



# Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Early Spring Newsletter: March 2014

## Calendar

- \* **March 16, 2014** – Joint Meeting with NV-ASA, Potomac Com. Ctr.
- \* **March 27-30, 2014** – ASA Convention, Charleston, SC
- \* **April 16, 2014** – PVC Field trip to Pennsylvania Nurseries.
- \* **April Date TBD** – PVC Flower Show, Annapolis Farmer's Mkt.
- \* **May 2-4, 2014** – MAC Spring Meeting, Flatwood, WV
- \* **May Date TBD** – Joint Garden Tour Excursion with NV-ASA
- \* **May 16-18, 2014** – ARS Convention, Plainesville, OH
- \* **May / June Dates TBD** – Cape Cod Trip, NC Mountain Trip
- \* **July 13, 2013** – PVC Picnic and Plant Exchange, Seneca Creek St. Park
- \* **September 7, 2014** – Regular Meeting
- \* **October 11, 2014** – Fall Banquet & District Meeting: Harold Greer

## Our Next Meeting: George McLellan "The Garden in Winter"

**Date:** March 16, 2014

**Time:** 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Where:** Potomac Community Center

**Note:** Joint Meeting & Plant Exchange!

It may seem as though this winter will never end, but maybe next year we can have more winter interest in our landscapes after heeding the advice of our featured speaker, George McLellan. He will be telling us how to "fill your gray months with color, fragrance and attraction." That we can surely use! This will be a joint meeting with the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. George was supposed to be their fall speaker but had to reschedule.

We will also be having a plant exchange, so bring a few plants with you: small rhododendrons, azaleas, or companion plants. Be sure things are clean and properly bagged so we don't make a mess.

George is a talented and sought-after landscape designer who lives in Gloucester, VA. His business is called "My Bloomin' Garden" and we expect to be visiting some of the gardens he has designed during the 2016 Williamsburg Convention. George is pictured to the right near the top of a waterfall he designed in the extensive display garden at Brent and Becky's Bulbs.

Unfortunately, George will be speaking to us after our trip to the North Carolina Nurseries, but he intends to be joining us on that excursion. He has provided a list of some plants we might look for on our trip, and a few notes are elsewhere in this newsletter. We also

### Chapter Officers

**President:** Bob McWhorter  
mcwho@comcast.net

**Vice President:** Dan Neckel  
vaneckel@verizon.net

**Treasurer:** Phyllis Rittman  
prittman@erols.com

sent an illustrated email prior to the trip. Feel free to



George McLellan in the display garden he designed for Brent and Becky's Bulbs

ask George for recommendations when you see him.

**Refreshment Duty:** Persons whose last names begin with **A** through **H** are asked to bring something for the refreshment table. Those who also belong to the NV-ASA are encouraged to bring something, too.

### Directions: Potomac Community Center

**11315 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD**

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)

**11315 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD**

## 2014 Photography Contest Results

We did have a relatively small turnout at our January meeting but we didn't have a shortage of excellent photos in this year's competition. We ended up with a number of ties, and the full list is provided below. The color insert shows the top winning photos.

In the share session, one of the most memorable presentations was by Tammy Chapin who had pictures of her garden and peak bloom of her next door neighbors, the McWhorters. Bob and Rosa were on the West Coast at the ARS Convention, apparently taking pictures of beautiful Mt. Rainier when their own garden was in bloom. It is good to have neighbors to look out for things while you are away!

### Best in Show: (Three way tie!)

Rosa McWhorter – “Mt. Rainier”

James Wallenmeyer – “A Pumpkin Flower”

Jon Wallenmeyer – “Dancing Butterflies”

### Category I: Flowers (Three way tie for 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1: Jon Wallenmeyer – “Dancing Butterflies”

2: Jon Wallenmeyer – “Dexter's Orange”

2: Bob McWhorter – “Washington State Beauty”

2: Tammy Chapin – “My First Year” (seedling bloom)

### Category II: Scenery (Ties for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)

1: Rosa McWhorter – “Mt. Rainier”

1: Rosa McWhorter – “Mt. Rainier”

3: Tammy Chapin – “Pink Bushes”

3: Bob McWhorter – “Beauty and the Beast”

### Category III: Other

1: James Wallenmeyer – “A Pumpkin Flower”

2: Tammy Chapin – “Wisteria”

## Plants for Fall and Winter Interest

### George McLellan Recommendations

Here are some plants George will discuss when he gives his talk on March 16. If you didn't get a recent email with pictures of some of these, we didn't have a valid email address for you. Request a copy by email!

### Broadleaf Evergreens:

Holly: *Ilex opaca*, *I.* ‘Sunny Foster’, ‘Nellie Stevens’

*Magnolia grandiflora* ‘Little Gem’, ‘Kay Paris’

*Aucuba japonica* ‘Crotonifolia’, ‘Gold Dust’

### Conifers:

*Chamaecyparis obtusa* ‘Crippsii’, ‘Aurora’

*Cedrus atlantica glauca*

### Winter Bark

*Acer japonicum* ‘Bihou’ or ‘Sango Kaku’

Crape Myrtle: *Lagerstroemia* ‘Natches’

### Winter Berries:

Winterberry Holly: *Ilex verticillata* ‘Red Sprite’



‘Snowflurry’, one of Dr. Ackerman's  
Hardy Fall-Blooming Camellias

### Late Fall Blooming Shrubs:

*Camellia sasanqua* ‘Yuletide’, ‘Snowflurry’

### Late Winter Blooming Trees and Shrubs:

Japanese Apricot: *Prunus mume*

*Mahonia x media* ‘Charity’, ‘Winter Sun’

Winter Jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*)

Winter Sweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*)

Witch hazels: *Hamamelis* ‘Angelly’, ‘Jelena’

Winterhazel: *Corylopsis glabrescens*

*Camellia japonica* ‘Gov. Mouton’, ‘Crimson Candles’

*Edgeworthia chrysantha* (paperbush)

### Late Winter Blooming Perennials

*Cyclamen hederifolium*, *C. coum*

Algerian Iris: *Iris unguicularis*

*Helleborus niger* ‘Joseph Lemper’

*H. orientalis*, *H. hybridus*, ‘Ivory Prince’, ‘Pink Frost’



Double Hellebore Hybrid

### Bulbs:

Snowdrops: *Galanthus elwesii*, *G. nivalis*

Iris: *Iris reticulata* ‘Harmony’

Crocus: *C. laevigatus* ‘Fonteynanyi’, *C. tommasinianus*

Narcissus ‘Rijnveld's Early Sensation’

# 2014 Photography Contest Winners



**1<sup>st</sup> Flowers, Best in Contest Tie: Jon Wallenmeyer**  
*'Dancing Butterflies'*



**1<sup>st</sup> Scenery, Best in Contest Tie: Rosa McWhorter**  
*Mt. Rainier*



**2<sup>nd</sup> Flowers Tie: Bob McWhorter**  
*Washington State Beauty*



**1<sup>st</sup> Other, Best in Contest Tie: James Wallenmeyer, A Pumpkin Flower**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Flowers Tie: Jon Wallenmeyer, 'Dexter's Orange'**



**1<sup>st</sup> Scenery Tie: Rosa McWhorter**  
*Mt. Rainier*



**2<sup>nd</sup> Flowers Tie: Tammy Chapin**  
*My First Year*



**2<sup>nd</sup> Other: Tammy Chapin**  
*Wisteria*



**3<sup>rd</sup> Scenery: Bob McWhorter**  
*Beauty and the Beast*

**Potomac Valley Chapter ARS**

## Winter Damage!

Much of the Eastern United States has been going through one of the most challenging winters we have seen for many years. Please take some time to record some observations on your azaleas and rhododendrons and how well they fared.

Naturally we want to know those plants were severely damaged by the extreme weather. Things to look for include foliage quality, whether is damaged, burned or killed entirely. We also want to know how well the cultivar bloomed. Some may not flower at all, but others may have partial trusses due to bud loss.

We also want to know those that have come through unscathed. That information will be invaluable for hybridizers and for people whose gardens are normally in extreme climates. It is not often that we have such a test of hardiness and although I hope we don't have another one very soon, please record what happened in your garden for the benefit of others.

## Pennsylvania Nursery Trek:

### Wednesday, April 16

We will be having a one day excursion to some excellent nurseries in Pennsylvania this spring. They offer a variety of woody plants, perennials, and annuals at excellent prices. You can certainly visit these places on your own, but below are the locations and approximate times we expect to be there. We hope you can join us. Let Bob McWhorter or Don Hyatt know if you are going on the trip so we can keep an eye out for you. Please note that Groff's does not take credit cards, so you must pay there by cash or check.

### 9:30 – 11:30 AM

#### Groff's Plant Farm

6128 Street Rd., Kirkwood, PA 17536

717-529-3001

Perennials, Annuals, Shrubs (No Credit Cards)

<http://groffsplantfarm.com>

### 12:00 Noon – 2:00 PM

#### Conestoga Nursery

310 Reading Road, East Earl, PA 17519

717-445-4076

Trees and Shrubs, Conifers, Perennials

(closed Tuesdays and Sundays)

### 2:30 – 4:30 PM

#### Black Creek Greenhouses

211 E. Black Creek Road

East Earl, PA 17519

717-445-5046

Annuals and Perennials



## Buy Online through the ARS Store: The Society Earns a Commission!

At the Fall ARS Board Meeting in Nova Scotia, Steve Henning offered to establish an Online Store for the ARS. Our Society is not selling anything directly, but the ARS Store website acts as a portal to other commercial vendors on the Internet. Whenever a person begins on our page and links to a participating website like Amazon.com, the ARS will get a small commission of the subsequent sales. Check in out:

### [www.arsstore.org](http://www.arsstore.org)

The store has several categories:

- **ARS Logo Merchandise:** featuring knit, woven and denim shirts, caps, visors, and computer briefcases.
- **Amazon Merchandise:** featuring Rhododendron & Azalea Books, Garden Books, Garden Tools, and any other item sold on Amazon.
- **Participating Merchants:** featuring other merchants who agree to give referral fees to the ARS for each purchase when the ARSStore.org is mentioned.

Preliminary results were promising. Very few people knew about the store, so traffic was low the first two months. In that time only 38 items purchased through the Amazon portion, and the value of those items was \$1348.66. However, that earned us \$63.93 in commission, a rate of 4.7% which was much higher than I anticipated. If more people start using the ARS Store website before going to Amazon to make purchases, those referral fees could build up. The price is the same either way, but the ARS can benefit.

### PowerPoint Program: Rhododendron Registration

Steve is now starting to offer some PowerPoint presentations such as one Don Voss and I prepared on Rhododendron Registration through the ARS Store. It is listed under the menu heading "Programs."

People can download the files from the website and there is no fee. If people find the material useful, there is a way to make a donation to the ARS. The program has hundreds of pictures of flowers and foliage which alone can brighten up cold day. The program explains the registration process, how to select an appropriate name, how to use a color chart, what many botanical terms mean, and more. Even if you never plan to register a name, it should give you an appreciation for the diversity of the genus. A second presentation I made about Digital Photography will be coming soon.

# 2014 Potomac Valley Chapter Membership Roster

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Dwarf Yellow Lepidote Species: *Rhododendron keiskei*

## Lepidote Rhododendrons

By Don Hyatt

To finish up this newsletter, I thought it might be good to mention the lepidote rhododendrons since they are often the first to bloom each spring. Over the years, I have really come to admire these charming plants.

Lepidote rhododendrons are the large leaf plants like the Dexters and Gables most people associate with the genus. Lepidotes are typically smaller in plant habit and flower size, and often have aromatic foliage. Except for the bright purple 'PJM', I rarely see them in our area.

I have many favorites. My first to bloom is usually *R. mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink'. I planted it with yellow corylopsis. I love yellow and have five selections of the dwarf, light yellow species *R. keiskei* planted with my double hellebores. Haag's '24 Karat' is a slightly taller yellow and seems quite tough. Kehr's blush pink 'Southland' has a compact habit but Weston's 'Landmark' is open and tall but has bright rose red flowers. The double purple Mehlquist hybrid 'April Rose' is lovely. Nearing's apricot 'Mary Fleming' and light pink 'Windbeam' are excellent but forget his 'Ramapo'. It does not take heat.

Lepidotes are not azaleas although I admit they have the same look and feel in the landscape. These plants are distinguished from the other rhododendron groups because they have "scales" on their leaves and stems. These tiny

structures appear as waxy dots on the surfaces, and are best viewed with a hand lens. We often call lepidotes "scalies."

Most of the lepidotes are more winter hardy than evergreen azaleas, often hardy to Zone 5. They are used as an azalea alternative in New England. Some are not heat tolerant, though. All require excellent drainage. One drawback is they can bloom too early and flowers can get caught by late frosts. Some selections bloom a bit later like the bright pink 'Aglo' and 'Olga Mezitt'. They rarely get frozen in my garden. Our own native *R. minus* var. *carolinianum* from North Carolina blooms early but the southern *R. minus* var. *minus* from the Gulf Coast blooms in late midseason. It is also very heat tolerant.

There are many "blue" lepidote species with colors we don't see in other rhododendrons or azaleas. They don't grow here. On the West Coast, *R. augustinii* can tower 8 ft tall but I've killed it many times. Bob and Rosa McWhorter had success with a hybrid 'Blaney's Blue'. I have plants now but none are budded. I keep buying blues for hybridizing since my goal is a hardy, heat-tolerant blue. Of course, Gable and countless others have been working on the same thing since the 1930's. We can always dream!



Tall Blue Lepidote Species: *Rhododendron augustinii*

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter  
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