

GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODOGRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society ::::::::::: Winter 2014

At your fingertips

Let your keyboard lead you to abundant rhododendron knowledge

There is a huge mountain of rhododendron information out there. It encompasses numerous topics and subtopics: hybrid parentage, best growing practices, hardiness ratings, number of stamens in a particular species, germination tactics, incidence of fall blooming, history of discovery, history of breeding, history of a rhododendron name. And so much more.

For decades that mountain of information was difficult to take advantage of. Say Curious ARS Member wanted details on Topic D. Luckily, Topic D was the subject of research by Noted Expert of Yore, and a report was published. Hooray! Oh well, it was in the erudite but obscure Journal of Indumented Species. "Someday," thought Curious ARS Member, "I must make a trip to Remote State University Botanical Library to go through the bound copies of that journal and find that article."

Yes indeed, there is a mountain of rhododendron information out there. And luckily for us, it's 2014 and an internet connection makes that mountain accessible.

For every mountain expedition, signs and directions make the journey reasonable. To that end, the RhodoGravure here offers a modest cumulation of digital addresses where all manner of useful information of interest to the modern ARS member may be read and saved.

A few words for those who do not use the internet firsthand: Please don't feel left out. If a particular citation here intrigues you, makes you want a certain nugget or thread of information, just pipe up. The RhodoGravure is confident that your child, niece, neighbor, librarian or good friend *does* have

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Our local experts

Touting hybrids at January meeting

There are tried and true rhododendrons and azaleas that no garden should lack, but many of us are always on the lookout for something different, something special, something dwarf or yellow for the garden. The January chapter meeting is designed to help members in that quest.

A panel of local ARS gardeners will introduce folks to "Not the Usual Suspects." These growers – Joan Warren, Tom Lloyd, John Villaume and Perc Moser – have been collecting and growing cultivars from far-flung and specialty nurseries and are in a position to tell us their merits (and secrets).

Many members know the frustration of skimming a West Coast catalogue and wondering, "Does it really look like that?" or "Maybe with climate change I can grow it here." The solution is to attend the Jan. 5 meeting and get the skinny on R. 'Drumroll,' 'Clement Bowers' and others

Important venue change: This meeting will be in the new building at the Bloomfield Farm section of Morris Arboretum (directly opposite the regular entrance). Gather at 1:30 p.m., Sunday Jan. 5, for conversation and snacks; 2 p.m. for the presentation. Alphabetic rotation for cookies and the like is people with last names beginning Q through Z.

If there is calamitous weather that day, call president Maris Ogg (215-836-0637) to find out if the meeting is still a go.



Mills photo

Eye candy

R. 'Dream of Kings' This dandy was hybridized by a Greater Philadelphia Chapter member, Mrs. H.A. Frederick Jr., in 1967 and registered in 1977. Not much is known about her. Many consider the flower one of the best purples, not a reddish or bluish or maroonish purple, but real purple. It is published here because a rhododendron newsletter without a lovely flower picture would be a sad publication.

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American Rhododendron Society
www.GPChapterARS.org

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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, 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.”

Keys to success

Here’s a salute to all who volunteered in 2013 to make possible the various Greater Philadelphia activities, from propagation to the plant sale and Flower Show exhibit, and more. In decidedly random order:

Joan Warren, Rupert Rossetti, Herb Thomas, Linda Hartnett, Tom Lloyd, Myo Myint, Bud Gressman, Reid Warren, Steve Torongo, Michael Mills, Sue Thomson, Norman Beaudry, Ellin Hlebik, Don Hyatt, Karel Bernady, Mimi Favre, Fran Schuetz, Debby Evans, Kim Kopple, Craig Conover, Maris Ogg, Ron Rabideau, Randy Dalton, Alice Horton, Glenn Fredericks, Richard Willis, Joan Roberts, Cathy Keim, Jon Villaume, Nils Knutzen, Wayne and Doris Guymon, Hope Punnett, David Zopf, Bob Harper, Debby Schmidt, Frank Brouse, Kate Deregibus, Bruce Keyser, Thein Thein Myint, Win Howe, Marc Thomson, Ann Howe, Jean Beaudry, Wil Smith, Karl Malessa, Jan Thomas, Sandy Crow, Beth Jester, Cynthia Rossetti, Tom Schuetz, Barbara Olejnik, Mary Knutzen, Marilyn Gressman.

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the computer access you lack. With this article in hand, ask that someone to look it up for you.

www.rhododendron.org
www.arsoffice.org

These are the two websites of the American Rhododendron Society. Why two? Well, things are evolving. Rhododendron.org is the “public” site, with two basic sorts of information: details of the society (such as chapter locations) and much rhododendron information. Notably, there are alphabetical lists of rhododendron and azalea cultivars and species, with photos and essential descriptive info, such as hardiness. The Rhododendron Blog has readable articles on gardening in general (mostly from West Coast contributors) and the Rhododendron of the Year feature is a region-by-region selection of highly recommended plants.

ARSoffice.org is the site for members and chapter officers. Members need to register with the site, and then can access the most recent *ARS Journals* online and a search-by-name national member roster. Being able to search for a member’s address, phone, etc., is an excellent service. To register, you must know your *ARS* member number. If you don’t know it, look at the outside wrapper of your *Journal* or contact the chapter membership chair (Myo Myint for Greater Philadelphia, contact info in box at left). These two members’ features (online *Journal* and searchable roster) are right at the top of the home page, in the “What’s New” area. ARSoffice.org can be a bit frustrating. If you sign in to access the *Journal* online, you cannot switch to the member roster. You have to get back to the home page to sign in again. The “chapter membership list,” “chapter email list” and other headings are accessible only to chapter officers, not members in general.

www.GPChapterARS.org

This site is the Greater Philadelphia Chapter’s web presence. Go here to get the meeting calendar, details on chapter events such as the cut-flower competition (truss show), plant sales and the like. Back issues of the *RhodoGravure* are available. This is the site where friends and other potential new members should be directed – if they join here, they become Greater Philadelphia members.

www.valleyforgears.org

The Valley Forge Chapter website has information specific to the chapter. Of note to growers are Tom Ahern’s hybridization and seed-growing tips. On the home page, click on “Links” to find the Ahern pages.

<http://rhodyman.net/rhodyn.php>

“Henning’s Rhododendron & Azalea Pages.” As in Steve Henning of the Valley Forge Chapter. This website, more than 15 years in the making/compilation, was a major factor in the presentation of the *ARS Silver Medal* to Steve in 2012. Steve touts his site as “a one-stop place” for rhododendron information. There are vast amounts of information here, from a listing of dwarf rhododendrons (with photos) to insect

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problems and more, more, more. There are abundant links to other websites. It's not always clear who the original source for the material is, and if you start getting lost, click on "Home."

www.hirsutum.info

"The purpose of this website is to give an overview (photos and information) of as many rhododendron species and cultivars (hybrids) as possible." That's the blurb at the top of the home page. There are indeed more than 20,000 plants on the list. The idea is that each has its own page with a photo and such basics as parentage, hybridizer, size, and hardiness. Let's say that it's off to a good start. Some entries have zero information beyond the cultivar name; some have all the blanks filled in. It's clear that many entries have been derived from the International Rhododendron Register and Checklist, which notoriously omits hardiness information. Other entries are simply taken from Fred Galle's encyclopedic book *Azaleas*. But it is a constantly accreting website. Steve Henning and Jim Wilhite of the Valley Forge Chapter are among the photo contributors. One intriguing feature of Hirsutum is the ability to post a picture of a rhododendron for which you seek the correct ID; people chime in with opinions, and sometimes you get a definitive answer.

www.azaleas.org/index.pl/azindex.html

www.pbase.com/azaleasociety/azaleas

These sites originate with the Azalea Society of America. The first is basically a list of known azalea (evergreen and deciduous) cultivar names. For most there is no further information. The second is a photo gallery of azaleas; there is negligible information about the cultivars. The Azalea Society home page is <http://azaleas.org>. The site includes a hard-to-find sub-page on hybrid groups (<http://azaleas.org/index.pl/hybridgroups.html#gde>), which links to info on Glen Dale, Kehr and other groups, but much of this info is relatively unusable.

www.rhs.org.uk/Plants/RHS-Publications/Plant-registers/Rhododendron

This site holds supplements to the International Rhododendron Registry and Checklist (IRRC), and also has an order blank for purchasing hard copies. The two-volume IRRC, the definitive compilation of named and registered rhododendrons through 2002, is not yet available electronically and costs £90. The supplements contain all rhododendron registrations since January 2003. The supplements are in pdf form; they can be searched by key word (but only one word, not a phrase). When doing a search, keep in mind that the search function covers all text in the supplement. That means that certain searches will result in many more hits than the cultivar name you may be seeking – for instance, if you want to find a hybrid named (theoretically) 'Pink Pink Pink' and enter the search term "pink," you will stop on every flower description that includes pink.

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

Back copies of the ARS Journal, 1947 through 1994, maintained by Virginia Tech. You can peruse the issues one by one, or use the search function, which is a bit more complex than

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.

Jan. 5, 2014, Sunday Chapter meeting, Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m. "Not the Usual Suspects." See article on Page 1. Note location: Bloomfield Farm section of the arboretum,

Feb. 11, Tuesday Board of Directors meeting, 7:30 p.m., home of Maris Ogg.

Feb. 16, Sunday Joint meeting with Valley Forge Chapter, Uwchlan Meeting House, Lionville, Pa. 2 p.m. Speaker: Greg Tepper, acting director, Delaware Botanic Gardens at Pepper Creek. (Directions on Page 4.)

Feb. 21-22 International Vireya Seminar, Hilo, Hawaii. For more information: www.rhododendron.org/2014vireya_seminar.pdf

March 1-9 Philadelphia Flower Show, Pennsylvania Convention Center. Chapter display: "A Rhododendron Confection."

March 28-30 Azalea Society convention, Charleston, S.C. For more information: www.nationalazaleaconvention2014.org. The theme of the conference is "Doin' the Charleston, Azalea Style."

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 22 Chapter picnic and annual meeting.

common enter-and-click searches.

<http://rhodyman.net/arsfall2009/PlantCatalog.html>

This is the catalog compiled for the plant sale at the 2009 ARS Fall Regional Conference hosted by Greater Philadelphia and other chapters in District 8. Although a convention sales list may seem like an odd resource, this is an excellent compilation of rhododendrons with Pennsylvania and nearby origins, with many photos and good descriptions. A go-to source for many Doppel, Becales, Ahern clones as well as more obscure Gable, Swarthmore, Delp and other cultivars.

www.donaldhyatt.com

Don Hyatt of Virginia is himself a resource treasure. His website includes texts of many of his entertaining and informative talks (found under "Natives" and "Gardens"). Also here is www.donaldhyatt.com/RobinHills/index.html, a definitive look at Robin Hill azaleas, compiled by Donald Voss, son-in-law of Robert Gartrell, creator of the Robin Hills. This site has better information than the International Rhododendron Register and Checklist or even Fred Galle's encyclopedic book.

Ever bought something from Amazon?

Keep it up, and help the ARS bottom line

Odds are, you purchased something online recently. Odds are, you will again. And if you do so in a certain way, the American Rhododendron Society will benefit.

In operation since late autumn, ARSStore.org allows ARS members (and anyone else for that matter) to make online purchases from Amazon.com with the ARS getting a little cut of the sale – and there's no added cost for the buyer.

No surprise, you have to make your purchase a certain way. You can't just go to Amazon and starting loading up your cart. Go first to ARSStore.org. The page opens with several choices. First off is "ARS Logo Items" – shirts, caps, the usual, with the ARS seal. Next there are "Rhody Books," "Garden Books," "Garden Tools." Beginning to sound enticing, eh?

Then there's the grand bazaar. If you thought Amazon was just a bookstore you have been driving to the mall too much. With the possible exception of original Picassos, just about everything is available through Amazon. You can go through the various Amazon "departments," or just enter a search term in the box on the right-hand side. Whether it's pickle-flavored candy canes (six for \$7.45) or an all-wood coffin (\$1,000), it's for sale (plus shipping charges, of course).

If you don't already have an Amazon account, you'll have to create one. But remember: if you want the ARS to benefit, always go through ARSStore.org. Steve Henning of the Valley Forge Chapter is the mastermind behind this endeavor. (You can even buy some thank you cards via ARSStore.org to send to him.)

Return to Uwchlan

Our annual joint meeting with the Valley Forge Chapter has become one of the most popular events we hold. So of course we will be reprising it on Feb. 16 at the Uwchlan Friends Meeting House in Lionville, Pa. Greg Tepper, of the Delaware Botanical Gardens at Pepper Creek, is the speaker. "The Sensory Appeal of Native Plants" is his topic.

Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Exit 312 (Downingtown). After the tollgate, proceed onto Route 100 South. At the second traffic signal, turn right onto Sheree Blvd. Turn left at the next light onto Eagleview Blvd., left again at Dowlin Forge Road. Go to the stop sign, and bear left into the parking area.