



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Winter Newsletter: January 2018

Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar - 2018

- **January 14, 2018** – Chapter Meeting, Potomac Community Center
- **March 2-3, 2018** – Tentative North Carolina Nursery Trip
- **March 25, 2018** – Chapter Meeting, Potomac Community Center
- **April 12, 2018** – Tentative Pennsylvania Nursery Trip
- **April 28, 2018** – Chapter Garden Tours (tentative)
- **May 21-26, 2018** – ARS Convention, Bremen, Germany
- **July 14, 2018** – Garden Workshop, Potomac Community Center
- **September 23, 2018** – Chapter Picnic, Seneca Creek State Park

Chapter Officers

President: Ginny Mohr
rngmohr@msn.com

Secretary: Diane Reinke
Isabelle49@aol.com

Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
prittman@erols.com

Next Meeting: Chapter Share Session and Photo Contest

Date: Sunday, January 14, 2018

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Potomac Community Center

Our next meeting will be on Sunday, January 14, at the Potomac Community Center. We will have our annual Photo Contest, so please check the next page for guidelines. We will also have a share session where we ask our members to bring a few images to share with the group. The content can be far reaching but we ask that you try to keep your presentations to no more than 10 minutes. Was there an interesting place you visited? Did an unusual plant flower in your own garden? Do you have a cultural problem and want some advice?

As your newsletter editor, I hope to share a few pictures I took during two trips with Karel Bernady to Yosemite National Park. One was prior to the 2017 ARS Convention in Eureka in April. (see right) The Sierra Nevadas had received a very heavy snow pack that winter so the waterfalls were the best they have been in decades. Since many of the roads were still closed due to the snow, we returned to Yosemite in July to see the wildflowers and that spectacular scenery. On that second trip, we saw *R. occidentale* in bloom as well as a host of striking wildflowers.

Refreshment Duty: We ask members whose last names are in the first third of the alphabet (**A – H**) to bring a snack for the refreshment table. Anyone with leftover holiday treats is encouraged to unload on us!



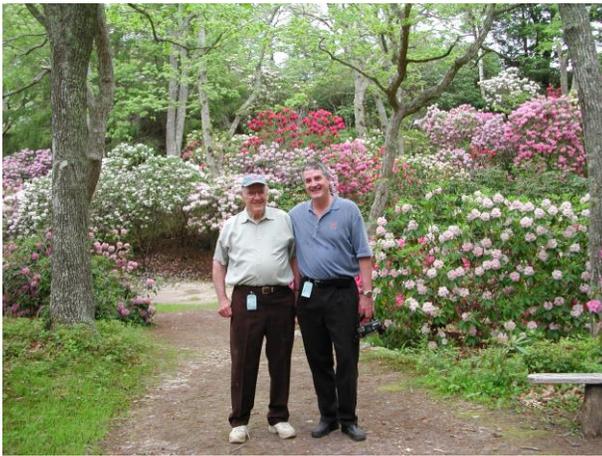
Vista in Yosemite National Park, April 2017

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

Our March 25th Program: Sonny Coble “The Reiley Ridge Rhododendrons”

Save the date! Our March meeting will feature Sonny Coble of the Mason-Dixon Chapter who will tell us about the rhododendron hybrids of the late Ed Reiley. Many of these were first sold at our 2016 Williamsburg Convention. Ed’s wife, Mary, is still making selections and they may be available soon.



Bill and Jon Wallenmeyer Photo: R. McWhorter

Sad News: Bill Wallenmeyer

We were saddened to learn of the passing of long time chapter member Bill Wallenmeyer on August 25. He was 91. We express our deep sympathy to his loving wife, Diane, sons Jon and Tim, and the all the Wallenmeyers. They have been such strong supporters of the ARS and our Potomac Valley Chapter. Jon was Past President of our group and is pictured above with his father Bill during one of our excursions to see the Dexter Rhododendrons on Cape Cod. The Wallenmeyers held a memorial service for Bill on November 5 and requested that donations be sent to the ARS. He will be missed.

More Sad News: Jay Murray

At the ARS Regional Meeting in Richmond in October, we learned that Jay Murray, the former ARS Registrar, had passed away on January 13, 2017. She was 94. Jay and her husband Bob received the ARS Gold Medal in 1999 and the Pioneer Achievement Award in 2013. These awards were in part to honor their extensive work with rhododendron registration that lasted 27 years. Jay had also been honored by the Royal Horticulture Society with the prestigious Loder Cup in 2006 for her contributions in the field of horticulture.

NC Nursery Field Trip: March 2-3, 2018

Plans for the North Carolina Nursery are not final yet but should be about the same as last year. We expect to visit Pine Knot Farms for the Hellebore Festival on Friday morning followed by Camellia Forest Nursery that afternoon. We will likely spend Friday night in Sanford, NC. If we get to Sanford early enough we can start shopping at Big Bloomers that afternoon and finish up the next morning. Then we'll go to Tony Avent's Plant Delights Nursery on Saturday before heading home.



Private Garden – South Tour in Eureka, CA

The 2017 ARS Convention: Eureka, CA

Conventions are always great fun, especially when one is just a participant and doesn't have to worry about hosting the event. Of course, Mother Nature has a way of wreaking havoc on conventions. In 2016, we had to deal with a late freeze that damaged several gardens. In California, they had a cold and very wet spring that delayed blooms but also caused mud slides that closed many roads. The major route between San Francisco and Eureka was blocked for several days due to a mud slide. The route from I-5 at Redding over the mountains to the coast was down to one lane with 1.5 hour delays.

Fortunately, Karel Bernady and I flew to San Francisco early so we could visit Yosemite and drove north along the Sierra foothills. We missed the road closures. The snow forecast for Yosemite when we visited did not happen and the weather cleared. It was perfect throughout the entire meeting.

There were two primary tours and we took them both. On the first day, we went on the South Tour which focused on the Humboldt Botanical Garden, the Founder's Grove with its tall Redwood trees, and several private gardens. The wet winter saturated soils in the Founder's Grove and sadly, strong winds caused several magnificent 2000-year old redwoods to fall. They broke into a multitude of splinters.

A North Tour attraction was Stage Coach Hills, a natural area known for its diverse forms of the West Coast native azalea, *R. occidentale*. We were pleased that some of the azaleas were in bloom. Singing Tree Nursery had many landscape plantings but the vistas of the Pacific Ocean from the private gardens were breathtaking. See images on next page.

On our way back to San Francisco, Karel and I visited the Mendocino Botanical Garden. Lovely! I will include some images of Mendocino and Yosemite in the digital version of this newsletter.



Humboldt Botanical Garden



Singing Tree Nursery

Garden Tours



Fallen Redwood Trees



Founder's Grove Redwoods

2017 ARS Convention Eureka, California



Rhododendron 'Mi Amor'



Rhododendron 'Naselle'



Private Garden - North Tour



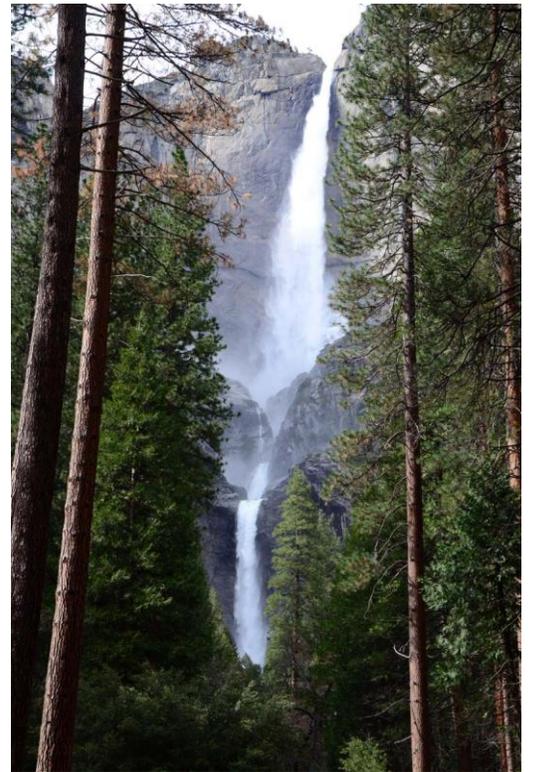
Private Garden - North Tour



R. occidentale at Stagecoach Hills



Yosemite Valley with Redbud (*Cercis*)



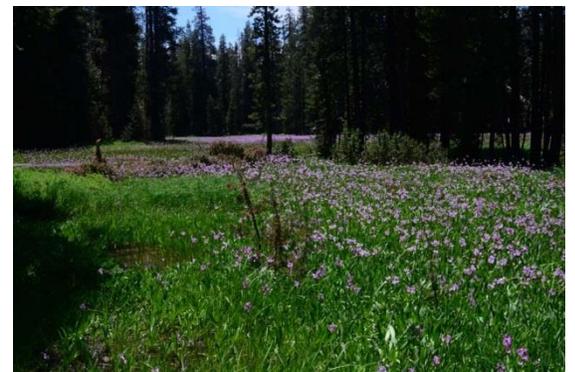
Upper and Lower Yosemite Falls



Half Dome from Glacier Point



Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon*)



Wildflower Meadow (*Dodecatheon*)

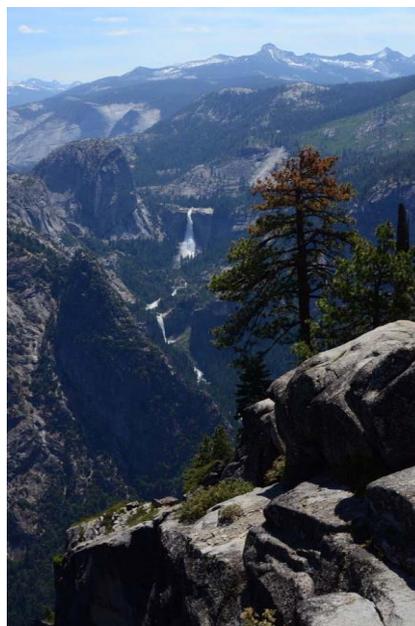


Merced River with Western Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*)

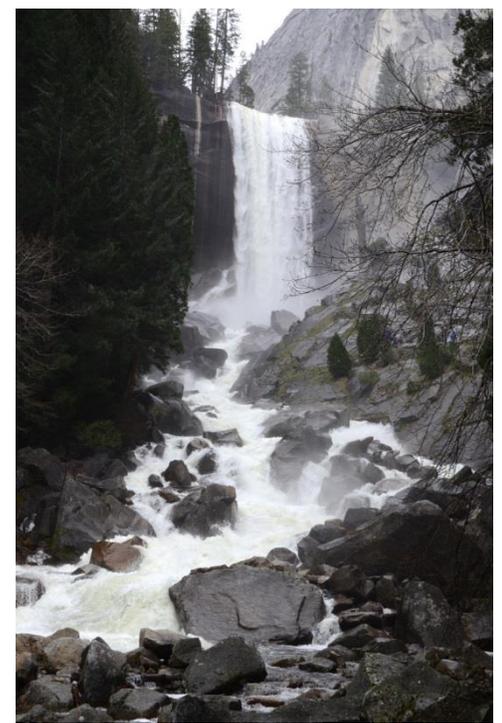
Yosemite National Park



Milkweed Blossoms



Glacier Point – Waterfall Vista



Mist Trail – Vernal Falls



'Jean Marie de Montague' with Foxglove



Rhododendron Walk – 'Pink Pearl' and 'Jean Marie de Montague'

Mendocino Botanical Garden



Rhododendron 'Golden Gate'



Cactus (*Echinopsis*) in the Mediterranean Garden



Cactus Blossoms (*Echinopsis*)



Rhododendron 'Noyo Snow'



Flowering Succulent (*Aeonium*)



Pacific Ocean from the Coast Bluffs Viewpoint

2018 Rhododendrons of the Year

Every year we must select the Rhododendrons of the Year for our Middle Atlantic Region. This year, the ARS asked that we include input from Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey since their climate is similar to what we have in District 9. Below are the selections we made for 2018.



2018 Elepidote Rhododendron 'A. Bedford'



2018 Lepidote Rhododendron '24 Karat'



2018 Evergreen Azalea 'Dreamsicle'

PVC Photography Contest Rules

Our annual photography contest will be held as part of our January 14 meeting. Look through the pictures you took in 2016 or 2017 and bring a few prints to the meeting.

Attendees will select winners by popular vote and prizes will be awarded. A single individual can only win one of the prizes so all those who enter usually get something. Be sure to enter!

We have established the following categories and rules for our contest:

Category I: Flowers – Close-up of rhododendron or azalea flowers, such as in a truss or 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, such as pictures that feature rhododendron foliage, people, animals, 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 2016 or 2017.
4. Photos must be naturally occurring, no composites. Digital editing software can be used to crop photos or correct brightness or contrast.
5. Photos may be matted, but no frames or glass.
6. Maximum dimensions: 8" x 10", even if matted.
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.



2018 Deciduous Azalea: *R. arborescens*

War on Deer! A New Year's Resolution By Don Hyatt



It seems like I make this same resolution every year. In 2018, I hope I can follow through. I realize that I am already too late for next spring since many prime plants have already been ravaged by the deer. If I start now, though, I may have flowers in 2019.

The damage in my garden gets worse every year. I have shared the photos at the bottom of this page before but it demonstrates my reality. Damage may be more severe for me due to rapid development in my McLean community. Older homes on wooded lots like mine are being torn down and replaced by "McMansions." Even though we are supposed to have covenants to protect the trees, most builders cut down almost every tree on the lot and clear out all of the vegetation anyway before starting to build. The multi-million dollar homes often span the lot coming to within a few feet of the property line.

Of course that means any animals that lived there must find refuge elsewhere. In addition to deer, this habitat destruction has concentrated critters in my yard including herds of chipmunks, squirrels, voles, rabbits, and even raccoons that chewed their way into my garage. My garden is now the Wholefoods Organic Salad Bar for homeless critters here in Franklin Forest. It really is a total disaster!

I have watched deer tastes change over the



Hyatt Garden – May 2009

years. At first they just chomped on the hostas and daylilies but then moved on my azaleas. They used to avoid the kalmia and small leaf lepidote rhododendrons but they are favorite foods now. They ate my maples, dogwoods, evergreen trees and defoliated the lower 6 ft. of most rhododendrons. The hoof traffic has destroyed the lawn. They have eaten nearly all of my wildflowers except for my yellow lady's slippers. I regularly shake garlic powder on those and my deer seem to hate garlic.

Minimizing deer damage takes constant effort and I must be more vigilant. Some suggestions in this article may help others with deer problems.

Fences

To stop deer browsing, nothing is as good as a tall fence. It should be at least 7 feet high and made of a heavy-weight material. I keep talking about fencing at least a portion of my garden, but I have a lot of preparation to do. My preference is a Benner fence like Norm and Jean Beaudry have. Benner has been the leading supplier for over 20 years:

**Benner's Gardens LLC, 1 Hudson City Centre,
Hudson, NY 12534 1-800-244-3337**

www.bennersgardens.com

In the meantime I have been using temporary barriers such as covering vulnerable plants with chicken wire or small sections of wire mesh. The diameter of the holes should not be too large since deer will push that fence down and eat the plants underneath through the openings. The plants I bought at our Convention plant sale are clustered behind a tangled mass of wires and mesh on my patio. I am not sure what is left since it is almost impossible for me to get in there, too.

It is important to protect young trees from bucks during rutting season. By September, I try to construct a cylinder of wire around the bottom 4 ft of any small tree that has a trunk diameter less than 6 inches. It keeps the bucks from rubbing the bark off those trees as they try to rid their antlers of the felt that covered them during the summer.



Hyatt Garden after Deer Damage – May 2015



Bark Damage to a Blue Atlas Cedar by Deer Rubbing

Electric fences are very effective but in my suburban community with children and lawyers nearby, that is not an option. I have considered purchasing some of those electronic stakes like the **Havahart 5250 Deer Repeller** which cost about \$50 each. An attractant lures the deer to the stake but as soon as it licks the surface, the deer gets a strong jolt of electricity. Those work briefly, but the deer soon learn to avoid them.

Chemical Repellants

I have used foliage sprays to deter the deer and that works fairly well. **Liquid Fence** is a common deer repellent which comes ready to use or in a concentrate that needs to be mixed with water. It is expensive but is effective. The active ingredient is apparently an egg protein. It smells terrible at first but after the stench fades, the protein makes the plants less palatable to the deer for many weeks. The spray must be reapplied several times during the season, especially after heavy rains.

www.liquidfence.com

Following a suggestion by the late Ed Reiley, I have made my own egg-based deer spray:

6 eggs

1 cup milk

A few drops of Dawn detergent

I whip the eggs, milk, and detergent in the blender and then combine it with enough water to make about 2.5 gallons of spray. I used to add 1/3 cup Tabasco Sauce but I now add a small amount of Liquid Fence concentrate. It stinks and I feel better about making my plants unsavory to Bambi.

Several people have recommended **Plantskydd** which they claim lasts 6 months during the winter

but only 3 to 4 months during the growing season. I have not used it yet.

www.plantskydd.com

With all of these sprays, be sure to clean your sprayer thoroughly after each use. The repellants can solidify and clog the apparatus so buying a new sprayer after each use will add significantly to the cost of fighting deer.

There are some other products that emit objectionable odors which seem to repel deer. An Amish fruit tree propagator, Schlabach's Nursery, sells small bars of soap that Jim Brant used one year. These bars are inexpensive and come with a wire to attach the soap to plants. The company does not have a website, nor do they do take credit cards or phone orders but Jim provided contact information:

Schlabach's Nursery, 2784 Murdock Rd,
Medina, NY 14103. (585) 798-6198



Bitrex – The Bitter Pill

People in the Hosta Society are excited about **Natura Plant Saver**, a systemic repellent made of Bitrex (Denatonium Benzoate), one of the most bitter chemical compounds yet known. Two or three pills pushed into the soil around the plant while it is actively growing will be absorbed into the tissues which makes it taste terrible to man or beast for up to 18 months. It is obviously not appropriate for a vegetable garden but it is wonderful for perennials.

www.naturaproducts.ca

The tablets are costly since a bottle of 50 will run about \$18. However, when one buys an expensive plant, it might be worth the money. I intend to try it when setting out young deciduous azaleas. The protection doesn't start right away since it takes time for the plant to absorb the chemical. New plants

must be protected by other means until that happens. Another important warning is to wear gloves and avoid exposing your skin to this product. Bitrex is easily absorbed through skin and will make everything taste terrible for many days.

Joe Brusco of the Massachusetts Chapter ARS has recommended making your own Bitrex spray. He had a large fenced landscape but very deep snows one winter broke down his fence and the deer herds got in. They ate everything above the snow line. He paid about \$100 for a kilogram of dry Bitrex powder on the web. He used a couple of teaspoons per gallon which he said was probably 100 times more than needed. One application seemed to do the trick.

Joe said to be sure to wear a dust mask when working with the powder and to do everything outside. It is very easy to contaminate something with a few stray particles. The bitter taste can linger for many days. Joe recommended using a spreader-sticker like WiltPruf in the spray to keep the Bitrex from washing off but he did not do that on his first application. He also indicated that there are sources with Bitrex dissolved in a solution which would make dust particles less problematic.

Although Bitrex is not toxic, its bitter taste is very nasty. I looked at some of the warnings on the Internet about being sure to wear protective gear, a respirator, and avoid getting on clothes, or anywhere near water supplies, or even on paved surfaces since it may discolor concrete. I thought I might wait on the “nuclear option” (Bitrex spray) until later. I am basically a klutz and frequently spill things. Dieting is also a 2018 resolution of mine but I am not sure that Bitrex is the best way to avoid calories.

Bitrex has to be applied when temperatures are above freezing when the temperatures are between 40 and 90 degrees. It is important to spray when the air is still air so there is no drift into unwanted areas.

There are some commercial products that contain Bitrex including Tree Guard® but I noticed it was not available for sale when writing this piece. I don't know if that is due to shipping problems during freezing weather or for other concerns.

Deer Resistant Plants

I have been trying to find deer resistant plants but I have discovered that hungry deer will eat almost anything. One winter, I threw some scraps of ham on the driveway to attract a fox during a very heavy snow. I wanted to encourage him to “hang around” in order to help keep down the bunny and chipmunk

populations. Within 30 minutes I had 5 deer on the driveway eating that ham instead. I presumed deer were strict vegetarians but Sandra McDonald sent me links verifying that hungry deer have been known to even eat road kill. I suspect that the salt content of the ham may have attracted my herd.

Deer can also change their tastes from year to year. Plants I thought were deer resistant can become fodder at a later date. Some recent surprises included Christmas ferns and Lily-of-the-Valley. So far, deer have not eaten any of my tree peonies nor do they like my hellebores. However, young deer will often taste anything in the garden. Many times I have found the flower stalks of expensive double hellebore hybrids chewed off and spit out on the ground. The yearlings may not have liked the flavor of hellebores but they still ruined the blooms.



Tree Peonies seem to be Deer Resistant

Deer love native azalea foliage during the growing season but I have found minimal damage once the plants drop their leaves, especially on species with relatively small buds like *prunifolium*.

If deer are not ravaging your garden, you are very fortunate. If you are like me, fighting the deer will be an essential part of gardening.

Miscellaneous Notes

We were expecting to get some rooted cuttings back from Van Veen Nursery this fall but it didn't happen. The nursery is planning to stay in business even after Kathy Van Veen passed away. Maybe we will get those cuttings in the spring.

We want to thank Lois Sheinfeld and her husband for their generous \$250 contribution in support of our newsletter. They are Associate members from New York and we really appreciate their kindness!

2018 Seed Exchange – Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

The following seeds are offered to chapter members and associates at \$0.60 per packet including postage. People are limited to one pack in any lot. Available seed will be divided among those who request the selection. Thanks to donors: Norm Beaudry (**Be**), Don Hyatt (**Hy**), George McLellan (**MI**). Please return orders to Don Hyatt with payment to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS by February 10, 2018. Seed will be distributed after that date.

Species, collected in the wild (cw)

1. *calendulaceum*, Hooper mix, Graham Cnty., NC, (Hy, MI)
2. *calendulaceum*, Roan mixed, Mitchell Cnty., NC (Hy, MI)

Species, open pollinated garden origin (op)

3. *adenopodum*, light lavender pink, superb foliage (Hy)
4. *hyperythrum*, white, very heat tolerant (Be)
5. *hyperythrum*, form with bronze new growth (Be)
6. *keiskei*, yellow, compact plants (Hy)
7. *metternichii*, pink, shiny dark green foliage (Hy)
8. *pseudochrysanthum*, light pink to white (Be)

Rhododendron Hybrids (op)

9. Cornelia Sanders, light pink *hyperythrum* hybrid (Be)
10. Dexter's Honeydew, light apricot, fragrant (Be)

Rhododendron Hybrids (op) (continued)

11. Dexter's Spice, white, fragrant (Be)
12. Hardy Giant, white, large leaves (Be)
13. Hardy Loderi, cream, fragrant (Be)
14. Laurelwood Persimmon, coral pink (Be)
15. Martin Keister White (*yak-metternichii*), white (Hy, Be)
16. max-calophytum, ivory white (Be)
17. Nestucca (*yak-fortunei*), compact white (Be)
18. Mary Garrison, salmon pink fading to buff yellow (Be)
19. Ross L, deep rose pink, heavily spotted with red (Be)

Deciduous Azaleas (op)

20. Gregory Bald Seedlings, yellow and orange (Be)

I am sorry that our local seed exchange has such a small listing again this year. Due to a combination of conflicts and family problems this fall, I did not get away to the mountains to collect any seed. The *R. calendulaceum* seed is left over from last year but should still be viable. We also have some interesting open pollinated seed from the Beaudry's garden. Norm manages the ARS Seed Exchange which does have many exciting offerings. That should be online soon:

www.rhododendron.org/seedexchange1.htm

2018 Seed Order Form - Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

Return to: Don Hyatt (donaldhyatt@verizon.net)

Order Deadline: February 10, 2018

Name: _____
(Please Print)

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Packet No.	Variety		Packet No.	Variety

_____ **Total Packets x \$0.60 each =** _____
(Make checks payable to **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS**)

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
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