

GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODO GRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society :::::::::: Summer 2013

What's in a name?

Society contemplates a change

If you were a Canadian, or a Dane, or a Chilean with a thing for rhododendrons, would you have second thoughts about joining the *American Rhododendron Society*?

That consideration is in the background of an idea brought before the national ARS Board of Directors at its May meeting concurrent with the convention in Seatac, Wash. To be blunt: Is it timely, appropriate and wise to change the name of our organization?

Many threads arose in the discussion: A huge proportion of people now joining the society do not live in the United States; "ARS" also stands for American Rose Society; changeovers incur costs; backlash is possible. Although Canadians at the board meeting seemed ready for a name that isn't U.S.-centric, District 8 Director Steve Henning reports that members from other countries told him they see no need for a name change. (Note that the society has 10 Canadian chapters, plus six in other countries. Our executive director and Journal editor are in Canada as well.)

The board did not vote on changing the name – there

wasn't even a new name offered as a motion. At this stage, the goal is to get the concept into circulation, so as to gauge sentiment, and to generate a wider discussion. One suggestion at the board meeting was not to formally change the name, but to drop "American" from most promotion and literature, leaving the full, legal name for the fine print.

In the spirit of discussion, the RhodoGravure here offers some possible new names, some as serious contenders, others because editors can get silly. How about: International Rhododendron Society ... Worldwide Rhododendron Society ... The Rhododendron Society ... We Are Rhododendrons ... Full-Planet Rhododendron Society ... Third Rhodo Rock From the Sun ... RhodAnon (Rhodophiles Anonymous).

Do you have particular thoughts about the name of our club? Board member Mary Parker of Nanaimo, British Columbia (maryjparker99@shaw.ca), is chairing an ad hoc study committee, and Steve Henning, the board member who represents our chapter and four others in District 8, welcomes comments at rhodyman@earthlink.net.

District 8 Cutting Exchange and Auction

To be held August 18; great desserts!

The annual District 8 Cutting Exchange and Plant Auction returns Sunday Aug. 18, at the home of Michael Mills and Randy Dalton.

Whether an old hand at propagating cuttings or a novice, this is a great way to get plant material. Since donors go snipping in the 24 hours beforehand, there's no predicting what may be available – maybe that ravishing red you've pined for will be waiting for you in a sandwich bag. Or maybe not – perhaps instead a huge-truss showstopper, or a scrumptious dwarf.

Don't see yourself as a propagator? There will be plants for sale, and not just rhododendrons. Some donated by chapters, some by gardeners. (yes, you may donate plants). Karel Bernady will reprise his role as auctioneer.

Format for the day: The event begins at 1:30 p.m. Cutting donors should not be late, since the cutting sale (so cheap!) is the first order of business, around 2:00 p.m.. The auction should begin around 2:30 p.m. Dessert will be in the

3:30 time frame.

Beverages will be provided. You are welcome to bring your own lunch. All are encouraged to bring a dessert to share.

This is a rain or shine event.

Driving directions will accompany the email reminder in early August. Non-computer folk: address is 632 Burnham Road, Philadelphia 19119. (That is off the 6600 block of Wayne Avenue in Northwest Philadelphia; the closest Schuylkill Expressway exit is 340A, Lincoln Drive.)

Cuttings: Take cuttings early in the day after watering or rain the evening before. Cuttings taken lower on a plant are preferred (they seem to root better), and should be about 6 inches of this year's growth. Place 6 cuttings of the same variety in a zipper-style plastic bag with just a few drops of water. Critical: label the bag in indelible marker with the variety and your name. Given the likely weather, refrigeration is recommended, even putting the bags in an ice chest (though not directly atop ice) for the trip to the event.

Greater Philadelphia Chapter
American Rhododendron Society
www.GPChapterARS.org

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Plants and Propagation: Karel Bernady & Linda Hartnett
Truss Show: Michael Martin Mills; Philadelphia. Flower Show: Linda Hartnett

The American Rhododendron Society is a horticultural organization devoted to the genus *Rhododendron* – which includes azaleas. At the national level, the society holds annual conferences, publishes the quarterly *Journal of the ARS*, and fosters plant research and conservation. Its website, www.rhododendron.org, is a trove.

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter gathers eight times a year. Sunday afternoon meetings are held September, October, November and January at Morris Arboretum. February through August we are more mobile, with a banquet, plant sale and picnic at various sites. The latest meeting information may be found at www.GPChapterARS.org.

Not already a member? Dues are \$40 per year, which includes chapter and national membership and a subscription to the *Journal*. Contact the president or treasurer (see above) for a member form or go to www.GPChapterARS.org; click on “Join us.”

Our new fall sales venue

For several years, the Greater Philadelphia Chapter has been a participant in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s Fall Garden Festival at the Navy Yard in South Philadelphia (it’s quite cool to drive so close to vast ships).

There’s change this year. In addition to promoting the ARS, we’ll be selling plants from our propagation program, as well as companion plants. The festival is Saturday, Sept. 21, and there’s plenty going on. PHS members can choose free dividend plants, and there will be booths from a number of excellent nurseries. It’s a smaller version of the vendor section at the March Flower Show, but so much better, because instead of tender houseplants, there are choice perennials and woodyies.

Getting to the festival is like going to the stadiums, except you keep going south. Take Broad Street till it ends at the Navy Yard, go through the gate and proceed straight about three blocks, when you’ll see the festival’s tents on the left. The event is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Calendar

Important: If you do not receive this newsletter electronically, you will not receive email reminders a week before events. Please use this calendar to mark your own.

All meetings at Morris Arboretum take place in the Widener Center – first building at the top of the winding drive.

Aug. 18, Sunday District 8 Cutting exchange and auction. Home of Michael Mills and Randy Dalton. See article on Page 1

Aug. 22, Thursday Propagation workday, sticking cuttings. Kristoph Nursery, central New Jersey, 9 a.m.-mid-afternoon. Contact Karel Bernady to confirm participation and to get directions (610-827-0113; bemark@verizon.net).

Sept. 8, Sunday Chapter meeting, Plants For Members rooted-cutting sale (also grafted plants and larger plants). Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Sept. 19, Thursday Valley Forge Chapter meeting, Jenkins Arboretum, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 21, Saturday PHS Fall Garden Festival. See article on Page 2.

Oct. 4-6 Eastern Regional Conference, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. See article on Page 4.

Oct. 13, Sunday Chapter Meeting, Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Oct. 17, Thursday, Valley Forge Chapter meeting, Jenkins Arboretum, 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 10, Sunday Chapter meeting. Speaker: Nicole Juday, Philadelphia garden historian. Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Jan. 5, 2014, Sunday Chapter meeting. Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Feb. 16, Sunday Joint meeting with Valley Forge Chapter, Uwchlan Meeting House, Lionville, Pa. 2 p.m.

March 1-9 Philadelphia Flower Show

April 12, Saturday Annual banquet, Whitemarsh Valley Country Club

May 9-10, Friday-Saturday Plant Sale and Cut-Flower Competition, Morris Arboretum

May 15-18 ARS national convention, Painesville, Ohio (40 miles west of Pennsylvania line)

Yak, yak, yak, what’s best?

A few decades ago, hybrids of *R. degroonianum ssp. yakushmanum* started entering the market in great numbers. Ooh, ah. Yes, but. The degree of sameness in many of these is a pity. The RhodoGravure seeks members’ recommendations for distinctive yak hybrids. Send nominations to Michael Mills (mmm19119@gmail.com) – and state why they are distinctive and superior.

Summer fiction

Catching up with other plant societies

By Michael Martin Mills

Plants may not be social creatures, but the people who grow them surely are. While the venerable and well-populated Rhododendron, Daylily and Succulent Societies grab the headlines, it's time to check in on their lesser brethren.

North American Anemone Society

The big news at NoAmAnemSoc is a return engagement at the Chelsea Flower Show. The focus of this year's exhibit was mnemonic devices for pronouncing "anemone." Also charming the Chelsea throngs: tongue-twister and limerick contests.

International Maclura Society

While the genus maclura is small – in fact just one species! – its fans are no slouches. Known as the osage orange tree, *Maclura pomifera* is distinguished by its fruit. The size of softballs, wrinkly, solid and hard, insipid pale green, inedible. What's not to like?



The society carries on various activities, largely related to finding a use for the fruit. Size aside, softball proved inappropriate – every time a bat connects with the "ball," it breaks apart and no one can catch it. Shot put, however, has proved highly successful. Promotion of the traditional home use as an insect

Osage orange fruit

How do you put it to beneficial use?

repellent is another society activity. Many older members recall that their mothers placed osage oranges in pantry corners to keep the cockroaches away. Talk about Integrated Pest Management! Look for an osage orange kiosk at your farmers market.

In recent years, paleobiologists have posited that now-extinct New World megafauna – mastodons, hippo relatives and the like – loved to eat osage oranges and thus spread the species, just as birds today spread mulberries and weeds by excreting the seeds. Now in the draft stage with the society's grant-proposal writers is a trial to assess the hypothesis, perhaps leading to revivification of the natural process. Basically, the society desires to collaborate with a traveling circus. Feed the elephants osage oranges! Route the circus parade through a field! Seal off the field for a number of years, then conduct a census of the sapling osage orange trees!

RIP, Ledum Society

At its recent meeting in Spitzbergen, the Ledum Society's remaining three members voted to cease operation. In

the 1990s, botanists concluded that subarctic ledums did not constitute their own genus, but were in fact very cold-hardy rhododendrons. Members of the society considered several responses, the first naturally being a judicial appeal of the abrupt decree; this foundered when it was learned that there is no appeal process for reclassification of plant species. Merger with the Rhododendron Society was on the table briefly, but members were troubled by the wanton increase in syllables from *Ledum* to *Rhododendron*. The final act of the society will be attempting to find a university library to accept its archives, including the complete set of the bilingual (Finnish and English) *Journal of the Proceedings of the Ledum Society (JotPotLeS)*.

Now in formation

Aficionados are sought for nascent clubs devoted to the advancement of the petunia, hackberry, and ophthalmophyllum. Contact www.societies.plant/underserved.

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Trusses and trophies

Three big winners

Just three entries took all the trophies at the Flower Show at Jenkins Arboretum on Mothers Day, each one getting at least two trophies.

The big winner was Sue Thomson, who took Best in Show and Sweepstakes. Her entry of R. 'George Lindley Taber' won the Partain Trophy for Best Evergreen Azalea and the Joseph B. Gable Memorial Trophy for Best Azalea, then went on to win Best in Show.

Joe Minahan's cross of 'John Paul II' X 'Dora Amateis' won the Charles Herbert Best New Hybrid Trophy and the James & Sally Sorber Trophy for Best Rhododendron. Jenkins Arboretum's entry of *R. flammeum* won the Howard & Catherine Kline and Francis & Pauline Raughley Trophies for Best Species and Best Deciduous Azalea, respectively.

There is no particular award, but it's interesting to note that Jim Wilhite joined Joe Minahan in the 100 Percent Club – all four of Jim's entries and all eight of Joe's won ribbons.

A total of 151 entries, brought by 10 competitors, were on the bench. Judges were Karel Bernady, Frank Brouse, Anne Howe, Win Howe, Eva Jackson and Wil Smith. Debby Schmidt was chair of the show, which this year was mounted by the Valley Forge Chapter. She was supported by many early-morning helpers.

Next year's competition will be under Greater Philadelphia Chapter auspices at Morris Arboretum as the two chapters continue their alternate-year arrangement.

Fall conference

Take a jaunt up to Halifax

The maritime provinces of Canada are a special zone in North America, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, has particular charm. And what should be taking place just across the harbor from Halifax but the 2013 Northeast Regional ARS Conference, Oct. 4-

6. The conference takes place at the Holiday Inn Harbourview in Dartmouth, N.S.

All sorts of information – with particularly alluring tour descriptions – is at www.atlanticrhodo.org/ARS_Convention/



R. 'Nancy Steele'

Richard Steele hybrid (*R. aureum* X 'Prelude') will be on sale

Information.html. For self-starters, there are many historic and sea-oriented sites in and about Halifax, such as the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, the star-shaped Citadel fort, and the gravesites of 150 victims of the Titanic.

There will be a plant sale of course, and hardiness is a sure bet. Hybrids of the late Richard Steele will be among the choices.

It's roughly 18 hours' driving time from Philadelphia, and you get to see fall color all the way through New England and New Brunswick. Drive around the Bay of Fundy one way and take the ferry across it the other way.

Wanted: Garden artists

2014 Flower Show is on the drawing board

We're all practitioners of the art of gardening, and an eye for gardening art is just what the committee that designs and mounts our annual exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show is looking for.

The overall theme of the Flower Show next March is "ARTiculture." The design process starts this summer, and committee chair Linda Hartnett wants more people to get in on the ground floor, generating ideas and helping come up with another award-winning exhibit design. Contact her at LindaHartnett@gmail.com or 215-287-0731.



R. 'George Lindley Taber' Sue Thomson's best-in-show entry at the May Flower Show at Jenkins. See article on Page 3.