

GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODO GRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society :::::::::: Autumn 2015

Planting elepidotes in sunny sites

A pitch for early bloomers

By Marianne and Bruce Feller

ARS New York Chapter

Although opinion may vary among growers of rhododendron with as to finer points of cultural requirements and preferences, we are largely of one mind on the advantage of high canopy shade for elepidotes, particularly from afternoon sun. But the absence of shade need not preclude elepidotes altogether.

Open exposures present a combination of challenges:

- Accelerated water loss.
- Higher ambient temperatures.
- Direct effects of full-day sun on foliage and bloom.

Your strategy for sun tolerance needs to factor in all of these issues. Assuming the availability of irrigation, water loss can be addressed directly. Use of heavy mulches will also reduce evaporation and moderate soil temperature year round.

The issue of higher ambient temperature poses a more serious challenge. Perhaps the most heat tolerant rhododendron, *R. hyperythrum*, is part of the solution. This species has been used in hybridizing a number of heat-tolerant offspring, includ-

ing *R. 'Hypermax'*, *'Charles Loomis'* and *'Peppermint Twist'*. Of course, don't overlook the obvious advantages of using lepidotes and deciduous azaleas as companion plants in open sun.

Our own experience suggests that the most serious effects of direct sun on established rhododendron is largely a much abbreviated bloom period – the flowers seem to last only a day or

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RareFind photo

Enhancing the winter garden

A preview of October and November meetings

Do you show off your garden in winter? Invite folks over for strolls and admiration? Wayne Guymon does. At the October 11 chapter meeting, he'll show us how we can give our winter gardens a lot more visual appeal.

"Early on in my gardening career," Wayne has written, "I was intrigued by the idea of a garden for all seasons where there was always something of interest to see. As a result, I have spent a good deal of effort collecting and growing plants that give interest to the garden during the slow period of the year when the majority of garden enthusiasts are comfortably indoors perusing their garden catalogues."

His laboratory, so to speak, is WynEden in Chadds Ford, Pa., a 10-acre garden with ponds and trails and slopes. Yes, there are more than 7,000 rhododendrons, but our treat as we all head into the "off season" will be learning about plants that have a special panache when we have to don our anoraks to see them.

Wayne, a native of Provo, Utah, is a Columbia Univer-

sity alumnus – three degrees in French, specializing in the application of the methodologies of linguistics and semiotics to the study of French medieval literature. (Merriam-Webster: "semiotics: a general philosophical theory of signs and symbols that deals especially with their function in both artificially constructed and natural languages and comprises syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics.")

The meeting takes place Sunday, October 11, in the Widener Visitor Center of Morris Arboretum (first building at the top of the winding driveway). We gather at 1:30 p.m. for conversation and refreshments, with the program beginning at 2 p.m. For free admission to the arboretum, just say "rhododendron meeting" to the person staffing the entrance kiosk.

November meeting

In continuation of successful joint events with our sister chapter,

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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, and January at Morris Arboretum. February through August we are mobile, with a banquet, plant sale and picnic at various sites. Latest meeting information may be found at www.GPChapterARS.org.

Dues are \$40 per year, for chapter and national membership and a subscription to the *Journal*. Contact the president or treasurer (see above) for a form or go to www.GPChapterARS.org; click on “Join us.”

Fall meetings

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our November meeting will coincide with the Valley Forge annual luncheon banquet, Sunday, November 15, at the St. David’s Country Club. (A reservation form accompanies this issue.)

If you have any Southern background, you may be one of those who pine for camellias, lovely flowers on lovely evergreen shrubs that, everyone knows, Yankees must do without.

Stop pining and come to the November meeting. Charles Cresson, gardener extraordinaire of Swarthmore, will present “Choosing Hardy Camellias for Spring and Fall.” As Charles points out, camellias go well with shade, heat and drought, attributes of many a garden in the Philadelphia area. His garden features towering camellias, plus a fair number of cultivars he has hybridized or otherwise grown from seed over the last 20 years of trialing for hardiness.

The event begins with a cash-bar social hour at 1 p.m.; dining at 2 p.m. Reservations received before October 31 get a \$5 bar chit. See accompanying reservation form for more details.

Elepidotes in sun



M. Mills photo

R. ‘Grace Seabrook’ in a sunny site

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so in hot weather before collapsing. While foliage can actually burn in periods of extreme heat and direct sun exposure, this seems less a problem than the effect of sun on the flowers.

Bearing this in mind, consider planting very early blooming elepidotes in sunny locations. April bloomers are far less likely to encounter the high temperatures that wilt flowers later in the season. You may want to try *R. ‘Taurus’* or ‘Grace Seabrook’, two excellent early

reds, or ‘Babylon’, a huge early white bloom with burgundy blotch. Other early blooming elepidotes include ‘Bosutch’, ‘Christmas Cheer’, ‘Jacksonii’, ‘Strawberry Swirl’, ‘Vernus’ and ‘Spring Glory’. ‘Hypermax’, mentioned above, is also an early

bloomer with the added advantage of *R. hyperythrum* parentage for basic heat tolerance.

Strengthening the case for early bloomers are a number of other advantages. Their foliage develops and matures earlier, before the strongest periods of summer sun, and often before the host of chewing insects reach

their destructive peak. They enjoy longer flower life, in sun or partial shade, and are rarely affected by petal blight.

Our obvious affection for early-blooming elepidotes is also based on the fact that they are unrivaled in the garden at that time of the year – when they can be most appreciated without competing influence at the very outset of spring bloom. Plant and enjoy early bloomers!



F. Thurber/Hirsutum photo



D.C. Royster/Hirsutum photo



G. Wedemire/Hirsutum photo

From top: ‘Bosutch’, ‘Peppermint Twist’, ‘Babylon’.

Our cookie maven

Secret weapon for meetings

Back in the early 1990s, Hillary Clinton was famously quoted as saying: "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was to fulfill my profession."

And then there's Maris Ogg, board member and stalwart contributor in the Greater Philadelphia Chapter. In the professional fulfillment category, in 2001 Maris founded Tower Bridge Advisors, an investment-management concern that has about \$1 billion under management for wealthy individuals. Not to mention the fact that she was elected president (of our chapter) the first time she ran.

But wait, there's more. Cookies, lots of cookies. One of the privileges of being on the chapter board in the Ogg presidency was attending meetings at her Flourtown home and noshing on, typically, a choice of three different kinds of cookies she had baked. Many of the recipes were of her own devising or adaptation.

Memo to Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders and all your fellow presidential aspirants: You need Maris Ogg on your team. The cookie constituency is not to be ignored, and her Rolodex could come in very useful. What a two-fer!

Maris has graciously shared the following recipes with the readers of the RhodoGravure.

Chocolate Mint Cookies

1½ cups mint chocolate chips (substitute: 1½ cups chocolate chips + 1 teaspoon mint extract)

6 tablespoons butter, softened

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

1½ cups flour

1½ teaspoons baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
confectioner's sugar

Melt 1 cup of the chocolate chips in microwave.

In a bowl beat butter and sugar until creamy.

Add melted chocolate and vanilla (and mint) extract and beat. Beat in eggs. Add flour, baking powder and salt and beat. Add remaining chocolate chips and blend.

Chill dough until firm, or leave overnight in refrigerator.

Preheat oven to 350F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls and roll in confectioner's sugar. Bake 10 to 12 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes then remove to cooling rack.

Makes 3 dozen.

Poppy Seed Cookies

1 cup sugar

zest of one orange

1 egg yolk

1 cup butter cut into 8 pieces

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

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.

October 11, Sunday, 1:30 p.m. Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting. Morris Arboretum, Widener Center. Wayne Guymon on winter interest. See article on Page 1.

October 13, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting. Home of Kim Kopple.

October 15, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Valley Forge Chapter meeting. Jenkins Arboretum. Liz Schumacher, "Gardening on Hillsides"

October 16-18 ARS Fall Conference, Islandia, Long Island, N.Y. "Long Island's Legacy Revisited." See Spring ARS Journal for details and registration forms or go to http://www.nyrhododendron.org/Fall_Conference_2015.htm

November 15, Sunday, 1 p.m. Valley Forge Chapter Banquet/Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting. St. David's Country Club. Buffet luncheon. Charles Cresson, "Choosing Hardy Camellias for Spring and Fall." St. David's Country Club, 1 p.m. social hour, 2 p.m. dining and presentation. See article on Page 1; reservation form accompanies this issue.

December 8, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting. Home of Kim Kopple.

January 10, 2016, Sunday, 1:30 p.m. Greater Philadelphia Chapter meeting. Morris Arboretum, Widener Center.

January 17, Sunday, 2 p.m. Valley Forge Chapter meeting. Jenkins Arboretum. Janet Novak, "Flowers of Greece & Sardinia."

February 21, Sunday Joint Greater Philadelphia-Valley Forge Chapter meeting, Uwchlan Meeting House, Lionville, Pa. Presentation by Steve Kristoph.

March 4-13 Philadelphia Flower Show.

April 16, Saturday Greater Philadelphia Chapter Annual Banquet/Valley Forge chapter meeting. Whitmarsh Valley Country Club. Kirk Brown as Frederick Law Olmsted.

April 20-24 ARS-Azalea Society Convention, Williamsburg, Va.

May 6-7, Friday-Saturday Greater Philadelphia Chapter Plant Sale, Morris Arboretum.

May 7, Saturday Cut-Flower Competition (truss show), under Greater Philadelphia auspices.

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup cake flour

¼ cup poppy seeds

1 cup mini chocolate chips

In a food processor fitted with steel knife, combine sugar and orange peel. Add egg yolk and mix. Add butter, salt and nutmeg and process until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Add remaining

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Cookies to the rescue

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ingredients except chocolate chips. Mix using 4 to 5 pulses. Do not over-process.

Turn out into a bowl and mix in chocolate chips. Divide dough into 4 equal portions on 4 sheets of plastic wrap. Shape into logs 2 inches x 4 inches and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350F. Cut dough into ¼-inch slices and arrange on baking sheet spaced 1½ inches apart. Bake until edges are lightly browned, about 8 minutes. Cool.

Coconut Bars

Bottom layer:

¾ cup butter or margarine softened

¾ cup powdered sugar

1½ cups flour

Filling:

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

1 cup packed brown sugar

½ cup pecans, chopped

½ cup flaked sweetened coconut

2 tablespoons flour

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon ground cardamom

½ teaspoon instant coffee

Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar

3 tablespoons orange juice

2 tablespoons butter or margarine

1 teaspoon lemon juice

For bottom layer:

Beat butter in large mixing bowl on medium speed until creamy. Gradually add ¾ cup powdered sugar, beating well.

Add 1½ cups flour, beating until blended. Press the dough into a 13- x 9-inch pan and bake at 350F for 12 minutes. Remove from oven.

For filling:

Combine eggs and the rest of the filling ingredients; pour evenly over bottom layer. Return to oven and bake 30 additional minutes.

For glaze:

Combine 1 cup powdered sugar and remaining ingredients. Pour over warm cookies. Cool in pan on wire rack. Cut into bars.