



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Early Spring Newsletter: March 2018

Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar - 2018

- **March 25** – PVC Regular Meeting, Potomac Community Center
- **April 12** – PVC Tentative Pennsylvania Nursery Trip
- **April 27-29** – MAC Spring Meeting, Harrisonburg, VA
- **May 5 or 6** – PVC Garden Tour (tentative)
- **May 20** – Multi-Chapter Open House, White's Nursery
- **May 21-26** – ARS Convention, Bremen, Germany
- **June 11-17** – PVC-MAC Tentative dates for Native Azalea treks
- **July 14** – PVC 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

Our Next Meeting: Sonny Coble "The Reileyridge Rhododendrons"

Date: Sunday, March 25, 2018

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Potomac Community Center

Please join us for our next meeting on March 25 at the Potomac Community Center to hear Sonny Coble speak on the rhododendron hybrids of Ed and Mary Reiley. Sonny is a retired educator and past president of our neighboring Mason-Dixon Chapter in Westminster, MD. He will be speaking about the hardy rhododendron hybrids developed by the late Ed Reiley. Ed was past ARS President, a recipient of the ARS Gold Medal, and the author of the book, "Success with Rhododendrons and Azaleas." He helped found the Mason-Dixon Chapter ARS. Ed developed some stunning hardy hybrids for central Maryland that are finally getting to market.

Ed's wife, Mary, continues evaluating and naming new hybrids, and works with the Mason-Dixon Chapter's Plant Development Committee to help introduce them. We did offer many of them for the first time at the 2016 ARS/ASA Convention in Williamsburg but you can consider becoming an Associate Member of the Mason-Dixon Chapter to have better access to those plants. The 2019 ARS Convention in Philadelphia may offer some of the Reileyridge Rhododendrons in their plant sale, too.

We hope to see you at our next meeting. Spring is on the way and it is time to think of plants! Please note that we usually have a plant exchange at our March meeting but since we will be meeting in a



The late Ed Reiley admiring Rhododendron 'Cadis' in his garden

smaller room, we did not think we could manage that activity. There will be other opportunities!

Refreshment Duty: We ask members whose last names are in the second third of the alphabet (**I – Q**) to bring a snack for the refreshment table.

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

Thoughts on the Reiley Garden

by Don Hyatt



'Wheatley' in the Reiley Garden

Ed Reiley at the Nursery

I joined the ARS in 1968 and I think Ed and Mary Reiley joined about the same time. It seems like I have always known them. In preparation for our next meeting, I thought I would share some memories of their garden which is located in Woodsboro, MD. I visited it many times prior to the 2006 joint ARS/ASA Convention we hosted in Rockville, MD. It was going to be on tour and I needed photographs for convention publicity but it was a wonderful place to visit, too. Sadly, I have been too busy to see it in bloom since then but I am sure it is still as lovely as ever.

Ed and Mary started adding rhododendrons to their garden in 1960, and by the time Ed retired in 1981, they established their Reiley Ridge Nursery as a wholesale and retail source for field grown rhododendrons. You could always count on a plant from them to be well grown and healthy.

By 2005, the Reileys had developed a five-acre landscape on the property. It featured azaleas, rhododendrons, mountain laurel, and companion plants including asters, iris, daylilies, daffodils, boxwood, hostas, and ferns. I most remember the

native birdfoot violets (*Viola pedata*), a very difficult wildflower for me to grow. They seemed to naturalize in the garden, especially along the paths. They have larger blossoms than most violets and cut-leaf foliage. Some plants have solid blue flowers but others can be bicolor with the two upper petals in dark purple and look like small pansies.



Birdfoot Violet (*Viola pedata*)

The garden is situated on a rather level site with about 70% of the area under widely spaced oak trees. The rest are in full sun. In 2006, they had over 2000 rhododendron plants representing 775 different cultivars and species.

Ed also had about 500 of his seedlings growing in lath houses that he was evaluating. I remember being there one day as he picked blossom after blossom from different seedlings that all came from the same cross to show me the subtle differences. I think one of the parents was 'Janet Blair' but I don't recall the other. It might have been 'Evening Glow' or some other yellow since the blossoms were large and ruffled in a blend of light yellow and pink. Some had a blotch and others did not. Four of them are pictured below. It would be difficult to select the best since they were all lovely. Ed wanted to wait to see which plants were good growers, too.



'Mistmaiden' in the Reiley Garden



Four of Ed Reiley's 'Janet Blair' Seedlings

Ed considered the garden a "test garden," where plants are evaluated and either retained or destroyed depending upon how well they performed. It was a beautiful landscape, too. At least half of the plants were 20 to 40 years old and obviously superb growers. They were fully clothed with foliage from top to bottom and covered with trusses when in bloom. They were lovely the rest of the year, too.



'Reileyridge Sweet Sue' in the Landscape



A seedling from the cross (*fortunei* x *Caractacus*)

I remember Ed pointing out an area which had some plants he grew from seed of the cross (*fortunei* x 'Caractacus'). They were all fragrant pastels in variations of pink and lavender, usually with a dark blotch. They made a wonderful landscape grouping. The plants were handsome with large, glossy leaves. Ed and Mary registered several from that cross: 'Reileyridge Sweet Sue', 'Reileyridge Target', 'Luscious Lora', and 'Mary's Choice'.

Ed passed away on March 16, 2008, but Mary has continued to evaluate those seedlings and introduce them through different venues.



Max Byrkit's "Cherry Tree" (*makinoi* x 'Yaku Angel')



"Cherry Tree" in the Reiley Garden

She also shares cuttings of other rare plants. If it is still around, one I love is a plant Ed rooted of Dr. Max Byrkit's (*R. makinoi* x *R. yakusimanum* 'Yaku Angel') that they called "Cherry Tree." The original plant was entangled in the roots of a cherry tree. It has pure white flowers and long narrow leaves.

There were lovely Dexters in the garden as well as Gables and West Coast hybrids. When Jack Ayers sold his home and moved west, we decided to move the species selection of *R. makinoi* that he had raised from seed and named 'Margaret K. White.' We knew it would have a good home.

Come to our next meeting as Sonny Coble gives us an update on the Reileyridge Rhododendrons.



R. makinoi 'Margaret K. White' growing in the Reiley Garden

Rooting Dormant Cuttings

by Don Hyatt



Tree Removal – Broken Branches Can Be Dormant Cuttings

We may not have had heavy snow in the DC area this winter, but the damage from falling branches during wind storms has resulted in lots of damaged plants. I felt fortunate that I had my largest oak tree taken down in January before that terrible March nor'easter. It died at the end of the summer, and I wanted it down before it took out my house or me. It was huge, maybe 80 to 100 ft tall. The arborists tried to avoid other plants, but a number of azalea and rhododendron branches were broken. If you find broken branches in your garden, don't throw them away. Try rooting some as dormant cuttings.

We usually root cuttings in summer or fall, but cuttings can root at almost any time of year. Even desiccated stems can often be salvaged. Just make a fresh cut at the base, stick the end in warm water, and cover the top with a clear plastic bag to increase humidity. The tissue will often plump back up in a day or two. If it revives, there is a very good chance you can root some cuttings from that branch.

For containers, I use anything that will fit inside a clear plastic bag to make a "mini-greenhouse." I fill the containers with my standard mix: 1/2 Peat, 1/4 Sand, 1/4 Perlite. The medium should be moist but not wet. Excess moisture encourages fungus diseases and rotting and is a major cause for failure.

Since rhododendrons and azaleas are shallow rooted, I make short cuttings, only about 1 to 2 inches long. I also remove any flower buds since attempting to bloom will use up energy that could be

put into forming new roots.

To further discourage fungus and insect pests, I usually "sterilize" the cuttings by soaking them for 5 minutes in a solution made of 1 part Clorox and 10 parts water. Afterwards, I rinse the cuttings well to remove the Clorox water.

Next, I dip the end of each cutting in a rooting hormone such as Dip 'N Grow, and insert the bottom inch into the medium. Rhododendron cuttings are wounded. When the container is full, I enclose the pot in a plastic bag to make a mini-greenhouse which keeps humidity high while the cuttings root.

Finally, I place the pots of cuttings under fluorescent lights with "long day" conditions, 16 to 24 hours of light every day. Roots do not need light to form but new growth is encouraged with long days. Placing pots on a north window sill with good light will work too. Try to avoid too much sun since bags can become easily overheated.

Cuttings should break dormancy in 4 to 8 weeks and at that time they are usually forming new roots. I watch the bags carefully to pick any out dead leaves and remove cuttings that rot. It helps keep fungal diseases at bay. There should be no need to water the pots for many months since the condensation on the bag continues to recycle moisture inside that tiny greenhouse ecosystem.

I keep containers under lights during the rest of the winter and early spring. In late spring, I start opening the bags to allow cuttings to get accustomed to lower humidity for several days. After they have hardened off, I try to repot them into individual pots.

By early summer, I have moved the cuttings into 3-inch or 4-inch pots and have given a few doses of weak fertilizer. By midsummer, plants get no more fertilizer as I want them to go dormant before frost. Cold frame protection that first winter is helpful, but dormant cuttings are often large enough by fall to make it on their own. I rooted 1200 azalea cuttings for the 1982 ARS Convention favors that way.

Don't let those broken branches go to waste. Even if you don't have broken branches, try rooting some cuttings. It is as easy as starting seeds!



Dormant Cuttings from a broken branch



Mini-Greenhouse



Cuttings break dormancy, sending out new roots and shoots

PVC Photography Contest Results

All who attended the January meeting agreed that this year's photo contest was the prettiest one ever. We had 30 spectacular entries and winners were determined by popular vote.

Rosa McWhorter swept the competition taking four of the top prizes. Her image of a spider web in front of azaleas was the hands-down favorite in Category III and also won Best in Contest. Below is a summary with winning images on the next page.

Category I: Flowers

- 1st Rosa McWhorter – “Pretty Enough to Eat”
- 2nd (tie) Diane Reinke – “Cinderella”
- 2nd (tie) Rosa McWhorter – “A. Bedford at its Best”
- 3rd – tie among the remaining entries

Category II: Scenery

- 1st Don Hyatt – “Azaleas in the Mist”
- 2nd Joanne Neckel – “Azaleas and Lake”
- 3rd – tie among the remaining entries

Category III: Other

- 1st Rosa McWhorter – “Rosa’s Web Site”
- 2nd & 3rd – tie among the remaining entries

Best in Contest

Rosa McWhorter – “Rosa’s Web Site”

In Category I, Rosa’s photo titled “Pretty Enough to Eat” showed a white evergreen azalea brushed with pink. It won 1st place and I thought the flower looked like Bob Stewart’s hybrid ‘Betty Ellen’. Diane Reinke’s photo of the white and red striped Glenn Dale hybrid ‘Cinderella’ tied with Rosa’s photo of the lavender “A. Bedford at its Best” for 2nd place. We couldn’t decide on a 3rd place and considered that essentially an 8 way tie.

In Category II, Don Hyatt’s photo featuring *R. calendulaceum* in the mist along the Appalachian Trail at Roan Mountain won 1st place. Joanne Neckel won 2nd in that category for her spectacular photo of purple azaleas framing a vista across a lake. The azaleas looked like they could be the Southern Indica hybrid ‘Formosa.’ Once again, we had an 8 way tie for 3rd place.

In Category III, Rosa’s entry was so dominant that we could not name a winner for 2nd or 3rd so we considered that another 8-way tie. The next page has the top winners. In the digital version, we will try to print some photos of the other entries.

Thank you all for entering! As we look ahead to this blooming season, be sure to take lots of pictures so you will have photos to enter in our chapter contest as well as in the ARS Photo Competition.

Happy 97th Birthday to Gray Carter!

By the time you receive this newsletter, one of our chapter treasures, Gray Carter, will have celebrated his 97th Birthday. Below is a recent picture of Carol Segree and Barbara Bullock with Gray. Gray was chapter treasurer for many years and one of our most able propagators. He raised plants for our sales, built propagating frames for other members, and is still one of the nicest people we know. Gray did receive the ARS Bronze Medal for his service to the chapter. Happy Birthday Gray!



Carol Segree and Barbara Bullock with Gray Carter

Garden Tour Date Change: *May 5 or 6*

Because the Middle Atlantic Chapter is holding their spring meeting in Harrisonburg, VA, during the weekend of April 27 - 28, we expect to move our chapter’s garden tour date to the following weekend, Saturday (5/5) or Sunday (5/6). Many of our members are Associates of their chapter and look forward to the MAC meetings. If you have some suggestions for gardens to tour, please let us know.

Pennsylvania Nursery Field Trip: *April 11*

Below is a tentative plan for our day field trip to Pennsylvania nurseries on Wednesday, April 11.

Groff’s Plant Farm (9:30 – 11:30 AM)

6128 Street Rd., Kirkwood, PA 17536

Conestoga Nursery (1:00 PM – 2:30 PM)

310 Reading Road, East Earl, PA 17519

Black Creek Greenhouses (2:45 – 4:30 PM)

211 E. Black Creek Road, East Earl, PA 17519

Most people bring a snack lunch and then we can have dinner in East Earl before heading home. More on this later.

(Chapter Roster Removed)

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS Photo Competition



1st Category I: Rosa McWhorter
“Pretty Enough to Eat”



2nd Category II: Joanne Neckel
“Azaleas and Lake”



1st Category III - *Best in Contest*: Rosa McWhorter
“Rosa’s Web Site”



2nd (tie) Category I: Diane Reinke
“Cinderella”



2nd (tie) Category I: Rosa McWhorter
“A. Bedford at Its Best”



1st Category II: Don Hyatt
“Azaleas in the Mist”

**Top Prize Winners
in the 2018 Contest**

More Images from the 2018 Photo Contest



Bob McWhorter



Bob McWhorter



Bill Miller



Don Hyatt



Don Hyatt



Bill Miller



Joanne Neckel



Joanne Neckel



Joanne Neckel



Rosa McWhorter



Bill Miller

These were some images from the 2018 Photo Contest that did not win a top prize but people sent them to me to put in the digital version of our newsletter. I have not indicated categories or titles, but just identified the photographer. Thanks for sharing your photos!



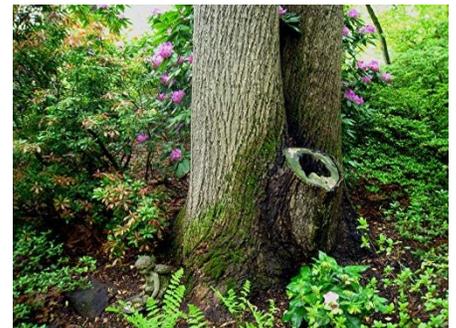
Bill Miller



Rosa McWhorter



Don Hyatt



Rosa McWhorter

More Images from the Reiley Garden



'Solidarity'



'Crimson Tide'



'Crimson Tide' in the garden



'Carol's' Super White'



'Sandwich Appleblossom'



'Peter Allan'



'Winterset White'



'Whittenton'



'Gilbert Myers'



Potomac Valley Chapter
of the
American Rhododendron Society

The Potomac Valley Chapter ARS is one of three American Rhododendron Society chapters located in District 9 which represents the Middle Atlantic region of the United States. Some of our chapter activities include:

- Regular Meetings with Speakers
- Annual Chapter Banquet
- Garden Tours
- Field Trips to Nurseries or to Wild Stands of Native Azaleas and Rhododendrons
- Local and National Seed Exchanges
- Plants for Members Program
- Flower Show
- Informative Chapter Newsletters
- Annual Photography Contest
- Access to Chapter Library Books

Our regular chapter meetings are usually held four times a year at the Potomac Community Center in Potomac, MD, on Sunday afternoons. However, we do hold occasional meetings at other locations in nearby Maryland, Virginia, or Washington, DC.

We encourage you to check out our chapter website which includes at least 16 years of previous newsletters that contain interesting articles, more color pictures, and examples of past activities:

www.arspvc.org

As a member of our local chapter you will also become a member at the national level of the American Rhododendron Society. This entitles you to a year's subscription of their outstanding quarterly **Journal** filled with information and many color pictures. You will also be invited to attend national conventions or regional conferences.

The cost of ARS membership is \$40 per year and includes membership in a chapter of your choice, such as our Potomac Valley Chapter. If you are already a member of another ARS Chapter, you may join the Potomac Valley Chapter as an Associate Member for only \$10 per year but you will need to identify your home chapter.

For more information about the American Rhododendron Society, check out their website:

www.rhododendron.org

Membership Application
American Rhododendron Society

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip/Country _____

Telephone _____

E-mail: _____

Memberships are on a calendar year basis and include the local chapter membership:

Individual/Family.....	\$40.00
Student (proof of age required).....	10.00
Commercial/Corporate.....	90.00
Sustaining	75.00
Sponsoring.....	150.00
Life, single	1,000.00
Life, family.....	1,500.00
Associate Membership*.....	10.00

**Associate Members must identify home chapter*

I would like my "home" chapter to be the Potomac Valley Chapter

To join our chapter, please contact our treasurer for mailing instructions:

Phyllis Rittman: prittman@erols.com

You may also send this form with US Funds payable to the national organization:

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 214
Great River, NY 11739

To pay online by credit card, follow the link to "Membership" on the ARS website:

www.rhododendron.org

More ARS Contact Points:

Phone (631) 533-0375, Fax (866) 883-8019

Email: member@arsoffice.org

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
Donald W. Hyatt, Editor
donaldhyatt@verizon.net
don@donaldhyatt.com