



14 Northwoods Road, Radnor, PA 19087
Chapter's Website: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER

January/February 2022

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon

Calendar at a Glance

- Jan 16 (Sun) 2:00 pm, Olivia Kirkpatrick "The Wister Garden", Virtual, details to follow.**
Feb. 20 (Sun) 2:00 pm, Peter Zale, "Conservation & Exploration", at Uwclan Meeting House
Mar. 17 (Thu) 7:30 pm, program TBA
April 9 (Sat) GP Chapter Annual Banquet
April 29-May 1 VF Chapter Plant Sale (Fri., Sat., & Sun.)
May 8 (Sun) Joint GP and VF Truss Show at Jenkins

President's Message

I hope everyone is doing well as we continue to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. This year we were planning to begin 2022 with a live meeting on Sun., Jan. 16th at Jenkins Arboretum. With the Omicron outbreak, we thought it would be wise to move to a virtual meeting via Zoom. Our speaker, Olivia Kirkpatrick, Tyler Arboretum's Wister Rhododendron Gardener, will fill us in on her plans as she moves this historic collection to the next level (see page 2). And on Sun. Feb. 20th our annual joint meeting with the Greater Philadelphia Chapter is scheduled at the Uwchlan Friends Meeting House. However we might also have to move this meeting to a virtual one. We will decide by Feb. 1st and get the word out to the members. Our speaker will be Peter Zale of Longwood Gardens, (see page 2).

Last month our District 8 Director, Steve Henning, put together a December 2021 bonus issue of the VFARS Newsletter with lots of good overview information on native Azaleas and Rhododendrons which fits in nicely with the native rhododendron germplasm repository project that our home base Jenkins Arboretum is working on. Please don't miss the page 3 report

regarding the Hybridizers Garden being planned at Tyler Arboretum, very exciting!!

Maybe before this year comes to a close we will finally be able meet in person. In the meantime, we will continue to do what we can to keep everyone's interest in Rhododendrons alive and well. And, once again, if you haven't renewed your ARS membership, please put it on your New Year's Resolution list, the Valley Forge Chapter and the American Rhododendron is truly depending on you.

I would like to thank two Board members who stepped up and volunteered to chair a Chapter Committee. Last year at this time we were wishing our Chapter Vice-President, Alice Horton, who was under-the-weather, a speedy recovery. This year Alice is doing much better and has offered to once again Chair the Plant Sale Committee – **Thanks Alice!!** Also, Perc Moser has offered to Chair the VF ARS portion of joint GP VF ARS Chapters Truss Show – **Thanks Perc!!**

Sincerely,
Jerry O'Dell, (610) 608-2018,
westdell@verizon.net

VF ARS website: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

On January 16, 2022 (Sunday) Virtual at 2:00 pm, details to follow.

Speaker: Olivia Kirkpatrick

“Tyler’s Wister Rhododendron Garden”

Join Olivia Kirkpatrick to explore the Wister Rhododendron Garden at Tyler Arboretum, one of the largest collections of hardy elepidote rhododendron in North America. The presentation will take us from the creation of the garden in 1961 by Tyler’s first director, Dr. John Wister, to the present. Olivia will discuss the progress in the garden in her first two years, and some of the plans for the future.



Olivia has been the gardener for the historic Wister Rhododendron Collection at Tyler Arboretum since November of 2019. Prior to this she held positions at Mt. Cuba Center; Winterthur Museum Garden and Library; Viridian Landscape Studio; and University of Delaware Soil Testing Office. She has an undergraduate degree from the University of Delaware in Landscape Architecture with a minor in Horticulture, and a background in fine arts, which lends itself well to garden design and curation. Olivia is responsible for the maintenance, curation and planting design for the Wister Garden. If she’s not in the garden at Tyler, she can usually be found hiking.

On February (20), 2:00 pm at Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House (hopefully)

Speaker: Dr. Peter Zale:

“Conservation and Exploration”

Peter Zale, PhD earned his doctoral degree from The Ohio State University where he studied plant germplasm collection development, breeding and genetics. As Associate Director, Conservation, Plant Breeding and Collections, at Longwood Gardens he is responsible for curatorial activities, the plant breeding program, the plant exploration program, and the recently initiated plant conservation program focused on propagating and conserving rare native orchids. He has published over 20 articles in trade, specialist, and peer-reviewed journals and designed and participated in over 20 plant exploration expeditions throughout the United States, Japan, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Republic of Georgia and Azerbaijan. He is an avid home gardener and plant collector with an interest in a wide variety of rare geophytes, hardy herbaceous and woody plants, including Rhododendron and a variety of unusual Ericaceous taxa.



Rhododendrons are interwoven into the history of Longwood Gardens; the evolution of this collection and its uses have evolved in tandem with the various needs and directions of the garden over the last 100+ years. When founder P.S. du Pont purchased the property where he created what we now recognize as Longwood Gardens in 1906, he followed horticultural trends and embraced rhododendrons as both garden and conservatory plants. As his private garden became a public garden in the mid-1950's, this interest continued and was emphasized in Plant Exploration program initiatives and to highlight the best selections from the best hybridizers of the time. Today, rhododendrons continue to be important to the gardens and the use and appreciation of these plants continues to evolve and be refined. Join Peter for a photographically rich presentation detailing the trends in uses of rhododendrons at Longwood Gardens, some of the interesting stories that have become part of the lure of Longwood Gardens and his own experience with rhododendrons in field and in his garden

Directions to Uwchlan Meeting House, 5 N. Village Ave., Exton, PA 19341

From the Exton Mall at Rt. 100 and Lincoln Highway (Bus. US 30): Go north on Rt. 100 for 2.9 miles, turn left on Rt. 113, Uwchlan Ave. and go 0.4 miles, turn right onto Eagleview Blvd. (at 2nd light from Rte. 100), make a right and then another right at Dowlin Forge Rd. (2nd light from Rte. 113), and come in to the Meeting House.

From the Pennsylvania Turnpike: Take Exit 312 at Rt. 100: Go south on Rt. 100 for 1 mile, turn right onto Rt. 113, Uwchlan Ave. and go for 0.4 miles, then turn right onto Eagleview Blvd. (2nd light from Rte. 100), make a right and then another right at Dowlin Forge Rd. (the 2nd light from Rte. 113), and come in to the Meeting House.

Hybridizers Garden To Be Created At Tyler Arboretum



A group of rhododendron enthusiasts and hybridizers and the staff of Tyler Arboretum propose to establish a hybridizers display and test garden at the arboretum featuring local and regionally hybridized rhododendrons of recent and coming decades. The display would encourage interest in and disseminate information about the genus Rhododendron.



Michael Mills photo

Rcv. 'Fashion Plate', a Joe Becaes hybrid

Through the test garden aspect of the project, it would identify rhododendrons that meet certain criteria and can be proliferated throughout the Middle Atlantic region. It will also spur the development of new varieties that fit the wants and needs of homeowners.

Tyler – about 14 miles west of central Philadelphia – has designated more than an acre of land near many of its large rhododendrons from the John Wister era. The fallow area needs to be cleared of weeds and brush roots. Some trees need to be cleared or limbed up. Then, a watering system as well as wood chips will be installed. It will take a few years to bring the space to a point where rhododendrons can be planted. Site preparation would cost approximately \$15,000.



Karel Bernady photo

Rcv. 'Cause of Our Joy' a Joe Minahan hybrid

Once site prep is done, a selection committee will determine the cultivars for the initial planting – current discussions envision 30 cultivars, planted in multiples of three. As the garden matures, a trialing committee will assess each of the hybrids; those that perform well, meet criteria for disease susceptibility, and show well (shape, size, leaves and flowers) will

remain in the garden. Ongoing maintenance would cost approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year.



Mary Reiley photo

Rcv. 'Steve's Sunrise', an Ed Reiley hybrid

In November, 2021, the ARS Executive Committee approved the proposal to create an ARS committee to provide a conduit for contributions under the 501(c)(3) status of the ARS, to manage and track financial donations, and to oversee the project. The plan is to seek donations from interested parties and to apply for grants to support the project. Tyler Arboretum will create its own funding mechanism as costs are to be shared equally. Perc Moser said the ARS committee plans to

find funding from chapters, individuals, naming rights, and endowments/grants.

The Tyler Hybridizers Garden Committee consists of Perc Moser, Karel Bernady, Tom Ahern and Michael Martin Mills. Negotiations with Tyler, led by Mandy Santiago, executive director, and Mike Karkowski, director of horticulture, have been friendly and have unfolded at a brisk pace, and indications are that both sides are eager to make the new garden happen. It is likely that a formal Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by both sides before spring.

Benefits will accrue to both the ARS and Tyler. The garden will allow vetting of new and recent hybrids for color and shape of leaves, color and shape of truss, shape and form of plant, resistance to disease, and heat and cold tolerance, not to mention the effects of climate change.

It will also allow for the sustaining and hopefully mainstreaming hybrids from Middle Atlantic hybridizers. Aside from establishing a new attraction at one of the country's premier arboretums, it should spur visitors to seek out and plant worthy cultivars well beyond the limited choices of today's commercial market.



Wister Rhododendron Garden at Tyler Arboretum

Spotted Lanternflies Are Still On The Move



The last of the lanternflies in Pennsylvania disappeared with the onset of frost a month ago. However an early freeze in some areas of Pennsylvania disrupted the egg laying cycle, but adults from other areas soon moved into the areas that had an early frost. Earlier in the year the SLFs seemed to be in lower concentration and at times seemed to be absent all together. The adults and the nymphs are both very mobile. It is important to smash the ones you see. There is some thought that this may help cultivate disease organisms on the dead SLFs that can infect live SLFs. Also, removal of Ailanthus trees (Tree of Heaven) seems to slow the spread and reduce infestations.

The Spotted Lanternfly or SLF, *Lycorma delicatula* (White), is an invasive planthopper native to Asia first discovered in PA in Berks

County in 2014. SLF feeds on sap from a myriad of plants but is a huge threat to grapevines, maples, black walnut, birch, and willow. A student from Penn State discovered that the SLF prefers woody plants with higher sucrose and lower glucose levels. As SLF feeds, the insect excretes honeydew (a sugary substance) which can attract bees, wasps, and other insects. The honeydew also builds up and promotes the growth for sooty mold (fungi), which can cover the plant, forest understories, patio furniture, cars, and anything else found below SLF feeding.

SLF is currently found in 34 counties in Pennsylvania, all of which are under a state-imposed quarantine. The quarantine is in place to stop the movement of SLF to new areas within or out of the current quarantine zone and

to slow its spread within the quarantine. The quarantine affects vehicles and other conveyances, plant, wood, stone products and outdoor household items. Counties within the quarantine zone: Allegheny, Beaver, Berks, Blair, Bucks, Cambria, Cameron, Carbon, Chester, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Huntingdon, Juniata,

Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Schuylkill, York, Wayne, and Westmoreland. In addition to Pennsylvania, SLF is also found in New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Connecticut, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Reminder: Membership Renewals were due Dec. 1 but still accepted

Thank you if you renewed already. If not, please support the ARS and send in your dues. Even if our meeting schedule has been disrupted, we hope you enjoy the ARS Journal and our chapter newsletters. We appreciate the many Associate Members from other chapters, too.

The ARS now accepts online renewals for those who prefer to pay by credit card or personal Pay Pal account. To avoid dealing with the mail, check out the ARS Office and click on Membership Services:

<https://www.arsoffice.org/>

You will need your “membership number” to complete the renewal process which is on your Journal mailing label.

If you didn’t receive or misplaced the chapter’s dues mailing or you want to be a new member, use the online form at

<http://valleyforgears.org/join.html>. If you have any questions, contact Darlene Henning at 717-735-7116 or mdhenning@earthlink.net

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter takes a gap year with the Flower Show

Update by Michael Martin Mills

For a second year, the Philadelphia Flower Show will be outdoors at FDR Park in South Philadelphia in June. But for the first time in 59 years, the ARS will not have an exhibit.

A number of factors went into the board's decision to opt out of the show this year. The biggest was the fact that a June event severely constrains the notion of a rhododendron exhibit. There is no reverse forcing of shrubs so that they bloom six weeks later than normal. Last year at the first outdoor show in the history of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Greater Philadelphia Chapter's exhibit had some summer-blooming deciduous azaleas and lots of non-rhododendrons. Being unable to include any spring-blooming lepidotes, lepidotes and azaleas felt something like having a 72-hole golf tournament played on a three-hole course.

As well, mounting an exhibit on sloping ground in full sun was, to echo many of the exhibit crew members, a bit much. Doing the exhibit in June, as opposed to early March, didn't help either: in February and March, gardeners have time on their hands and can use a chunk of it to put together the exhibit.

In June, people are hard at work in their own gardens, with little time to spare for pro bono work for PHS. The usual contingent of docents dwindled to less than a third of the Convention Center level, leaving our exhibit last June unstaffed for most of the time.

PHS has not indicated whether the outdoor Flower Show will be standard going ahead or if returning to the Convention Center in late winter will happen in the post-pandemic era. The chapter Board of Directors is not opposed to participating in late-winter indoor shows, should they resume.

Plant Labels are available for Chapter Members

In cooperation with Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens, plant labels are made for VF ARS members from January through March. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Wright (steve@jenkinsarboretum.org).

Eligibility: Labels will be made **only** for members and only for their **own use**. The sequence of orders processed will give priority to active members.

Description: The product is a permanent, laser-engraved, black anodized aluminum plant label. Each will measure ¾ inches wide by 3 inches long and will come with rounded corners and a pre-punched hole for hanging. Hanging wire is the responsibility of the member (small diameter bell wire is recommended).

Quantity: 120 labels maximum per order/member.

Cost: \$30.00 for 1 to 40 labels, \$50 for 41 to 80 labels, and \$70 for 81 to 120 labels.

Checks should be made out to “Valley Forge Chapter, ARS”, and the money will be passed on to Jenkins.

Instructions for submitting:

Create a document, preferably in Microsoft Word or similar program, that lists all plant tags to be made. Be sure to write the names *exactly* as you would like them to appear on the label – capitalization, spelling, quotes, etc. must be carefully reviewed before submission. Jenkins staff will review the document, recommend edits, and confirm those edits before any label-making will take place. For single-line labels, the list is simple. If double-

line labels are desired, simply put the second line in parentheses.

Single Line Examples:

- R. mucronulatum
- R. x ‘Hershey’s Red’
- ‘Koromo Shikibu’

Double Line Examples:

- R. fortunei (‘Lushan’)
- R. x ‘PJM’ (Weston Hybrid)
- ‘Anna Kehr’ (Kehr Hybrid)

Notes:

- 1) No line on a plant label can be longer than 26 characters (including spaces).
- 2) The format is yours, i.e., it may be ‘P.J.M.’ or just P.J.M. Plant names should not be abbreviated.

Checking label information: After you have prepared your list (as outlined above), thoroughly check and recheck using your own resources. As mentioned earlier, the Jenkins staff will thoroughly review and offer suggested modifications, but it would be very helpful to have someone else give your list a check ahead of time. It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to check the labels for accuracy as they cannot be corrected once engraved. Inaccuracies may pass on false information on numerous occasions (plant sales, flower/truss shows, cuttings exchanges, garden tours).

Engraving label information: The final plant list should be emailed to Steve Wright at: steve@jenkinsarboretum.org, with ‘metal plant labels’ in the subject line.



The Evergreen Azalea Story

Evergreen azaleas began to be established in cultivation in Europe in the early 1800's. The first ones were not hardy and were used for greenhouse and indoor decoration, and are known as Indian or Belgian Indian Hybrids. The name "Indian" was derived from a misidentification of *Rhododendron indicum* as being associated with this group. A mixed group developed in the southern US beginning in the middle of the 1800's, in part from the Belgian Indian types, is known as Southern Indian Hybrids.

A large group of evergreen azaleas, known as Kurume Hybrids, has its origin near the

Japanese city of Kurume. They became widely known in the West through the work and writing of E.H. Wilson, who selected and imported 50 cultivars from Japan, arriving at Arnold Arboretum in Boston 1919. The new summer blooming Encore Azaleas are related to the Kurume azaleas. A third major group is the Kaempferi Azaleas, derived in part from *Rhododendron kaempferi* and developed in Holland after World War I. Another group, the Satsuki Azaleas, is highly prized in Japan and has been used by hybridizers in the West.

The Inter-Group Evergreen Azalea Hybrids include relatively new groups of hybrid azaleas that have been derived from plants in several groups, such as Satsuki, Kaempferi, and Kurume. The popular Glenn Dale hybrids are assigned to this group; they were developed, starting in 1935, by B.Y. Morrison in Glenn Dale, Maryland. Back Acre hybrids were also developed by B. Y. Morrison after his retirement to Pass Christian, Mississippi, in

1964, where he continued his azalea breeding work on his farm called Back Acres. Robin Hill hybrids were developed in New Jersey, so they are cold hardy. Dr. August Kehr, former geneticist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, developed some spectacular azalea cultivars having double or semi-double camellia-like flowers.

Gable hybrids were introduced by the late Joseph B. Gable, a nurseryman and hybridizer in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania. They are among the hardiest evergreen azaleas. Linwood Hardy hybrids were developed by Al Reid by combining outstanding characteristics of

greenhouse plants with hardy azaleas. Pennington hybrids consist of 16 named cultivars developed by the late Ralph Pennington in Covington, Georgia. Harris hybrids were developed by James Harris in Lawrenceville, Georgia. Pericat hybrids were developed by Alphonse Pericat in Collingdale, Pennsylvania, for greenhouse forcing but are as hardy as Kurume

hybrids. Aromi hybrids were developed by Dr. Gene Aromi, a retired University of Southern Alabama professor in Mobile, Alabama. Holly Springs hybrids were created by Col. Ronald C. Vines (Ret.) in Springfield, Virginia, just south of Washington DC. Huang hybrids were created by a Mr. Huang in China. Klimavicz hybrids were created by Joe Klimavicz in Vienna, VA.

Most of the rhododendrons and azaleas grown in gardens are hybrids, and their ability to resist cold differs remarkably from one variety to another. For this reason it is best to purchase rhododendrons and azaleas from a local nurseryman who grows his own plants.



R. kiusianum

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



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**We hope you plan
to attend!**



Steve Henning, editor
 103 Acer Place
 Lancaster, PA 17601



NEWSLETTER
January/February 2022



In This Issue	Officers and Committees:
Page 2 <i>Jan. 16: Virtual! Olivia Kirkpatrick: “Tyler’s Wister Rhododendron Garden”</i> <i>Feb. 20: At Uwchlan, Dr. Peter Zale: “Conservation & Exploration.”</i>	President: Jerry O’Dell (610) 608-2018 Vice President: Alice Horton (610) 430-0196 Treasurer: Bob Smetana (610) 688-5249 Secretary: vacant
Page 3 <i>Directions to Uwchlan Meeting House Hybridizers Garden at Tyler Arboretum</i>	Directors: Bob Horton (*20-‘23) (610) 430-0196 Erin Van Yahres (*20-‘23) (610) 644-2806 Steve Wright (*19-‘22) (267) 481-0175 Darlene Henning (*19-‘22) (717) 735-7116 Perc Moser (*21-‘24) (610) 525-3651 Kathy Woehl (*21-‘24) (610) 688 9173
Page 5 <i>Spotted Lanternfly are still on the move</i>	Membership: Darlene Henning (717) 735-7116 Newsletter Editor: Steve Henning (717) 735-7116 Plant Sale: Alice Horton (610) 430-0196 Plants-for-Members with Greater Philadelphia Chapter
Page 6 <i>Reminder: Renewals were due Dec. 1 ARS GP takes gap year at Flower Show</i>	Truss Show (VF): Perc Moser (610) 525-3651 Webmaster: Steve Henning (717) 735-7116
Page 7 <i>Plant Labels are available for Members</i>	VF Chapter’s web site: ValleyForgeARS.org
Page 8 <i>The Evergreen Azalea Story</i>	
Page 9 <i>ARS 2022 Spring Convention</i>	
ARS websites: rhododendron.org ARSStore.org ARSOoffice.org ARS2019.org	
Please contact us with email changes or if you receive this newsletter by email rather than letter carrier. Please inform Steve Henning of any changes (rhodyman@earthlink.net).	