



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Early Spring Newsletter: March 2015

Calendar

- * **March 6 – 8, 2015** – North Carolina Nursery Field Trip
- * **March 22, 2015** – PVC Regular Meeting, Potomac Com. Ctr.
- * **March 26-29, 2015** – ASA Convention, Nacogdoches, TX
- * **April 18, 2015** – PVC Plant Sale, Annapolis, ((*Date Change!*))
- * **April 22, 2015** – PVC Field trip to Pennsylvania Nurseries.
- * **April 24-26, 2015** – Middle Atlantic Chapter Meeting (*Date Change!*)
- * **(April 25, 2015)** – Maryland Member Garden Tours (*Date may change*)
- * **(April 26, 2015)** – Virginia Member Garden Tours (*Date may change*)
- * **May 6-10, 2015** – ARS National Convention, Victoria, BC.
- * **May (16, 17, or 18), 2015** – Possible Picnic at White's Nursery in
- * **May 20-23 or May 27-30** – Cape Cod Field Trip (dates will depend upon the weather)
- * **June 15-20** (*Dates may change*) –Mountain Trip

Chapter Officers

President: Dan Neckel
vaneckel@verizon.net
Vice President: Ginny Mohr
rngmohr@msn.com
Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
prittman@erols.com

Our Next Meeting:

“Evolution of the Mary Livingston Ripley Garden”

Speaker: Janet Draper

Date: March 22, 2015

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Potomac Community Center

For our spring meeting, we are really excited to have Janet Draper, a horticulturist at the Smithsonian, as our featured speaker. For nearly 20 years, Janet has been overseeing the evolution of the Mary Livingston Ripley Garden, one of those choice, quiet places on the National Mall where visitors can appreciate the beauty of our Nation's Capital amid a bounty of choice plants and flowers.

Janet will tell us about the history and evolution of this garden from its inception in the 1980's through the present. Horticultural styles have changed over the years, but also events like trampling of the site during an inauguration have influenced the garden, too. Look on page 3 for a few more details.

Janet's goal for the garden is to expose visitors to a wide variety of exciting plants so they can expand their garden palettes. Yes, rhododendrons are the focus of our plant society, but most of us look for companion plants to provide color and interest the rest of the year. I know we will all get ideas from Janet, so be sure to join us at the meeting.

At this meeting, we will also have a plant exchange. Those who wish to participate should bring a small plant to trade with other attendees. The plant doesn't have to be a rhododendron or an azalea,



Janet Draper sitting next to *Yucca recurvifolia* at the Mary Livingston Ripley Garden Photo: J. Draper

but any interesting plant worth about \$5 to \$10 will do. If we have extra plants after the initial exchange, we usually invite those who did not bring a plant to get something. Bring a friend to the meeting, too.

Refreshment Duty: Persons whose last names begin with **Q** through **Z** are asked to bring something for the refreshment table.

Directions: Potomac Community Center
11315 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD

From **I-270 North**, stay in the **Local lanes**

Take exit **#4B/ MONTROSE RD WEST**

Continue west on Montrose Rd. for **1.7 miles**

Turn **LEFT** on **FALLS RD (MD-189)**

Continue **1.4 miles** to the Center (on the left)

11315 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD

2015 Photography Contest Results

Congratulations to all our winners in this year's Photography Contest that was held at our January meeting. Pictures of the top prize winners can be seen on our color page, and we will try to place all images our website version.

Carolyn Beck won "Best in Show" for her picture of the Haag rhododendron hybrid 'Smoky Mountain'. That large rhododendron has light lavender flowers with a dark blotch, and was developed by the late Russell and Velma Haag of Brevard, NC. It is a superb garden plant that can get big, but Carolyn's winning photograph with its soft blend of lavender and green was truly captivating. Congratulations, Carolyn. Well deserved!

Since we have a limit of one prize per person, everyone who entered did go home with something. Take lots of pictures this year so you have something to enter in next year's contest.

The full list of prize winners is shown below.

Best in Show

Carolyn Beck: "Smoky Mountain"

Category I – Close-up of Flowers

First Place

Carolyn Beck: "Smoky Mountain"

Second Place

Rosa McWhorter: "Wardii Goldsprenkel"

Third Place

Don Hyatt: "Hooper's Copper"

Category II – Plants or Landscapes

First Place

Dan Neckel: "Cleveland Botanical Gardens"

Second Place

Don Hyatt: "Smokianum"

Third Place

Ann Fessenden: "Azaleas"

Category III - Other

First Place (tied)

Rosa McWhorter: "Shenandoah Overlook"

Dan Neckel: "Stan Hywet Gardens"

Second Place (tied)

Tom Fessenden: "Garden Collage"

Joanne Neckel: "Vienna Flower Shop"

Third Place

Don Hyatt: "Caroline's Surprise Adornment"

Fifty Shades of White:

Snow Problems and Schedule Changes

Will this winter ever end? February 2015 has been one of the coldest on record, and many gardens are looking sad right now. It will be wonderful to see those piles of discolored snow replaced by green lawns and flowers. Because of the relentless cold and snow, spring should be late this year, so we may have to rethink the schedule for some of our planned activities.

MAC Schedule Change

The Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS has changed the date of their spring meeting in Raleigh, NC, by one week. It will now be April 24-26 instead of the previous weekend. That does conflict with the garden tours we had planned. Since spring will be late, we may move our tours off by a week, too.

Cape Cod Trip

Cape Cod and the Boston area have really been hit hard with record snowfalls this winter. Boston has topped 100 inches of snow for the second time in recorded history. We don't know what to expect for our field trip up there in late May, but some of the people up there still want us to come. Depending upon when spring actually arrives, we have set aside two possible dates to visit private gardens in that region, either May 21 or May 28. We can visit the public gardens at Heritage Plantation with the Dexter display on either side of the date. We do need to allow a day's travel to and from the Cape. Our destination will be the Earl of Sandwich Motel where we will stay for at least two nights:

The Earl of Sandwich Motel

Old King's Highway, 378 Route 6A,

East Sandwich, Massachusetts 02537

1-800-442-EARL - 508-888-1415

www.earlofsandwich.com

Roan Mountain and Gregory Bald

For the mountain trips to North Carolina and Tennessee, we hope that spring will be back on schedule by mid June. Our first choice will be the week of June 15 – 20 but if the cold weather persists, we may have to postpone that trip to the week of June 21 – 27. Our next newsletter in late May will have our proposed itinerary and motel locations.



Raised beds and hanging baskets help display rare plants in the Mary Livingston Ripley Garden Photo: J. Draper

The Mary Livingston Ripley Garden

The driving force behind the establishment of the Mary Livingston Ripley Garden was Mrs. Mary Livingston Ripley, the wife of the Smithsonian Institution's 8th Secretary, S. Dillon Ripley.

Mr. Ripley was at the helm of the Smithsonian from 1964 to 1984 and is considered one of the most active directors of the Smithsonian who led the organization through its most rapid period of expansion in its history. During that time, the Smithsonian added eight new museums including the Hirshhorn Art Museum and Sculpture Garden. He also got the Smithsonian involved in television, and he established the Smithsonian Magazine in 1979. Attendance nearly tripled during his tenure, from 10.8 million visitors each year to 30 million.

Mary Livingston Ripley was an active gardener and plant collector, but she had wide ranging interests in horticulture, entomology, photography, and science. In 1978 when a site adjacent to the Arts and Industries Building of the Smithsonian was scheduled to become yet another parking lot, she envisioned a place where visitors on the National Mall could find refuge in a fragrant garden instead.

The garden was designed by prominent U.S. architect, Hugh Newell Jacobsen. He designed a lovely series curved raised beds which provided many intimate places in the garden. Through effective use of plant materials, there is also a feeling of informality to the garden. Staff members in the Smithsonian's greenhouses raise plants for seasonal color in the flower beds and hanging baskets.

The Ripley Garden is open daily, and we will try to arrange a field trip this year to visit the gardens.

For more information, check their website:

gardens.si.edu/our-gardens/ripley-garden.html

A Proposed Group Picnic in May

Deb and Mike White of Germantown, MD, have recently become Associate Members of our chapter. They have a nursery specializing in azaleas and rhododendrons, and are planning to invite several groups to their new home in May for a pot luck picnic. Deb is reviewing dates that will be best for them, but we anticipate the picnic will be either May 17, 18, or 19. We will announce details at a later time.

Deb and Mike White

22531 Wildcat Road

Germantown, Maryland 20876

www.whites-nursery.com

Spring Cleanup on Hooper Bald

March 31 – April 2, 2015

George McLellan and Jim Brant have spearheaded a multi-chapter restoration project on Hooper Bald trying to preserve a rare native stand of flame azaleas, *R. calendulaceum*. The mountain top which is on the border of North Carolina and Tennessee is easily accessible from the Cherohala Skyway, south of the Smokies. This area has some of the largest flowered forms of *R. calendulaceum* we have ever seen in the wild, and for several years we have been cutting back encroaching vegetation so the azaleas have room to grow. We are also planting native azalea seedlings from selected forms back into the wild on a nearby bald, Oak Knob.

As some of you know, Jim is recovering from back surgery and we wish him a speedy recovery. Since it is not likely that he will make the spring cleanup session, George could use some help. He has selected April 1st as the target date, with March 31 and April 2 as travel dates. We intend to stay at the Microtel Inn in Robbinsville on 3/31 and 4/01.

Microtel Inn Robbinsville

11 Rodney Orr Bypass

Robbinsville, NC 28771

(828) 479-6772

Of course, the trip is not all work since there will be time to admire the ephemeral spring wildflowers like trillium and hepatica in nearby Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. We hope some of you can join us!

2015 Membership Roster – Not Published



1st (tie) Category III– Rosa McWhorter “Shenandoah Overlook”



1st Category II – Dan Neckel, “Cleveland Botanical Garden”

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS 2015 Photo Contest Winners



2nd Category I – Rosa McWhorter, “Goldsprekel”



Best in Show, 1st Category I,: Carolyn Beck – “Smoky Mountain”



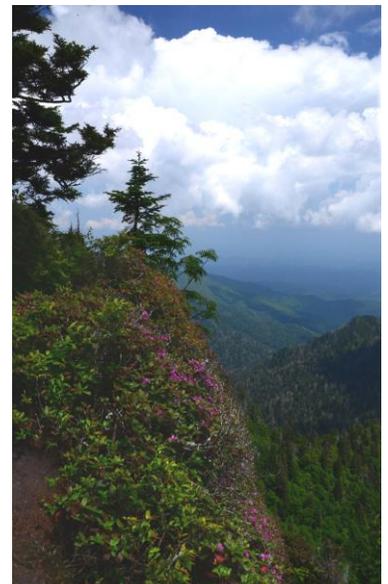
2nd (tie) Category III – Tom & Anne Fessenden – “Collage”



2nd (tie) Category III –Joanne Neckel, “Vienna Flower Shop”



1st (tie) Category III– Dan Neckel
“Stan Hywet Gardens”



2nd Category II – Don Hyatt
“Smokianum”