

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society



August 2012 Newsletter

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NEXT EVENT: District 8 Cutting Exchange and Plant Auction. Sunday, Aug. 19, at the Chadds Ford home of Debby Schmidt. Proceeds benefit the ARS Endowment Fund and the ARS Research Foundation. The event begins at 1:30, when those contributing cuttings should arrive (details on cuttings below). The sale of cuttings (Cheap, my friends, cheap!) starts at 2 p.m. At 2:30, there will be an auction of donated plants (yes, you may donate plants for the auction). Karel Bernady will be the auctioneer. A propagation demonstration follows the auction, and dessert is scheduled for 3:30.

Please bring chairs, desserts and (optional) cuttings. Beverages will be provided. (Feel free to bring your own lunch as well.)

Cuttings: Take cuttings early in the day after watering or rain the evening before. Cuttings taken lower on a plant are preferred (they seem to root better), and should be about 6 inches of this year's growth. Place 6 cuttings of the same variety in a zipper-style plastic bag with just a few drops of water. Critical: label the bag in indelible marker with the variety and your name. Given the likely weather, refrigeration is recommended, even putting the bags in an ice chest (though not directly atop ice) for the trip to Chadds Ford.

Directions: 51 Blue Stone Drive, Chadds Ford, Pa. Debby Schmidt's home is just north of Route 1, between Longwood Gardens and the Chadds Ford business district. Turn north on Chandler Road, proceed about a half-mile to Fox Run Road and turn right. At the end of Fox Run, turn left and proceed to No. 51, which is on the left.

PLANTS FOR MEMBERS, WITH A TWIST. This annual meeting/sale, which has been known to have members virtually panting with expectation, returns to an arboretum near you on Sunday, Sept. 9. As in the past, rooted cuttings, adorable in their little pots, will be sold at a remarkably low price. Even more remarkable is the opportunity to acquire choice, delectable, obscure varieties. If anything could top that, our propagation maestro, Karel Bernady, has mastered the ancient art of grafting. Thus, the impossible-to-root are now acquirable. The grafted plants to be sold are two years old and, given the extra effort and time they required, will cost more. A list of all rooted and grafted cuttings to be sold will be posted on our website in late August, and an *email* reminder of the meeting will be sent then as well. (If you do not receive email, mark your calendar now; if you cannot wait until the sale/meeting itself to get a printed list of varieties, contact Karel Bernady in late August.) The sale takes place Sunday, Sept. 9, at the Bloomfield Farm section of Morris Arboretum. We'll gather at 1:30 p.m. for conviviality and refreshments, with chapter announcements preceding Karel's warm-up spiel and the sale itself.

A FUN B.Y.O. DAY IN THE SHADE. Thursday, Aug. 23. That's Bring Your Own Lunch, and help Karel Bernady stick cuttings for next year's crop of baby rooted plants of incomparable rareness and desirability. Those who have never propagated cuttings are particularly encouraged to take part – you'll learn best techniques (Karel's rooting success is storied) and there's always plenty of rhododendron tidbits in the conversation around the work table. The workday starts at 9 a.m. (late arrival is fine) and takes place, rain or shine, at Steve Kristoph's nursery in the middle of New Jersey (a quick few miles from Exit 8 of the New Jersey Turnpike). BYO lunch; beverages provided. Please contact Karel Bernady at 610-827-0113 or bernadk@verizon.net. (Grafting work days will be in late October and early November; let Karel know now if you are interested.)

A MOVEABLE FEAST. After a couple of years in the new farm-side facility at Morris Arboretum, our typical meetings will again be held in the Widener building at the top of the winding driveway on the public side of the arboretum. All will agree: It's better, especially for slide presentations. Thanks to Bob Gutowski and Kate Deregibus of Morris for facilitating this. Among the goals is greater attendance from the public. *Important deviation:* The Sept. 9 Plants for

Members sale/meeting will be on the farm side, which is better suited for those slightly grimy little pots.

CHANGES IN OUR OFFICERS. In addition to the election of Maris Ogg as president at the annual meeting in June, there have been a few tweaks to our governance chart (FYI, the bylaws empower the board to fill vacancies in offices). Michael Mills has become the secretary, a vacant office, and thus resigned as vice president. He'll do double duty as corresponding and recording secretary. Debby Evans was chosen to be vice president, and will include publicity of chapter events to the wider world in her portfolio.

COMING SOON, TO AN INBOX NEAR YOU. Our chapter newsletter is going quarterly, under the name Greater Philadelphia RhodoGravure, with a completely new look. The first issue will be for the fall. The RhodoGravure will be available both as email and as a dead-tree, USPS-delivered product (see next paragraph!), and will include the meeting schedule and information for the coming six months or more. A brief meeting reminder will be sent *electronically ONLY* shortly before each meeting. The editor of the RhodoGravure will be Michael Martin Mills (mmm19119@gmail.com), and he welcomes ideas, suggestions and contributions. He aims to make the RhodoGravure a lively and informative quarterly.

PAPER VS. VIRTUAL. Frankly, we'd really like everyone who can to switch over to electronic newsletter delivery. Why? It's cheaper, and it's way easier for the dedicated band of officers and directors who keep the chapter humming. If you've been receiving the printed newsletter by mail and are ready to go electronic, please contact Michael Mills and supply him with your email address: mmm@gmail.com.

CALENDAR:

Aug. 19, Sunday – Cutting Exchange and Auction, 1:30 p.m. (see above).

Aug. 23, Thursday – Propagation workday, starting at 9 a.m., Kristoph Nursery, Englishtown, N.J. (see above)

Sept. 9, Sunday – Regular meeting with Plants for Members sale of rooted cuttings. 1:30 p.m. at Bloomfield Farm, Morris Arboretum (see above)

Sept. 22, Saturday -- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Fall Garden Festival. Philadelphia Navy Yard. All day.

Oct. 21, Sunday – Regular chapter meeting, Widener building, Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Nov. 18, Sunday – Regular chapter meeting, Widener building, Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Jan. 13, Sunday – Regular chapter meeting, Widener building, Morris Arboretum, 1:30 p.m.

Feb. 17, Sunday – Joint meeting with Valley Forge Chapter, Uwchlan Meeting House, Lionville, Pa.

April 13, Saturday – Annual banquet.

Next Board meetings: Sept. 25, Dec. 4, 7:30 at Maris Ogg's house.