



# Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Summer Newsletter: July 2016

## Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar

- **July 16, 2016** – Canceled Meeting (Propagation workshop)
- **September 25, 2016** – Chapter Picnic, Cabin John Regional Park
- **October 29, 2016** –PVC Banquet and Speaker, Normandie Farms

## Some Regional Activities of Note

- **September 9-11, 2016** – MAC Fall Meeting, Pipestem, WV
- **September 17, 2016** – NV-ASA Auction. Kirkwood, Prys. Church
- **September 29, 2016 – Oct. 2** – ARS Western Regional, Newport, OR
- **October 15, 2016** – Mason-Dixon Ch. Banquet, Westminster, MD

### Chapter Officers

**President:** Dan Neckel

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**Vice President:** Ginny Mohr

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**Treasurer:** Phyllis Rittman

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## Chapter News:

### Propagation Workshop Canceled

Due to a number of conflicts, we have had to cancel the propagation workshop we had planned for July 16. It is still a great time to root azaleas but probably a bit too early for rooting most of the large leaf rhododendrons. Early fall is usually a better time to root them.

In our Summer 2015 newsletter, your editor did publish an article with diagrams illustrating his approach for rooting azalea cuttings. It can be found online at our chapter website ([www.arspvc.org](http://www.arspvc.org)). Since we canceled our propagation workshop, he has decided to include a version with photographs in this newsletter.

Azaleas are easy to root so if you haven't tried rooting cuttings, experiment this year. This process works well for many other types of plants, too, and the advantage is that the cuttings will require little care until you have time to transplant them. At the fall picnic, we will try to provide a demonstration on rooting rhododendrons. Of course, azaleas seem to root easily at any time of year.

### Chapter Pot Luck Picnic: September 25

**Where:** Cabin John Regional Park

7400 Tuckerman Ave, Bethesda, MD

**When:** 1:00 - 5:00 PM

Mark your calendars and note the change of location. We will be moving our Chapter Picnic to Cabin John Regional Park this year. We will be in Shelter K which does have a charcoal grill, so the chapter will provide hot dogs and hamburgers as usual, but we ask people to bring a side dish or dessert to share.

At the picnic, we will also have election of officers. We expect to have a plant exchange, too, so if you have an extra plant you would like to trade, bring it along.

**Note:** We will send a reminder about the picnic as well as fall banquet registration forms in our next newsletter.



Banquet Speaker, Dick Murcott (right), discusses hybridizing with Bud Gehrlich (left-center) and others at the 2009 Convention

### Potomac Valley Banquet: October 29

**Where:** Normandie Farm Restaurant

10710 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD 20845

**When:** 12:00 noon – 4:00 PM

**Speaker:** Richard Murcott

**“Rhododendrons Are Like Chrysanthemums”**

We are returning to Normandie Farms for our Fall Banquet, and we are very excited to have Richard Murcott coming from Long Island, NY, to be our speaker.

Dick Murcott has been a noted hybridizer for probably 50 years or more. His garden was featured at the 1978 ARS Convention and again at the 2009 ARS Convention. We had a number of his rhododendron hybrids in our convention plant sale.

Anyone who has heard Dick speak before will attest that he is one of the most entertaining speakers in the ARS. He is very witty, extremely knowledgeable, and incredibly enthusiastic. He has a rare oratory gift that few can match so expect to be completely captivated as he weaves a masterful presentation about rhododendrons.

## Rooting Azalea Cuttings by Don Hyatt

I encourage you to propagate your favorite plants and share them with others. Azaleas are very easy to root, and this approach uses a technique that relies on “mini-greenhouses” that will require minimal care for months at a time. Once cuttings are rooted and you have some spare time, they can be transplanted into individual pots and grown on!

### Cutting Selection



Choose healthy growth that is beginning to harden off. Twiggly growth and long shoots can root but average size is best.



Select only the new shoots. Pinch out soft tips and carefully remove some lower leaves where the roots will form.



Azaleas are shallow rooted and only the bottom inch of the cutting will go in the soil. Long shoots can be cut in sections.

### Preparation



Soaking cuttings for 5 minutes in dilute Clorox solution (5%) will kill bugs and minimize potential disease problems.



Rinse cuttings very well to remove all traces of the Clorox solution since it will burn the leaves, too.



Dip the bottom half inch of each cutting in rooting hormone. Dip 'N Grow (5%) or Rootone are popular choices.

### Rooting



Insert the bottom inch of the cutting into damp potting medium (equal parts peat and perlite). Medium should not be wet!



Enclose each pot in a clear plastic bag. This keeps humidity high during rooting but too much moisture causes rotting.



Place cuttings in a bright north window or under fluorescent lights for at least 8 to 10 weeks. No watering is necessary.

# Williamsburg 2016!

## Convention Reflections by Don Hyatt



As co-chair of this spring's 2016 Joint ARS/ASA Convention in Williamsburg, I want to take this opportunity to say "THANK YOU" to all those who helped stage the event. We approached the meeting as though we were hosting a party for our friends, and that is essentially what we did.

I really appreciate the hard work and support from our committee members. The Northern Virginia Chapter ASA representatives were Rick Bauer (co-chair), Paul Beck (treasurer), and Carolyn Beck. My counterpart for Potomac Valley was Phyllis Rittman. The MAC representatives were George McLellan and Dave Banks (registrar). The Mason-Dixon team members were Ray Smith and Sonny Coble.

We started planning for the event four years ago. I realize that the older I get, the faster time flies but when hosting a convention, it seems that time reaches warp speed. The weeks and months leading up to the convention were a blur. For many of us, most other duties were put on hold.

We did have some surprises as we neared the convention. The Virginia Department of Agriculture wanted us to treat the soil of every plant we would have in the sale with Bifenthrin, an insecticide that

would assure that no plants would have any soil-born pests like Japanese beetles, weevils, or fire ants. It was reassuring to know that we were not sending bugs to distant locations.

Soon, people started arriving and it was show time. As I was rushing around trying to take care of many last minute details, Harry Risetto, one of our long time Potomac Valley Chapter members who had chaired many Dahlia Society Conventions, pulled me aside for a few words of comfort. He said, "There are two measures for a successful convention: 1) nobody comes to blows, and 2) nobody dies." The four days passed very quickly and since I am not aware of us experiencing either benchmark, I guess we had a successful meeting.

Seriously, though, many people told me that our meeting was one of the best conventions they had ever attended. Mother Nature did zap some of our gardens with late freezes. The freezes did hurt the gardens north of Richmond but also some of the rhododendron plants for the sale that we were staging at an unheated hoop house near Saluda, VA. There were a few minor glitches, but everything did seem to run smoothly.

On Wednesday, the ARS and ASA national officers held their board meetings to discuss society business. Other attendees opted for tours to Colonial Williamsburg or other historical locations.

That afternoon, was the first big test, the opening of our incredible plant sale. Opening day at the plant sale is usually a bottleneck but not this year. We all need to thank Paul Beck for his electronic and financial wizardry. He printed up bar code labels for every plant in the sale and each attendee had a unique bar code on the name tag. The cashiers at the checkout stations could scan the attendee's name tag, scan the plants they wanted to buy, and quickly print up a detailed invoice with the name of the



Azaleas Ready for Treatment with Bifenthrin at the Beck's



George McLellan and Rick Bauer Treating Plants at Saluda

purchaser, the names of the plants they wanted to buy, and the cost. People could pay by cash or credit card. In an instant, they were out of there. No backups! In the first two hours of the plant sale, Paul told me they were averaging one plant sold every 12 seconds! Phenomenal!!!



**Paul Beck and Lars Larsen at the Plant Sale Checkout**  
Photo by Sandra McDonald

We really must salute Carolyn Beck and the propagators in the ASA for the wonderful plants they raised for the sale. In 2006, the rhododendrons were excellent and big sellers. This time, due to a series of weather-related problems, we suffered significant losses with the rhododendrons but the azaleas were superb. Thank you, Carolyn!

On Wednesday evening we welcomed our guests and then tried to spark discussion by offering some “share sessions” on topics of current interest. In one room, we alternated short, 20-minute presentations on native azaleas and rhododendron hybridizing. Joe Brusio led off with his work in breeding for unusual rhododendron leaf forms. Charlie Andrews followed talking about the native azalea hybrids he has found along Hurricane Creek in Northern Georgia. Next, Tom Ahern shared images of the rhododendron hybrids developed in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania. Sally and John Perkins discussed polyploidy concerns in native azalea hybridizing followed by Peter Norris who shared his interest in hybridizing with *R. yuefengense*. We finished up with George McLellan talking about the native azaleas on Hooper Bald and I showed some pictures of the yellow rhododendron hybrids of the late Bob and Audrey Furman.

In another room, Jim Trumbly from California gave a longer presentation on Satsuki azaleas followed by Rick Bauer who discussed Northern Virginia’s Legacy Project. I wish I could have heard

those presentations. I have heard Rick before and I understand Jim Trumbly may have an article published soon in the *Azalean*.

I was too busy to go on any tours but I did get to many gardens that week. Rick Bauer and I visited all sites prior to the meeting to finalize bus routes and I took pictures then. This article has many tour photos, but some were taken before that late freeze.

Early Thursday morning, our first tour left for Richmond and the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. We also saw two private gardens, the azalea display of Roy, Elizabeth, and the late Madeline Cosby, and the Japanese garden of Joe and Junko Liesfeld.

In the evening, our speakers focused on the legacies of plant explorers, old and new. Our first speaker, Kirk Brown, the President of the Garden Writer’s Association, gave a hilarious presentation as the early plant explorer, John Bartram. Then Steve Hootman, Director of the Rhododendron Species Foundation, shared his spectacular trips hunting for rhododendrons and other plants in remote parts of China and Southeast Asia.

**John Bartram (Kirk Brown) Steve Hootman**



Photo by Sandra McDonald

Photo by Don Hyatt

On Friday, we took off for the Norfolk Botanical Garden and the exquisite private garden of Bill and Linda Pinkham. At the ASA Banquet, Paul and Carolyn Beck as well as Dan Krabill were honored with the ASA’s Distinguished Service Award. Rick Lewandowski was the keynote address, and he spoke on tapping nature’s diversity for the garden. He focused on the use of native azaleas and other wild companion plants in the landscape. Superb!

**Rick Lewandowski**



Photo by Don Hyatt

Saturday's tour was to Gloucester and featured the display garden of Brent and Becky's Bulbs, four charming private gardens, and a stop at Beaverdam Park for lunch. Two of the gardens were larger estates with scenic waterfront views, the home of Cam and Dean Williams called Dunham Massie Farm, and Belle Terre, the home of Bill and Sue Perrin. The other two were beautifully landscaped suburban homes, the garden of Jim and Pam Brant, and the garden of Barbara and Al Hall. We really appreciate how much work the garden hosts put into preparing for the tours. They were spectacular!

At the ARS Banquet that evening, the society awarded two Gold Medals, one to Norman Beaudry and the other to Bill Mangels. We have printed their citations in column to the right. Congratulations!!

### Mike Stewart



Photo by Don Hyatt

Mike Stewart gave the keynote address where he discussed the contributions of early plant explorers and how their discoveries enhanced our gardens. Mike included images and video of his trip to Sikkim. Awesome!

On Sunday, we did open the plant sale to the public which allowed us to sell additional plants. Financially, our convention was quite successful. Since both the ARS and the ASA have had serious financial trouble in recent years and they have no method to raise funds except through dues or donations, the committee and presidents of the hosting chapters have decided to make a substantial contribution to both parent organizations and split the remaining funds between the four chapters. This will ease some financial problems at the national level and will still provide funds for the local chapters to use for their activities.

We have so many people to thank! Many committee members donated plants to the sale or items for the auction. Others made significant donations, too, like the tissue culture rhododendrons from Jay Gillenwater, the azaleas from Mike and Deb White, and the wonderful tree peonies from Ron Brown. We were very grateful to J. Jackson and Lindy Johnson for those fantastic native azaleas favors they donated and to Buddy Lee for the new Encore azaleas we gave to each attendee. We thank all who helped and anyone who came! THANKS!

**Relax!** Our District IX will not be due for another convention until 10 years from now, or in 2026!



Norman and Jean Beaudry

Photo by Betty Ann Addison

### Norman Beaudry 2016 Gold Medal Award

*You are a skilled scientist who accepts and excels at daunting challenges. Your management of the ARS Seed Exchange is exemplary. You drastically reduced costs, increased efficiency, and expanded its scope. The Seed Exchange enables hybridizers to share genetic resources worldwide, helping them develop new forms and improve hardiness. Without your leadership, this vital activity could have been lost. Your efforts have helped fund seed collection trips to remote Asian locations which has enhanced genetic diversity and introduced new species. Your kind and honorable nature has built a global network of trusted friends which has helped preserve and distribute rare plant materials. You have participated as a faithful member of the Research Committee in evaluating and recommending funding for research that reflects the international character and interests of the ARS. For you many outstanding achievements, the American Rhododendron Society is proud to award the Gold Medal to Norman Beaudry.*



Bill and Ann Mangels

Photo by Don Hyatt

### William A Mangels 2016 Gold Medal Award

*You have provided the American Rhododendron Society with exemplary leadership and fiduciary responsibility for almost 30 years. You served as President, Vice-President, Program Chair, Awards Committee Chair, and Treasurer of the Mason Dixon Chapter. You served the overall Society as Director of District 9, and as a member of the ARS Executive Committee. You were the ARS Treasurer from 2005-2014 and have been the Endowment Fund Chair since 2002. In these roles you provided excellent direction and discretion to the Society's investment strategy, dealt judiciously with budget and investment issues and helped distribute countless grants to disseminate information and educate the public on the genus Rhododendron. For your many contributions and outstanding service, the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to award the Gold Medal to William A Mangels.*

**Richmond: Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**



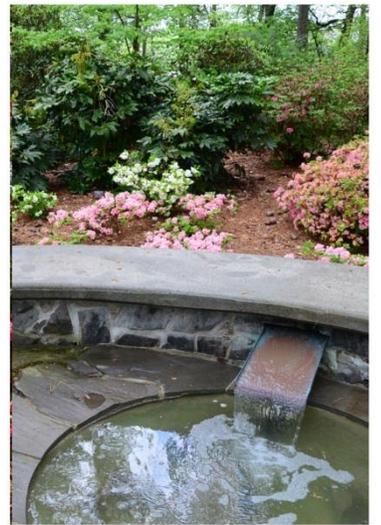
**Junko and Joe Liesfeld Garden**



**Roy and Elizabeth Cosby Garden**



**Norfolk: Norfolk Botanical Garden**



**Linda and Bill Pinkham Garden**



**Gloucester: Brent and Becky's Bulbs**



**Barbara and Al Hall Garden**



**Jim and Pam Brant Garden**



**Beaverdam Park**



**Cam and Dean Williams Garden**



**Sue and Bill Perrin Garden**



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