



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Fall Newsletter: September 2014

Calendar

- * **September 7, 2014** – Potomac Community Center: Karen Rexrode
- * **September 13, 2014** – Chapter Plant Sale, Green Spring Gardens
- * **September 26-28, 2014** – Western Regional Conference, Everett, WA
- * **October 11, 2014** – District Luncheon, Wildfire Restaurant: Harold Greer
- * **January 19, 2015** – Potomac Comm. Cntr: Bob McWhorter & Photo Contest

Chapter Officers

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

Our Next Meeting: Karen Rexrode “Quest for the Best: Plant Exploration”

Date: September 7, 2014

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Potomac Community Center

It is always good to start off the new season with a super program. We are excited to have Karen Rexrode as our speaker. Her talk is titled “Quest for the Best: Plant Exploration.” She traces many of the 19th century plant explorers who traveled through Japan, China, and Korea and brought back new plant species and rare varieties that have enriched our gardens.

Karen has been a prominent horticulturist and noted photographer in the Washington Metropolitan area for many years. She owned and operated Windy Hill Plant Farm in Loudon County for over 25 years and specialized in perennials and unusual annuals. After closing the nursery in 2005, she traveled for a year and pursued her photography interests before joining the staff at the historic Virginia estate, Oak Hill.

Karen has taught classes at Green Spring Gardens, is a frequent speaker at garden clubs and conferences, and she is also a regular on Merrifield Garden Center’s “Gardening Advisor” TV program that airs Saturday mornings. You’ll enjoy her blog and photo archives:

<http://karenrexrode.typepad.com/>

Please join us for great meeting, and bring a friend!

Refreshment Duty: Persons whose last names begin with **I** through **P** 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



Karen Rexrode

Photo: K. Rexrode

Chapter Plant Sale

Date: Saturday, September 13, 2014

Time: 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Where: Green Spring Gardens
4603 Green Spring Road
Alexandria, VA 22312

Our chapter will be joining other vendors at Green Spring Gardens for their annual “Fall Garden Day and Plant Sale.” Sponsored by FROGS (Friends of Green Spring), a portion of the proceeds go to support the gardens but the rest will help supplement our chapter treasury. We should have some nice native azaleas, evergreen azaleas, and rhododendrons for sale.

Please support our chapter at this sale. We could use people to help set up, or come during the day to talk to the public and give others a break. Perhaps you will even buy a plant or two. Let Dan Neckel know if you can help us out that day. It should be fun!

Dues are Due!

With this issue of your newsletter, we are also sending your dues renewal envelope for the coming year. Please return your payment to our Treasurer, Phyllis Rittman and make checks payable to:

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

Membership categories include:

Category	Cost
Regular - (one or two people in the same household)	\$40
Commercial / Corporate	\$90
Sustaining	\$75
Sponsoring	\$150
Student – (under age 25) Access to online Journal only	\$10
Life Member – Single	\$1000
Life Member – Family	\$1500
Associate – must already belong to another ARS Chapter	\$10

Mail renewals to our treasurer:

Phyllis T. Rittman, Treasurer
10840 Fairchester Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Potting Party

During the first week of October, we should be getting a shipment of rooted cuttings from Van Veen Nursery in Portland. We sent them to Kathy Van Veen last fall, and she will send us what she was able to root. We will need people to assist with potting them up, protecting them over the winter, and growing them on for the 2016 Convention in Williamsburg. We haven't set a date for the potting party yet since we don't know the exact date of shipment. If there is a chance that you could lend us a hand, let Dan Neckel know.

Fall Mountain Trip

The week after our Fall Banquet, October 13 – 16, some of us expect to be taking off to the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee to admire the fall foliage and collect native azalea seed. We should be going to Roan Mountain, Wayah Bald, Hooper Bald, and sections of the southern Blue Ridge Parkway. Plans are sketchy but if you want to join us, let Don Hyatt know and he will share details later.

Sad News:

The plant world has lost a number of good friends this summer. We are indeed saddened by the loss and wish to extend our sincere sympathy to the families.

Bob Stelloh and Ed Collins were not members of our chapter, but many of us have worked with them over many years. They were stewards of the famous "Red Max" (*R. maximum*) in the wild near Mount Mitchell.

Sharon Allender was a member of our chapter and a friend to everyone who knew her. Below are a few details and thoughts about these wonderful people, but no words can do justice to their many contributions.

Bob Stelloh - On July 15, 2014, Bob Stelloh passed away from lung cancer. He has been such a presence in the ASA and ARS for so many years it is hard to believe he is gone. Bob was the Treasurer of the ASA for many years and also a leader in the ASA's online presence. He established the ASA website and also monitored the Yahoo Azalea group. We will miss his frequent email messages. Many of us visited Bob and his wife Audrey's lovely home on the garden tours of the 2012 ARS/ASA Convention in Asheville.

Ed Collins – Our good friend Ed Collins passed away on July 20, 2014. He has been suffering in recent years from Alzheimer's disease. Ed was a founding member of the Sandwich Club which helped evaluate the Dexter, Consolini, and Cowles rhododendron hybrids on Cape Cod. When he moved from New Jersey to Hendersonville, he brought many of those rare rhododendrons with him but also became active with the garden of Velma Haag, evaluating and trying to preserve the Haag hybrids, too. Ed was also a native azalea fanatic, always looking for superior forms of species and natural hybrids. The garden of Ed and his wife Mary was on tour at the Asheville convention.

Sharon Allender – For decades, Sharon Allender had been an active supporter of our Potomac Valley Chapter. Sadly, we learned from son, Mark Tresize, that she had passed away on August 5.

Sharon was the consummate volunteer, ready to assist and always brimming with kindness and caring. She helped out at the schools her children attended, and I can remember her cutting armfuls of flowers from her garden to make lovely arrangements for the school in order to thank the teachers. She was always there to assist with our chapter activities, too. She helped with flower shows and plant sales, and she was a frequent contributor at our winter share sessions.

With her children grown, Sharon and her husband John Tresize moved from Potomac, MD, to the Short Pump area north of Richmond where she had planned to build a new garden. Ten months ago, shortly after the move, she learned she had brain cancer. How tragic to lose another person who had so much more to give. She will be greatly missed, but certainly not forgotten.



Picnic gathering at Seneca Creek State Park



Getting ready for the feast

Photos below courtesy of Bob McWhorter



New Officers: Ginny Mohr and Dan Neckel



Jon Wallenmeyer and Rosa McWhorter

PVC Picnic July 13, 2014



**Carolyn Beck greets new members
Johan and Beth Kitchen from
Severna Park, MD**

Chapter Picnic

We had another great time at the Chapter Picnic this year, and thought you would enjoy seeing some photos of the event. The weather was warm and humid, but not too bad for a July afternoon in the Washington, DC, area. The food was great, and the friendship was even better. We all had a wonderful time.

We held elections, and thanked Bob McWhorter for his dedicated service as our chapter President. Our new officers for the coming year will be Dan Neckel as our President and Ginny Mohr as Vice President. Phyllis Rittman will continue as Treasurer, and we still haven't filled the office of Secretary.

We had some native azaleas for sale and also a plant exchange. We expected to have a small auction of rarer plants to raise some money to help pay for Harold Greer's travel expenses. He is coming from Oregon to

be our fall banquet speaker. The restaurant where we will hold our banquet this time does not lend itself to an auction of larger plants, so we have decided to hold various fund raising activities elsewhere.

To everyone's surprise, Carolyn and Paul Beck arrived with a trailer full of plants to donate including rhododendrons, azaleas, and conifers. Needless to say, the auction did better than expected. We thank the Becks for their generosity. Thanks to all who donated!



Just a few more plants for the auction!

Pot Bound! *By Don Hyatt*

Handling overgrown container plants

We had a chance to pick up some inexpensive deciduous azaleas from Transplant Nursery earlier this summer. These were “pot bound” rooted cuttings that should have been transplanted two years ago. Some were 30 inches tall and still in a 2-inch pot! Root systems were so dense they looked like compressed coconut fiber, and plants needed watering twice a day!

Such plants need special attention in order to grow and become established in the garden. One of the most common problems with transplanting container plants is that the roots often do not get out of the old potting medium; plants never establish in their new location. With very dense root systems, some actions may seem ruthless but it is necessary for long term success.

The first stage was to remove the plant from the pot and inspect the root system. Look for the larger roots, and try to tease those out with a fork or fingers to separate them from the ball. Those will form the new root structure, and it is important to get those roots into the new potting medium. This is not an easy task, and it requires some real care trying to decide which way the roots are growing. There will be some damage to smaller roots, but try to unwind the larger roots and realize new small roots will branch from them later. Be forewarned that some root systems may be so dense that you must use a saw or knife to try to break them apart. It may seem like it will hurt the plant, but to do nothing is usually disaster. If the roots were to stay in that mass, the plant will take much longer to establish and will probably dry out and die before it ever does.

If there is damage to the root system, it is important to cut back some of the top branches to keep the plant in balance. The greater root loss, the more of the top should be removed. The plants we got from Transplant Nursery needed to be cut back by almost half. Heavy pruning is preferable in early spring rather than summer, but in this case we had little choice. When people try to rescue native azaleas from the wild, there is usually significant root loss because it is not possible to get even half of the main roots when a plant is dug. People will cut back all the main branches to modest stumps, and “heel in” the plant by placing it in a bed of rich, well drained soil to recover. Native azaleas will branch freely from those old canes, but be careful with larger rhododendrons since many will not.

Plants that have been through such an ordeal will need time to recover. Putting them in open shade and misting the foliage helps, but they shouldn't need such constant watering. Avoid fertilizer at first since it can burn delicate new roots. Light applications are OK after several weeks but don't fertilize too late in the season. Plants need to go into dormancy before fall, and a late flush of growth makes them vulnerable to winter damage. By next year, the plant should be fine.



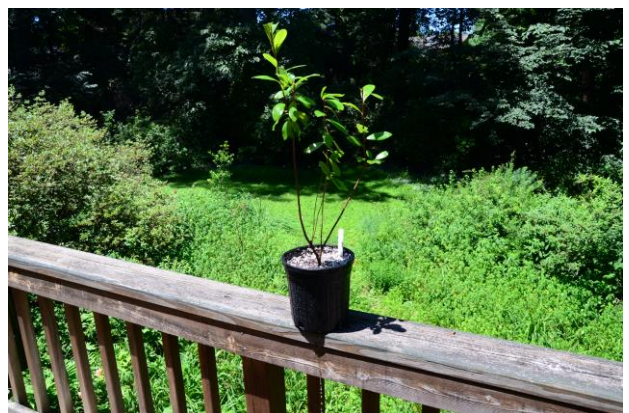
Flat of 32 overgrown native azalea cuttings



Dense tangle of roots in the pot



Root system teased apart so roots can go into new soil.



Repotted plant ready to grow on.

ARS/ASA Joint District Meeting and Banquet Harold Greer - "Rhododendron Diversity"

Registration Deadline: 10/4/ 2014
Please register early since the seating capacity at the restaurant is limited.

When: Saturday, October 11, 2014

Time: 11:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**Where: Wildfire Restaurant
at Tysons Galleria (Tysons II)
2001 International Drive
McLean, VA 22102**

**Price: \$42.00 per person
(including tax and tip)**

Menu:

Surf & Turf Combo (Grilled Salmon *and* Filet Mignon) or **Vegetarian** (Black Bean Burger)

The Wildfire Restaurant serves family style meals, and we selected a premium surf and turf entrée combo. Each table will receive platters of both cedar planked grilled salmon and filet mignon, and diners can take a serving of each one. For vegetarians, the alternative entrée is their popular black bean burger. The meal will begin with Chopped Salad, Bison Meatballs, and Cornbread. Side dishes served with the entrée will include Redskin Mashed Potatoes and Balsamic Roasted Vegetables. The dessert choices will be Key Lime Pie and Triple Layer Chocolate Cake. Coffee, tea, and soda are included with the meal. We will have a cash bar.

Our Speaker and Program:

Harold Greer

"Rhododendron Diversity"

For most of us in the rhododendron world, Harold Greer needs no introduction. He is undeniably one of the leading authorities on the genus. Many of us consider him the best! Having worked with rhododendrons and azaleas since early childhood, Harold has a depth of knowledge that few can match. He and his wife Nancy own Greer Gardens, a wonderful nursery in Eugene, OR. Harold is a renowned author, a celebrated hybridizer, a phenomenal photographer, and a very entertaining speaker. We are thrilled to have him!

Harold will present one of his most popular programs, a multimedia PowerPoint presentation on Rhododendron Diversity. Expect to be amazed with his overview of rhododendrons and azaleas including variations in flowers, foliage, and plant habits. Your 2016 Convention Committee will give a brief preview of the Williamsburg meeting, and also auction off a few rare plants to help defray Harold's expenses.



Greer Hybrid: 'Very Berry'



Harold Greer



Greer Hybrid 'Trude Webster'

Directions to the Wildfire Restaurant:

From the Capital Beltway, I-495, take the Chain Bridge Road exit onto Rt. 123 toward Tysons Corner. Near the top of the hill, turn right onto International Drive and take the second right into the upper parking area for Tysons Galleria. The restaurant is located on the third floor between Saks Fifth Avenue and Macy's, but look for the convenient outside elevator that goes directly to the restaurant.

For public transportation, the Tysons Corner Station of the new Silver Line of the Metro Subway just opened. It is now a short walk from there to the Galleria. For assistance on directions, please refer to the map on the next page.



ARS/ASA Joint District Meeting and Banquet, October 11, 2014
Harold Greer - "Rhododendron Diversity"

Fall Banquet Registration Deadline: October 4, 2014

We are using this event to practice some mechanics of the 2016 Convention, and provide two registration methods. For secure online registration using credit card or PayPal, link to the MAC website:

www.macars.org/events.html

If you prefer to pay by check, fill out the registration form below and mail with payment to Dave Banks. He must receive it no later than 10/04/2014. Make checks payable to:

ARS/ASA Convention 2016

Send to:

Dave Banks: dfbanks@earthlink.net (contact by email for proper mailing address)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Print the name of each attendee and indicate entrée choice: Enclose a check to cover the cost for each meal (\$42)

- 1) _____ **Combo** or **Vegetarian** Cost: _____
- 2) _____ **Combo** or **Vegetarian** Cost: _____
- 3) _____ **Combo** or **Vegetarian** Cost: _____

TOTAL: _____

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
 Donald W. Hyatt, Editor
 Don@donaldhyatt.com