

P.O. Box 715 Southeastern, PA 19399-0715

Web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER ***August / September 2016***

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon

Calendar at a Glance

- Aug. 28 (Sun.) District 8 Cuttings Exchange and Auction at Maris Ogg's (**note change**)
Sept. 11 (Sun.) P4M with GP at Morris Arboretum
Oct. 20 (Thu.) Greg Thompson, "Fungal Diseases Affecting, Rhod., Azaleas, & Trees"
Nov. 13 (Sun.) VF ARS Banquet at St. Davids Golf Club
Jan. 15 (Sun.) Bob & Rosa McWhorter, "Gardens of Germany and Denmark"

President's Message

Rick Ray and Liz Ball hosted a wonderful summer picnic. The day was perfect, attendance was good, the food and beverages were great and in good supply. But the best was the hospitality our hosts showed everyone. Their gardens were toured by all. Officers were re-elected and Steve Henning came off the board after many years of service and Jerry O'Dell was brought on.

The District 8 fundraiser will be hosted by Maris Ogg and Bob Smith at their gardens in Flourtown. The event will be a bit different this year as Maris is planning to serve dogs and burgers along with some adult beverages. Please come out Aug 28 and support the ARS Endowment Fund and Species Foundation. Bring cuttings to exchange and dig plants for the auction. All chapters including those outside District 8 are welcome to attend and bring friends.

Our September meeting will be at the GP meeting place at Morris Arboretum Weidner Center on Sunday Sept 11 where their P4M Sale will be open to all. I urge VFARS members to take advantage of this event as many truly unique plants will be available. Many plants from the grafting program can't be found anywhere, but at this event.

Our October meeting will be back at Jenkins 7:30pm Thursday Oct 20 featuring arborist Greg Thompson. Greg will educate us on tree and shrub fungal diseases in our area.

I'm off to get some water on all those plants I put in this spring.

See you in August:

Bob Smetana, (610) 688-5249, vfarsmetana@yahoo.com

Visit the Chapter's web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

RHODODENDRON & AZALEA CUTTINGS EXCHANGE AND PLANT AUCTION

(Auctioneer: Karel Bernady)
at Bob Smith & Maris Ogg's
507 E Mill Road, Flourtown, PA 19031
(215) 836-0637



Sunday, Aug. 28, starting at 1:00 p.m., rain or shine

Proceeds benefit ARS Endowment Fund and Research Foundation

1:00 pm: Hot dogs & Burgers courtesy of Maris.

2:00 pm: Cuttings exchange/sale.

Bring Cuttings: If donating cuttings, please arrive around 1 p.m. Use plastic bags for each cultivar, clearly labeled. Cut 3 or 4 large-leaf (elepidote) or 4-6 small-leaf (lepidote) cuttings. Best to take cuttings early in the day, ideally from the lower portions of the shrub; if there has been a dry spell, water the night before. Place in a plastic bag with a few drops of water. Named varieties only, please! Please label the bags with a waterproof marker or pencil and add, if possible, info about characteristics or parentage. Transporting the bags in a cooler is also a good idea. Cuttings are sold for 25 cents a bag for everyone and are an easy and inexpensive way to increase one's collection of azaleas and rhododendrons.

2:30 pm: Plant Auction: Karel Bernady auctioneer. Please donate rhodies and azaleas, as well as other garden-worthy plants that you feel others would like.

Some plants are donated by chapters, some by individual members. Most years, John Bartlett

of Gettysburg Garden brings an assortment of very special plants.

Important: It will help the auctioneer and the bidder if you write a description of plants that you donate for auction. Having such info will make for lively bidding, especially for one-of-a-kind or special plants.

Proceeds of the sales go to ARS Endowment Fund and the ARS Research Foundation. Prices tend to be reasonable, though sometimes a bidding frenzy results for choice items.

3:00 pm: Propagation.

Frank Brouse will expertly demonstrate how to propagate from cuttings.

About 3:30 pm: Dessert.

Please bring a dessert or appetizer to share.

Beverages will be provided.

Maris has tables and 32 chairs. If it is convenient, bring your folding chairs just in case.

If possible, **RSVP to Ellin Hlebig by August 21** or contact her for questions at 610/584-9764 or leftwall@yahoo.com

Directions:

From the Fort Washington exit of the Turnpike at US 309:

Proceed south on the PA 309 expressway for 1.2 miles.

Take PA 73 exit West toward Flourtown 0.2 miles.

Turn left onto East Mill Road.

Go to 507 East Mill Road on right directly opposite Sycamore Street.

There are three residences on the driveway; 507 is the first, on the left.

Limited parking along the driveway; best to park on Sycamore Street.

From Blue Bell:

Proceed southeast on PA 73 for 4.3 miles

Turn right onto East Mill Road.

Go to 507 East Mill Road on right directly opposite Sycamore Street.

There are three residences on the driveway; 507 is the first, on the left. Limited parking along the driveway; best to park on Sycamore Street.

From Arcadia University:

Proceed northwest on PA 73 for 2.6 miles.

Turn left onto East Mill Road.

Go to 507 East Mill Road on right directly opposite Sycamore Street.

There are three residences on the driveway; 507 is the first, on the left.

Limited parking along the driveway; best to park on Sycamore Street

On September 11, 2016, (Sun.), P4M at 1:30 pm at Morris Arboretum, Weidner Center.

Plants for Members (P4M):

On Sunday, Sept. 11, the Valley Forge (VF) Chapter will join the Greater Philadelphia (GP) Chapter for our joint Plants For Members. This will be held in the Weidner Center, at Morris Arboretum, 100 E Northwestern Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19118. At the gate, just say you are with the Rhododendron Society and admission is gratis. Rooted cuttings and 2-year grafts will be available. As part of this joint effort VF members will be invited to join GP members for their propagation workshops:

For more details on this and other GP ARS hosted events, visit their website at https://sites.google.com/a/gpchapterars.org/gpc_ars/home

On October 20, 2016, (Thursday), at 7:30 pm:

Greg Thompson:

**“Fungal Diseases Affecting,
Rhododendrons, Azaleas, & Trees”**

Greg Thompson owns Pennsylvania Tree Service in Phoenixville. Greg has been a tree surgeon for about thirty years. Much of that thirty years he has been a Certified Arborist and Pesticide Applicator.



On November 13, 2016 (Sunday), Banquet at St. Davids GC at 2:00 pm, Social Hour at 1:00 pm:

Speaker is to be announced

On January 15th (Sunday), at Jenkins Arboretum at 2:00 PM.

Bob and Rosa McWhorter: Gardens of Germany and Denmark

In May of 2014, Bob and Rosa McWhorter joined a small group of other ARS members who took a remarkable trip to see public and private gardens in Northern Germany and Denmark, some of the finest rhododendron gardens in the world. That region has been a center for rhododendron hybridizing, too. The McWhorters went through their images, selecting the best to put in a PowerPoint show so they can share some of that wonderful trip with us. Our January meeting will be a chance to enjoy images of their trip including lovely landscapes and gorgeous flowers.



2016 Joint Rhododendron & Azalea Flower Show Results from Sunday, May 7, at Morris Arboretum



This entry from Marc and Susan Thomson which won Best in Show was entered as 'lola'.

Michael Martin Mills, Chair of the Joint Cut Flower Show reported that among the many entries submitted by Marc and Susan Thomson at the Cut-Flower Competition in May was a spray of a salmon-pink azalea for which they had no name – a "lola" in rhodo-speak, for "lost label."

First, it got the blue ribbon in its section. Then it won best in class for evergreen azalea hybrids. Next up: the Maxine West Trophy for Best Evergreen Azalea. And no one, judges or show crew members, recognized it or knew its name. Finally, the judges had before them four entries from which to choose Best in Show: the Best Rhododendron Hybrid (the Gressmans' 'Wyntersett White'), the Best Deciduous Azalea ('Pink Lights', also from the Thomsons), the Best Species (Joe Minahan's *R. kiusianum*), and the nameless evergreen azalea spray.

'Lola' took the prize. It is the first time Marc and Susan have won Best in Show at the Greater Philadelphia show. As luck would have it, they found the tag before the deadline for trophy engraving: 'Aya-kanmuri', a Japanese Kurume hybrid that according to the International Rhododendron Register and Checklist has been

Best in Show: *John Wister Trophy*, 'lola', aka 'Aya-kanmuri' Marc & Susan Thomson

Best Rhododendron Hybrid: *Ross B. Davis Jr. Trophy*, 'Wyntersett White', Bud & Marilyn Gressmans

Best Evergreen Azalea: *Maxine West Trophy*, 'lola', aka 'Aya-kanmuri' Marc & Susan Thomson

Best Deciduous Azalea: *Walter Kern Trophy*, 'Pink Lights', Marc & Susan Thomson

Best Species: *Francis J. Sholomskas Trophy*, *R. kiusianum*, Joe Minahan

Best New Hybrid: *Joseph J. Becales Trophy*, 'John Paul II' x 'Orange Ruffy', Joe Minahan

Best Foliage: *Dan & Betts Layman Trophy*, 'John Paul II' x 'Harold Amateis', Joe Minahan

Most Show Points: *Judi Meade Trophy*, Michael Martin Mills

around since 1918.

The Thomsons were presented with their three trophies at the June 19 Annual Meeting and picnic. Joe Minahan also took home three trophies: the Joseph J. Becales Trophy for best new hybrid ('John Paul II' x 'Orange Ruffy'), the Dan and Betts Layman Trophy for best foliage ('John Paul II' x 'Harold Amateis'), and the Francis J. Sholomskas Trophy for Best Species (*R. kiusianum*). As mentioned, Bud and Marilyn Gressman won the Ross B. Davis Jr. Trophy for best rhododendron hybrid ('Wyntersett White').

The Judi Meade Sweepstakes Trophy was won by Michael Martin Mills, who racked up points with 10 blue ribbons in various sections.

This year's show took place on May 7 at Morris Arboretum, in conjunction with the annual plant sale. Circumstances were more challenging than in the past, since the tent for the show was on lawn, and not a putting-green-perfect lawn. Maris Ogg cut planks in her woodworking shop to place under the table legs, and a deft crew of ARS members wielded levels and shims to get all the tables level. (Top-heavy bottle-and-truss combinations do not go well with tilting tables!)

The show chair was particularly grateful for three pinch-hitting judges. Defying all odds, four of the seven people he had lined up for judges were unable to carry through. Steve Wright of Jenkins Arboretum and chapter members Tom Lloyd and Linda Hartnett filled the void on short notice, joining Jerry O'Dell of Tyler Arboretum and veteran judges Mich Steele and W. Robert Stamper.

Thirteen competitors submitted 120 entries. This was the eighth year of the combined Greater Philadelphia-Valley Forge competition. Next year's show will be under Valley Forge auspices at Jenkins Arboretum.

Raising Rhododendrons from Seed by Don Hyatt

I want to share how I raise rhododendrons and azaleas from seed. It is very easy, and a great way to raise many plants at very little cost. Rhododendrons can bloom in 3 to 4 years from seed, azaleas even sooner. Seed is cheap!



Pot of Native Azalea Seedlings

Container – Any clean pot will do, but I must find a clear plastic bag that will cover that pot and leave a bit of headroom for the seedlings to grow inside.

Plastic Bags - I enclose my pots in clear plastic bags to create mini-greenhouses. It will keep the humidity high inside while the seedlings grow during the winter months. I will not have to do anything all winter long except watch them grow. Should small seedlings dry out just once, they often die so this method means they will succeed on their own in spite of my negligence.

Medium – I use my standard rhododendron medium: equal parts peat moss and perlite. I do add some coarse sand since I like the weight and texture sand provides. Avoid sand that has any lime or salt content since it is toxic. Recently I have been adding some Pro-Mix since it has nutrients and beneficial fungi which aid growth. The medium should be moist but not wet since too much moisture encourages disease.

Planting - Sprinkle the seeds over the top of the medium. Do not cover them with soil, but place the entire pot inside the clear

plastic bag to create that mini-greenhouse. You may mist the seed lightly with water, but the 100% humidity inside is usually enough moisture to initiate germination.

Light – Rhododendrons and azaleas do require adequate light to grow well. I use inexpensive “Shop Lights”, fixtures with two fluorescent tubes that I suspend about 12 inches above the containers. The lights can be plugged into a timer that keeps them on for at least 16 to 24 hours a day. Another option is to set the containers on a bright north or east windowsill that doesn't get too much direct sun since heat can build up inside the bag and kill the seedlings.

Care - Seeds should germinate in 2 to 4 weeks. In most cases they will require no additional care until spring. The condensation on the bag usually falls back into the pot so there is no need to water. After seedlings have germinated, I have made one very weak application of fertilizer (1/8 strength). Be careful, though, since fertilizer can kill. Low light and high fertilizer makes plants prone to disease. Warren Grooms of the ASA recently shared a George Harding quote, “If you feel the need to fertilize, take a cold shower instead.”



Rhododendrons Seedlings Ready To Transplant

Transplanting – If seedlings are too close, I will transplant crowded pots to space plants an inch or so apart in new containers. I then put them back in bags under the lights. After the weather is warm, the plants can go outside. I often transplant at that time into larger flats or community pots, spacing seedlings about 16 to 2

inches apart. The flats can be set outside in some bright area that has open shade, such as the north side of the house or beside some larger plant. They can grow on their own all summer but I do cover flats with netting or screening to keep the critters out.

Problems – Potting soil that is too wet is a major cause of problems with seedlings. A gray mold can develop on seedlings inside the plastic bags, especially if they are planted too close together. Opening the bags, picking out the mold by hand, and letting things dry out will often help. I prefer to transplant any seedlings with mold into pots with fresh medium. Another problem some have had is with tiny fungus gnats. The larva will eat roots of seedlings, but I have never had an outbreak using my mini-greenhouses. Not enough room to party!

Extended Care – Natural selection will eliminate the weaker plants, but cold frame protection helps seedlings survive that first winter. I sometimes mulch flats well after cold arrives, but many will perish by spring anyway. I transplant whatever is left into larger pots to grow on, and give away the excess. Seedlings make great gifts for horticulturally inclined friends. We also need stewards who will give homes to our native azaleas and rhododendrons. Plant the neighborhood!

ARS Seed Exchange

Specialists have repeatedly observed how some plants in a seed lot of a species will be conspicuously more vigorous and occasionally appreciably hardier than the others. Thus some species strains evolved which were more adaptable to the local climate and which made possible the cultivation of that species by others in the same region. Guy G. Nearing was a pioneer in the selection of hardy forms of species normally unsuited to the New Jersey climate and he made important contributions doing this.

The ARS Seed Exchange make it easy to find seed that you can raise. Seeds collected by Society members from around the world are offered for sale at the exchange. Until March 15th only members of the American Rhododendron Society may order seed. After March 15th anyone may order seeds.

Details of the ARS Seed Exchange are posted on the ARS Website at:

<http://www.rhododendron.org/seedexchange.htm>

Seed is \$1.00 per packet, (10 pack minimum) except for seed packets from the Ernebjerg China collections which are \$2.00 per packet. Postage and handling fee is \$3.00 domestic.

Direct any questions to Norman Beaudry, ARS Seed Exchange Chairman, at ARSseed@gmail.com

ARSStore.org has earned \$1,500 for the ARS. Thank You!

May was the best month ever for Amazon sales in ARSStore.org. It may be a coincidence, but it corresponds to the use of MailChimp to send email reminders to all ARS members with known email addresses. Amazon pays a referral fee to the ARS on sales made when entering Amazon from the ARSStore.org. These referral



ARSStore.org

fees are typically 5.5% and go entirely to the ARS.

ARSStore.org has NO expenses.

Just go to ARSStore.org and from there click on the Amazon logo. Amazon sells just about everything. As long as you go to Amazon from ARSStore.org, the ARS gets a referral fee..

Rooting Azalea Cuttings by Don Hyatt

I encourage you to propagate your favorite plants and share them with others. Azaleas are very easy to root, and this approach uses a technique that relies on “mini-greenhouses” that will require minimal care for months at a time. Once cuttings are rooted and you have some spare time, they can be transplanted into individual pots and grown on!

Cutting Selection



Choose healthy growth that is beginning to harden off. Twiggy growth and long shoots can root but average size is best.



Select only the new shoots. Pinch out soft tips and carefully remove some lower leaves where the roots will form.



Azaleas are shallow rooted and only the bottom inch of the cutting will go in the soil. Long shoots can be cut in sections.

Preparation



Soaking cuttings for 5 minutes in dilute Clorox solution (5%) will kill bugs and minimize potential disease problems.



Rinse cuttings very well to remove all traces of the Clorox solution since it will burn the leaves, too.



Dip the bottom half inch of each cutting in rooting hormone. Dip'N Grow (5%) or Rootone are popular choices.

Rooting



Insert the bottom inch of the cutting into damp potting medium (equal parts peat and perlite). Medium should not be wet!

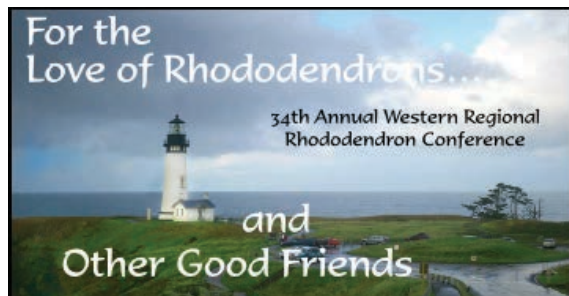


Enclose each pot in a clear plastic bag. This keeps humidity high during rooting but too much moisture causes rotting.



Place cuttings in a bright north window or under fluorescent lights for at least 8 to 10 weeks. No watering is necessary

ARS Fall Meeting in Oregon



September 30 to October 2, 2016

Best Western Agate Beach Inn

Newport, Oregon

The six chapters of ARS District 4 welcome you to the Best Western Agate Beach Inn for a great educational and fun event featuring outstanding speakers from around the world and across the nation.

After the welcome dinner on Friday evening, there is a program which highlights rhododendrons from around the world.

Saturday morning seminars will educate us on propagation, how to select rhododendrons, and wonderful companion plants to go with our rhododendrons.

Saturday night will feature Don Hyatt, an outstanding and well-known speaker from Virginia, plus a sight and sound program called Rhododendrons, Up Close and Personal, which will make you look at rhododendrons in a different way. This promises to be a delightful and entertaining way to end the evening.

Sunday morning will round out the educational seminars before ending the conference with a continuation of Friday night's theme of seeing and learning about rhododendrons from around the world. You will not want to miss these last programs, which complete our world tour with Rhododendrons from Far Away Places by Steve Hootman.

The July ARS Journal has complete program and registration details.

ARS 2017 Spring Convention

April 27-30, 2017 - Eureka, CA

Red Lion Hotel & Sequoia Conf. Center

The Eureka Chapter of the ARS will host the 2017 ARS convention in Humboldt County, CA.



The Red Lion Hotel will be our host hotel, with a rate of \$99 per room per night. The rate includes a full breakfast and an airport shuttle. The new, Sequoia Conference Center, three blocks from the hotel will be our meeting and program venue. Convention attendees can walk, drive or take a shuttle between the hotel and the center.

Humboldt County has the greatest concentration of ancient redwood groves. Prairie Creek Redwoods State park contains herds of Roosevelt Elk and Fern Canyon was one of the sites used in filming "Jurassic Park". Patrick's Point State Park shows off replicas, still in use, of local first-nation buildings and magnificent views of the rugged coastline cliffs and beaches where you can find agates

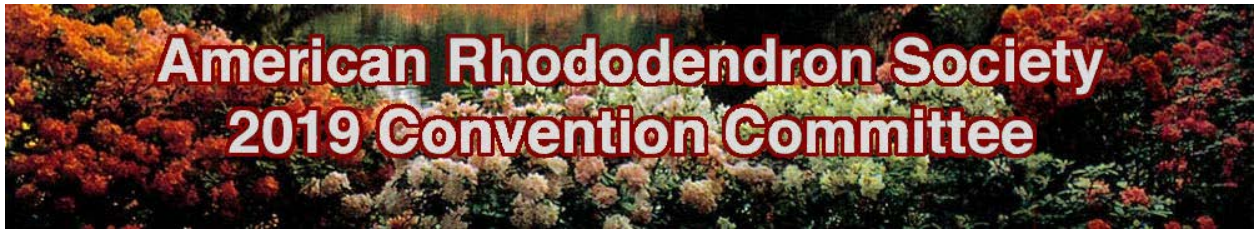
Rhododendron macrophyllum can be found in abundance among the redwoods. Many open areas in the county host the Western Azalea, *Rhododendron occidentale*. There are many Victorian buildings in Eureka as well as in the Victorian Village of Ferndale.

For more information visit:

<http://eurekaarhody.org/convention.php>

ARS 2018 in Germany Plus

ARS 2018 Spring Convention will be in Germany plus optional tours to visit gardens in Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Plans are to have this international convention entirely in English. Planning is well under way.



Region 8, will host the 2019 ARS International Convention

The Greater Philadelphia, Lehigh Valley, Susquehanna Valley and Valley Forge Chapters of the ARS will host the 2019 Convention.

Convention committee ponders hotels

May of 2019 may seem far off – more than halfway through the next U.S. president’s term in office in fact – but District Eight ARS members are definitely at work on the national convention to be held here then.

At the most recent meeting of the working committee, chaired by Steve Henning, three hotels were under consideration, the Desmond Hotel in Malvern, the Valley Forge Raddison (part of the casino complex), and the Wyndham in Lionville, which under a different name was site of the 2009 fall regional conference (you remember, the one when we shared the hotel with a large gathering of motorcyclists). Steve and Michael Martin Mills made a site visit to the three, and the task now is to get a bid from each that will work with the convention budget.

Tour itineraries are being contemplated, with a mix of outstanding public gardens (Longwood, Mount Cuba, Chanticleer and others) and fine

private gardens of members. There will probably be three days of tours to choose among. Evening speakers are being considered, and in addition to a plant sale (essential for attracting attendees and for the bottom line), a truss show and photo competition are envisioned.

Anyone interested in working on the planning committee is invited to contact Steve Henning (rhodyman@earthlink.net). Closer to the convention, many more members will be needed to carry out a variety of duties – tour docents, plant sales, goodie-bag stuffing, staffing the registration table and more. The fact is that some ARS conventions in recent years have struggled for success. The national organization does not underwrite conventions, which have to be self-supporting. Based on the 2009 fall regional convention and presuming a healthy level of member participation in pulling it off, this could be a very memorable convention. But it does require people to pitch in.

[Thanks to Michael Martin Mills for preparing this article]

Tick & Mosquito Article



The article for gardeners on mosquito and tick borne diseases in the May-June issue of this newsletter stimulated some interest. A special 4-page version of the article is available at:

<http://arsstore.org/downloads/Vectors.pdf>

International Rhododendron Journal

This journal is a work in progress. JARS editor Glen Jamieson is working with 15 rhododendron societies to form an electronic journal for all rhododendron societies. The societies include ARS, Australian, Azalea Society of America, Dunedin (NZ), German, Japan, Latvian, Norwegian, China, Rhododendron Species Foundation, RHS, France, Quebec, Sweden, and Taranaki (NZ). Also, Glen is looking for rhododendron and azalea articles for JARS. Glen Jamieson can be contacted at:

ars.editor@gmail.com .

American Rhododendron Society
 Valley Forge Chapter
 P.O. Box 715
 Southeastern, PA 19399-0715

FIRST-CLASS MAIL



NEWSLETTER

August / September 2016

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In This Issue	Officers and Committees:
Page 2 Aug. 28, District 8 CutX & Auction	President: Bob Smetana (610) 688-5249
Page 3 Sep. 11, Plants for Members (P4M)	Vice President: Debby Schmidt (610) 388-8573
Oct. 20, "Fungal Diseases"	Treasurer: Chris Smetana (610) 688-5249
Nov. 13, VF Banquet	Secretary: Joan Warren (610) 913-0005
Jan. 15, "German & Danish Gardens"	Directors:
Page 4 Joint Cut Flower Show Results	Alice Horton ('14-'17) (610) 430-0196
Page 5 Raising Rhod. from Seed by D. Hyatt	John Ryan ('14-'17) (610) 971-2368
Page 6 ARS Seed Exchange	Ellin Hlebig ('15-'18) (610) 584-9764
ARSStore.org earns over \$1,500	Kathy Woehl ('15-'18) (610) 644-6249
Page 7 Rooting Azalea Cutting by D. Hyatt	Michele Hawk ('15-'18) (610) 687-9120
Page 8 ARS Fall Meeting in Oregon	Darlene Henning ('16-'19) (610) 987-6184
ARS 2017 Spring Convention	Jerry O'Dell ('16-'19) (610) 608-2018
ARS 2018 in Germany Plus	Membership: Darlene Henning (610) 987-6184
Page 9 ARS 2019 Convention Committee	Newsletter Editor: Steve Henning (610) 987-6184
Tick & Mosquito Article Available	Plant Sale: Chris Smetana (610) 688-5249
International Rhododendron Journal	Plants-for-Members with Greater Philadelphia Chapter
ARS website: rhododendron.org	Truss Show (VF): Debby Schmidt (610) 388-8573
	Webmaster: Steve Henning (610) 987-6184
	VF Chapter's web site: ValleyForgeARS.org
Please contact us with email changes or if you receive this newsletter by letter carrier rather than email, even though you have e-mail. Please inform Steve Henning of any changes (rhodyman@earthlink.net).	