



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Winter Newsletter: January 2017

Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar - 2017

- **February 5, 2017** – Chapter Meeting, Potomac Community Center
- **March 3-4, 2017** – Tentative North Carolina Nursery Trip
- **April 20, 2017** – Tentative Pennsylvania Nursery Trip
- **April 27-30, 2017** – ARS Convention, Eureka, CA
- **May 6, 2017** – Chapter Garden Tours
- **July 15, 2017** – Propagation Workshop, Potomac Community Center
- **September 24, 2107** – Chapter Picnic, Seneca Creek State Park
- **October 28, 2017** –PVC Banquet and Speaker, Normandie Farm

Chapter Officers

President: Ginny Mohr
rngmohr@msn.com

Secretary: Diane Reinke
Isabelle49@aol.com

Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
prittman@erols.com

Some Regional Activities of Note

- **March 18, 2017** – NV-ASA Youth Gardening Symposium, Kirkwood Presb. Church
- **March 30 – April 2, 2017** – ASA Convention, Hammond, Louisiana
- **May 12-14** – Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS Meeting, Wintergreen, VA

Our Next Meeting:

Speaker: Christopher Lewis

**“Bees and Honey Bees, Pollinator
Plants and Rhododendrons”**

Date: Sunday, February 5, 2017

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Potomac Community Center

Our next meeting will be on Sunday, February 5, at the Potomac Community Center. We will have our annual Photo Contest but we will also have a guest speaker, Christopher Lewis from Behnke Nurseries. He will be speaking on Native Bees and Honey Bees, Pollinator Plants and Rhododendrons.

Chris describes himself as a “farm boy” who grew up in Howard County and studied geology at Susquehanna University, PA. After working in Louisiana in the oil industry, he returned to Maryland use his engineering talents supervising construction at BWI Airport. Still anxious to get involved with plants, he studied horticulture at the USDA Graduate School and became a Master Gardener in Montgomery County and a Certified Professional Horticulturist. Later, he also received certification in Integrated Pest Management.

Chris has been with Behnke Nurseries since 2005 and was former manager of their Potomac garden shop. He is now at their main facility in Beltsville and has worked with trees, shrubs, and garden shop management. At home, Chris tends his own garden



R. periclymenoides and Bumble Bee Pollinator

where he focuses on edible plants and natives, and he manages his own bee hives. Chris and his sons are active in scouts. Join us for a great meeting!

Refreshment Duty: We ask members whose last names are in the first half of the alphabet (A – M) to bring a finger food or snack to share with others.

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

District Director Report

By *Bill Meyers*

I attended the recent ARS Board Meeting at the Western Regional Meeting in Newport, OR on Friday September 30, 2016.

Key items discussed were:

- Our Ann Mangels headed a Transition Team which included cutting a number of significant costs and reorganizing some roles. Changed printer of the Journal saving \$2,000 per issue. By-laws and policies are being adjusted and/or re-written.
- Dave Banks is new ARS Treasurer but was previously our District Director. With this change I was made DD instead of Alternate DD. I have been able to get Richard Mohr of PVC to become our new Alternate for District 9.
- Katherine Sterner is new Office Administrator and will handle all membership services and dues monies. Laura Grant has retired.

For those who purchase items on-line through Amazon, please first go to ARSstore.org, then click on Amazon. Your Amazon order will then be handled as usual except the good news is the ARS will get 5.5% of the cost. This is significant through the year but can be even more significant at holiday time.

Ann Mangels, currently Eastern VP, will be new our new ARS President at the end of the Spring Convention to be held in Eureka, CA, April 27-30, 2017. We will then need a new Eastern VP.

Additional forthcoming Conventions will be:

- May 2018 - Bremen Germany with a pre-convention tour of the Netherlands and a post convention tour of Denmark and possibly Finland.
- 2019 – Philadelphia, PA
- 2020 – Portland, OR for the ARS 75th Anniversary where it was founded.
- No Fall Regional Meetings in East are scheduled yet. Should have one in the east in 2017 and 2019. Eastern Directors are to suggest locations. No tours are needed, just speakers.
- District 1 is to arrange a Western meeting.

Chapters are urged to send copies of their Newsletters to National.

New members who sign up after April 1st, will get the Journal for 18 months.

There is now a printed Journal and an on-line Journal. Both are different so check out. Will need to create a personal log-in to access on-line Journal.

It was found there are 15 rhody societies world wide. There was a brief discussion about creating one worldwide Society.

Ken Webb, Western VP, reported District 1 is doing lots of propagation. He suggested each Chapter have “a propagation center” that all its members could use. 60% of seed exchange orders went to Europe last year.

Several Chapters have started “Facebook” pages generating interaction but it was noted someone has to run each of those.

There was lots of discussion about how to generate new members which is really important for continued financial success and future growth. Was also some brief discussion about the common interests of the ASA and the ARS and possible combination of at least “back office” functions but no conclusion was reached.

Bob Weissman, our national Webmaster, reported his re-design of our website to be more attractive to young folks. Now have more and better graphics and photos, a searchable database of plants which can be searched by bloom time, available hybrids, etc. Can enter a zip code and find all rhody sales businesses within a 25 mile radius, etc. Check it out!!!

Need chairs for Fund Raising, Membership and PR/Publicity. If interested let me or Ann know ASAP.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Meyers

Sad News: Ted Stecki

We were saddened to learn that former ARS President, Theodore S. Stecki (Ted), passed away on November 26. He was 80 years old.

Ted began his professional career at RCA but spent 40 years with Lockheed Martin before retiring. He was very active in the Greater Philadelphia area where propagated and sold rhododendrons through a family business he established, Hill House Nursery.

For many years, Ted was one of the key people forcing rhododendrons into bloom for his ARS chapter's exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show.

Ted was ARS President in 2010 when the National Arboretum was planning to cut down the Glenn Dale Azaleas. Your editor appreciated his support and assistance in successfully fighting that misguided decision. Ted will be missed.

2017 Rhododendrons of the Year

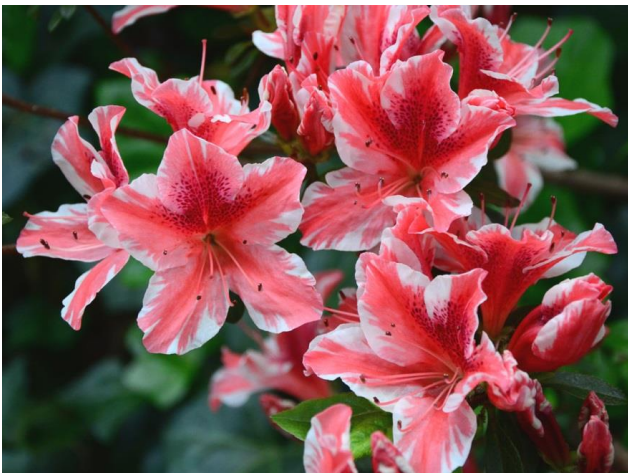
Below are the 2017 Rhododendrons of the Year selected for the Middle Atlantic Region. It is not easy finding plants that grow well throughout our District and are also registered. We want to know your favorite plants for us to consider next year.



2017 Elepidote Rhododendron 'Gilbert Myers'



2017 Lepidote Rhododendron 'Blaney's Blue'



2017 Evergreen Azalea 'Ben Morrison'

PVC Photography Contest Rules

Our annual photography contest will be held as part of our February 5 meeting. Look through pictures taken in 2015 or 2016 and bring a few prints to the meeting.

Attendees will select winners by popular vote and prizes will be awarded. A single individual can only win one of the prizes so all those who enter usually get something. Be sure to enter!

We have established the following categories and rules for our contest:

Category I: Flowers – Close-up of flowers, such as a rhododendron truss or an azalea spray.

Category II: Scenery - Rhododendron or azalea plants in the landscape or in the wild.

Category III: Other – This category is for any photographs featuring rhododendrons or azaleas that don't seem to fit into the first two categories, such as pictures that feature rhododendron foliage, people, animals, or whatever.

Photography Contest Rules

1. Open to chapter members or associates only.
2. No more than two entries in any category.
3. Photos must have been taken in 2015 or 2016.
4. Photos must be naturally occurring, no composites.
5. Photos may be matted, but no frames or glass.
6. Maximum dimensions: 8" x 10", even if matted.
7. Put your name, the title and category on the back.
8. Photos are the property of the exhibitor but we ask permission to reproduce winners in our newsletter.



2017 Deciduous Azalea: *R. canescens*

2017 ARS Convention: Eureka! *Rhododendrons in the Redwoods* April 27–30, 2017

Are you planning to attend the ARS Convention this year? You should have received your Winter Journal by now which has details about the meeting. It looks like an exciting program! I intend to fly to San Francisco, rent a car, and tour other spots prior to the meeting.

The convention features world class speakers like Steve Hootman and Mike Stewart who spoke in Williamsburg. There will be two main garden tours that are repeated each day. There is also an alternative tour of Victorian homes in the Eureka area on Saturday. Look for tender rhododendrons we cannot grow like the huge, fragrant blossoms of ‘Patricia Marie’.

The South Tour will visit the Humboldt Botanical Garden, the Founder’s Grove which is a magnificent stand of old redwoods, and two private gardens.

The North tour will visit Singing Tree Gardens, the nursery and landscape of past ARS President, Don Wallace, Stagecoach Hills which is a native azalea preserve where the lovely West Coast species, *R. occidentale*, grows, and two private gardens.

For more details including travel suggestions, check out the convention website:

<http://eurekarhody.org/convention.php>



Redwoods in the Founders Grove



California’s 2017 ROY Winner: ‘Patricia Marie’

Looking Ahead to 2018: Germany! “North America Meets Europe”

It is not too late to start planning for the ARS meeting next May in Germany. This will be one of the most extensive rhododendron meetings ever offered, if you are able make time to see everything. The Pre- and Post-Tours are optional and hosted by our European friends. The actual Convention will be hosted in Bremen Germany. Here are some of the activities currently planned.

May 6–12: Pre-Tour Part 1, Holland

Visit many public and private gardens including the famous bulb display at Kuekenhof.

May 13–14: Pre-Tour Part 2, Germany

Visit the Rhodo 2018 Exposition in Westerstede as well as the Hobbie and Hachmann Nurseries.

May 15–20: Pre-Tour Part 3, Denmark / Sweden

Tour south Sweden and Denmark visiting private gardens, public gardens, and a castle.

May 21-26: ARS Convention, Germany

This is the main part of the convention with several days of tours to spectacular public gardens or nurseries during the day and banquets and speakers in the evenings.

May 27–31: Post-Tour, Finland

Fly to Helsinki from Bremen and tour Finnish gardens for 3 days before flying home.

For more information and pictures, check out the proposed program at the ARS Store website:

<http://arsstore.org/ARS2018/>

NC Nursery Field Trip: March 3-4, 2017

Plans for the North Carolina Nursery Trip in early March are still sketchy at this time. We will try to update that in our next newsletter or by email.



R. occidentale at Stagecoach Hills



R. catawbiense along the Appalachian Trail at Roan Mountain

Rhododendron Treks - 2016

By Don Hyatt

After the 2016 Convention in Williamsburg was over and people were recovering, I probably should have done the same to catch my breath. Of course I didn't. I hate to miss a single year of that awesome spectacle when the Southern Appalachians come into bloom. Having visited Roan several times a year for the past 20 years, this year was the best I have ever seen. The flowers were in peak condition and the weather was ideal.

Much of the east coast had been damaged by the late April freeze. My garden had the worst damage I have seen in the past 65 years. Not only were the flowers frozen, but also large plants were killed by the freeze or died later that summer. The mountains were still dormant when that freeze hit so they were just fine. Spring was early again, almost a week ahead of normal, so on Saturday, June 11, a number of us headed to the mountains.

Grayson Highlands / Mount Rogers, VA

Our first destination was Grayson Highlands and Mount Rogers near Marion, Virginia. The group was small, only four of us. George McLellan came from Gloucester, VA, and Donald Halsey from Charlotte, NC. I had picked up Ralf Bauer from Germany at Dulles Airport and headed south.

Grayson Highlands State Park has many floral attractions including a huge stand of *R. catawbiense*

and some excellent *R. calendulaceum* forms. The area is lower in elevation than Roan Mountain so it blooms slightly ahead of Roan.

Flame azaleas are scattered throughout the park and this year they were slightly past peak but still pretty. Among my favorites is 'Grayson's Gold' which has large gold flowers in a rounded trusses and 'Frisly Lemon' which has very finely ruffled lemon yellow blossoms. It is stunning.

It was well into the afternoon when we convened. We admired azaleas in several areas and then parked our cars at Massie Gap for a short hike a couple of hours along the Rhododendron Trail to Wilburn Ridge. We didn't get all the way to the huge display at Rhododendron Gap but we could appreciate the diversity in flower color with so many smaller rhododendrons in bloom. Some were near white while others were shades of lavender and pink. We spied a few with deeper tones of purple to rose.



Near White *R. catawbiense* at Grayson Highlands

The trail is easy with little elevation change, and there are striking rock outcroppings we could climb to get a better overview of the rhododendrons and the scenery. We also spied another prime attraction, a small herd of wild ponies that decided to graze in that area. We decided to say hello.



R. calendulaceum 'Frisly Lemon' at Grayson Highlands



Ralf Bauer, George McLellan, and others greet the wild ponies

In 1975, the park released about 50 ponies said to be descendants of the wild ponies on Assateague and Chincoteague Islands. They hoped ponies would keep down the vegetation in the open areas so that it did not return to forest. That seems to be working. The park keeps the herd to about 150 animals that roam freely. We see no evidence of rhododendron or azalea browsing. People are not allowed to feed or touch the animals but we seem to mingle quite well.

Black Mountain, Kentucky

The next day, Karel Bernady joined us to check out the *R. cumberlandense* that grows on Black Mountain, the highest point in Kentucky (4145 ft). It is located near the Virginia border. There are several Forest Service roads at the crest that allowed us to explore and photograph many azaleas on the banks that were just coming into bloom.



Black Mountain *R. cumberlandense* – Ball Shaped Truss

Black Mountain is of particular interest since it is where the famous *R. cumberlandense* ‘Camp’s Red’ selection was discovered. We did see many nice forms of the species including light orange to deep orange shades, a few red-oranges, and one that was an excellent yellow. We did not find any deep red forms, though. The plant that attracted the most attention was one with large, ball-shaped trusses in deep orange-red. Stunning!

Roan Mountain & Linville Gorge, NC

Without a doubt, Roan Mountain is my favorite spot in the Southern Appalachians. If I can witness Roan in bloom on a clear day, my year is complete. Everything else is secondary.

On all of our excursions, we try to stay in the same location at least two nights in a row. That way we can take longer hikes when we have the best weather and find alternative activities on the other days. There is always so much we can do.

As with most of our hikes, participants can vary from day to day. We encourage people to join us on whatever parts of the hike they can manage.

For Roan we stayed in Mountain City, TN, near J. Jackson and Lindy Johnson. Karel headed back, but Charlie Andrews and Dale Berrong arrived from Georgia. Rick and Susan Bauer would be arriving late, so we decided to hike Roan on Tuesday.

On Monday, we decided to see the Linville Falls area. There are scenic drives on the Parkway, a short hike to the falls, vistas of Grandfather Mountain, and more. Ralf is a serious hiker and he had read about a trail in the Linville Gorge Wilderness area. It was too challenging for us old people. We agreed to drop him off and would pick him up later that day.

Linville Falls is always lovely. We also took the Tanawha Trail which leads to a rock outcropping where the Park Service has built an extensive deck for better viewing of Grandfather Mountain. It also protects the sensitive vegetation.



View from the deck on the Tanawha Trail near Grandfather Mt.

After a wonderful afternoon, George and I headed back to pick up Ralf. He met us on time but encourage us to take a short hike out to Weisman’s View. The scenery is gorgeous and we noticed lots of *R. minus* var. *carolinianum* growing on the rocks. We have added this to our “to do” list and hope to see *R. vaseyi* at both Mt. Pisgah and Grandfather Mt. and the *carolinianum* in early May this year.



George and Ralf at Weisman’s View



Pausing on Round Bald for a Photo Op - Left to right: Charlie Andrews, Rick Bauer, Don Halsey, and J. Jackson (Mt. Mitchell distant right)

Roan Mountain was our Tuesday destination and the day could not have been better! The sky was blue and the visibility superb. The 360-degree views framed by the rhododendrons and azaleas in full bloom were breathtaking. It was perfection!

We parked at Carvers Gap and after an easy hike along the Appalachian Trail through fir trees and masses of purple *R. catawbiense*, we were soon on top of Round Bald (5807 ft). It is part of the Roan complex and we could see most of its other humps including Roan High Knob (6285 ft), the highest point. In the distance we could see Mount Mitchell (6684 ft), the highest point in the eastern US.

Just over the crest of the hill is Engine Gap, and that is where the *R. calendulaceum* begins in earnest. The flame azaleas continue along the Appalachian Trail for many miles and there are huge stands of purple *R. catawbiense* and fields of wildflowers, too.

Roan's next knoll is Jane Bald but the trail gets steep and rocky so it is not as easy. On Jane, the Appalachian Trail descends to the left but we take the spur to the right up to Grassy Ridge Bald (6050 ft). We usually have lunch there and then go to the edge to see Roan's final hump, Grassy Ridge Point (6189 ft). The entire top of that peak can turn purple when the rhododendrons bloom. It was purple! We hiked to the peak, turned around, and headed back.

In our next newsletter, I will continue with the second half of this trip to places like Wayah Bald, Hooper Bald, and prime spots along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Due to a foot injury, I could not join the others on longer hikes but I could still enjoy the incredible beauty of the Southern Appalachians.

I have written about this area many times but I run out of superlatives. A picture may be worth a thousand words but photos cannot do Roan justice. Please consider joining us sometime, usually the 2nd to 3rd week in June. You must see it in person!



Orange *R. calendulaceum* at Engine Gap



Yellow and Red *R. calendulaceum* forms along the Appalachian Trail



R. catawbiense on the Trail to Grassy Ridge Point

Vistas of Roan

(This page only appears in the digital version)



R. calendulaceum - Jane Bald with the AT and Roan High Knob in the Distance



R. catawbiense on Grassy Ridge Point



R. catawbiense



R. calendulaceum - Looking toward Roan High Knob



R. calendulaceum



R. calendulaceum at Engine Gap



R. calendulaceum at Engine Gap



R. catawbiense along the Appalachian Trail at Roan Mountain

2017 Seed Exchange – Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

The following seeds are offered to chapter members and associates at \$0.60 per packet including postage. People are limited to one pack in any lot as available seed is divided among those who request the selection. Thanks to donors: Norm Beaudry (Be), Don Hyatt (Hy), Lindy Johnson (Jn), George McLellan (MI). Please return orders to Don Hyatt with payment to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS by February 10, 2017. Seed will be distributed after that date.

Species, collected in the wild (cw)

1. *calendulaceum*, Hooper mix, Graham Cnty., NC, (Hy, MI)
2. *calendulaceum*, Roan mixed, Mitchell County, NC (Hy)
3. *calendulaceum*, Snake Mountain mix, (Jn)
4. *maximum*, red, Curtis Creek Red Max, (Jn)
5. *vaseyi*, pink, Haywood County, NC (Hy, MI)

Species, open pollinated garden origin (op)

6. *atlanticum*, white, Delmarva, (Jn)
7. *cumberlandense*, orange-red Gregory Bald seedling (Jn)
8. *prunifolium*, deep red (Jn)

9. *vaseyi*, deep pink, garden selection (Jn)

Rhododendron Hybrids (op)

10. Moonlight Bay, large cream (Be)
11. Quaker Lake, white *hyperythrum* hybrid (Be)

Deciduous Azaleas (op)

12. Nat. Hybrid ‘Miss Lindy’, very fragrant pink (Jn)
13. Nat. Hybrid ‘Honey’, deep rosy pink (Jn)
14. Nat. Hybrid, pale yellow w/ yellow blotch
15. Nat. Hybrid, pink w/ yellow blotch, fragrant (Jn)
16. Nat. Hybrid, yellow w/ yellow blotch (Jn)

I realize our seed offerings are slight this year. However, we do have some great options for native azalea people thanks to J. Jackson and Lindy Johnson (Jn). All of the Natural Hybrids listed are plants we have admired in their garden and most are complex hybrids between *R. cumberlandense* and *arborescens*. Some are very fragrant and others are not, but they all look like the plants we see on Gregory Bald. The seed of open pollinated plants in their garden will likely produce seedlings in almost any color from white through pink, orange, red, yellow or multicolor blends. Some may have a contrasting blotch of yellow or gold. All of them will be beautiful. Pictured to the right is ‘Miss Lindy’ which looks and smells like a pink *arborescens*.



Natural Azalea Hybrid ‘Miss Lindy’

2016 Seed Order Form - Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

Return to: Don Hyatt (don@donaldhyatt.com) by February 10, 2017

Name: _____
(Please Print)

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Packet No.	Variety		Packet No.	Variety

_____ **Total Packets x \$0.60 each =** _____
 (Make checks payable to **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS**)

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
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