



# *The return of the truss show*

For the first time, it was a fully merged two-chapter event

On Mothers Day, for the first time in four years, the local ARS had a traditional cut-flower competition, or, as the cognoscenti say, the truss show.

In 2019, District 8 hosted the national convention, and national regs stipulate that the convention must include a truss show. No hosting chapter in its right mind would also have a chapter truss show under such circumstances, so the modest “people’s choice” show at the Desmond Hotel was all there was. The next two years the pandemic put the kibosh on such endeavors.

This year’s show was distinctive also for being the first fully merged Greater Philadelphia-Valley Forge competition. (In 2008, the chapters came to their senses and stopped having two separate shows every May, and for the next 10 years, alternated hosting the show – but the rules and details flipped every year, as each chapter maintained its format.)

The fully merged show – co-chaired by Perc Moser of the Valley Forge Chapter and Michael Martin Mills of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter – required some revision of the rules to eliminate divergences between the two older rulebooks. Pre-pandemic, Joan Warren and Michael had merged and massaged the catalogues of previous entries into one comprehensive list. Two sets of trophies were sorted and winnowed to one. Trophies that were running out of engraving room were “retired,” and the ultimate set of nine trophies is relatively balanced blend of trophies from each chapter.

In an unprecedented outcome, the judges awarded six trophies to entries from one exhibitor, Michael Mills, including Best in Show. One of Michael’s entries, a spray of the evergreen azalea *R. kaempferi*, actually got three trophies: Best Evergreen Azalea, Best Species and Best in Show. The Hybridizers Cup – for the best truss or spray hybridized by the exhibitor – went to Perc Moser for his cross, ‘Pink Sparkler’ X ‘Rhodsoc’.

Judges for the show were Frank Brouse, Eva Jackson, Mike Karkowski, Jerry O’Dell, Bob Smetana and Mich Steele. Karkowski, director of horticulture at Tyler Arboretum, was a first-time judge, but the five others have many years’ experience in judging. There were 107 entries, one of the lower turnouts since the end of the two-shows-on-one-weekend era. One anomaly of the show was that there was not a single entry of a deciduous azalea hybrid, presumably a result of the earliness of the show (May 8) and the rather cool April.

## The complete trophy list:

Charles Herbert Trophy for Best New Hybrid (Hybridizers Cup): ‘Pink Sparkler’ X ‘Rhodsoc’, Perc Moser

Karel F. Bernady Trophy for Best Species: *R. kaempferi*, Michael Martin Mills

Lloyd Partain Trophy for Best Evergreen Azalea: *R. kaempferi*, Michael Mills

Betts and Dan Layman Trophy for Best Foliage: ‘Taurus’, Michael Mills

Mr. and Mrs. James G. Sorber Trophy for Best Rhododendron Hybrid: ‘Fashion Plate’, Michael Mills



Best in Show was cut from this specimen of *R. kaempferi*.

John Wister Trophy for Best in Show: *R. kaempferi*, Michael Mills  
Judi Meade Sweepstakes Trophy for Most Points: Michael Mills  
(Specimen plant and deciduous azalea trophies not awarded due to lack of entries.)

Some random notes of interest about the show:

This was the first time that ‘Fashion Plate’, winner of the Best Rhododendron Hybrid Trophy, was ever entered in either chapter’s competition, somewhat surprising given its age (hybridized by Joe Becales in the early 1980s) and its popularity with hybridizers. At the end of the show, Perc Moser took the trophy truss home to use its pollen for another round of tinkering with nature.

Perc Moser made the cross of ‘Pink Sparkler’ X ‘Rhodsoc’, Best New Hybrid, in 2013.

The Best in Show spray of *R. kaempferi* came from a 32-year-old plant originally grown by the late Ed Rothman from seed he obtained from Japan.

At the conclusion of the show, it was a once-a-year opportunity for visitors to Jenkins, which like all public gardens strictly forbids taking flowers from the premises. All the entries were removed from their vases and placed on tables outside the arboretum entrance, and folks could take home fabulous bouquets of rhododendrons and azaleas. It didn’t take long for all the flowers to be snapped up.

## *Two late-summer plant-buying opportunities*

Cutting Exchange & Auction in August; Plants for Members in September

The head gardener at RhodoGravure headquarters had a intriguing observation recently. When people – whether plantswomen with oodles of gardening experience or, hmm, naïfs from the other end of the spectrum – show particular interest in a plant, there is a correlation between many of those plants and the sources of the plants.

Take for instance, a corkscrew willow (*Salix natsudana*). The next-door neighbor, a mower not a horticulturalist, said, “I just love that tree.” Other folks have taken a shine to the August-blooming Chinese pea shrub (*Campylotropis macrocarpa*), the rare native American *Stewartia malocodendron*, or, even rarer, Gray’s lily. Ooh-ahh, way cool, say visitors. Take note: all those plants all made their way into the garden from the District 8 Auction & Cutting Exchange.

And consider this little random list of rhododendrons at RhodoGravure headquarters: the bodacious ‘Babylon’, Tom Ahern’s scrumptious ‘Orange Ruffy’, the real purple ‘Dream of Kings’, the overlooked ‘Isabel Gable’, and a ‘Mary K’ that won Best in Show eight years ago. Every one of them is a former Plants-for-Members dinky rooted cutting.

The aforementioned head gardener thinks those two events are the bee’s knees if the goal is a really cool, distinctive garden at utterly affordable prices.

So mark your calendars now: this year’s Cutting Exchange & Auction will be Sunday, August 21, 1:00 p.m. at Jenkins Arboretum. The Plants-for-Members sale serves as the September meeting of both the Greater Philadelphia and Valley Forge Chapters; it will be on Sunday, September 11, Morris Arboretum, 1:00 p.m. Details will be emailed closer to the events.

## *Dank and dreary was the sale*

But gardeners were undeterred



This was the scene Thursday, May 5, at Tyler Arboretum **[left]** when the Greater Philadelphia Chapter set up its rhododendron segment for the arboretum's annual plant sale. Alas, things went decidedly downhill weatherwise as the sale opened Friday and continued through Sunday.

It was cold, it was rainy, it was awful. Did that stop people from buying plants? Of course not.

Sale chairman Karel Bernady reported that 149 rhodos and azaleas (77 percent of the available inventory) were sold, a pretty good result even if the weather had been perfect. While final calculations are not yet complete, he projects a final net to the chapter not much different from the previous year.

In addition to Karel, ARS members working on setup were Linda Hartnett, Perc Moser, Maris Ogg, Bud Gressman, Stuart Brooks and Michael

Mills. Most of them also worked one or more dank days hawking the plants and educating rhododendron neophytes.

This was the second time for the chapter to participate in Tyler's spring sale, and once again the Tyler staff earned an A-plus for friendly, timely, go-the-extra-mile support and assistance.

## *Incumbents sweep chapter elections*

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter conducted the Annual Meeting of the organization at the June 19 picnic held jointly with the Valley Forge Chapter.

As is almost always the case, the main business of the meeting was election of officers and directors for the coming term. Terms of four officers and two directors were expiring, and the board offered a slate of Ron Rabideau for president, Linda Hartnett for vice president, Myo Myint for treasurer, Michael Martin Mills for secretary, and Bill Halberstadt and Maris Ogg for director.

All were incumbents. A motion was made to close nominations and elect the slate by acclamation, and the motion carried without dissent.

Pursuant to the bylaws, the president and treasurer were re-elected to one-year terms, and the other four were elected to two-year terms. At the April Board of Directors meeting, the board voted, also in accord with the bylaws, to waive term limits for any members of the slate so affected.

Continuing office holders are directors Karel Bernady, Stuart Brooks, Craig Conover and Perc Moser. Craig also serves as immediate past president.

For several years now, the annual June picnic has been a joint event with Valley Forge, complete with the presentation of trophies for the May cut-flower competition. This year's picnic was at the Philadelphia home of Michael Mills, and was attended by about 35 ARS members. Michael's numerous clumps of *Spigelia marilandica* and a *Stewartia pseudocamellia*, both in full bloom, drew many compliments.

At the request of several attendees, Michael has given the RhodoGravure the recipe for the spicy grilled turkey breast that was served. He gives credit to his brother Eric, who devised the spice ratio.

### **Spicy Grilled Turkey**

2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 tablespoons paprika

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon ground black pepper

1 "turkey London broil" (a boneless, skinless turkey breast half, trimmed by the poulterer to be of relatively uniform thickness)

neutral oil, such as grapeseed or canola

#### *the night before cooking:*

Mix sugar, paprika, salt and pepper to make a rub.

Lightly coat the turkey with oil on all sides (this makes the rub stick). Place the meat in a dish that will hold it without having to squeeze or cram it in. Spread as much as half of the rub on the turkey and use hand or spatula to get it evenly coated. Flip the turkey over and repeat. (You may have some of the rub left over – it will keep for future grilling.)

Cover with plastic wrap with the wrap in full contact with the turkey. Refrigerate overnight.

#### *to cook:*

Bring turkey fully to room temperature. When the charcoal-wood fire has ceased flaming and is ready, spread coals evenly. Place turkey on grill and cook for exactly 8 minutes. Turn over and cook for 8 more minutes. If the thickest part seems too springy, leave on the grill for no more than 1 to 2 minutes longer. Allow turkey to rest for about 10 minutes before carving.

## *Calendar*

**All listings should be considered tentative pending coronavirus developments.  
Members will be advised by email of changes and cancelations.**



**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.

**August 9, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.** Board of Directors meeting.

**August 21, Sunday, 1 p.m.** District 8 Cutting Exchange and Auction. Jenkins Arboretum, Devon. See article on Page 3.

**September 11, Sunday, 1p.m.** Plants-for-Members sale of chapter-propagated plants. Morris Arboretum's Bloomfield Farm garage. See article on Page 3.

**September 27-29, Tuesday-Thursday** ARS Eastern Regional Fall Conference at Gettysburg, Pa. Early registration deadline: August 31. More information at <http://arsstore.org/Fall2022>. See article on Page 1.

**October 11, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.** Board of Directors meeting.

**October 17, Sunday, 12:30-3:30** Chapter meeting and pot-luck brunch. Morris Arboretum (pandemic-permitting).

**December 13, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.** Board of Directors meeting.

**January 8, 2023, Sunday, 1 p.m.** Chapter meeting, Morris Arboretum.

**April 19-23** National convention, joint conference with the Azalea Society of America. Atlanta.

## Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

[www.gpchapterars.org](http://www.gpchapterars.org)

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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 typically 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. Several events are held in conjunction with the Valley Forge Chapter of the ARS. Latest meeting information may be found at [www.GPChapterARS.org](http://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](http://www.GPChapterARS.org); click on “Join us.”

# Chapter Board Minutes

## **Board of Directors Meeting,**

Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

February 8, 2022

In attendance by Zoom: Linda Hartnett, Myo Myint, Bill Halberstadt, Karel Bernady, Maris Ogg, Stuart Brooks, Ron Rabideau, Kim Kopple, Michael Mills, Perc Moser.

**Treasurers' report:** [Editor's note: Details of the accounts are not published online. Members in good standing are welcome to contact the treasurer to obtain such information.]

Our balance is above normal due to the lack of flower show expenses.

**The Truss show** will be held on May 8 at Jenkins. Perc and Michael will decide how to handle trophies. The Jenkins plant sale is the weekend before: There will be a cocktail party Fri night on April 30 and the plant sale will be held on April 31 and May 1.

**May 6-7-8 is the Tyler plant sale.** We will sell plants that we have and will also purchase from Mike White's nursery. We will have Azaleas and elepidotes for sale. Karel and Linda will take inventory at Steve's to see what we have to sell. Myo will request verification from our insurance company for Tyler's files.

**Michael reported** on his initial research on other possible meeting locations and noted that the cactus and succulent society has meetings at Cathedral Village.

**We discussed holding Spring Garden tours** with likely locations at Perc and Michael's homes. We do not think that we have enough time to adequately plan for this event. We need to publish info with PHS and the Hardy plant society and possibly the Inquirer's garden column. We will focus on this next year. Questions to be answered: do we charge for this event? When should it be held? How to insure robust turnout?

**The joint meeting** at Uwchlan will be virtual. Ron will host and send a link to everyone. Our speaker is Peter Zale and he wants to be paid in plants. Karel will coordinate.

**The Banquet** will be held at Sunnybrook on April 9. Cocktail are at 6PM cocktails. Dinner is at 7PM and Steve Wright will be our speaker. The club will supply the projector and screen. We will have our Rhododendron Roulette after dinner.

**Hybridizer test garden** – Karel confirmed that we have an MOU with Tyler for the test garden. The MOU was signed by Perc Moser, Michael Mills, Tom Ahern and Karel. The trees have been removed from the site and we have created a selection committee to evaluate the plants to be planted. The selection committee is composed of the founders plus Ron Rabideau, Peter Zale, Carol Segree and Steve Wright. The committee is creating a set of criteria for selection. Don Hyatt will help create an article through the ARS to be published in the Journal. By July 1, plants are to have been selected and we will begin to gather cuttings. Lehigh has pledged \$3,000 for the garden. GP has also committed \$3,000. We will begin to raise funds for maintenance to be held by the ARS.

**Ron asked for reimbursement** for his Zoom expenses and the Board unanimously agreed.

## **Board of Directors Meeting**

Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

April 5, 2022

In attendance by Zoom: Karel Bernady, Stuart Brooks, Bill Halberstadt, Linda Hartnett, Michael Mills, Kim Kopple, Perc Moser, Myo Myint, Ron Rabideau Maris Ogg.

**Treasurers' report:** [Editor's note: Details of the accounts are not published online. Members in good standing are welcome to contact the treasurer to obtain such information.] Our chapter allocated \$3,000 to the hybridizer test garden and these funds were sent. Regarding the Regional conference money [held in the GP bank account], the Board agreed to recommend that a conversation be held with the chapters who own these funds to clarify the ultimate disposition. Karel agreed to discuss this with everyone.

**Truss show:** Michael reported that he and Perc have resolved remaining issues for our upcoming joint Truss Show. The show will be held on May 8 at Jenkins Arboretum. Everyone is urged to participate. Judges have agreed to serve and Michael will bring a brochure to the banquet with entry tags. We still need workers on Sunday. Going forward, this will be a joint show to be held at Jenkins. The Valley Forge Board agreed that trophies can be consolidated.

**Karel is holding a potting day** on April 12 and is looking for volunteers. Karel noted that we may be short pots as plastic is apparently not available, but we can use Steve's pots. We will be up potting our cuttings.

**Tyler plant sale update.** Plants have been selected from our stock. We have 45 plants to sell which we will supplement with 45 native plants from Steve Kristoph. Karel and Linda will travel to Mike White's nursery on April 20 and are expecting to purchase about 100 plants. They will rent a van which we will then use to transport all plants for the sale to Tyler. Tyler will water the plants if needed that week. Karel will forward labeling information to Austin at Tyler. We will have printed hang tag labels for each plant and have priced based on size. The sale will be held on May 6, 7 8. Hours are from 8am-2pm Saturday and Sunday. Friday is members only day from 11am-7pm but with timed-ticket reservations required and our members can attend Friday with timed tickets. We will set up on Thursday from 10-2PM.

**Hybridizer test garden** – Perc reported that this project is up and running and we have begun to receive donations to fund the ongoing costs. The selection committee has been created. Our chapter will be asked to fund about \$1,000/year for maintenance. The committee has completed one grant proposal and will continue to look for funders. Perc will hold a separate meeting for fundraising and we will ask for donations at the upcoming banquet.

**Travel Grant** – The Board was sent a brief narrative on the creation of a \$500 annual travel grant. Apparently VF has been involved the grant's creation. We tabled this item for further information.

**June Picnic** – The date for our picnic is June 19. Michael volunteered to have the gathering at his house. Michael asked for volunteers to help with set up. The picnic will serve as our annual meeting and we need to elect officers. Officers with expiring terms are Maris, Bill, Michael, Myo, Linda and Ron. Craig will continue to serve as past President. All agreed to serve another term. The Board unanimously approved waiving term limits. Ron will continue as Chapter President.

**New business** – What can we do to update our website? Karel and Myo will work on this. Maris discussed the joint membership committee composed of Ron, Steve Wright and Maris, who are working on increasing membership and one of the action items is improving websites.

**Upcoming meetings:** Kim will reserve space at Morris for meetings. Next meetings are PFM on Sept 11 at Bloomfield farm, Oct 9 and Jan 8. We will try to have our annual brunch in October, COVID permitting.

### **Board of Directors Meeting,**

Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

June 15, 2022

In attendance by Zoom: Stuart Brooks, Bill Halberstadt, Linda Hartnett, Michael Mills, Kim Kopple, Perc Moser, Myo Myint, Ron Rabideau, President and Maris



**The minutes** from our last meeting were approved as amended.

**Treasurers' report:** [Editor's note: Details of the accounts are not published online. Members in good standing are welcome to contact the treasurer to obtain such information.] We have not yet received the proceeds from our plant sale at Tyler. Karel has communicated with Mike Karkowski but we have not heard back from him yet.

**Truss show** Michael reported that we had 107 entries, which was a relatively low number, historically. We speculated that weather was a factor. Michael commented that the venue at Jenkins is ideal and there seemed to be many Jenkins visitors to the show after judging was complete. Perc and Michael have chosen the trophies to be used going forward, from the trophies available from both chapters. Bob Smetana, one of the judges will present trophies at the joint picnic next weekend.

**Plant sale** – Our plant sale at Tyler was relatively successful in very poor weather. We do not have the official sales results yet, but, most plants were sold. One problem was that our members were not admitted on Member day. We believe that we can remedy this next year if Tyler requires people to register in advance. Unless COVID continues to be a factor, it is more likely that admission will be open on member day as we heard many complaints from attendees about the admission policy.

**Hybridizer test garden** – Perc reported that we have raised \$20K thus far and the committee wrote and initial check to Tyler for shared expenses. The committee has established evaluation criteria and is now looking for nominations. Steve Henning has written an email that clearly outlines the nomination procedure. The process is relatively easy. Michael or Perc will call for entrants at the picnic and we will also ask for donations. Stuart suggested that we add a link on our website to the entry information. Perc will supply the information for Myo.

**The joint Picnic** is to held this year at Michael's house on June 19. Attendees are invited to arrive at 1PM to tour the garden and lunch will be served at 2PM. People helping with set up should arrive around 12:15. Linda will tend the grill. The chapter will provide the beverages and main dish and guests should bring a side dish. Elections will be held at the picnic which will serve as the Chapter Annual Meeting. Officers with expiring terms are Maris, Bill, Michael, Myo, Linda and Ron. Craig will continue to serve as past President. All agreed to serve another term. The Board previously approved waiving term limits. Ron will continue as Chapter President.

**Upcoming meetings** – Kim told the Board that she has contacted Morris about reserving dates for our coming meetings but has not heard back yet. A question about our meeting locations has come up before and a preliminary check for alternatives revealed that most venues would charge us for space. At this time, we will probably remain with Morris unless they decide not to allow us to use their space.

**Joint committee** – could be revived. Perc will discuss with VFC.

**GP Chapter Website** - The Board discussed the need to improve our Website. Maris and Steve Wright have been exploring a membership marketing initiative for both chapters which includes discussions of possible upgrades for our websites. Maris will spearhead the website improvement initiative and report back to the Board.