



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Fall Supplement: October 2019

Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar and Some Regional Activities

- **October 23, 2019** – Gray Carter Memorial, London Town Gdns., MD
- **October 27, 2019** – NV-ASA Meeting, Kirkwood Presb. Church, VA
- **November 2, 2019** – PVC Fall Banquet, Normandie Farm, Potomac, MD
- **November 3, 2019** – Mason-Dixon ARS Meeting, Westminster, MD
- **November 9, 2019** – MAC Fall Meeting, Richmond, VA
- **April 29 – May 3, 2020** – ARS 75th Anniversary Conv., Portland, OR

Chapter Officers

President: Ginny Mohr

rngmohr@msn.com

Secretary: Diane Reinke

lsabelle49@aol.com

Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman

prittman@erols.com

Fall Banquet: Dr. Stephen Krebs

“Form Plus Function: Building Better Adapted Rhododendrons”

Where: Normandie Farm Restaurant

10710 Falls Rd, Potomac, MD 20854

Date: Saturday, November 2, 2019

Time: 12 noon to 4 PM

We will once again hold our annual banquet in Potomac, MD, at the Normandie Farm Restaurant. We have upgraded the menu this year and the price will be \$50 per person. Our choice of entrees will be Grilled Filet of Atlantic Salmon with Fresh Béarnaise Sauce, Scaloppini's of Veal Francaise w/Caper Citrus Drizzle, or the vegetarian option, Vegetable Lasagna w/Portobello Mushroom Garnish, Marinara.

We are excited to have rhododendron expert Dr. Stephen Krebs as our banquet speaker. Steve has been the long-time Director of the David Leach Research Station of the Holden Arboretum in Kirkland, Ohio. He earned his M.S. in Agronomy at the University of California, Davis, and received his Ph.D in Plant Breeding and Genetics at Michigan State University. Steve has been working at the David Leach Research Center since 1992 so he has spent the bulk of his career at one of the leading rhododendron research facilities in this country and has been in charge of it for most of that time.

Steve's talk is titled “Form Plus Function: Building Better Adapted Rhododendrons.” He will discuss some results of his innovative breeding program to develop plants that are not only heat and cold tolerant, but also disease resistant. He has created some spectacular new plants that are just now



Steve Krebs admires the huge leaves of *Rhododendron sinogrande*

coming to market. On the next page, Steve has an introduction to his talk and a photo of a new hybrid.

Steve used a rhododendron species from Taiwan known as *R. hyperythrum* in his breeding efforts in order to create beautiful hybrids that also carry its desirable hardiness traits. Steve's first release was picked up by PDSI (Plant Development Services, Inc.), the firm that markets the Encore® azaleas. His rhododendron is now registered and trademarked as Southgate® Splendor™, part of the Southern Living series. It is a first-generation *R. hyperythrum* cross, but Steve will show us some exciting new hybrids he has on the way from more advance crosses, too.

We will have a short auction to raise funds to help defray our speaker's expenses so be sure to bring your checkbook. Hope to see you there!

Our Speaker: Stephen Krebs, Ph.D

(Photos this page by S. Krebs)



Stephen Krebs, Ph.D - Director, David G. Leach Research Station, Holden Forests and Gardens

“Form Plus Function: Building Better Adapted Rhododendrons”

By Steve Krebs

Rhododendrons have been hybridized in the West for almost 200 years, resulting in over 25,000 registered cultivars. This large number of plants reflects their popularity as well as the enthusiasm of hybridizers who have recombined the vast ornamental diversity of genus *Rhododendron* via interspecific cross pollinations.

Overwhelmingly, and not surprisingly, the breeding emphasis has been on aesthetic attributes such as flowers and foliage because most backyard hybridizers are pursuing an enjoyable avocation and are less concerned with broad consumer or commercial success. Improvement of adaptive traits has been largely focused on cold hardiness, resulting in a diverse array of rhododendrons that can be grown in USDA hardiness zones 4 and 5.

Yet many other functional traits have not been addressed, traits such as disease and pest resistance, heat tolerance, drought tolerance, and high pH adaptability that could improve the landscape performance of rhododendrons and expand their commercial market.

I started working with David Leach in 1992, a few years after his property, collections, and breeding populations had been incorporated into The Holden Arboretum’s research program. We worked together for five years prior to his passing in 1998.

I am trying to build on David’s legacy of highly ornamental, cold hardy (USDA zone 5) rhododendrons by adding other adaptive traits to the collection. My goal is to create novel hybrids that are more easily and broadly grown because they can tolerate challenging conditions.

In many cases, species that have these valuable features can be found in the wild. My presentation demonstrates how a species from Taiwan, *R. hyperythrum*, can be hybridized to combine its resistance to the rhododendron root rot pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi* with a broader array of ornamental traits.

Significantly, increased disease resistance also confers adaptability to warmer climates such as the Gulf South (hardiness zone 9), regions where culture of large leafed rhododendrons has heretofore been limited. Resistant cultivars can be grown on their own roots, or serve as rootstocks for grafting susceptible scions, and I will give an update on our evaluations of experimental and commercially available rootstocks that can provide protection against this soil pathogen.



Southgate® Splendor™
One of Steve’s New Hybrids

Note: Our Winter PVC Newsletter will carry our local seed exchange. We need seed so if you have interesting things to share, please collect it this fall and send to Don Hyatt.



Species Profile: *R. hyperythrum*

Rhododendron hyperythrum is a heat and cold tolerant species from Taiwan that seems to have a remarkable root system. When Hurricane Isabel hit the Southeast U.S. Coast in 2003, some gardens were flooded by a storm surge that killed most rhodies but the salt water didn't seem to faze this species.

The white flowers open very early but the trusses are lax and not as spectacular as some species. Even so, in every other respect this plant is a winner. It is a compact grower with dark green, recurved leaves, and it actually thrives here! It has no indumentum but the new growth on some forms can be dark burgundy red.

The disease resistance and heat tolerance of *R. hyperythrum* is passed to its progeny. The Southgate hybrids from John Thornton and Steve Krebs owe their adaptability to this species.

Dues are Due!

With this newsletter, we are enclosing your 2019 dues renewal notice as well as a return envelope. You may also pay for your Fall Banquet reservations at the same time and write one check to cover both. Please include both your registration form and dues notice in the envelope. Also, please include your proper **email address** on the membership form so we can send you the color digital newsletter. Mail your payment to:

Phyllis T. Rittman, Treasurer
prittman@erols.com

Online Dues Renewals

If you prefer to pay by credit card or personal Pay Pal account for dues renewal, check out the ARS Office and click on Membership Services:

<https://www.arsoffice.org/>

You will need your "membership number" to continue which is on your Journal mailing label. Unfortunately, the ARS Office *cannot* accept credit card payment for our banquet reservations.

Gray Carter Memorial Dedication

When: October 23, 2019, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

**Where: London Town Gardens
839 London Town Road
Edgewater, MD 21037**

Several chapters have come together to celebrate the life of Gray Carter, a cherished member who passed away on July 17, 2018. He was 97. Gray was an extremely generous man who propagated azaleas and rhododendrons that he donated to our societies.

The Potomac Valley Chapter ARS and the Ben Morrison Chapter ASA soon began raising funds for a memorial to Gray. We were so pleased to link up with London Town Gardens in Edgewater, MD. We purchased a bench which has now been placed in their garden and have started adding landscape plants.

On September 23, we planted 43 rhododendrons and azaleas. Some were purchased with funds we collected, some given by the Mason-Dixon Chapter, and others donated by individuals. The digital version of this newsletter has some images of those varieties.

We certainly want to thank Lauren Silberman, the Executive Director at Historic London Town & Gardens, and Meenal Harankhedkar, the Director of Horticulture, for being so accommodating with us. We also want to thank the large group of enthusiastic Master Gardeners and volunteers who did most of the planting that day. London Town wants to renovate their Dexter collection so if you have plants you can donate, they will certainly have a good home:

www.historiclondontown.org

On Wednesday, October 23, we have planned a reception to celebrate Gray's life and dedicate the bench pictured below with Carol Segree. We expect to gather about 10:00 AM at the garden to toast Gray, and will follow with refreshments at a nearby gazebo.

Please RSVP by October 20 to Budne Reinke or Carol Segree if you plan to attend so we can better plan for the event.



Some Plants Used in the Landscape Near Gray Carter's Bench



'Marshy Point Annapolis'



'John C. White'



'Carol Kittel' photo: C. Beck



'Wheatley'



'Marshy Point Pink Sparkle'



'Gigi'



R. makinoi



'Koromo-shikibu'



'Mist Maiden'



'Great Smoky'



'Dauntless'



'Aromi Sun Struck' photo: C. Beck



'Phyllis Korn'



R. alabamense



Gray Carter



'Heads Up'



'Ben Morrison'



'Taurus'



'Bellringer'



'Don's Variegated Austrinum'



'Secret Wish'

District 9 Director's Report

By Bill Meyers August 27, 2019

At the time of this writing, in our mid-Atlantic Region, this summer's high heat and humidity has broken, at least temporarily. District 9 is alive and active thanks to some new members joining but unfortunately and sadly, long-standing members are aging and a number of those once quite active and participating, are missing from recent meetings and activities. Ray Smith of Mason Dixon has taken it on himself to publish a draft "Treatise of Membership ideas" which the Executive Committee has re-viewed and is preparing to act upon. We'll keep you posted on results. I'll be happy to share it with those who may be interested.

The Mid-Atlantic Chapter will have had their Spring Meeting (they have 2 meetings each year) and their fall meeting is now scheduled for one day, Saturday, November 9th at the Roslyn Center in Richmond, VA possibly a joint session with the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA and including a tour of the Cosby Garden. Members continue to support the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, the Hahn Garden at Virginia Tech and the James Mason University Arboretum and to assist in maintaining the "balds" in the Appalachian Highlands. With respect to this last item, Jim Brandt and George McLellan of MAC, Don Hyatt of Potomac Valley and Rick Bauer of the Northern Virginia Chapter of the ASA as well as current National President of ASA, have been working feverishly with Steverson Moffat of the Nantahala National Forest Management Team of the US Forest Service regarding management practices in the Highlands to protect ericaceous shrubs there, particularly our native *rhododendron*. We had gotten word the Forest Service was going to do a major "burn" in those areas including the "balds" that Don Hyatt and others have maintained and photographed so beautifully. This is most concerning.

The Potomac Valley Chapter held a workshop, as they do annually, to demonstrate propagation techniques for rhododendron cuttings to chapter members, particularly for new folks. In mid-September, PVC will have their annual chapter picnic at Seneca Creek State Park including a Plants-for-Members sale and, on November 2nd, will hold their Annual Fall Banquet at Normandie Farm which usually hosts an outstanding speaker and presentation as well as presenting an unusual plant auction.

In mid-July Mason-Dixon also had its annual cutting demo geared to new members, followed a week later with the chapter's annual cutting and plant auction, always an exciting event and fund raiser. Ray Smith, as usual, served as auctioneer. On Saturday

September 21, 2019, Mason-Dixon will hold their annual Summer Picnic at the home of member Nettie Bernady in Hedgesville, WV, with burgers and dogs, ice and drinks furnished by the Chapter and those coming will bring a dish to share. Sad news is that Harry Weiskittel, former owner of Marshy Point Nursery and Mason-Dixon Chapter member, passed away in early May after suffering from Alzheimer's Disease for several years. His son Austin tried running the nursery for a few years but ended up closing it, another huge loss to azalea and rhododendron lovers nationwide.

Marshy Point was one of the east coast's major wholesalers of azaleas. Many of his cultivars were truly special. Paul and Carolyn Beck and Rick Bauer of the Northern VA Chapter of the ASA and Don Hyatt of Potomac Valley are working to catalog as many of those hybrids as possible. If interested, memorial gifts may be made to the Memory and Alzheimer's Treatment Center of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD.

Recognizing that there were no Chapters that had volunteered to host the ARS Fall 2020 Eastern Regional Meeting, Ann Mangels, immediate past President of the ARS and Mason-Dixon Chapter member suggested Mason-Dixon take that on. It was readily agreed by the Mason-Dixon Executive Committee, meeting this summer to do that, hopefully with support from the Potomac Valley and Mid - Atlantic Chapters of District 9 and also possibly with the help of both the Susquehanna and Lehigh Valley Chapters which are nearby. It will be held in Gettysburg Pennsylvania at the Wyndham Hotel just off route U.S. Route 30, east of its intersection with U.S. Route 15. The dates are September 25, 26 and 27, 2020. The board will meet on Friday the 25th followed by evening festivities and the plant sale. Further information will be published later.

The main attractions in Gettysburg are the Civil War Battlefield, an incredible round diorama about the battles there, the Eisenhower Farm and President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address site. Also, the mountains and woodlands surrounding Gettysburg have large areas of *Rhododendron maximum* and Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia*). We invite you to come and see old friends, make new ones, look back into history, and talk and learn about rhododendrons in the relaxing atmosphere of Adams County, Pennsylvania where there are also some great antiques available at many locations. It might be a little early for Fall colors but it should be beautiful just the same. Please add this to your calendars and come and join us in Gettysburg!!!

Summer Activities!

Chapter members enjoyed some activities this summer including a workshop to root rhododendron and azalea cuttings and our PVC Chapter Picnic. We hope you enjoyed them.

Your officers will be meeting in October to plan activities for next year. We really want to know what things you enjoyed and what kinds of activities you would like to do in the future. Please share your thoughts with us.

Workshop on Rooting Cuttings

On July 27, we held a workshop to give members hands-on experience with rooting rhododendron and azalea cuttings. The chapter provided all supplies including cuttings of good varieties for people to root.



After Don Hyatt gave a PowerPoint presentation that he made explaining how to root cuttings, people sat down at the tables and went through the process themselves. It was a fun afternoon.



Don provided attendees with a CD containing a copy of his presentation. If you would like to get a copy, he temporarily posted it and another on how to start seeds on our chapter website at the link below:

www.arspvc.org/downloads.html

It will also be available at the ARS Store:

www.arsstore.org

Chapter Picnic

Below are some images from the Chapter Picnic at the covered pavilion we rented at Seneca Creek State Park on September 15. We had wonderful weather, great food, and enjoyed the company of our friends.



We also had our plants for members sale that day and most of them were sold.



ARS Convention

Just a reminder that the 75th Anniversary of the ARS will be celebrated at the 2020 convention next spring in Portland, OR. The website is now online and it is not too early to start planning for next year:

www.ars75.org

It's ROY Time Again!

It is time to select our 2020 Rhododendrons of the Year (ROY) for the Middle Atlantic Region. We need to nominate plants in November. Please think about your favorite rhododendrons and azaleas, and let Don Hyatt know. You can see images of our past ROY winners dating back to 2004 on the ARS website:

www.rhododendron.org/roy19ma.htm

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS
Donald W. Hyatt, Newsletter Editor
Don@donaldhyatt.com



Potomac Valley Chapter ARS – 2019 Fall Banquet
“Form Plus Function: Building Better Adapted Rhododendrons”
by Stephen Krebs, Ph.D

Saturday, November 2, 2019 12:00 Noon - 4:00 PM

Where: Normandie Farm Restaurant
10710 Falls Road, Potomac, MD 20854

Price: \$50.00 per person

<i>Registration Must Be Received by 10/27/2019</i>

Menu Choice: Grilled Salmon, Veal Scaloppini, or Vegetable Lasagna

We are back again at the popular Normandie Farm restaurant in Potomac, MD. Entrée choices include Grilled Filet of Atlantic Salmon with Fresh Béarnaise Sauce, or Scaloppini's of Veal Francaise w/ Caper Citrus Drizzle. We also have a vegetarian option, Vegetable Lasagna w/Portobello Mushroom Garnish, Marinara. Dinner includes all the amenities as well as their famous popovers and homemade cheesecake. There will be a cash bar. For more on Normandie Farm, see their website: www.popovers.com

Our Speaker: Stephen Krebs, Ph.D

Steve Krebs has been the Director of the David Leach Research Station of the Holden Arboretum in Kirkland, OH, for many years. His research has focused on developing rhododendrons that are not only be heat and cold tolerant, but also resistant to disease. He has been using the species *R. hyperythrum* from Taiwan to breed with other more colorful rhododendrons and his plants are just beginning to make it to the market. You won't want to miss seeing what will likely become our rhododendrons of the future.

Please return your reservation form with check payable to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS to our Treasurer by October 25:



PVC Fall 2019 Banquet Registration Form
“Form Plus Function”
Saturday November 2, 2019

Registration Deadline Sunday, October 27, 2019

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please print the name of each attendee below, and circle the entrée choice
(Fish: Grilled Salmon, Veal: Veal Scaloppini, or Veg: Vegetarian)

- 1) _____ **Fish Veal Veg**
- 2) _____ **Fish Veal Veg**
- 3) _____ **Fish Veal Veg**
- 4) _____ **Fish Veal Veg**

No. of attendees _____ **x \$50.00 each =** _____ **Total** Make checks to: **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS**



Membership Application American Rhododendron Society

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 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 newsletters dating back to 2001 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

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:

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER ARS
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 National Contact Points:

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

Email: member@arsoffice.org