



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Winter Newsletter: January 2013

Calendar

- * **January 13, 2013** – PVC Regular Meeting, Potomac Comm. Ctr.
- * **March 2-3, 2013** – Field Trip, North Carolina Nurseries
- * **April 13, 2013** – Flower Show (?), National Arboretum (tentative)
- * **April 18-21, 2013** – ASA Convention, Athens, GA
- * **April 24-25, 2013** – Field trip, Delaware and Pennsylvania
- * **April 27, 2013** – Plant Sale and Show, Annapolis Farmers' Market
- * **May 1-5, 2013** – ARS Convention, Seattle, WA

Chapter Officers

President: Bob McWhorter
mcwho@comcast.net
Vice President: Dan Neckel
vaneckel@verizon.net
Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
prittman@erols.com

Our Next Meeting:

Winter Party – Photography

Contest and Share Session

Date: Sunday, January 13: 1 – 4 PM

Location: Potomac Community Center

It is a new year, and time to abandon worries we had in 2012 about the Mayan calendar and the fiscal cliff. Let's turn our thoughts to pretty gardens and lovely rhododendrons!

As usual, the focus of the January meeting will be our Photography Contest. The guidelines are listed on the next page but our rules are relatively simple. We have three categories and all we ask is that that people not enter more than two pictures in any category.

The attendees select the winners and we award prizes at the end. We do have a restriction that no individual can win more than one prize so that often means everyone who enters wins something. Because your editor has won Best in Contest two years in a row, he will *not* be competing this year but he will bring some images for the share session. Bring your best photos from 2012 and enter our contest!

The other activity we have at our winter meeting is the share session. This is a time for people talk about their gardens or places they visited. Tell us what you have been doing. Bring digital images on a memory stick or CD to share. We also ask that you to limit your presentation to about 5 to 10 minutes.

Your editor will share some pictures of the trip he took to the West Coast after the September ARS Board meeting in Naniamo, BC. He spent an extra week out there visiting sites like Butchart Gardens in Victoria, the Rhododendron Species Foundation near Seattle, but also the North Cascades in Washington State. The image to the right is one of the photos he took near Mount Baker of a sister peak, Mount Shuksan, reflected in Picture Lake. The North Cascades National Park east of Bellingham has some of the most beautiful scenery he has ever seen!



Mount Shuksan and Picture Lake, Washington

Refreshment Duty: We have decided to make this meeting a Winter Party, so we are asking *everyone* to bring some finger foods or snacks to share. We want to avoid typical potluck foods like casseroles and salads since we will not have a place to sit down to eat a meal. Instead, we would prefer people to bring items that are easier to eat while standing up like veggie sticks, meat balls, hors d'oeuvres, cheese, crackers, chips, dips, cookies, cakes, candy, or simple desserts.

Don't be concerned if items are not low calorie. This can be the time to unload some of those excess holiday goodies that you don't want to be tempted to eat later on. When you make your New Year's resolutions, consider adding an amendment to exempt our PVC Winter Party. We can splurge that day, and then get back to some serious dieting afterwards.

Directions to the Potomac Community Center:

From **I-270 North**, stay in the **Local lanes**
Take exit **#4B/ MONTROSE RD WEST**
Continue west on Montrose Rd. for **1.7 miles**
Turn **LEFT** on **FALLS RD (MD-189)**
Continue **1.4 miles** to the Center (on the left)

Address: 11315 Falls Rd, Potomac. MD

2013 PVC Photography Contest Rules

We have established the following rules for our local chapter photography contest. Please enter!

Category I: Flowers – Close-up of flowers, such as a rhododendron truss or an azalea spray.

Category II: Scenery - Rhododendron or azalea plants in the landscape or in the wild.

Category III: Other – This category is for any photographs featuring rhododendrons or azaleas that don't seem to fit into the first two categories: pictures of foliage, creative effects, people, or whatever.

Photography Contest Rules

1. Open to chapter members or associates only.
2. No more than two entries in any category.
3. Photos must have been taken in 2012.
4. Photos must be naturally occurring, no composites.
5. Photos may be matted, but no frames or glass.
6. Prints no larger than 8" x 10" including matting.
7. Put your name, the title and category on the back.
8. Photos are the property of the exhibitor but we ask permission to reproduce winners in our newsletter.

Attendees will vote for their favorites with prizes awarded at the end of the meeting.

North Carolina Nursery Trek: *March 1 - 3*

We will be repeating our annual field trip to nurseries in Southern Virginia and North Carolina again this year. Joe Marsala will be coordinating the event as usual, so if you are interested in going, please let Joe know:

Joe Marsala:
joe-marsala@comcast.net

We usually stay at the Comfort Inn in Garner, NC, for two nights and use it as our base of operation. In past years, they have given us a discount comparable to that of AAA. However, as you cross the state line, you might stop at the North Carolina Welcome Center and check out their Discount Coupon Books. If the hotel is listed this year, you might even get a better price.

Comfort Inn – Garner
126 Cleveland Crossing Drive
Garner, NC 27529 (919) 773-1110

The trip is very informal. People arrange their own transportation and make their hotel reservations. We just hang out together and have fun. Several of the nurseries are mail order and not open to the public except during a few "Open House" weekends.

On the way to the hotel in Garner on Friday, most people stop by Pine Knot Farms for the Hellebore Festival. For those who get an early start, there may be time to get to Sanford to see the bargains and huge selection of plants at Big Bloomers that afternoon or take a quick tour of the J.C. Raulston Arboretum,

which is nearby. Last year, some of us went to Cam Too Camellia Nursery in Greensboro, NC. Cam Too is one of the largest wholesale camellia nurseries in the US and they have accepted group orders from us but we have to pick them up. We do have to submit the order in advance since they have 30 acres of greenhouses and need time to locate the plants we want. Located about 100 miles west of Pine Knot, expect to spend an extra 4 hours on the road.

On Saturday, we usually go to Big Bloomers and Plant Delights Nursery. In past years, Camellia Forest has made special arrangements to open for us on Sunday morning. Some of us have also toured the J.C. Raulston Arboretum on Sunday as well.



Gazebo at the J.C. Raulston Arboretum

Each evening, we will gather in the hotel lounge area for "Happy Hour." Bring some snacks and your own alcoholic beverage if desired. It is fun to "talk plants" before going across the road for dinner.

Below is a list of the nurseries we usually visit. Keep in touch with Joe Marsala for details. We will not have another newsletter until after the trip.

Pine Knot Farms – Hellebore Festival (10 am – 4 pm)
681 Rockchurch Rd, Clarksville, VA 23927

www.pineknotfarms.com

Cam Too Camellia Nursery (Wholesale)
805 Oakbury Court, Greensboro, NC 27455

www.camtoocamellia.com

Big Bloomers Flower Farm
275 Pressly Foushee Road, Sanford, NC 27330
www.bigbloomersflowerfarm.com

Plant Delights Nursery - Open House
9241 Sauls Road, Raleigh, NC 27603
www.plantdelights.com

Camellia Forrest Nursery (Sunday at 10:00 AM)
9701 Carrie Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
www.camforest.com

J.C. Raulston Arboretum (8:00 AM – 5:00 PM)
4415 Beryl Road, Raleigh, NC 27695
www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum

District Director Report: Don Hyatt

As the new District 9 Director, I attended the Fall ARS Board Meeting on your behalf in Nanaimo, British Columbia, on September 21, 2012. President Don Smart called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM. We had a very cordial and productive session, adjourning at 5:30 PM.

One of the first agenda items was a proposal for a reduced-rate student membership category. Details are not finalized yet, but we could offer a significant cost reduction to students if they forgo a printed copy of the Journal but only have access to the digital version. There has been strong support for reaching out to young horticulturists so we expect this to pass easily at our next meeting in May. The digital version of the Journal is now online so all members are encouraged to check it out. Details including how to set up an account are in the 2012 Fall Journal on page 205.

The majority of the meeting was spent on the annual budget. The ARS has experienced a significant loss of membership recently and that has caused financial strain. Not long ago, we had 5000 members and if still at that level, our finances would be fine. Currently we have just 3215 members so we have lost significant income. Our largest expense is producing the Journal but most of those costs are fixed, independent of membership numbers. Reducing the size or quality of the Journal, or publishing only 3 copies per year were not considered acceptable cost-saving options.

Dave Collier, chair of the Budget Committee, went through the budget in great detail. We made significant cuts in many expenses but did have to raise others. The budget committee's role is to provide a planning guide, not to restrict expenditures. With projected income from dues set at \$148,040 and likely expenses at \$161,544, we do face a potential shortage of \$13,504. We did discuss many additional revenue sources and will continue to seek solutions, as we do not want to sacrifice quality. One idea was to request modest donations of \$5 to \$10 from our members for the General Fund. If many people are willing to donate, that could easily resolve the shortfall.

We will save money by shifting to digital publications. Older ARS Journals are now online at the Virginia Tech Digital Archives:

(<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS>)

One cost-saving motion was to stop maintaining hard copy Journals for resale. Demand has been low, so past issues will soon be dumped for paper recycling. Contact the ARS Office quickly if you want something.

The ARS Board gladly approved the application for a new Finnish Chapter. Since overseas mail delivery is slow but also very expensive, a committee was established to study the feasibility of Electronic

Associate memberships. The thought is to provide International Rhododendron Societies a reduced rate for access to our online Journal. That could provide a new revenue source for the ARS. A proposed cost-saving option for board members is to conduct one board meeting each year by electronic methods rather than face-to-face. The earliest date for that would be the fall of 2014.

We discussed the ARS website and the need for greater depth in educational materials. Since what is successful often varies by region, every District has been asked to determine the 10 most common questions that people ask about rhododendrons, such as how to plant, common disease problems, hardiness, etc. The ARS does have an online blog but they need more writers willing to support it. Another committee was established to investigate the feasibility of an online store.

The nominating committee has proposed a slate of officers for next year including Bruce Feller as ARS President and our own Ann Mangels as East Coast Vice President. Bill Mangels will continue as Treasurer for one more year as we go through a new accounting review.

There has been some reluctance in accepting responsibility for hosting ARS conventions but that may be changing. A general rule is that each District should try to host a convention in its region about once every 10 years. Next spring, the ARS Convention will be in Seattle, and in 2014, it will be in the Great Lakes area. Victoria hosted the 2005 Convention and they have offered to host it there again in 2015. Our last District 9 Convention was in 2006, and some of us have been discussing possibilities of a joint ARS/ASA Convention in the Norfolk area in 2016. I have spoken with all District 9 chapters now and have received positive feedback from each one. Thanks!

Flower Shows: *Dates Still Tentative*

We had scheduled our annual flower show at the National Arboretum on April 13 but plans are still not confirmed at this time. Yes, it is an early show but there were several other conflicting activities in April including the ASA and ARS Conventions so it was one of the few dates that was free. One advantage to an early show would have been the chance to display many azaleas and lepidote rhododendrons that we rarely see.

The problem we are having is that the Arboretum has been unable to commit to us for that date. Due to extended delays during renovation, the Administration building where we hold our show is still not finished.

If we can't hold the flower show at the Arboretum, we do have a plant sale with a flower display at the Farmers Market in Annapolis on April 27. Perhaps that will be a suitable alternative for this year. Details will be provided in the next newsletter.

Fall Banquet

We had a wonderful Fall Banquet. Our speaker was George Woodard, the Superintendent of the Phipps Estate on Long Island, a 100-acre estate that many of us saw at the 2010 Convention. George shared photos of the landscape he has developed during his 30 years there, his new rhododendron hybrids, and some hybrids from others. It was a lovely afternoon with a great program, good food, warm friendships, and a spirited auction. We also celebrated Don Voss's 90th birthday and gave him a whimsical birdhouse (right) built by another chapter treasure, 91-year old Gray Carter.

Many people realized that Hurricane Sandy was swirling around in the Atlantic but few realized how devastating it would become. George headed back to Long Island to await the storm, and sadly, it headed straight toward New York. We have all seen news reports of the devastation to shoreline communities in New York and New Jersey, but many historic gardens like the Phipps Estate have suffered great damage, too.

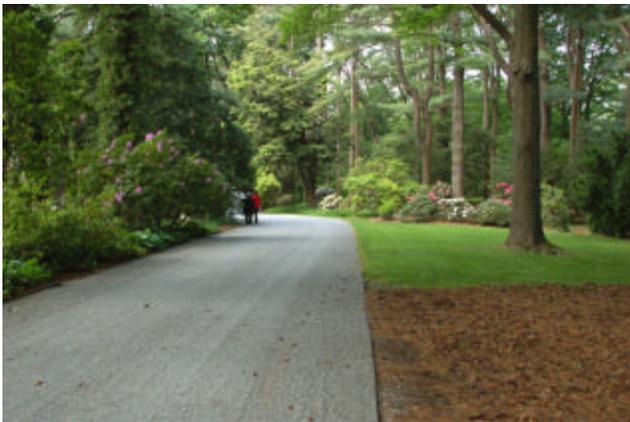
George said that the garden looked like a war zone and he did share some images. The estate lost 300 trees including white pines that shattered and 100-year old oaks that uprooted. After the hurricane, they got some heavy wet snow in yet another storm. It caused more damage to the surviving trees. Many plants have been destroyed and it will never be the same, but the garden will recover in time. Below are comparisons.



Don Voss with his "Jailbird" house built by Gray Carter



Phipps Woodland Garden, 2010 Convention Hyatt



Phipps Estate Driveway, 2010 Convention Hyatt



Phipps Woodland Garden, After Sandy Woodard



Phipps Estate Driveway, After Sandy Woodard

Convention 2016

About every 10 years, each ARS District should try to host convention and we are due again in 2016. Since the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA is also due for a convention, we are considering a joint meeting of both organizations again. The likely site will be the Norfolk-Williamsburg area since both societies have ongoing projects with the Norfolk Botanical Garden. Williamsburg is nearby and always a popular draw.

We will be organizing a convention committee soon, so please consider volunteering to help us stage this event. Some of us will have to travel to Norfolk occasionally to check out hotel accommodations and such, but most of the planning will be done locally.

A Cool Tool: *The Weed Wrench*

It is not often that I get excited by a garden tool. Usually, I manage to do everything I want with my shovel, trowel, pruning shears, and saw. However, when volunteering this year at the White Garden and the National Arboretum this year, I was introduced to the Weed Wrench. I have decided that I need one!

The Weed Wrench is used to pull up invasive woody shrubs and tree seedlings and causes minimal disruption to nearby plants. The tool is like a long crowbar with a clamp on the end. The clamp will grip around the trunk of the tree, and with a bit of leverage on the bar, that weed tree or shrub just pops out of the ground and leaves the roots of nearby plants relatively undisturbed.

The Weed Wrench comes in four sizes. The tools are not cheap, but they are very heavily made. The Mini runs \$82 plus shipping and is only 24 inches long, but it can pull up woody plants with a trunk nearly 1 inch in diameter. The Heavy Weed Wrench is the largest, and it is 60 inches long, but it can pull up moderate sized trees with a trunk diameter of 2.5 inches. It sells for \$189. The longer the shaft, the greater the leverage. Barbara Bullock, seen below, says she always carries the Mini in her truck.



Barbara Bullock demonstrates the Mini Weed Wrench at the December 7 Volunteer Session at the Arboretum

The Weed Wrench is not distributed through dealers and is only available from the manufacturer. The company accepts cash or checks only, but no credit card payments. Here is the contact info:

Weed Wrench Company

P.O. Box 512

Grants Pass, OR 97528

541-471-2012

<http://www.weedwrench.com/>

Check out the website since it has information on ordering, shipping, availability, testimonials, and a video of the Weed Wrench in use. Of course, when the spring volunteer sessions begin at the White Garden or

at the National Arboretum, you can always join us there and test it out.

At the White Garden this year, many of us used the Heavy Weed Wrench to uproot invasive woody plants and tree saplings that were coming up through the azaleas and rhododendrons. It was amazing to see how large some of those plants were, many 8 ft tall or more! The Heavy Weed Wrench was as effective on tiny saplings as it was on larger plants.

The tool is praised for being environmentally friendly since there is no need to apply toxic herbicides to stumps as is normally done when we have cut down an invasive tree or shrub. Just pry the plant out of the ground and toss it in the debris pile. Pictured below are some participants in the final volunteer session for the year at the White Garden in October. They are proudly standing in front of a pile of uprooted trees and branches we cleared from the garden. Mary Olien, Director of Green Spring Gardens, is holding the Weed Wrench. It is definitely a Cool Tool!



From left: Dave Meadows, Paul & Carolyn Beck, Phyllis Rittman, and Mary Olien holding the Heavy Weed Wrench



Dave Meadows and Mary Olien uproot a large, invasive shrub in the White Garden with the Weed Wrench.

Remembering Good Friends

We lost some wonderful rhododendron people this year and we extend our sincere sympathy to their families and friends. They will be missed.

Carole Lago

We recently learned that Carole Lago passed away from a heart attack on September 21. She and her husband Carlos have been long time Potomac Valley Chapter members. Carlos served as our secretary and newsletter editor for many years.

Carole was the great grand daughter of the first vice-president of Cuba, Domingo Mendez Capote. When Castro took over as dictator, she fled with her family, first to Madrid and eventually moved to the US where she had an illustrious career in the State Department serving as a Spanish translator and teacher of US diplomats. She is survived by her beloved husband Carlos (below), their two children, and one grandchild.



Carlos and Carole Lago

Celia Porter Dollarhide

Celia Dollarhide, immediate past president of the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS, succumbed to lung cancer on December 6. She was the daughter of General Robert W. Porter who retired from the army and settled at Middle River Farm in Madison County. He was an avid collector of the Dexter and Pilkington hybrids, and passed away in 2000.

Celia had a very distinguished career over 34 years in the Department of Veterans Affairs, serving the last seven years as the Director of the Education Service.



Celia Dollarhide at Middle River Farm

When Celia retired in 2001, she split her time between her home in Alexandria and Middle River Farm where she continued to maintain and enhance her father's rhododendron collection.

Jeannie Gustafson

Although not a member of our chapter, many of our Dexter Rhododendron enthusiasts knew Jeannie and her late husband Richard (Dick) Gustafson through the Sandwich Club and our annual trips to Cape Cod. We just heard that Jeannie passed away from a stroke.

The image below shows Jeannie seated on a bench that was dedicated to Dick Gustafson in 2008 in the Dexter Rhododendron Dell at Heritage Plantation. We are planning a chapter field trip to Cape Cod in late May when the rhododendrons are in bloom.



From left: Karel Bernady, Barbara Gingras, Jeannie Gustafson and Bea McDonald in the Dexter Dell

Upcoming Activities

We do have more activities planned for the year but dates are not finalized so we did not put them on the calendar. Around April 24-25, we do have plans to see gardens and visit nurseries in Pennsylvania, much like the March trip to North Carolina. This may only be a one-day event instead of two. More on that later!

In late May, we do expect to have a trip to Cape Cod to see the Dexter Rhododendrons. We usually wait until April to set a date so we can see whether spring will be early or late. We want to be sure we see peak bloom if we are planning to drive all the way to Massachusetts! Norman Beaudry usually coordinates the event so let him know if you are interested.

In mid-June, we are also planning a trip to the Southern Appalachians. We do want to check on the Great Azalea Planting at Hooper Bald, so we will try to go when *R. calendulaceum* is in peak bloom. Occasionally, some of us have gone twice or even three times a year to make sure we see the natives. From mid May to October, we can always find flowers in bloom somewhere in the Appalachians. If you are interested, let Don Hyatt know.

Finally, we do have our picnic scheduled for June 24th. That's firm as we have already paid the deposit.

2013 Seed Exchange – Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

The following seeds are offered to our members and associate members at \$0.60 per packet including postage. Thanks to our donors: Norm and Jean Beaudry (**Be**), Don Hyatt (**Hy**), Paul James (**Ja**), Lindy Johnson (**Jn**), George McLellan (**Ml**), Bob and Rosa McWhorter (**Mc**), Helen Myers (**My**), and Mike White (**Wh**). Please return orders to Don Hyatt with payment to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS by February 5, 2013.

Species Collected in the Wild (cw)

1. *atlanticum*, cw, Prince George County, VA (Ml)
2. *calendulaceum*, red form, cw, near Roanoke, VA (Ja)
3. *calendulaceum*, cw, mixed, Mitchell Co., NC (Hy)
4. *calendulaceum*, cw, mixed, Hooper Bald, NC (Hy, Ml)
5. *calendulaceum*, cw, 'Hooper Copper' bicolor, (Hy, Ml)
6. *calendulaceum*, cw. 'Hooper Duke'. deep orange. (Hv, Ml)
7. *calendulaceum*, cw, 'Hooper Pumpkin', light orange, (Hy, Ml)
8. *calendulaceum*, cw, FS-11-20, large red, (Hy, Ml)
9. *calendulaceum*, cw, frilled red, Hooper Bald, NC (Hy, Ml)
10. *catawbiense*, cw, lavender pink., Avery Co., NC (Hy)
11. *maximum* 'Red Max', cw, red, McDowell Co, NC (Hy, Ml)
12. *vasevi*, cw, pink. Havwood County, NC (Hv, Ml)

Species Open Pollinated (op)

13. *adenopodum*, light pink, excellent foliage, op (Hy)
14. *alabamense*, white, yellow blotch, fragrant, op (Ja)
15. *anwheiense*, pale pink, compact, op (Hy)
16. *calendulaceum*, seedling from WV, op (My)
17. *carolinianum*, Gordon's form, (Paul's best!), op (Ja)
18. *chapmanii*, ARS SE #46-92, op (Ja)
19. *hyperythrum*, op (Hy)
20. *keiskei*, Haag Form, op (Ja)
21. *macrosepalum*, op (Ja)
22. *makinoi*, Hyatt form, pink, op (Hy)
23. *mariesii*, op (Ja)
24. *metternichii*, Hyatt form, light pink, op (Hy)
25. *metternichii*, Wada's form, deep pink, op (Be)
26. *micranthum*, op (Ja)
27. *periclymenoides*, pink, op (Wh)
28. *schlippenbachii*, pale pink form, op (Be, My)
29. *schlippenbachii*, moderate pink form, op (Hy)
30. *schlippenbachii*, white form, op (My)
31. *serrulatum*, white, op (Ja)
32. *wadanum*, op (Ja)

Rhododendron Hybrids, Hand Pollinated (hp)

33. Cloud Nine x Marchioness of Landsdowne, hp (Mc)
34. Cloud Nine x Twilight Pink, hp (Mc)
35. Dexter's Orange x Blazing Grace, hp (Mc)
36. Hardy Giant x Babylon, hp (Be)

Rhododendron Hybrids, Open Pollinated (op)

37. (*aberconwayi* x Ruby Bowman), op (Ja)
38. (*adenophorum* x *metternichii* 'Sir Lancelot'), op (Ja)
39. Bliss (Scintillation x Mary Belle), op (Ja)
40. (Caroline x *fortunei* 'Lu Shan'), op (Ja)
41. (Champagne x Medusa), op (Ja)
42. (Dexter's Spice x Dexter's Peppermint), op (Ja)
43. Disca, op (My)
44. Donna Hardgrove, op (Ja)
45. Enchanter (Ann Hargrove x Anna Delp), op (Ja)
46. (Epoch x *augustinii*), op (Hy)
47. Gosh Darn! (Catalglia x Mrs. H.R. Yates) F2, op (Ja)
48. Hockessin (*pubescens* x *keiskei*), op (Ja)
49. Hypcat (*hyperythrum* x Catalglia), op (Ja)
50. Hypermax, (*hyperythrum* x *maximum*), op (Ja)
51. John C. White, (Vulcan x *fortunei*), op (Hy)
52. (*keiskei* x *xanthocodon*), op (Ja)
53. Ox, orange hybrid, op (Ja)
54. Purple Pearl (*carolinianum* x *mucronulatum*), op (Ja)
55. *racemosum* x *keiskei*, op (Ja)
56. Ring's *yakusimanum* cross, beautiful foliage, op (Ja)
57. Rhodworks (*hyperythrum* cross), op (Ja)
58. *soulei* x Idealist, op (Ja)
59. Temple Belle, op (Ja)

Azalea Hybrids, Open Pollinated (op)

60. Admiral Semmes, hardy yellow deciduous, op (Hy)
61. Aromi Sunstruck, deciduous azalea, yellow, op (My)
62. Choptank (ARS SE #1234-95) deciduous white, op (Ja)
63. Zo Hybrids, late deciduous azaleas, mixed, op (Jn)

Seed Exchange Comments by Don Hyatt

We have some exciting offerings in our seed exchange this year including species we don't often see. For some reason, seed set in the wild was quite low in many places except on Hooper Bald. The large flowered *R. calendulaceum* form we call 'Hooper's Copper' has had very little seed in past years. It has among the largest flowers we have seen on that species, and some blossoms have measured up to 3.5 inches across. (pictured right)

This year, we have plenty of seed because George McLellan, Brent Heath, and I hand pollinated (selfed) most of the open flowers on the plant!



R. calendulaceum 'Hooper's Copper'

