

RHODOGRAVURE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY :::::::::: AUTUMN 2022

We're doing brunch again, at Jenkins

With a presentation on winter-blooming plants

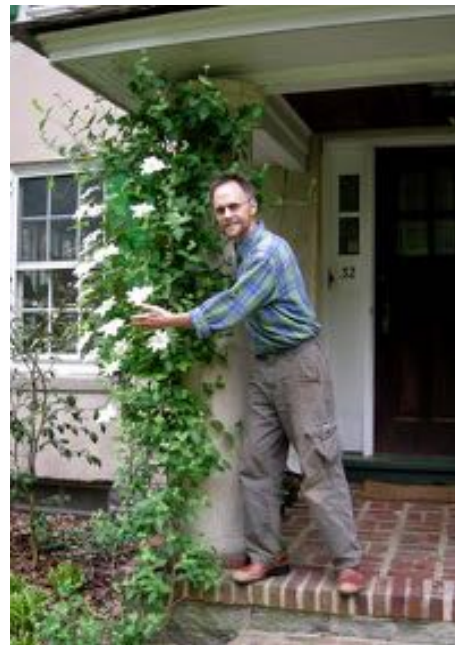
Covid has waned enough that the Greater Philadelphia Chapter is resuming its October practice of having a brunch meeting – yum!

Sunday, October 9, we will gather at 1 p.m. at Jenkins Arboretum.

The chapter will provide beverages (wine, coffee, sodas, etc.). Members are asked to bring a brunch-appropriate dish to share – say, quiche, or an egg-and-sausage casserole, fruit salad, bagels and lox, you get the drift.

But it's not just an occasion for noshing with friends. The presenter will be Charles Cresson, the wonder of Swarthmore. Mr. Cresson, whose education includes time at the Royal Horticultural Society's Wisley Garden, will be speaking on winter-blooming plants for our clime in this age of climate change. His garden – a tour de force of the classics and the unusual in a meticulous display – now boasts various winter bloomers that in decades past would have been either wimpy or, umm, dead. This presentation should give you some great ideas for adding winter interest a few notches above holly berries and pine cones.

(Why not at Morris Arboretum? Morris is changing its arrangements with plant societies, and not exactly in our favor. Jenkins came to the rescue for this meeting, and we are checking out other possible venues for 2023.)



Charles Cresson, at home in Swarthmore.

40 cultivars chosen for Tyler Garden

During a mid-August Zoom meeting, 40 rhododendron cultivars were chosen for planting in the soon-to-be trial garden at Tyler Arboretum. Some rather luscious blooms are in the group, all of which were hybridized and grown in the mid-Atlantic states.

Currently, Karel Bernady, a member of the Founding Task Force for the garden, is scurrying to collect and root cuttings of the selections. The goal is that they will be large enough for planting in 2025, when site preparation and design will be complete.

The 10-member selection committee consisted of Ron Rabideau, Greater Philadelphia Chapter president; Carol Segree, Potomac Valley Chapter president; Steve Wright, director of horticulture and curator of plants collections, Jenkins Arboretum; Peter Zale, associate director for conservation, plant breeding and collections, Longwood Gardens; Mike Karkowski, director of horticulture, Tyler Arboretum; Christian Stoltz, Wister rhododendron gardener, Tyler; and the members of the Founding Task Force, Karel Bernady, Tom Ahern, Perc Moser and Michael Martin Mills.



'Gilbert Myers'

Nominations for the trial garden were solicited spring and early summer. After reading their attributes and perusing photos, each member of the selection committee chose a "top 20" list and a "next 20" list. Using a point system, all the cultivars were ranked. Because the decision had been made early on that a given hybridizer could be represented by a maximum of three cultivars in the initial planting, that meant some tweaking of the rankings to arrive at the final 40.



'Cyclops'

The top five in the rankings are 'April Rhapsody' (bred by Allan and Shirley Anderson), 'Bisque' (Ahern), 'Cyclops' (Rabideau), 'Sun Dust' (Andersons), and TT220 (Richard Murcott). Seven hybridizers reached their maximum of three cultivars: Ahern, Andersons, John Doppel, Joseph Minahan, Moser, Murcott and Hank Schannen.

Given the possibility of propagation failure, a reserve list of six cultivars was chosen as well.

The Founding Task Force and Tyler Arboretum regard the project as having a long life. The focus of the collection is newer hybrids bred for the climate of the mid-Atlantic states, with the strong hope that publicity of the trialing results will lead to a broader selection of rhododendron cultivars available commercially.

Assessing the various cultivars over a number of years is key, but the garden will be designed to become a significant permanent component of the Tyler landscape, not unlike the Wister collection, which adjoins the trial garden site. It is envisioned that additional cultivar nominations and selections will be made over time to augment the first season's planting. There is also additional land that may be added to the trial garden in coming years.



'Sun Dust'

The Founding Task Force is pleased with the level of fundraising to date. From individuals and chapters, about \$35,000 has been received. After the expenses for site preparation and plant acquisition, Tyler and the ARS will share long-term maintenance costs, so fundraising will also be a long-term concept.

Below is an alphabetical list of the 40 selected cultivars and their hybridizers.

Ahern's No. 102 (Tom Ahern)	'Lavender Ice' (Hank Schannen)
'Angeline Dee' (John Doppel)	'Love Child' (Schannen)
'Anita Gehrich' (Philip Waldman)	'Madeline Winter' (Moser)
'April Rhapsody' (Allan and Shirley Anderson)	'Mike O'Hara' (Minahan)
'Austin's Firecracker' (Doppel)	Murcott's No. TT220 (Murcott)
'Bisque' (Ahern)	'Norm Beaudry' (Minahan)
'Bob's Peach' (Bob Bondira)	'Purple Elf' (Schannen)
'Catherine Josephine' (Howard Kline)	'Rhein's Luna' (William Rhein)
'Cause of Our Joy' (Joseph Minahan)	'Rhein's Picotee' (Rhein)
'Christan's Art' (Richard Murcott)	'Ruth's Showstopper' (Doppel)
'Cosmic Candy' (Perc Moser)	'Scintillation' X 'Apritan' (Donald Hyatt)
'Cyclops' (Ron Rabideau)	'Sea Gold' (Anderson)
'Cynosure' (Benjamin Shapiro)	'September Song' X 'Fashion Plate' (Howard Roberts)
'Dream of Kings' (Kathleen Frederick)	'Sidney V. Burns' (Murcott)
'Elmer's Gift' (Elmer Morris)	'Speckled Honey' (Dennis MacMullan)
'Gilbert Myers' (Helen Myers)	'Sugaree' (Moser)
'Great Gatsby' (Werner Brack)	'Sun Dust' (Anderson)
'Hannah Grace' (Ahern)	'White Elegance' (Brack)
'John C. White' (George Ring)	'Winsome Winnie' (MacMullan)
'Kenny Mac' (Sandra McDonald)	'Yellow Eyes' (Al Fitzburgh)

Report from the Fall Conference

Program included two Gettysburg addresses

Three brisk days greeted ARS members when they gathered in late September for the biannual Fall Eastern Conference in Gettysburg, Pa. Ten people from our chapter made the trek to Adams County.

The host group was the Mason-Dixon Chapter of the ARS, which holds its meetings in Westminster, Md., but claims both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line as its territory.

Of course, a fall conference should mean no rhododendrons in bloom – but there in the plant sale room were a fair number of blooming evergreen azaleas. They were supplied by White's Nursery, which is a key source for the Greater Philadelphia Chapter's sales as well. (Mike and Deb White, who were in attendance at the conference, propagate a vast number of rhododendron and azalea cultivars, and are an important resource for the dissemination of recently introduced varieties, such as evergreen azaleas hybridized by Joe Klimavicz and Robert Stewart, both of northern Virginia.)

Two informative evening programs were offered: Don Hyatt on hybridizing history and trends for our region, and Wayne Mezitt on the history and legacy of Weston Nursery in Massachusetts. Weston is 99 years old and still in the Mezitt family, Wayne's son Peter now in charge of the operation.

The ARS-Tyler Arboretum trialing garden got some attention, including a presentation by Karel Bernady at the Hybridizers Roundtable the last day.

No ARS conference is conceivable without a tour, and thus it was off to Hershey Gardens and the National Park System's battlefield parks of Gettysburg. The former is a 23-acre arboretum and ornamental garden that is the legacy of Milton Hershey, first conceived as a rose garden for public enjoyment. It was expanded and enhanced decades ago, as evidenced by the fine mature specimens of choice trees, including a very statuesque giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), dawn redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), various oaks, and a smattering of elepidote rhododendrons and evergreen azaleas (largely common cultivars of the mid-20th century). The perennial and annual beds and the rose garden were very floriferous.

But perhaps the most impressive floral display was at Gettysburg Gardens, the nursery operated by John and Julie Bartlett: hundreds of pots of hardy cyclamens in bloom. Just seeing the swath of the flowers was a delight, but as John pointed out, if you looked closely, every plant had its own distinctive pattern of variegated foliage. The Bartletts welcomed conference attendees for an open house on Tuesday afternoon, and many an ARS member left with a stash of the uncommon woodies and perennials the nursery is known for.



Upper left: Tom Ahern, Linda Hartnett, Perc Moser, Karel Bernady and Maris Ogg at Hershey Gardens. Above: Marilyn Gressman and a noted president. Left: Karel Bernady with a 'Taurus'-colored rose at Hershey Gardens.

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.

October 9, Sunday, 1 p.m. Chapter meeting and pot-luck brunch. Jenkins Arboretum (see article on Page 1).

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

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

January 8, 2023, Sunday, 1 p.m. Chapter meeting, location to be determined.

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

October 19-21 Western Regional conference. Florence, Oregon.

April 19-23, 2024 National convention, Bellingham, Washington.

And you thought you had a lot to deadhead!



Photo: Jordan Pettitt/Solent News

This specimen of *Rhododendron argioplum* (formerly *R. smithii*) was planted in the '80s or '90s – that would be the 1880s or 1890s. It's in Horsham, West Sussex, in the south of England, on the grounds of a hotel. It's regarded as the largest rhododendron in the country, and some call it "shrubzilla." For more images and history, go to www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9447569

Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

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, 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. 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.”

Chapter Board Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting,

Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

August 9, 2022

In attendance by video conference: Karel Bernady, Stuart Brooks, Craig Conover, Linda Hartnett, Michael Martin Mills, Kim Kopple, Perc Moser, Myo Myint, Ron Rabideau, Maris Ogg.

Minutes from our last meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's 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.] Myo Myint reported that our chapter balances are in line with year-ago figures.

The board went on to discuss our annual gifts. Last year we gave \$400 to the ARS endowment, the ARS Research Foundation, The Rhododendron Species Foundation and Jenkins Arboretum. We also donated \$750 to Morris Arboretum and \$750 to Tyler Arboretum. After some discussion, the Board decided not to make a contribution to Morris this year. Michael Mills moved that all \$400 donations be repeated. The motion was seconded and passed. The Board then agreed to pay Tyler the agreed upon percentage of the plant sale revenue and in addition to that, make a \$750 donation to Tyler.

Myo reminded the Board that we usually pay for a membership with PHS, which gets us one speaker per year.

Future meetings. Kim reported on her conversations with Morris about reserving space for future meetings.

Reservations are confirmed for the 2022-2023 meetings.

- 9/11/2022: 1p-4p at Bloomfield Farm. The garage will be ready for set up on 9/10.
- 10/9/2022: 12:30-3:30p in the Education Center at Bloomfield Farm. The break area and the conference room will be available.
- 1/8/2023: 12:30-3:30p in the Widener Visitors Center, Upper Gallery.

Beginning in January 2023, Morris will charge for meeting space. They would like to support plant societies and are extending a 50% discount to us for the space. The rental cost with the discount will be \$200/hour. This rate applies to the January 8 meeting.

Morris is updating their catering policies. In 2023, outside food will no longer be permitted. We will be required to use their caterer. This requirement may also be in place for the 2022 meetings, to be confirmed.

Alex Melian, our contact at Morris, is on a leave of absence. Alex will be returning shortly, although the date is unknown. Through 2022 Vince Marrocco will be our point of contact until Alex returns. Starting in 2023, our contact will be Sarah Ruth Peterson, the Rentals Coordinator. Kim spoke with Vince about the meeting reservations and with Sarah about the rental rate and catering policy.

Kim advised Vince that the policy changes would be reviewed with the Board.

The board discussed these changes and decided to undertake a search for new meeting space. We created a list of possible places to meet and assigned Board members to investigate the feasibility:

Possible location	Person contacting
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy	Michael
Cathedral Village	Michael
Temple Ambler	Kim
Chestnut Hill College	Maris
The Hill at Whitemarsh	Maris
Stoneleigh	Ron

The board also discussed shifting the location for PFM to Jenkins Arboretum.

Hybridizers Garden. Perc reported that the committee has raised about \$23,000 and has sent \$9,000 to Tyler. The Valley Forge Chapter agreed to add \$1,000 to their annual budget for the Hybridizers Garden and recommended that the GP Board do the same. To date, there are nearly 80 entries and the selection committee will convene on August 15 or 16 to begin the selection process. Once the plants for the garden are selected, we will obtain 6 cuttings of each plant, and grow the cuttings at Steve Kristoph’s Nursery until they can be placed in the garden. There remains some debate about the number of plants of each selection to be planted at Tyler ultimately.

Karel informed the Board that he and Perc went to Tyler to check on the plants from Joe Minahan that were moved to Tyler. Tyler did a nice job planting them close to the test garden and the plants seem to be doing well.

Eastern Regional meeting. This meeting takes place in Gettysburg on September 27-29. Karel is speaking about the hybridizers garden.

Plant sale. Karel will have final numbers by the end of the week, but his estimate is for net proceeds about \$2,400. Given the poor weather during the sale, we were pleased with the results.

Plants For Members. will be held on September 11 at Morris Arboretum Bloomfield Farm. Linda will not be present, so she will need a volunteer to use Square to accept credit cards for payment. Linda will develop instructions. Linda and Karel are completing a plant inventory at Steve’s. Karel believes that we can bring 6 trays of 3” cuttings and about 125 gallon plants for the sale. We will need volunteer to help with setup on Sept 10.

Upcoming meetings. We need a speaker for our October 9. Michael will contact Charles Cresson and we will invite Jenny Rose Carey if Charles is not available.

Cuttings. Anyone who has plants that can be a source of cuttings for our propagation program should send the list of plants to Karel. He will let everyone know once he sees those lists, if

cuttings are desired. We will be sticking cuttings at Steve's on August 27. Ron informed the Board that the new owner at RareFind will allow us to take cuttings. Ron noted that RareFind seems to be struggling a bit. We intend to provide plants for the Atlanta convention, but we can discuss the logistics as we get closer to the event.

Cutting exchange and plant auction will take place on August 21. Anyone can donate plants to be sold. The event will begin at 1PM at Jenkins Arboretum.

Joint Membership Committee. Maris and Steve Wright met to set a plan for increasing membership of both chapters. Ron Rabideau also serves on this committee. The committee prioritized two initiatives: 1) Improve our websites and 2) create a new programming committee to help create programming for an intern outreach day, which, prior to Covid, was scheduled each year and attracted between 100 and 200 young gardeners [who are interns at local arboreta]. Our plan is to provide some programming on rhodie propagation, perhaps, and to offer interns a free one year membership in one of our chapters to increase young members. This is why we are looking for programming to appeal to this group for next year.

Philadelphia Flower Show. It will be back indoors next year at the convention center. Will we participate? The Board seemed undecided. Some of the difficulties discussed were: The workload involved, lack of communication from PHS, problems in finding an organization to force our plants, need to create a committee soon to work on design, lack of members willing to act as docents. The Board also noted the lack of new members from the Flower Show contacts with the public. On the positive side, we know that we are asked many questions about rhodies, particularly about problems that people have in their gardens. We also wonder if we were successful in recruiting younger members, if they would want to continue our participation. Linda will contact the previous committee members to gauge their interest.

Upcoming dates:

Cutting Exchange and Auction	August 21 at 1PM, Jenkins
Plants for Members	September 11, 1PM
Regional ARS Meeting	September 27-29, Gettysburg
Member Meeting	October 9, 1PM at Bloomfield Farm at Morris Arboretum Possible Speaker Charles Cresson
GP BOD meeting	October 11 via Zoom
Member Meeting	January 8, 2023. Location and speaker TBD

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

– Maris Ogg