively hotly debated practice involves who should touch or handle an exhibit. Generally, judges should refrain from picking up or handling exhibits and ask one of the clerks for assistance is doing this. This will reduce the appearance of conflict of interest should the exhibit fall apart, fall on the floor, be damaged, etc. when touched. It also may make it easier for all of the judges to examine the exhibit. Judges should have opportunity to look into and under the truss to evaluate the grooming, to look at the stem (to make sure there is only one), and to be able to have a good look at the leaves.

Finally, a relatively common standard in most flower shows is to **judge against the level of perfection** and not as to personal preferences. This standard can be interpreted in several ways. One is that each exhibit needs to be compared to what a perfect exhibit for this variety might look like. This reduces the problem of comparing one variety against another. Who is to say that a vireya is better than an azalea? A year or so back, I heard one fairly experienced judge announce to the team that he really didn't like a particular cultivar and that he felt that regardless of quality, no exhibit of this cultivar should ever receive a ribbon. I was speechless and had to wonder why the judge felt compelled to confess this at that moment. As it turned

out, that particular exhibit was the best of that class and won a ribbon anyway. A related approach that is often employed is to judge an exhibit on **how it looks at the instance of being judged...not how it looked yesterday or how it will look tomorrow**. In a heated environment such as may occur in some shows, an exhibit can quickly fade. Alternatively, an exhibit that is picked too much ahead of time may not have enough flowers open to provide the judge with a true picture of what the cultivar looks like.

During the judging process, your team may not necessarily agree on which exhibits deserve a ribbon. Some judges will penalize an exhibit if it has not been named correctly, as naming an exhibit correctly is an important part of the educational benefits of a show. Hopefully the schedule will outline the maximum number of points that might be deducted (usually 5 or less). However, there may also be a rule that unnamed exhibits cannot be awarded a trophy because no one would know what it is, be able to learn more about it, or even then be able to buy it.

If the judges are unable to determine the winner, it may be beneficial to re-examine the exhibits and judging criteria and review what is typical for the highest ranked cultivars. With a little bit of negotiation and further examination, it is usually fairly easy to narrow down the number of exhibits and identify those most worthy of a ribbon. Sometimes, the differences between judges are simply based on where they are standing and how they are looking at an exhibit (they may not all have seen the bug-chewed leaf or other imperfection from where they were standing).

This is where point scoring can really help. Not only does it give you a list of things to check but also a place to note faults and run a numerical tally. Judging criteria may be described in the show schedule. The Southwest Oregon Chapter, for instance, suggests the following weighted guidelines to judges: size according to variety (25 percent), flower condition and grooming

Basic Judging Etiquette

- 1 – The show schedule is the show rule book.
- 2 – Judge by how you see it.
- 3 – Never touch exhibits; work with the clerks.
- 4 – Read the schedule, know the judging criteria.
- 5 – Avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest.
- 6 – Award ribbons when justified.
- 7 – Judge against perfection; not by personal preferences.
- 8 – Be kind to your fellow team mates, as you may need to work with them again.
- 9 – Shows are more than just fun competitions where one can win cool trophies.. They are an important strategy in educating the public.
- 10 – Practice makes perfect!

(30 percent), foliage (25 percent), and form typical to variety (20 percent). They also include definitions of each of these elements in their note to the judges, along with an indication of recent weather conditions.

There are no standards within the ARS recommended for all chapters (or regional chapters) for the criteria or the percentages to use, but there could be. A few chapters have even considered creating and documenting a standardized set of expectations for judges and shows that might serve as a District-wide standard (or perhaps even broader). Developing standards across a District, for instance, can make it easier to use judges from other Chapters in your show.

During the judging process there are always options. If your team gets stuck and can't make a decision, you may be able to give more than one second and/or third place ribbon, or honorable mention. It may also be interesting to ask the clerks what they think, as many of them are very experienced as clerks and judges. It may also be possible to ask a local expert, the show chair, or classification lead for their expert opinion on what is typical for a particular cultivar. Either way, the judging

process should be “transparent” and fair for all.

Once the judging process is complete, the clerks will step in and ribbon the winners, note information in their journal, and expose the names of the exhibitors. In some shows, they may even take certain winners to a trophy competition area. The process for judging and awarding trophies is basically the same only HARDER, because typically all of the exhibits are of high quality and there may be more judges involved in the judging process.

I once had a Flower Show School instructor say that anyone can judge anything once they understand the judging process and the criteria, and are knowledgeable about the thing being judged. It really doesn't matter if it is a floral exhibit or arrangement, race horses, music, or beauty pageants. However, I think I'll stick to flowers and floral arrangements!

Reference

Hamel, E.V. 1982. *The Encyclopedia of Judging and Exhibiting Floriculture and Flora-Artistry*. Ponderosa Publishers, St. Ignatius, MT: 547 pp.

Rhododendron Species in our Midst: *Rhododendron semibarbatum* (not your mother's favorite azalea)

Sally and John Perkins
Salem, New Hampshire



The small and nearly hidden flowers of *Rhododendron semibarbatum* are not showy enough for anyone, alone your mother, to consider it among her favorites. *R. semibarbatum*, has always been considered by rhododendron experts as a loner, almost an outsider. The species has been difficult to classify exactly where in the enormous genus *Rhododendron* it belongs. In the old Balfourian system it was classified as a distinctive species in the *Semibarbatum* series (Davidian 1992). Then it was classified as a lone member of the subgenus *Mumeazalea* (Cullen 2005). The two bearded stamens notwithstanding, just like most azaleas, it has five stamens. In DNA research of Goetsch et. al. (2005) it aligns with another unique species, *R. nipponicum*, and their results indicate that it may be more closely related to evergreen azaleas than previously thought.

R. semibarbatum is a rare species native to mountainous regions of Japan's Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu providences, growing in thickets and forests. Although normally maturing at 0.6-1.8 m (2-6 ft), *R. semibarbatum* may occasionally be as tall as 3 m (10 ft). The plant habit is erect, being taller than broad. The deciduous, paper thin, wavy edged elliptic five cm (two inch) leaves are especially attractive when in its yellowish orange to red fall color. Pat Halliday (2001) in *The Illustrated Rhododendron* captures the beauty of this unusual species.

This species is unique in having five unequal, dimorphic stamens where the

two shorter stamens are densely pilose (having dense soft hairs) with globose-ovoid anthers. In fact, "semibarbatum" refers to these partially bearded stamens. The small (1.3 – 1.9 cm (1/2 - 3/4 inch)), white, rotate flowers are borne in clusters of one to three flowers in the axils after the leaves are fully expanded. The seeds are unwinged.

R. semibarbatum was first introduced by the Russian botanist Tschonoski to the Botanical Gardens of St. Petersburg where it flowered in the greenhouse in 1870. Seed was collected by Wilson in 1914 and sent to the Arnold Arboretum in the USA and later to Kew in Britain. The *R. semibarbatum*, we grow in Salem, NH, has been reported to be a diploid using flow cytometry (João Loureiro, University of Coimbra, Portugal, pers. comm.).

In the fall of 1991, we purchased a seedling of *R. semibarbatum* at the Arnold Arboretum Case Estate's plant sale. Our little plant was not given winter shelter in a cold frame but instead was planted on a northern slope with dense shade. We thought it might die and were surprised to notice it pushing little green buds late the following spring. The first week of July in 1994, we noticed small white flowers had fallen to the ground near *R. semibarbatum*, and we wondered from where. Amazingly, hidden in the foliage were two more flowers. We quickly consulted our copy of Davidian's (1992) *The Rhododendron Species, Volume III* and were pleased to find that the label fit the

description. It has flowered in June every year since, making *R. semibarbatum* one of about 50 rhododendrons that have bloomed for more than ten consecutive years in our garden. In 2006, the plant had its best bloom ever with flowers on nearly every branch, but one still had to get close to appreciate the floral display that lasts nearly a month.

Our plant was 1.2 m (4 ft) high by 1.5 m (5 ft) wide after 15 years and has never shown any significant winter damage, blooming fully after -27 C (-17° F) temperatures and defying the Zone 7 hardiness rating usually assigned to this species. In 2004 after a very cold January where night time temperatures hovered near or below -17 C (0° F) for more than 20 days, *R. semibarbatum* experienced partial flower bud blast but no foliage damage, performing better than many other rhododendron species commonly grown in New England, such as *R. degronianum*. In the ice storm of December 2008 our plant took a direct hit from a white pine branch that was 25 cm (12 in) thick. Much to our surprise, despite being flattened and losing some major branches, it survived to bloom in June.

In contrast to our experience of finding the species easy to grow, the Arnold Arboretum has never been able to permanently establish *R. semibarbatum* in their collection and University of Maine at Orono field studies indicate that the species is killed to the ground at -29

C (-20° F). As far as we know, no other New England based member of the ARS Massachusetts Chapter living in Zone 6 or colder grows this species. However, since 1998, *R. semibarbatum* has survived at the Polly Hill Arboretum on Martha's Vineyard.

This species has no well-known cultivars and has not been used in hybridization. Although not difficult to propagate by cuttings, *R. semibarbatum* is usually grown from seed and is sometimes available from the Rhododendron Species Foundation. Although more of a curiosity than a horticultural gem, *R. semibarbatum* is hardy enough and easy enough to be tried by the adventurous grower who wants to add a deciduous late bloomer to their "evergreen azalea" collection, even before the taxonomists end their debate over where this species belongs in the genus.

R. semibarbatum has a delicate charm in flower and a noticeable presence clothed in its autumn color to be a welcomed addition to our garden.

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**See page 59 for
color photos
of *R. semibarbatum***



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www.rhododendron.dk/ARS_seed.htm.

A printed hard copy seed list and order form will be published before January 15th. It will be mailed only to seed donors without an email address and to all others only by request.

Seed purchases are open to "ARS members and seed donors only" until April 1st 2012 and to everyone after April 1st. The price of seed this year will be \$3.00 per pkg. and \$4.00 per pkg. (plus shipping) for seed collected in China his fall.

Norman Beaudry, Chairman
ARS Seed Exchange

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Mrs. Bartholomew Found at last?



Clive L. Justice
Vancouver, BC

When ARS Journal Editor Glen Jamieson edited my Rhodo Trivia article for inclusion in the Fall 2011 issue of JARS, he could find no reference to the name of one of the Waterer hybrid names created before 1877 that Millais had listed in his 1917 first series volume list. This list was of Waterer hybrids and others that were usually available at the time (1917). The hybrid was called 'Mrs Bartholomew*'. Glen could find no source for the name or a Waterer hybrid of that

name, and ruled out my suggestions of literary or stage characters from mid 19th century popular novels, stage plays or opera performers. My lame suggestion that the name had come from the Edinburgh cartographers and map makers, John Bartholomew, the father (1831-1893), and son John George (1860-1920), was held in question, as the naming honour was awarded prior to 1877, and these Bartholomew men only achieved prominence many years after this date. A wife or mother there would have been well after the time of John Waterer's hybridizing and namings. Other suggestions from the Sir Walter Scott Romances *Ivanhoe* and *Lady of the Lake*, The Waverley Novels, and Gilbert And Sullivan Musicals, along with Google searches, all yielded nothing. Dur-

ing the next few weeks I kept coming up with suggestions of Mrs. Bartholomew's that might be in other 19th century literary and stage play sources, but these too proved negative. My persistent pursuit made me such nuisance that I received an 85th birthday card signed by my wife and "Mrs. Bartholomew."

In the Times Literary Supplement (TLS) there has been a spate of recent books published on Shakespeare, and it was through a TLS that I believe I have found a reference to a Mrs. Bartholomew. In a recent TLS, a book by Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare – Upstart crow to sweet swan 1592–1623*, was reviewed by Peter Holland, under the TLS title *Who was Adonis*. Holland's review suggests that Duncan-Jones felt that "Shakespeare might have found hurtful some comments in the Introduction to Ben Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair*, first performed in 1614."

There is Mr. and Mrs. Bartholomew in one of the cast lists in the performance of that play. In Ben Jonson's play, Mrs. Bartholomew was not only herself but also plays the part of "Dame Overdo." Whether this has any reflection on the Waterer hybrid or the hybridizer is hard to say. However, there must have been some connection with Shakespeare, but I have yet to find it. When it played in Waterer's time, it would have been before the 1840s.

The connection I did find had occurred some years later in the 1870s when the founder of the New Shakespeare Society, formed in 1873, was Mr. Frederick J. Furnivall, so there was also a Mrs. Furnivall to name a fine rhodo hybrid for as well. He wrote a 144 page tome on Shakespeare, a complete biography of the Bard from birth to death, his works and much historical trivia about his exploits. But perhaps more importantly, provided a wife. The Shakespeare tome was published and placed in Volume I of a three Volume book titled *The Royal Shakespeare*, published in 1877 and again in 1894 by Cassell and Company of London. We have the latter edition but I have yet to get through reading the entire Introduction.

* = not registered.





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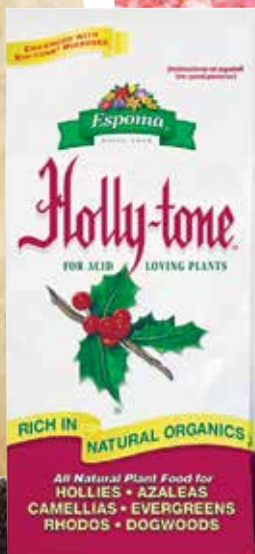
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The Haag Legacy

Reprinted from the Spring 2004 issue of the Journal American Rhododendron Society.

Some fortunate, long-standing members of the American Rhododendron Society have had the opportunity to become acquainted with Russ and Velma Haag. The Haags' initial interest in rhododendrons dates back to 1952 and blossomed into a love affair that has spanned more than half a century. Although Russ passed away in 1995 at age 85, Velma (now 93) still actively continues to nurture their legacy, working in their garden every day—weather permitting.

During the course of those years, and especially after they retired to a magnificent piece of mountain acreage in North Carolina during the early 1970s, Russ and Velma did extensive hybridizing. Of over 15,000 seedlings put into the ground through the years, they registered only a handful of their crosses and unselfishly made them available to the general membership. These include 'Blue Ridge', 'Carolina Moon', 'Great Smoky', 'Cloud Nine', 'Golden Delicious', 'Good Fortune' and 'Whitewater North Carolina'. In addition to these varieties, there are over 1,000 other mature, unregistered hybrids flourishing today in the natural setting of the Haag RhodoGardens.

In the Springtime RhodoGardens is a feast for the eyes of any rhododendron lover. It is the result of a true lifetime passion Russ and Velma Haag have had for these marvelous plants. Each year Velma welcomes many visitors who come from throughout the country to enjoy the flowers. As a living memorial to their love of rhododendrons, Russ and Velma's son, Curt Haag, has recently created an Internet web site to share with you hundreds of photographs of the flowers and sites around the property. The web site,

www.RhodoGardens.com

also provides an email link for contacting Velma for additional information if you would like to bring your camera and pay a visit.

*Name is not registered.



Russ and Velma Haag in front of their North Carolina home. This picture was taken by *Money Guide* magazine in 1985 for a special issue on retirement planning. The Haags were among several couples from across the country whose stories were featured in an article entitled, "Picking The Place That's Perfect For You."

RhodoGardens



Velma holding a beautiful yellow truss from an unregistered cross between 'Phipps Yellow' and *R. maximum*. This plant only started producing these great flowers after it was 15 years old.

In Memory
Velma Haag

October 28, 1910 – October 8, 2010

Velma has joined husband Russ in that special place where the rhododendrons bloom perpetually – and never need to be deadheaded.

Many of you have enjoyed visits to the Haag's Rhodogardens in Western North Carolina, and as the Haag children now live in other parts of the country, they will be selling the property where Russ and Velma spent their last 40 years. It is our great hope that our parents' rhododendron legacy will continue under new stewardship of buyers from within the rhododendron community.

The article on the facing page was first published in the Spring 2004 issue of The Journal. While it provides a fascinating glimpse into the Haags' love affair with rhododendrons, the Rhodogardens web site (www.Rhodogardens.com) tells their whole story. And although the entire 170+ acre property with its 3200-foot mountaintop, 30-foot waterfall and 6-acre horse pasture may be financially beyond the reach of most, the Heart of the Property's 15 acres encompasses not only the entirety of the Haag hybridizing efforts, but also a veritable treasure of other unique plants, the Haag home, a lake and meadow, as well as three additional and very private, potential home sites for possible future development.

Rhododendron Species in our Midst: *Rhododendron semibarbatum*

(Continued from page 53.)



R. semibarbatum 'Canobie'*. Photos by Sally and John Perkins.

* = name is unregistered

Register of Plant Names

The ARS Register of Plant Names and Checklist—Winter 2012 Supplement—will not be published this winter. Our Registrar Jay Murray is recovering from surgery and is unable to compile it. We wish her a swift recovery.

The photos here are of plants whose names were published in the Fall 2011 Register. All photos are by Christina Woodward. The page numbers for descriptions refer to the Fall 2011 issue.



'Aotearoa'. Page 229.



'Leitmotif'. Page 231.



'Triple A'. Page 234.

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Sonja Nelson, Assistant Editor
Journal American Rhododendron Society

Errata: in *JARS 65 (4)* on p. 198, the photo caption should be *Rhododendron catawbiense*.

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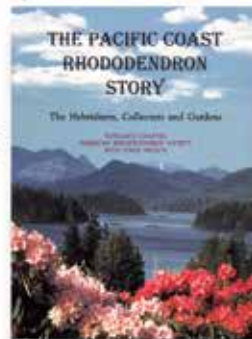
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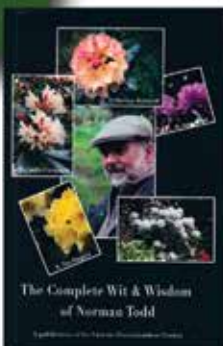
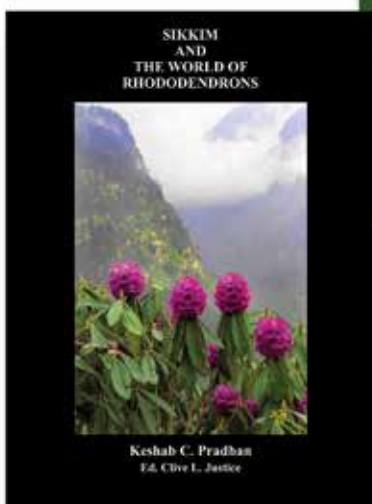
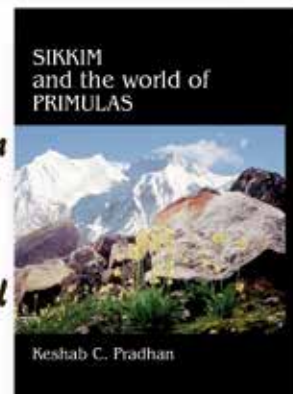
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