

RHODOGRAVURE

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY :::::::::: WINTER 2025

A new year, new meetings

The chapter will utilize three familiar sites

Most ARS members remember when the concept of a year that didn't begin with the numeral 1 was eerie, otherworldly, a handwriting challenge, a big deal dubbed Y2K. And now we are a quarter-century into the thousand-year stretch called the 21st century. It seems so ordinary that our years begin with a 2. How could we have been so eggy back then?

The Delaware Valley Rhododendron Society, which never set foot in the 20th century (it was so limited), is marking this 25th anniversary of the initial 2 with more than 2 intriguing and informative meetings and conferences.

The first takes place Sunday, January 26, at Jenkins Arboretum, with Heather Titanich speaking about "Community Forestry." Given that our region was once nothing but forest – millions and millions of acres of forest, with some native rhododendron species making cameo appearances – the changes wrought by European settlement and expansion are profound. We obviously can't undo all the changes, but a better balance would enhance growing conditions for all manner of plants. Ms. Titanich has a wide range of horticultural and forestry experience, including stints at both Jenkins and Tyler Arboretums.



Heather Titanich

Arrive as early as 1:30 p.m. to chat with chapter friends; the program will begin at 2:00.

Fair warning: as this issue of the RhodoGravure was being prepared, the local football team, the Eagles, was advancing toward the possibility of playing a crucial semifinal game the very same afternoon as the meeting at Jenkins. If such a rare conflict of fabulous events comes to pass, the Delaware Valley Chapter may politely defer to the big guys with helmets and reschedule Ms. Titanich for a future meeting. Members will be promptly informed by email if the meeting is postponed.

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There are no known sporting events of significance on February 16, and, continuing a tradition begun by the former Valley Forge and Greater Philadelphia Chapters, that is the date for the annual meeting at the Uwchlan Meetinghouse in Lionville, Pa.

Tara Spears, who is on the horticultural staff at Jenkins Arboretum, will update the members on her research on native deciduous azalea species, a fair number of which she has seen IRL (that's in real life) while hiking the length of the Appalachian Trail. She is also becoming the expert on *Rhododendron smokianum*, which is the most recently recognized – and little known – species of American natives.



Tara Spears

The meeting at Uwchlan is always a yummy event, as all are encouraged to bring sweet or savory items to share (note: no warming of foods on site – the ovens are off-limits for our rental). Beverages, including wine, will be provided. Start time is 1:30 p.m. (Does this place name baffle you? You are not alone. The pronunciation is UKE-lun. It’s a variant spelling of the Welsh for “upland,” referring to the hilliness of the area. The building in which we meet was built in 1756.)

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Final details are pending for March, but odds are we will be hearing from Will Ryan, the brand-new director of horticulture and land stewardship at Tyler Arboretum, where the meeting will take place. Members will be notified by email when the date and such are nailed down.

Two East Coast conventions this spring

The Azalea Society comes here; then we can go to Canada

This spring there are two East Coast conferences for our favorite genus, and neither will get in the way of participating in the classic May activities of the Delaware Valley Rhododendron Society.

First up will be the national conference of the Azalea Society of America, sponsored by Jenkins Arboretum and headquartered at the Desmond Hotel in Malvern, Pa. The dates are May 7-9, which is *after* DVRS plant sales and *before* the chapter’s cut-flower competition (truss show).

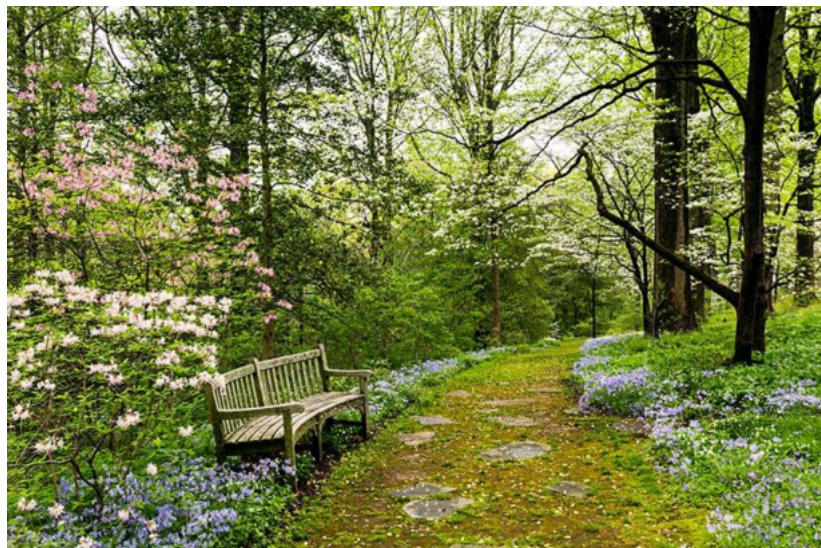
The national conference of the American Rhododendron Society won’t be until June, because that’s peak bloom time at the convention site in Nova Scotia. The dates are June 5-8, with pre- and post-convention add-on tours of gardens farther afield in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

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An azalea conference is, ipso facto, a streamlined rhododendron conference – we’ve all had to explain to neophytes, sometimes ad nauseum, that “azaleas are rhododendrons,” right? Here is an invitation from Steve Wright of Jenkins Arboretum, who is the head honcho of the ASA event:

Our sister organization, the Azalea Society of America will be coming to Philadelphia this spring for a convention all about “History and Horticulture.” In the absence of a local Azalea Society chapter, Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens is acting as host of the event, and my Jenkins co-worker Tara Spears and I have created a great lineup of plant sales, displays, and, of course, outstanding gardens and speakers.

Participants will visit Chanticleer, Jenkins, Wyn-Eden (Wayne Guymon’s home



Deciduous azaleas at the Mt. Cuba Center, on the ASA tours.

in Kennett Square), Win-terthur, and Mt. Cuba Center to see these gardens at their peak (fingers crossed). Presenters include noted local author Nicole Juday, who will present a historical view of Philadelphia’s private gardens, plantsman extraordinaire John Lonsdale, who will speak on azalea companion plants, and finally our own native azalea expert, Karel Bernady, who will speak about azalea hotspots in the northeast.

Would you like to participate? If you would like to attend the convention as a participant, please see the [Azalea Society’s website](#) for more information and the registration form (nonmembers pay the same as ASA members, by the way). If you would like to be involved as a volunteer, we would be grateful to have people assisting with registration (Wednesday, May 7, 3:00-8:00 p.m.) and with the convention plant sale (at Jenkins on Thursday, May 9, 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.). Please reach out to Steve Wright (steve@jenkinsarboretum.org) to discuss volunteering or any other questions you might have. We hope to see you in May!

– Steve Wright

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Four years and some months ago, many of us were gearing up for the June 2021 ARS convention in Nova Scotia, which had been on the calendar since 2019. Instead, covid made a hash of things. Even though vaccinations became available in early 2021, Canada was quite strict– not only were U.S. citizens not allowed to attend, nor were Canadians from other provinces. As much as was practical was offered on Zoom, but that’s a flimsy substitute. The RhodoGravure staff was in anguish for all the preparations the host Atlantic Chapter undertook, with a virus ruining so much.

Hallelujah, there are second acts in rhodoland, and a Nova Scotia convention is in the offing this coming June 5-8, with the title “Emerging Trends for Rhododendrons.”

Nova Scotia is a peninsula barely connected to the bulk of Canada and geologically is part of the northern end of the Appalachians Mountains. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, its climate belies its latitude, and there are plenty of rhododendron devotees in residence.

The convention will be in Wolfville, on the north side, on a protected bay off the Bay of Fundy. Getting there will take some planning – and a valid U.S. passport. By air, one arrives in Halifax, a hour or so away by car. For a fuller Canadian Maritime experience, one might drive from the Philadelphia area, which would take more than 15 hours and involve one ferry or another from Maine or New Brunswick.

Presentations and meals will be at several locations within walking distance of each other; two levels of accommodation have been arranged, a hotel not far from the activities and much less costly rooms at nearby Acadia University (yes, a dormitory-like setting, but the photos look quite reasonable).

In addition to the requisite garden tours and dinners (lobster on Friday!), speakers include Connor Ryan of Holden Arboretum and the Leach Research Station in Ohio and Hartwig Schepker, managing director of the Botanischer Garten und Rhododendron-Park in Bremen, Germany, speaking on “The Impact of Climate Change on Rhododendrons.” Former Greater Philadelphia Chapter president Ron Rabideau will be part of the Breeders Roundtable on Saturday.

Two random asides: the days of June are longer in Nova Scotia than in Philadelphia. The U.S. and Canadian dollars are far from parity now; 100 Canadian is about 70 U.S., so don’t get sticker shock when you go to <https://ars2025.org>.



Idleywildgardens, a six-acre private garden in Nova Scotia, on tour June 6.

June in the maritimes has such appeal, and after all the work the Atlantic Chapter has gone through twice (not to mention the recent “51st state” matter), let’s have a good turnout from the Delaware Valley Rhododendron Society.

Pop quiz

Match the quotation with its author.

1. “To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.”
2. “Gardening is a work of a lifetime: you never finish.”
3. “If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people.”
4. “Gardens are not made by singing ‘Oh, how beautiful’ and sitting in the shade.”
5. “Anyone who has time for drama is not gardening enough.”

- A. Rudyard Kipling
- B. Anonymous
- C. Confucius
- D. Oscar de la Renta
- E. Marcus Tullius Cicero
- F. Audrey Hepburn



**Rudyard
Kipling**

Answers on last page.

Let us dream of spring planting

Sale dates are already set

The 1921 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Anatole France, once remarked, “I do not know any reading more easy, more fascinating, more delightful than a catalogue.” The chief book critic at RhodoGravure headquarters has a strong feeling that he meant a plant catalogue.

We all know what will be coming through the mail slots in the coming weeks: catalogues from mail-order nurseries and specialists, with tempting photographs of cantaloupes, roses, waterlilies, ferns and, let us hope, rhododendrons and azaleas. Make your lists, and while it’s still winter heed the advice of Daniel Burnham, famed Wanamaker’s architect and contemporary of Anatole France: “Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will not themselves be realized.” By spring, your lists can be pared and refined.

But be wary of going on a buying binge too soon. The Delaware Valley Rhododendron Society can be counted on to outdo those printed (or online) catalogues with the selections of chapter-propagated plants at two plants sales. Mark these dates in your calendars, red-letter days to be sure:

April 25-27, Jenkins Arboretum. As in years past, Friday evening is the “preview” event (a ticketed, fund-raiser affair) with public sales on Saturday and Sunday. Perc Moser will be coordinating this sale and will be in the market for volunteers for setup and sale days.

May 2-4, Tyler Arboretum. The custom here is a Tyler-members-only sale on Friday, and public sales on Saturday and Sunday. Linda Hartnett will be coordinator for the Tyler sale and will likewise be seeking setup and sales volunteers.

With the Jenkins sale being moved a week earlier than in previous years, there is the felicitous situation in which rhododendron devotees need not choose between simultaneous sales, but can go to, and work at, both sales. Not only that, neither sale will impede the collection and preparation of entries for the May 10 truss show.

Calendar

Important: If you do not receive this newsletter electronically, you will not receive email reminders about a week before events. Please use this calendar to mark your own.

A note on meeting times: At its recent meeting the DVRS Board decided to regularize all Sunday afternoon meetings. Gather as early as 1:30 p.m. for coffee and conversation; the program will begin at 2 p.m.

January 21, Tuesday Board of Directors meeting. Jenkins Arboretum, 7 p.m.

January 26, Sunday Chapter meeting, Jenkins Arboretum, 1:30, program at 2:00. Heather Titanich, "Community Forestry." See article on Page 1. **NOTE:** Possible Eagles game may result in rescheduling of the meeting.

February 16, 2025, Sunday Chapter meeting, Uwchlan Meeting House, Lionville, Pa. 1:30, program at 2:00. Tara Spears, "American's Native Azaleas." See article on Page 1.

March, Sunday to be announced Chapter meeting, Tyler Arboretum, Edible Garden Building, 1:30 p.m., program (to be announced) at 2:00.

March 18, 2025, Tuesday Board of Directors meeting. Jenkins Arboretum, 7 p.m.

April 25-27 Chapter plant sale, Jenkins Arboretum.

May 2-4 Chapter plant sale, Tyler Arboretum.

May 7-9, 2025 Azalea Society of America national convention. Desmond Hotel, Malvern, Pa. See article on Page 2. More info: [Azalea convention](#).

May 10, Saturday Cut-flower competition (truss show), Jenkins Arboretum.

June 5-8, 2025 ARS national convention, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. See article on Page 3. More info: [Nova Scotia convention](#).

Delaware Valley Rhododendron Society

A chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

DVChapterARS.org

Officers

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Directors

Terms expiring 2025: Bill Halberstadt, Linda Hartnett

Terms expiring 2026: Michael Martin Mills, Ron Rabideau, Kathy Woehl

Terms expiring 2027: Mimi Favre, Maris Ogg, John Weygandt

Committees

Finance: Bob Smetana, chair

Plant Propagation and Sales: Karel F. Bernady, chair

Membership: Maris Ogg and Steve Wright, co-chairs

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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 Delaware Valley Rhododendron Society is the result of the recent merger of the Greater Philadelphia and Valley Forge Chapters of the ARS, and serves rhododendron and azalea enthusiasts in Philadelphia, Southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware. The group typically gathers monthly (except July and December) for program meetings, summer picnic, autumn banquet and multiple plant sales. Activities are at various locations, mostly on Sunday afternoons. Dues are \$40 per year, for combined chapter and national membership and a subscription to the Journal. Contact the president or treasurer (see above) for a form or go to DVChapterARS.org; in the Table of Contents, click on "Join."

Pop quiz answers

1. F.
2. E.
3. D.

4. C.
5. A.
6. B.

