

14 Northwoods Road, Radnor, PA 19087

Chapter's Website: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER

October / November 2020

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon

Calendar at a Glance

No meetings scheduled in the near future due to COVID-19 precautions.

President's Message

With the Fall Equinox just a day or two away, we can now look forward to a refreshing relief from the hot summer. And I hope everyone is doing well as we continue to grapple through the Covid-19 pandemic. However we were able to wrap up the summer season on a bright note thanks to the Greater Philadelphia Chapter.

On Sunday, Sept. 13th, the GP Chapter hosted their Plants for Members sale at the Morris Arboretum. This has become a true "look-forward-to" event for members since it was established in the mid-1980s and is always well attended by both the GP and VF Chapters as well as other ARS Chapters. This year, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, it was staged outside, but the weather cooperated and it was well attended with strict social distancing in place and everyone wearing masks. It was definitely a much needed event for these trying days. Hats off to the Greater Philadelphia Chapter for well-organized P4M Sale!!!

Having said that, as far as our remaining 2020 Chapter events, I've gotten feedback from the Board and heard from some members. Most agree it's just not the right time to hold an indoor event and they said would not feel comfortable attending one. Consequently, I'm very sorry to say that our October 15th Chapter meeting at Jenkins and our Nov 8th Banquet at St. David's Country Club have been cancelled. With hope, as pandemic constraints

improve we can again meet together in the 2021 season. In the meantime, we might consider conducting our early 2021 season meetings (January & February) virtually through Zoom.

As you will see on page 3, this is the time when we remind members that it to renew your membership for the upcoming year. In spite of the setbacks we encountered this year I truly hope everyone is looking forward to another year as a Valley Forge Chapter ARS member. I look forward to continue working with all of the Chapter members as we continue to "encourage interest in and disseminate knowledge about Rhododendrons and Azaleas." And, once again to repeat what I've been saying in previous newsletters, I'm really looking forward to when we once again meet together in one location as the Valley Forge Chapter ARS.

In closing and speaking on behalf of the entire Valley Forge Chapter, I would like to extend our warmest condolences to Karel Bernady and his family for the loss of Betty, Karel's beloved wife of fifty-six years. We will fondly remember her bright smile and engaging warmth that was always on display at all of the Chapter functions. We will miss her very much.

Everyone, please stay safe.

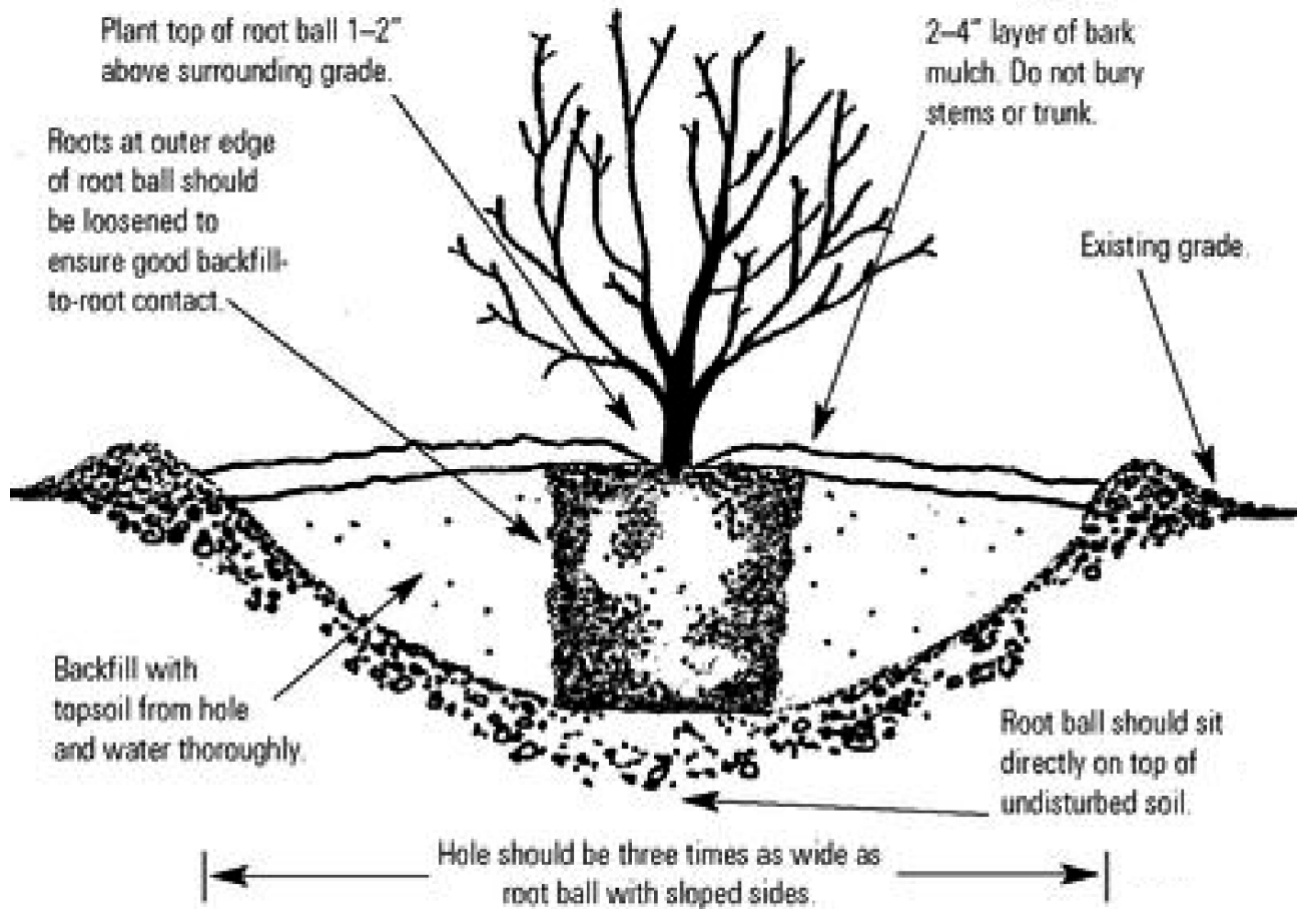
Sincerely,

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

VF ARS website: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

Planting & Watering Container-Grown Trees and Shrubs

From Weston Nurseries



Container-grown plants are usually grown in a "soil-less" planting mix composed of bark mulch, sand, and organic matter such as leaf compost. The advantage to this type of culture is that the root system develops entirely in the container, thus minimizing the transplant shock possible with B&B material. The disadvantage is that the pot tends to limit the size the plant can achieve before becoming 'root bound', which occurs when the roots begin to fill the pot. To prevent phytophthora infection in the nursery, the media is designed to not hold water.

In the nursery they are usually watered once or twice a day. The problem occurs when we bring them home and plant them. The media doesn't retain water; hence they need to be watered more often. Make sure the plant's roots are moist before you install the plant.

Newly installed shrubs and trees should be checked and watered every other day for the first two weeks, taking into account any rain. This will ensure that the soil is thoroughly moist. Once the soil is moist, limit watering to once a week if less than one inch of rain falls during the week. Your plants need to be watered throughout their first full growing cycle in order to establish roots into new soil and put on top growth. A full growing cycle includes a fall and spring season.

Late fall watering, until the ground is fully frozen, is essential for the survival of newly planted trees and shrubs. Assuming you have good drainage, each watering should apply as much water as the original container would hold if it didn't have holes in the bottom. Hence use a container when watering so you know how much you are applying.

ARS Membership Renewals Are Due December 1st

Our membership chair, Darlene Henning, is mailing out membership renewal forms to all regular and associate members. Details are on the forms, but the dues are the same as last year: \$40 for regular members and \$10 for associate members whose primary membership is with a different chapter.

Please support the ARS and send in your dues. Even if we can't meet face to face right now, we hope you enjoy the ARS Journal and our chapter newsletters. We appreciate the many Associate Members from other chapters, too.

Members must renew by December 1 to avoid Journal disruption, so try to renew early.

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 don't receive or misplaced Darlene's mailing or you want to be a new member, use the form on this page for regular members and on the next page for associate members from other chapters. If you have any questions, contact Darlene at 717-735-7116 or mdhenning@earthlink.net.

AUTUMN IS RENEWAL TIME! RENEW TODAY

Would you like to make a gift to General Fund? Amount \$ _____
 Remember someone with a gift to the Endowment Fund Amount \$ _____
 Who would you like to remember? _____
 Would you like to make a donation to the Research Foundation? Amount \$ _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email _____



Check here only if you do not wish to have your phone, fax, and e-mail address printed in our membership rosters.

DUES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1

Student (St)\$10
 Regular (R)\$40
 Commercial (C)\$90
 Sustaining (SU)\$75
 Sponsoring (SP).....\$150
 Commit for Life (L), payable over 3 years (1-\$400 & 2-\$350).....\$1000 (individual)
 Commit for Life (L), payable of 3 years in increments of \$500\$1500 (Family)

The power of the internet should encourage commercial membership for our "grower" members, your free full-page ad will be visited by thousands of people each week during our busy rhododendron season

Membership type _____ x no. yrs. _____ = Total US Funds Enclosed _____

Check here if you do not wish to receive the Journal/ARS _____

THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
 Valley Forge Chapter
 14 Northwoods Road
 Radnor, PA 19087

Sad News



Betty Bernady passed away August 30. Betty, the wife of Karel, was always in the kitchen when we met at Uwchlan Meeting House. We always enjoyed seeing. She was very witty and will be greatly missed by all.



Betty & Karel

Rhododendron of the Year Nominees Wanted

Don Hyatt is charged with polling chapters in the Middle Atlantic Region for a consensus on the Rhododendrons of the Year. Each fall, we come up with nominees. Each of us can select four plants as nominees:

- a large leaf Elepidote Rhododendron,
- a small leaf Lepidote Rhododendron,
- an Evergreen Azalea, and
- a Deciduous Azalea.

Usually Don travels to chapter meetings in the region trying to get nominees but that will not happen this year. If you have some favorite plants, send the names to Don Hyatt, Don@donaldhyatt.com, and he will try to form a consensus. We don't want to repeat past winners so review the prior ROY winners from our region listed on the next page.

WELCOME BACK ASSOCIATE MEMBER

REMEMBER, AUTUMN IS RENEWAL TIME!

Please Mail Your Associate Dues Before December 1st

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____



DUES SHOULD BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1

What is your home chapter? _____

Enclose your Associate Dues Amount \$ 10.00

Extra Endowment Fund Donation Amount \$ _____

Who would you like to remember? _____

Extra Research Foundation Donation? Amount \$ _____

Total Enclosed Amount \$ _____

Thank You For Being A Valley Forge Chapter Associate Member _____

THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
Valley Forge Chapter
14 Northwoods Road
Radnor, PA 19087

Middle Atlantic Region – 2021 Rhododendron of the Year Award Nominees

We need your input for the 2021 Rhododendron of the Year Awards. Below are last year’s Winners:



‘Bea MacDonald’



R. keiskei



‘Wagner’s White Spider’



R. periclymenoides

These are all the past ROY Winners by Year for the Middle Atlantic Region:

Year	Elepidote	Lepidote	Evergreen Azalea	Deciduous Azalea
2020	‘Bea MacDonald’	<i>R. keiskei</i>	‘Wagner’s White Spider’	<i>R. periclymenoides</i>
2019	‘Ken Janek’	‘Rhein’s Luna’	‘Treasure’	<i>R. cumberlandense</i>
2018	‘A. Bedford’	‘24 Karat’	‘Dreamsicle’	<i>R. arborescens</i>
2017	‘Gilbert Myers’	‘Blaney’s Blue’	‘Ben Morrison’	<i>R. canescens</i>
2016	<i>R. hyperythrum</i>	<i>R. minus var. minus</i>	‘Inch’	<i>R. atlanticum</i>
2015	‘John C. White’	‘Southland’	‘Ashley Ruth’	‘My Mary’
2014	‘Nestucca’	‘Kehr’s White Ruffles’	‘Caitlin Marie’	<i>R. calendulaceum</i>
2013	‘Taurus’	‘Cornell Pink’	‘Rose Greeley’	<i>R. schlippenbachii</i>
2012	‘Janet Blair’	‘Windbeam’	‘Sandra’s Green Ice’	‘Sunny-side-up’
2011	‘Brown Eyes’	‘Molly Fordham’	‘Tina’s Whorled’	<i>R. prunifolium</i>
2010	‘Scintillation’	‘Mary Fleming’	‘Carrie Amanda’	‘Klondyke’
2009	‘Wheatley’	‘Landmark’	‘Koromo-shikibu’	‘Old Gold’
2008	‘Mist Maiden’	‘Weston’s Aglo’	‘Dream’	‘White Lightning’
2007	‘Caroline’	‘Olga Mezitt’	‘Fairfax’	(none)
2006	‘Bellringer’	‘PJM Elite’	‘Elsie Lee’	‘Homebush’
2005	‘Calsap’	‘Dora Amateis’	‘Nancy of Robinhill’	‘Gibraltar’
2004	‘Gigi’	‘April Pink’	‘Girard’s Fuchsia’	‘Crimson Tide’

Criteria for selecting a Rhododendron of the Year for the Middle Atlantic Region:

1. We need to select plants that grow in as wide a range as possible. We are not trying to publicize new varieties that are recently released but we want plants that are considered “good doers” or appear on the Proven Performer lists developed by the local chapters in our region.
2. The cultivar should be a superior form. It should have attractive flowers, good foliage, and a plant habit that makes it a desirable landscape specimen when not in bloom. The plant should not be prone to insect damage or disease problems.
3. One of the biggest difficulties we have had in choosing ROY nominees is that the plants must be **officially registered** with the American Rhododendron Society. Many wonderful plants we grow are not registered so they are not eligible for the ROY awards. Rhododendron species can be used as ROY winners without being registered provided the typical form performs well throughout the region.
4. The variety should be available for purchase either through commercial sources or chapter plant sales. Ideally, we should be looking several years ahead to give growers time to build up stock for sale.

To develop a list of potential nominees, please send names of your favorite rhododendrons and azaleas to:

Don Hyatt: donaldhyatt@verizon.net or don@donaldhyatt.com

Raising Rhododendrons and Azaleas from Seed

by Donald W. Hyatt

My procedure for raising rhododendrons and azaleas from seed is rather easy. The process requires some simple materials, viable seed, and a bit of patience, but the results are very rewarding. Seedlings started during the winter months can be planted outdoors the following spring, and in a few years they will provide a wealth of landscape material at practically no cost. Rhododendrons can flower in 3 to 4 years from seed, and azaleas even sooner. Those first blooms will be the most exciting part since every plant will be slightly different. Some may be prettier than their parents and others not as good, but the next prize winner could be in your own backyard too.



For containers, I often recycle plastic gallon jugs used for milk or bottled water. With a pair of scissors, I cut off the top half of a well-washed jug and make a few slits in the bottom for drainage. These jugs make excellent seed starters but almost any container will do. It is important to find a clear plastic bag that will completely enclose the pot to make a miniature greenhouse



for germination. That way, tiny seedlings won't require special care in our dry winter homes.

The soil mix I use is my standard potting medium for rhododendrons and azaleas: 1/3 peat moss, 1/3 perlite, and 1/3 sand. I make certain that the sand is well washed does not contain limestone, since rhododendrons do not like salt or sweet soil. I fill the cutoff plastic jugs about 1/2 full, and moisten the medium well, but make sure it is not too wet or soggy. Excess moisture is a serious problem for seedlings or rooted cuttings since it encourages fungus diseases.

I plant the small seeds directly on the surface of the medium, and try to spread them fairly uniformly, not too close together. I often moisten some very dilute fertilizer solution at this stage but nothing else during the next few months. Sometimes I plant the seed more closely at first, and then prick out small seedlings soon after germination, just as they show their first true leaves. I then transplant them to fresh containers, spacing evenly to allow the seedlings more room to grow.



I enclose each container inside a clear plastic bag and place these mini-greenhouses under artificial lights, about 12 inches from the top of the container. An inexpensive "shop light" fixture with two fluorescent 40-watt bulbs can provide enough light for 15 or more pots of seedlings. I keep the lights on for 18 to 24 hours per day, since long days encourage vegetative growth.



Seedlings germinate in a few weeks, and grow slowly at first but since the entire system is enclosed, there is no need to water or fertilize. I

just watch the leaves expand, imagining what the blooms will look like and wondering where I will put those plants in years to come. Mature rhododendrons are best spaced 6 to 10 feet apart, so a few pots of seedlings can easily plant an acre of land.

In most cases, seedlings grow undisturbed until I am ready to transplant in the spring. Plants will grow more rapidly if given space, dilute fertilizer and fresh air, but when I am short on time, I have often let them stay in sealed containers for a year or more. Rhododendron seedlings can survive much neglect. If seedlings are too close and the medium too wet, a gray mold might appear which can kill them, but some fresh air and repotting helps the condition.

When ready to transplant, gradually open the bags to get seedlings used to lower humidity before the move.

Once in the garden, allow the seedlings grow on their own without too much fuss or care. Natural selection may kill a few of the weaker plants but the others should adjust to local conditions. In a few years you will have a garden full of beautiful rhododendrons and azaleas that are perfectly adapted to your particular environment. Each spring, you will anxiously await the blossoms of old

favorites as well as the first blooms of your new seedlings. It won't be long before you are giving away plants to all your friends because you have run out of room.



Rhododendron: Rivals of the Rose

Courtesy of the Literary Gardener, Rhonda Nowak

The Rhodora

On being asked, Whence is the flower?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals fallen in the pool
Made the black water with their beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that, if eyes were made for seeing,
Then beauty is its own excuse for Being;
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask; I never knew;
But in my simple ignorance suppose
The self-same power that brought me there,
brought you.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Rhodora" in 1847

In May of 1834, Ralph Waldo Emerson began a new journal while visiting his mother in Newton, Massachusetts. No doubt inspired by the profusion of flowers in bloom at the time, his first entry was "The Rhodora," a verse that was later published in his first book of poetry.

Emerson subtitled "The Rhodora" with "On being asked, Whence is the flower?" and he ended the poem by answering this question:

"Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same power that brought me there brought
you."

"The Rhodora" is an early expression of Emerson's thoughts about the connection between humans and

nature, ideas he developed further in his well-known transcendentalist essay "Nature" (1836).

It's certainly not difficult to understand why Emerson saw a higher power in the brightly colored rhododendron flowers, or why he described them as a "rival of the rose." In fact, "rhododendron" comes from the Greek "rhodon" (rose) and "dendron" (tree), perhaps originally referring to Rhododendron species that can grow as tall as trees.

The ancient Greeks and Emerson may have been surprised to learn there are about 1000 species in the Rhododendron genus that have originated in many parts of the world, a few of which are China, Japan and the United States.

It's important to note that all parts of all types of rhododendron are poisonous to humans and pets (also horses). The toxicity of the plant is probably why it represented "danger" in the Victorian language of flowers. There have been cases of accidental poisoning when people consumed "mad honey," which contains a neurotoxin from rhododendron nectar.

Ralph Waldo Emerson most likely was unfamiliar with the rhododendron's hallucinogenic effects, yet he saw God in "the purple petals, fallen in the pool, [that] made the black water with their beauty gay."

Rhonda Nowak is from Medford, Oregon, an area that has seen some of the most devastating and tragic damage from recent wild fires. She has a website at <https://mailtribune.com/podcasts/the-literary-gardener>



ARSStore.org

Where every purchase benefits the
American Rhododendron Society

We hope you are and your loved ones are staying safe during this Pandemic. If you are doing online shopping during these challenging times, please remember to use the ARS affiliate stores, AmazonSmile or Target. Walmart has closed their affiliate store.

Stay Safe!

COVID-19 precautions and community impact have changed our lives. The first priority is to stay safe and to protect the most vulnerable in our communities. We owe our first responders and medical staffs a HUGE THANK YOU. They are our heroes in these troubled times. We also must be grateful to those that are manning other essential activities so the we can keep our lives as normal as possible.

It is important to stay in touch with our friends and neighbors.

Do you want to avoid going out?

Many of us, especially those in the more vulnerable population, are avoiding going out during this pandemic. We try to get groceries delivered. We order more things on line. If we dare venture to go out, some of our "non-essential" stores have closed. Stores that are open have in place social-distancing rules and may be out of some hard-to-find items. This online shopping so we don't have to go out to

Quick Links:



[Target.ARSStore.org](https://www.target.com/?ref=arsstore)



[Amazon.ARSStore.org](https://www.amazon.com/s?ref=arsstore)

is a time when many of us are turning to looking for items that we can't get delivered locally. The good news is that ARS online affiliate stores Amazon, and Target have many of the items we need. Since these stores are affiliated with the ARS, if you go to them through the ARSStore, they give the ARS a donation at no cost to you, their customer. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at manager@arsstore.org

AmazonSmile is our Amazon now.

If you use [Amazon.ARSStore.org](https://www.amazon.com/s?ref=arsstore) you will be automatically taken to the ARS AmazonSmile store. I am sure some of you might have been surprised to see this, but AmazonSmile is our only Amazon option. If you are an Amazon customer, you can enter through [Amazon.ARSStore.org](https://www.amazon.com/s?ref=arsstore) and still receive all your normal perks.

Target Has Store Pickup. The ARS also has [Target.ARSStore.org](https://www.target.com/?ref=arsstore), online ARS affiliate stores to use. These stores donate up to 4% to the ARS. A growing number of ARS members are using these stores, especially in these troubled times. **Target** has most anything **Amazon** has and some things **Amazon** doesn't have such as store brands. **Target** has home delivery as well as free store pickup. They have similar low prices. In many cases, home delivery is free.

Use these links for the ARS affiliate store of your choice.

Steve Henning, editor
103 Acer Place
Lancaster, PA 17601



NEWSLETTER
October / November 2020



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ARS websites:	Darlene Henning ('19-'22) (717) 735-7116
rhododendron.org ARSStore.org	Perc Moser ('18-'21) (610) 525-3651
ARSOoffice.org https://ars75.org/	Kathy Woehl ('18-'21) (610) 688 9173
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	Newsletter Editor: Steve Henning (717) 735-7116
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	Plants-for-Members with Greater Philadelphia Chapter
	Truss Show (VF): Debby Schmidt (610) 388-8573
	Webmaster: Steve Henning (717) 735-7116
	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).	