

GREATER PHILADELPHIA **RHODO GRAVURE**

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

# More friends in our beds

Flowers beds, that is, with rhododendrons named for folks we know

When you walk through your garden, do you commune with people in plant form? Many a rhododendron and azalea bears the name of a dear friend or colleague, and the RhodoGravure here

offers the second installment of a compilation of plants in our beloved genus named for people active in the Greater Philadelphia Chapter and its sister chapters in the region.

In a future issue, the third installment of eponymous plants will go a bit further back into local ARS history. (To see the first installment, go to [www.gpchapterars.org](http://www.gpchapterars.org), click on "Newsletter," then click on "Spring 2013.")



### 'Betty Layman'

This Gartrell/Robin Hill azalea has large salmon flowers, blooming in late midseason. Parentage: 'Oakland' X 'Heiwa'. It grows wider than tall and is an excellent plant for the Philadelphia area. The Greater Philadelphia Chapter is currently propagating large numbers of 'Betty Layman,' named after Mary Elizabeth "Betts" Layman, beloved chapter leader who died in August 2012.

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**LEFT: R. 'Betty Layman'**

# A hot topic in rhododendrons

October meeting takes on heat tolerance, and more

Did some of your young rhodos croak in the summer heat? Better come to the chapter meeting on Sunday, Oct. 13. Ron Rabideau, key man at RareFind Nursery and a hybridizer, will focus on heat tolerance and new introductions. For generations, rhododendrons have carried cold-hardiness information, but their performance at the other end of the thermometer is just as important, all the more so as warmer and warmer summers are recorded.

Ron's overall topic is new plants that RareFind is making available, including some future rhododendron introductions.

Ron was raised and educated in Massachusetts (B.S. in plant and soil science, University of Massachusetts), and moved to New Jersey in 1997, being hired by Hank



**Ron Rabideau**

With *R. arboreum* ssp. *delavayi*

Schannen to manage RareFind's startup. He is a veteran of four plant-hunting expeditions, in China (twice), India and Siberia. His rhododendron hybrids include 'Absolute Citron', bright medium yellow with a blotch of red speckles.

The meeting begins at 1:30 with refreshments and conversation, with the program beginning at 2 p.m. For free admittance to Morris Arboretum, tell the person at the entrance kiosk you're attending the rhododendron meeting. It all takes places in the Widener Building at the top of the winding driveway.

### Layman Memorial Dedication

At the conclusion of the Oct. 13 meeting, weather permitting, we will walk a

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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](http://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](http://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](http://www.GPChapterARS.org); click on “Join us.”

## Recent doings

The chapter had two successful sales in September. First was the annual Pants-for-Members offering of rooted cuttings and two-year-old granted propagations. A total of \$740 was taken in. (And kudos to all present, buyers included, for the efficient, speedy cleanup of the Widener Center, thus preventing a bridezilla encounter.)

A week later, under the leadership of Linda Hartnett, we operated a sales booth at the PHS Fall Festival at the Navy Yard. Gross proceeds were \$1,400, both from chapter plants and consignment material. Linda and Michael Mills each put in an 8-hour day, with help from Maris Ogg, Randy Dalton and Alice Horton.

To wind up the month, Maris led a exploratory meeting with representatives of other plant societies (daylily, iris, rock garden). Most of the groups face similar challenges. What can we learn from each other: how can we help each other? A followup meeting is anticipated.

## Eponyms

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### ‘Charlie Herbert’

Charlie Herbert himself made the cross, in 1970, but it was the Rahns, Clarence and Evelyn, who registered it in 1990. As described by Bob Huber, it has pink, “widely funnel campanulate” flowers, 17 per dome-shape truss, midseason, hardy to 0F. The parentage is ‘Captain Jack’ X *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushmanum* Exbury form. Charlie was founding vice president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter and its second president, before running off to Valley Forge.

### ‘Marie Tietjens’

‘Mount Siga’ X ‘Full Moon’, registered by Max or Marie Tietjens in 1975. Strong purplish pink to strong purplish red at margins. According to Betts Layman, this was a case of rushing to name and register; a number of years on, Marie realized it wasn’t the greatest plant. The cross was made by L. Bagoly of Strafford, Pa., in 1967. Marie was famed for her glass jar propagation technique in numerous Nearing frames in the Tietjens’ garden in Blue Bell, Montgomery County.

### ‘Maxine West’

A Robin Hill azalea hybridized by Robert Gartrell (1960) and registered by him in 1984. Parentage is ‘Lady Louise’ X (‘Kaigetsu’ x Gable’s ‘Carol’). The international *Rhododendron Register* describes it as irregularly double, pale purplish pink to very pale purple, light yellow green throat. Anecdotal information from Betts Layman is that there is a “white form” ‘Maxine West’ as well.

### ‘Robert Huber’

The description, as published in the 2009 ARS Northeast Regional Conference sale catalogue, is “orchid pink flowers, with darker pink edges, spotting of Spanish orange; spherical trusses ... midseason; 4 ft.; -5F.” The cross, ‘Everchoice’ X unknown, was made by one S. Everett (or Everitt) and registered by Charlie Herbert in 1979. The seed parent, while registered, is also mysterious – registered but with unknown parentage, though speculation is that it is a cross of two Dexters.

### ‘Ruth Davis’

Ross Davis acquired a seedling of *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushmanum* X *degronianum* ssp. *heptamerum* from Joe Gable and named it for his wife. In the old days we called it yak x metternichii, but then the taxonomists got busy. The flower is a typical apple-blossom yak affair – white with pink fading to pure white. The foliage is particularly handsome, dark glossy green with good indumentum. There is a tendency to some fall bloom; hardy to -10F.

### ‘Schamanek’s Glow’

Named for John Schamanek, former president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, this is a yak cross with fine dark green foliage and an appleblossom flower. Some fall bloom. It is one

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# Bring a friend!

## Philadelphia gardening Heritage at November meeting

In November, please bring a friend to hear Nicole Juday, Philadelphia garden historian and staff member at the Barnes Foundation Arboretum, speak at the monthly meeting.

Not kidding: Bring a friend, as this meeting has been designated the fall's "Bring a Friend Meeting," part of the chapter's efforts to expand our little club, get new people interested in rhododendrons and the chapter. Every friend you bring will receive a baby rhododendron (from our propagation program). It goes without saying that organizations like ours must constantly be bringing in new participants.

Please help us extend our reach.

The speaker's presentation – "Philadelphia's Gardening Heritage" – should have great appeal. In the 19th century, Philadelphia was at the forefront of American horticulture, with numerous nurseries producing the plants that became the backbones of Victorian gardens. Nicole Juday is a key figure in Awbury Arboretum's nascent Heritage Plants of Philadelphia project and will discuss Philadelphia garden history, Awbury's distinctive place in it, as well as the new Heritage Plants endeavor.

Nicole discovered a love of historic plants while working as horticulturist at Germantown's Wyck, which has the oldest rose garden in the U.S. Many plants later, she now writes and speaks frequently about old roses, antique plants, and garden history.



**Nicole Juday**  
Garden historian

## October meeting

### With Layman Memorial dedication

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modest distance in the arboretum for the dedication of a living memorial to Dan and Betts Layman. (Golf cart transport will also be available.) After Betts' death last year, the chapter received many memorial contributions. The board of directors decided that an ornamental tree at Morris Arboretum was most appropriate, and a fine specimen of *Stewartia sinensis* was selected. The standard tree identification tag will be replaced with one engraved with the Laymans' names.

# 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.

**Oct. 13, Sunday** Chapter Meeting. Speaker: Ron Rabideau, Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m. See article on Page 1.

**Oct. 17, Thursday**, Valley Forge Chapter meeting, Jenkins Arboretum, 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Greater Philadelphia member Janet Novak, "Exploring America's Native Orchids."

**Nov. 10, Sunday** Chapter meeting. Speaker: Nicole Juday, Philadelphia garden historian. Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m. See article on this page.

**Dec. 3, Tuesday** Board of Directors meeting. Home of Maris Ogg. 7:30 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. Speaker: Greg Tepper, director of horticulture, Mount Cuba Center.

**Feb. 21-22** International Vireya Seminar, Hilo, Hawaii. For more information: [www.rhododendron.org/2014vireya\\_seminar.pdf](http://www.rhododendron.org/2014vireya_seminar.pdf)

**March 1-9** Philadelphia Flower Show

**March 28-30** Azalea Society convention, Charleston, S.C. For more information: [www.nationalazaleaconvention2014.org](http://www.nationalazaleaconvention2014.org).

**April 12, Saturday** Annual banquet, Whitmarsh Valley Country Club. Speaker: Don Hyatt.

**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)

**June** Chapter picnic and annual meeting, Mount Cuba Center, Hockessin, Del.

## Keep on grafting

Anyone who purchased a grafted plant at the September Plants-for-Members meeting was no doubt impressed with the size and robustness of the plant, just under two years from the simultaneous grafting-rooting deed. Super propagator Karel Bernady is sold on this approach – not only can hard-to-root plants be propagated, but quick-growing plants result.

More grafting is in store this fall. Karel prefers to work closely with one or two helpers, so there is no pre-set date. If you want to learn this process – and help build our stock of grafted inventory – please contact Karel at 610-827-0113 or [bernadk@verizon.net](mailto:bernadk@verizon.net)

# Eponyms

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of many iterations of the cross *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushmanum* X *R. smirnowii*.

## ‘The Minahan’

Not many people get “the” in front of their name – The Honourable Jean Marie de Montague, The Pope, The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Dennis MacMullan is responsible for this cultivar, honoring Joe Minahan, hybridizer extraordinaire and trophy collector who lives in Camp Hill, Pa. Yellow, midseason. The parentage is (‘Janet Blair’ x ‘Crest’) X ‘Yellow Balloon’.

## ‘Theodore S. Stecki’

From the International Rhododendron Register and Fred Galle’s encyclopedic *Azaleas*, we learn that this is a Linwood azalea, hybridized in 1970 and registered in 1984 by Al Reid, who worked with Charles Fisher in Linwood, N.J. The parentage is ‘Nellie’ X ‘Opal’, and it is hose-in-hose, doubled, vivid purplish red or deep purplish pink, depending on the source. The eponym, Ted Stecki, is former national ARS president, longtime leader of the Pine Barrens Chapter, and for many years the driving force behind the annual exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show.



R. ‘The Minahan’