



Potomac Valley Chapter American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Spring Newsletter: May 2012

Calendar

- * April 26, 2012 – Volunteer at the White Garden (first of the season)
- * April 28, 2012 – Potomac Valley Chapter ARS Garden Tour
- * April 29, 2012 – Northern Virginia Chapter ASA Garden Tour
- * May 4-7, 2012 – ARS/ASA Joint Convention, Asheville, NC
- * May 12, 2012 – Mason-Dixon ARS Flower Show, Westminster, MD
- * May 18-20, 2012 – MAC ARS Meeting, Blacksburg, VA
- * June 24, 2012 – Chapter Picnic, Seneca Creek State Park, MD

Chapter Officers

President: Richard Mohr

rngmohr@msn.com

VP & Secretary

Still Open

Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman

prittman@erols.com



'Midnight Mystique' in the Mohr Garden

Chapter Garden Tour

Date: Saturday, April 28, 2012

Time: 9 – 5 PM

Location: *Maryland Gardens*

We have a very busy spring this year with lots of activities in our Potomac Valley Chapter as well as other events offered by nearby rhododendron and azalea society chapters. We have included those in our calendar since many of us are members of the other organizations. Our chapter did have to cancel its Flower Show this year but we have decided to hold a garden tour instead. A separate page in this newsletter will include addresses, directions, a timetable, and other details. We highlight the general itinerary here.

Even though spring was very early, there should still be plenty of rhododendrons and midseason azaleas for us to see. In the morning we will visit three gardens in the Montgomery County area and in the afternoon we will visit two gardens in Anne Arundel County. The gardens will only be open during the specified times, so we ask that our members stick to the schedule since it allows our garden hosts to participate in the tours. Members do not have to participate in the whole day's activities, and can come to any of the gardens as desired. Attendees are asked

to bring their own bag lunch and drinks. There are no plans for a rain date, so our tour is rain or shine. If there is bad weather, bring an umbrella.

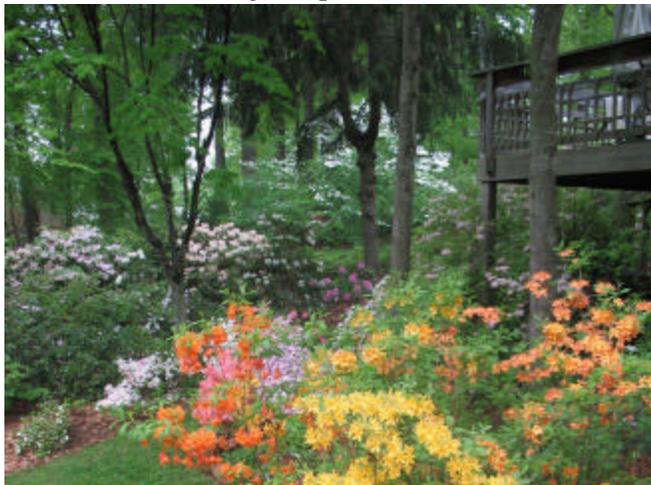
We will begin our tour at the home of Richard and Ginny Mohr who live very close to the Potomac Community Center where we often hold our meetings. The Mohr's home is on a wide street and there is ample room for parking, so we hope people will use this as an opportunity to arrange carpools to the other gardens. Be sure to check out their 'Midnight Mystique', the bicolored purple and white rhododendron that has produced so many interesting hybrids. In every garden, please be sure to ask before taking pollen if you wish to make some crosses. Members are also encouraged to bring their cameras so we can make this a photography outing.



Vista in the Beaudry Garden

Our next stop will be the home of Norman and Jean Beaudry, one of the featured gardens on tour during the 2006 ARS/ASA Convention. They have limited parking in their driveway so we ask that drivers reserve those spots for handicap parking and persons who have difficulty walking. The rest of us are asked to park at the street and walk through the front gate of their deer fence. That is a wonderful way to view the

extensive front yard plantings as you descend to the home, but there are also more plantings in the backyard. The Beaudrys have a large collection of rhododendrons, azaleas, dwarf conifers, maples, and companion plants, and their Dexter rhododendron collection is one of the best in the region. They also have many of their own hybrids, so we have asked Norman to demonstrate how to make a rhododendron cross. As we visit the gardens we will try to discuss plants that have been good parents and others that may not, and what one might expect from various crosses.



The Wallenmeyer Garden

Our next stop will be the home of Jon and Phyllis Wallenmeyer. Their home is on a wide street with ample parking. The Wallenmeyers have a lovely landscape with filled with rhododendrons and azaleas. You can get a sense of the natural design from a vista taken in their garden among the color pictures in our last newsletter showing photography contest winners. A portion of that photo is shown above.

From there we will head east to Gambrills for the other Maryland gardens. Bob and Rosa McWhorter have reserved a community pavilion near their home



The Home of Bob and Rosa McWhorter

that day where we can have our lunch. After we finish lunch, we will then tour their garden.

The McWhorters have a lovely landscaped garden surrounding their home with many rhododendrons, azaleas, and companion plants. Their street is wide which allows ample parking, but Bob recommends that cars park on his side of the street heading up the hill as it provides better view of traffic along their road.

Our final garden on the tour will be the beautiful landscape Carol Segree has created on the one acre property around her home. Her backyard is a knoll with ravines on both sides, and she has created a network of wooded paths throughout the garden. Carol has an extensive collection of rhododendrons and azaleas, and her eye for design is evident everywhere. She has many deciduous azaleas like the frilled, pale lemon yellow 'Sweet Christie' pictured below. She is also partial to many other plants including Japanese maples, peonies, and magnolias.



'Sweet Christie' in the Segree Garden

Field Trip to Cape Cod – May 16-18

Due to the unprecedented warm weather in early spring, the bloom season on Cape Cod is way ahead of schedule, too. Instead of the Memorial Day weekend, the date has been pushed back two weeks. Sadly, this will be in conflict with some other local activities.

If you are interested in going, let Norman Beaudry know so he can keep you informed.

Norman Beaudry: beaunorm@verizon.net

Most people stay at the Earl of Sandwich Motel but there are many other places to stay in Sandwich.

Accommodations: The Earl of Sandwich Motel

378 Route 6A, East Sandwich, MA 02537

1-800-442-EARL www.earlofsandwich.com

District 9 Director's Report

By *Ann Mangels*

Over the years, I've often laughed at the amount of space written about the weather in these annual reports. When I asked the chapter presidents from District 9 to highlight their activities since the last meeting, no one talked about weather – and for good reason.



Bill and Ann Mangels

It's been outstanding and unprecedented! Early flower shows are the winners for us this year and hopefully we'll see some trusses not usually blooming at show times.

Mason Dixon continues to stay active, with the Plant Development Committee expanding its variety of specimens, some of which may be available at the flower show in May. The community garden at the Bear Branch Nature Center will be cleaned and replanted at the end of March, in readiness for spring. Deer continue to be a problem there. The chapter annually has a luncheon in January which provides an opportunity for catching up and looking forward. They have also been visible at local home and garden shows, a source of many new members.

Since the Middle Atlantic Chapter hosted last fall's ARS meeting in Richmond, they have been able to concentrate on some future activities. Their spring meeting will be in Blacksburg, VA, with visits to private gardens and to the Hahn Horticultural Garden. Chapter members will be stopping to visit mountain areas in Tennessee and North Carolina after the meeting in Asheville to enjoy the work accomplished last fall when over 700 native plants were put into the ground.

Potomac Valley has been leading efforts by Friends of the National Arboretum to recognize the value of the azalea hillside by encouraging donations to its continued presence. Volunteers have also worked at the Margaret White Garden which has been turned over into a county open space area. Margaret was a longtime member of the Potomac Valley Chapter who died recently after years of collecting and establishing her garden. Because of transitions at the National Arboretum, meeting place of the chapter, they are unable to have a flower show this year and will instead have a member garden visiting day.

Ann Mangels

Director, ARS District 9

North Carolina Plant Trip

By *Joe Marsala*

This year, 15 plant-hungry souls converged on Garner, North Carolina, for our annual plant hunting trip. Suffice it to say that North Carolina is richer and our wallets much lighter as a result! As usual, our 'wine and snacks' socials were lots of fun. We visited



Waterfall in Tony Avent's Garden

Pine Knot Farms, Big Bloomers, Tony Avent's Plant Delights Nursery, and Camellia Forest. Several folks also visited CamToo wholesale camellia nursery and another group visited J.C. Raulston Arboretum.



Roof Top Garden in the J.C. Raulston Arboretum

Those attending were Tim and Janet Sheldon, Brent and Becky Heath, Nancy Fuchs, Don Hyatt, George McLellan, Joe and Marge Marsala, Phyllis Rittman, Ray Gustin, Bill Cawthorn, Bill and Ann Mangels, and Dianne Gregg.

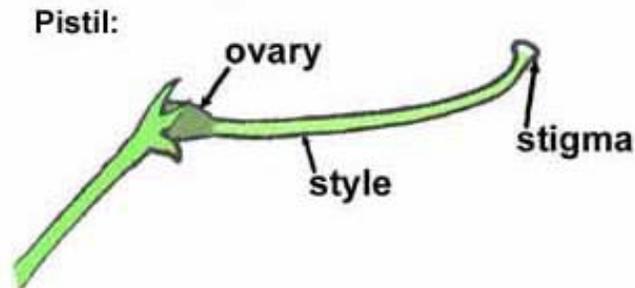
I noticed a greater variety of plant material this year (is this even possible?). We all had a great time, but now we must focus on getting all those plants in the ground!

Making a Rhododendron Cross

by Don Hyatt

When we have our garden tour, we will try to ask Norman Beaudry to give us a demonstration on how to make a rhododendron cross. The bees have no trouble making crosses, but when a breeder wants to create a new hybrid, hand pollinated crosses where both parents are known are preferred by most hybridizers.

A typical flower is composed of a number of basic parts. The petals are usually the most obvious since their color is usually what attracts us when we see flowers in bloom. With rhododendrons and azaleas, the petals are usually not separate but are fused together into a single funnel-like structure called the corolla. Where the corolla attaches to the stem, or pedicel, there are usually smaller green bracts called sepals. In hose-in-hose flowers, those sepals may actually have become a second corolla.



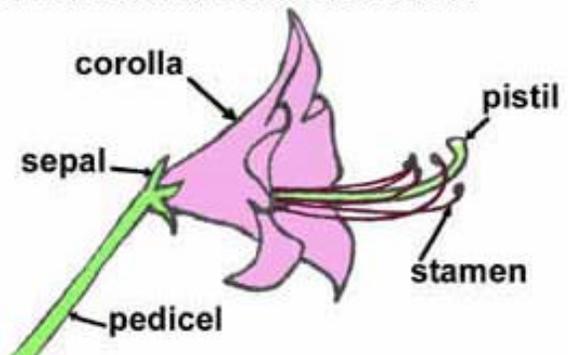
Protruding from the center of the flower are the important parts needed for hybridization. The female part of a rhododendron blossom is a solitary structure called the pistil. Typically, it is a little longer and thicker than the male parts of the flower which are the stamens. At the far end of the pistil is a sticky surface called the stigma. This is where pollen must be placed in order to make a cross. At the other end where the pistil adjoins the sepals is the ovary. This will later become the seed pod. The portion between the ovary and the stigma is called the style.

Most rhododendron and azaleas have from 5 to 10 stamens and each stamen has an obvious pollen sac at the end called the anther. With some rhododendrons

Stamens:



Parts of a Rhododendron Flower:

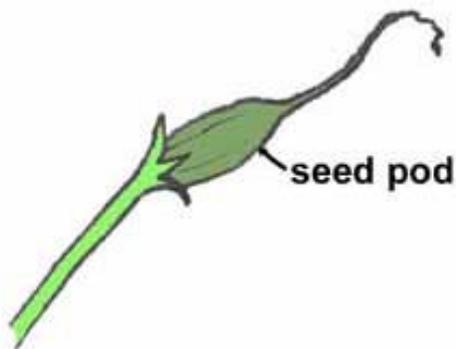


like *R. fortunei*, the anthers contain so much pollen that it drools from the holes at the end and hangs in long strands. Pollen seems to exude from the anthers more readily when the stamens are jostled or twirled as when visited by a bee. With other rhododendrons, the pollen is not easily accessed and sometimes the anthers must be cut open to get to the grains. I prefer to use "promiscuous parents" with gobs of pollen.

The process of making a cross is rather simple. Just remove a couple of stamens from one flower and dab the pollen on the stigma of another blossom. Pollination is done! Within a day or two, the minute pollen grains on the stigma will germinate and send tiny tubes down the style to fertilize the undeveloped seeds in the ovary. By mid summer, the ovary should be much larger than it was when the flower was first pollinated, and the rest of the pistil will have withered and turned brown. As the seed pod dries out in late fall, it will split open to release the tiny seeds inside. At that time, the seeds can be planted but they can also be saved for future years. Seed viability does diminish with time, so if they are not planted during that first year, it is best to store them in a refrigerator in order to keep germination rates high.

There are some procedures that hybridizers use to ensure a "pure" cross with no possibility of contamination. When someone has a hybridizing goal in mind, why waste time raising stray seedlings that don't meet goals of the desired cross? However, hybridizers will admit that some of the best things often come from those chance seedlings. Personally, I like to force budded plants in my greenhouse so I can make crosses in late winter where there will not be a problem with rain, wind, or bees bringing in stray pollen from another flower. When making crosses outside, it is best to remove the corolla and stamens from unopened buds of the proposed seed parent prior to making a cross. That way, insects will not be attracted to the flower and without stamens there will

be less chance of self pollination. Because the flower parts were removed in the bud stage it is not easy to tell when the flower is "open" and ready for pollination. The stigma should be watched carefully to see when it becomes moist and sticky since that is when it is ready to accept pollen. After pollen is applied, some people protect the stigma with a small piece of aluminum foil crimped over the tip or even a plastic bag covering the entire flower truss.



I usually try to pollinate at least half the flowers in rhododendron truss. That way if I see big seed pods develop on flowers where I made a cross, and only undeveloped ovaries elsewhere, I feel certain the cross is good. It also provides extra seed to share in our seed exchange. Always label the cross so it is easy to find later and there is no confusion as to the parentage. By convention, the seed parent is listed first and the pollen parent is listed second.

As we walk around the various gardens on our tour, let's discuss the potential of various crosses and what we might expect. Then take some pollen home and make a few crosses of your own.

Mountain Hikes: *Dates to be Determined*

We will try to arrange a more organized field trip to see the native azaleas on Roan Mountain and Gregory Bald in a future year, but some of us will be heading to the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee in early June as always. We need to check on the flame azalea seedlings we planted on Hooper Bald last fall.

The peak season seems to be getting earlier every year. We used to plan our hikes around the third week in June, but in recent years we have moved the date back to the second week and this year it could even be the first week. If you want to join us this year, just let Don Hyatt or Jim Brant know so we can keep you posted on our plans. If we hear that the mountains are in bloom, we may leave with little advance notice.

Don Hyatt: Don@donaldhyatt.com

Jim Brant: jandpbrant@verizon.net



The White Garden

Volunteering at the White Garden

When Margaret White passed away in January of 2009, she was just a few weeks away from her 104th birthday. At that time, the title to her lovely 13-acre estate transferred fully to the Fairfax County Park Authority. She has given a wonderful gift to our community, and I hope the members of our chapter will continue to support the upkeep of her garden.

The property is officially called the John C. and Margaret K. White Gardens now, but it is not opened to the public except on special occasions. The county needs to deal with some infrastructure problems first, and funding for that is not available at this time. The garden still needs care, though. We need to prune, rake leaves, and pull invasive weeds or vines. If you can spare a few hours once a month, we really need your help. The first sessions should be lovely! Come!!

Mary Olien, the Director of Green Spring Gardens, has set up a work schedule for those who would like to volunteer. Essentially, it will be the 4th Thursday of the month from 9:00 AM until noon, but she plans to schedule a few Saturday sessions later in the season.

Wear long pants and heavy shoes. Bring plenty of drinking water, your own tools, insect repellent and sun block. Work dates for the next few months are:

April 26, 2012 9:00 AM to Noon

May 24, 2012 9:00 AM to Noon

June 28, 2012 9:00 AM to Noon

If you can help, Mary would appreciate an RSVP:

Mary Olien: 703-642-5173

mary.oliem@fairfaxcounty.gov

Directions: 3301 Hawthorn Ln, Falls Church, VA
From Annandale Rd, turn east on Holloman Rd. Take next left on Princess Anne Lane. From the end of the paved road continue into the park on the gravel road and park on the grass by the field or below the barn.
Warning: GPS units don't usually find her driveway!

Chapter Picnic and Plant Exchange Sunday, June 24, 2012: 1 – 5 PM Seneca Creek State Park

We will be holding our annual picnic and plant exchange near Gaithersburg at Seneca Creek State Park from 1:00 – 5:00 PM. We will be returning to the Fawn Pavilion, the same covered picnic facility we have used for a number of years. It is located in the park on the south side of Clopper Lake so either follow the signs or ask for directions at the gate.

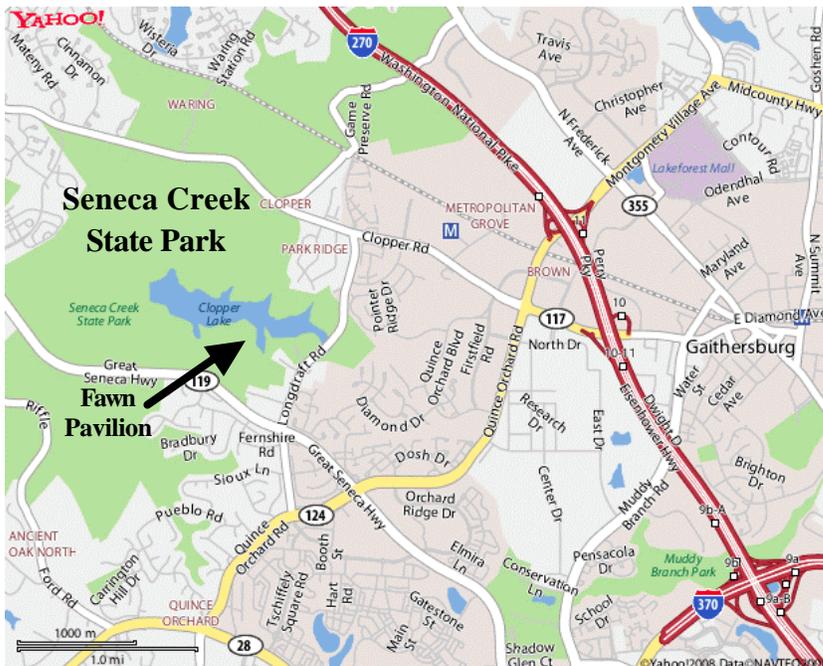
The chapter will be providing hamburgers, hotdogs, and buns, plus standard items like drinks, ice, condiments, plates, and eating utensils. However we ask you to bring some other picnic type food to share with others. Please bring items that will not spoil quickly on a warm day or keep them cool on ice.

We also hold our annual plant exchange here. Dig up a plant or two now so you have something to trade.

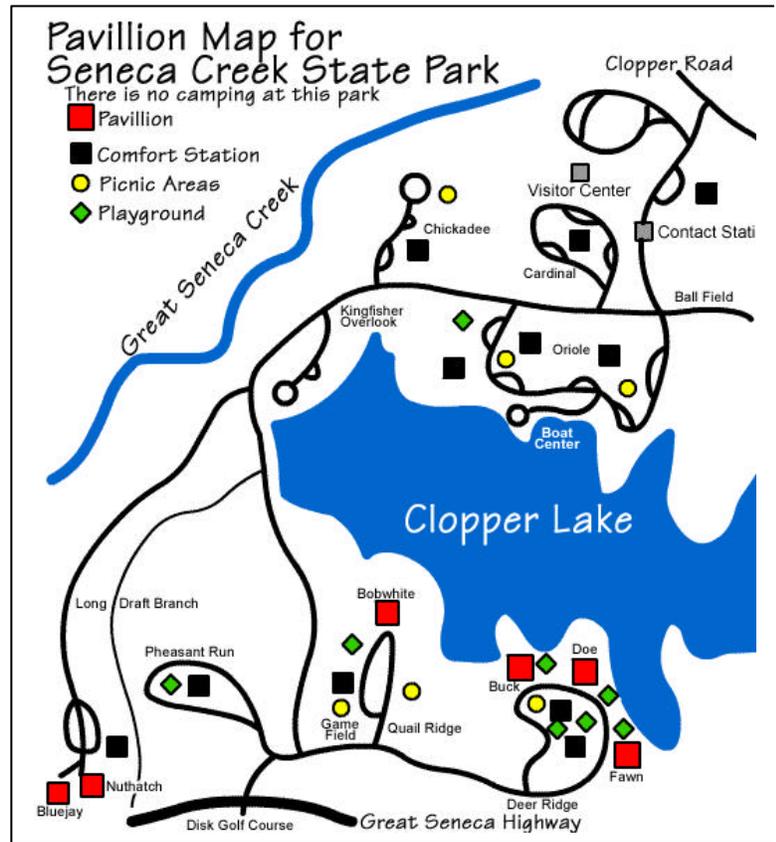
The park does charge a nominal entry fee but check at the gate since senior citizens 62 and older have not had to pay. We will elect officers, too.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Take I-495 to I-270N toward Frederick
2. Merge onto I-270 Local N
3. Take the Exit #10 West, toward MD Rt. 124
4. Turn RIGHT onto MD 117 (Clopper Rd)
5. Turn LEFT into the Park: 11950 Clopper Rd



Seneca Creek State Park - Fawn Pavilion
11900 Clopper Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20878



Potomac Valley Recipe Corner

Since we decided to include the announcement of our Picnic in this issue, we had some room for a few recipes. Our June picnic is a potluck, and some of these dishes have been featured in past years. Enjoy!

CORNY CHICKEN CASSEROLE

From Anne Fessenden

Serves 8 to 10

- 4 cups chicken, cooked and diced
- 1 cup rice, uncooked (long grain or brown)
- 1 - 8 oz. can water chestnuts, drained & cut in quarters
- 2 cups celery, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed
- 20 oz. Cream of Chicken soup (regular or lite)
- 1 & 1/3 cups mayonnaise (regular Hellman's preferred, but could use lite)
- 2 cups cornflakes, coarsely crushed
- 4 oz. butter or margarine, melted
- 1/2 to 1 cup almonds, sliced

Cook rice in water or chicken broth, according to package directions for rice. Stir often so as not to let the rice stick. Allow rice to cool slightly. Transfer to a

medium - sized mixing bowl and add chicken, chestnuts, celery, onion, corn, soup and mayonnaise.

*Stir well. Transfer to a well - greased casserole dish.

Meanwhile, combine melted butter/margarine with cornflakes and sprinkle over casserole. Top with sliced almonds.

Bake in a preheated 325 degree F oven for about 45 minutes or until the casserole bubbles in the middle.

*Note: If casserole seems a little too stiff while mixing, add a little chicken broth or milk to mixture before placing in casserole.

CALICO BAKED BEANS

From Don Hyatt

½ lb bacon

4 medium onions, chopped

1 large can Bush's Baked Beans (28 oz)

1 can black beans (16 oz), drained

1 can dark red kidney beans (16 oz), drained

1 can light red kidney beans (16 oz), drained

1 can butter beans or limas (16 oz), drained

1 can garbanzo beans, (16 oz) drained

½ cup ketchup

½ cup brown sugar

Chop bacon into small pieces and fry in large skillet. Remove bacon , but reserve at least 2 Tbsp of bacon fat. Saute onions in bacon fat until soft.

In a large bean pot (2 quart or better), stir together beans, ketchup, and brown sugar. Top with onions and sprinkle bacon on top of that. Bake in 350 degree oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until bubbly.

SEVEN LAYER BEAN DIP

From Ginny Mohr

This delicious and attractive dip is composed of the following seven layers:

1: Mix one can bean dip with one can refried beans

2: Mix one carton guacamole dip with two diced avocados

3: Mix 1 pkg Taco seasoning mix with 3 Tbsp mayonnaise and 3 Tbsp sour cream

4: ¾ lb shredded cheddar cheese

5: ¾ lb shredded Monterey Jack cheese

6: Two finely diced tomatoes

7: One small can of black olives, drained and sliced

On a large plate, spread the above seven items as layers in the order listed ending with the black olives. Serve with tortilla chips.

Donald W. Hyatt, Newsletter Editor
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