



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Late Summer Newsletter: August 2025

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS Calendar – Fall 2025

- **September 8, Fall Membership Renewal Campaign Begins**
- **Saturday, Oct 4: Membership Table, London Town Gardens Fall Sale**
- **Thursday, Oct 9: PVC Chapter Picnic, Seneca Creek State Park**
- **November 1 – 2: MAC Fall Meeting, Fredericksburg - Brent Heath**
- **November 2: ASA Meeting, Springfield, VA – Kathy Jentz**
- **December 3: PVC Fall Banquet w/ speaker, Annapolis, MD**

Chapter Officers

President: Carol Segree
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Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
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Membership: Norm Beaudry
beaunorm@gmail.com

Chapter News and Fall Activities

Dues Renewal – Some Important Changes

The ARS hasn't raised dues in 14 years but has come to the realization that it needs to do something in order to avoid serious financial problems. We have been operating at a loss for several years. The ARS Board has been involved in heated discussions for the past year and finally approved some changes that will become effective for the 2026 calendar year. Look for renewal details elsewhere in this newsletter and in subsequent correspondence. We will begin our membership campaign in early September and we hope we can count on you to renew for another year.

With the rising costs of publishing including paper and postage, there is a realization that we must transition our publications to digital format in order to be viable in the future. Steve Henning has been developing procedures to convert the standard hard copy Journal produced by editor Glen Jamieson and associate editor Don Smart into a digital version that can be easily read on most platforms including desktops and cell phones. The images will be high resolution and the login procedure to access the copy will be simplified. Steve has been able to translate JARS into multiple languages to support international members as well. Phenomenal! Thank you, Steve!

Those who wish to change to digital for 2026 will see no increase in dues. It will remain at \$40. The local chapter does keep \$10 of that amount for their use to cover meeting expenses and insurance. The ARS will, however, only be publishing three issues of JARS each year. For those who wish to continue receiving a hard copy Journal, there will be a \$10 increase to \$50 a year but they will have full access to the digital version, too. We encourage all to check out the digital Journal in order to appreciate the advanced navigation features and high-resolution images.

Chapter Picnic – Thursday, October 9

Seneca Creek State Park

11950 Clopper Rd, Gaithersburg, MD

11:00 AM to 2:30 PM



Weekends are busy so we are trying something new this year for our chapter picnic. We will be holding a weekday lunch on Thursday, October 9, from 11 am to 2:30 pm. We intend to eat promptly at noon. The chapter has reserved the Fawn Pavilion from 8 am to 4 pm. We can arrive any time after the morning rush hour, have a nice gathering, eat at noon, and leave before the evening rush. This might allow us to avoid some traffic. The chapter will provide fried chicken and attendees should bring a side dish. We will ask you to RSVP by October 3. Details later.

London Town Gardens Fall Plant Sale

Saturday, October 4 – Information Table

Our chapter is trying to maintain a close association with London Town Gardens in Edgewater, MD. We set up a flower show table to greet the public last April and have been invited back for their fall plant sale. We will be next to the Master Gardeners' table. We will answer questions about rhododendrons and azaleas, and invite people to join our group. Care to help out?

The New Dues Structure

Dues notices for 2026 will be mailed out in early September and payments must be received no later than the first of December. The following membership options are listed below.

Category	Cost
Individual - Digital	\$40
Individual - Print & Digital	\$50
Commercial / Corporate	\$90
Sustaining	\$75
Sponsoring	\$150
Student – (under age 25) Access to online Journal only	\$10
Life Member – (one or two people in the same household)	\$1000
Associate – must belong to another ARS Chapter (identify)	\$10

Write a check made out to **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS** and mail to our membership chair:

Norman Beaudry

PVC-ARS Membership Chair

Questions: **Beaunorm@gmail.com**

If your membership is current, you can renew online and pay by credit card at the ARS website:

www.rhododendron.org

Any regular members who have already paid several years ahead will need pay an additional \$10 per year to receive the printed copy of the Journal. Otherwise, their memberships will automatically be converted to the Digital only category. Life members will receive Print and Digital but should contact the chapter annually to verify personal details.

We need a valid email address for every member. Please make sure you **print** your preferred email address **very clearly** on your renewal form.

Support the Rhododendron Species Foundation

Join the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden: \$45

Free admission to RSBG, reciprocal benefits at 345 other gardens, rare plant sale, lectures, publications.

<https://rhodygarden.org/join/>

A Busy Weekend: November 1 – 2

MAC Fall Meeting – Brent Heath (Saturday)

NV-ASA Meeting – Kathy Jentz (Sunday)

It is a sad reality that plant society memberships are dwindling. Joint activities are now becoming more common. Many of us belong to multiple organizations so we enjoy opportunities to attend joint functions. The ARS and ASA have had joint conventions in Atlanta (1984 & 2023), Rockville (2006), and Williamsburg (2016). Our Potomac Valley Chapter were co-hosts for both the Rockville and Williamsburg Conventions.

Our chapter has had joint meetings with the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS as well as with the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA. Much of this newsletter will be devoted to highlights from the MAC spring meeting in Norfolk and the ASA convention in Pennsylvania this year. Great events!

Although the first weekend in November looks like there will be a conflict with MAC and NV-ASA, it is actually possible to attend both events. MAC will be hosting their fall meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn in Fredericksburg which is on the north side of town. Brent Heath, a world-renowned expert on daffodils and other bulbs, will be their keynote speaker on Saturday night. He is very entertaining and much in demand. Doug Jolley, MAC's president, will be inviting Potomac Valley members to attend this meeting as we did in Norfolk in the spring. He assures us that Sunday's activities will end before noon so there will be plenty of time to head up I-95 to attend the Azalea Society event.

The NoVA ASA's meeting will be held at the Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Springfield which is south of DC, just minutes off of I-95. Their speaker will be ASA Editor, Kathy Jentz, another excellent speaker who spoke at our fall banquet in 2022. The Fredericksburg Hilton and the Kirkwood Church are only about one hour apart. Since the ASA meeting starts at 1:30 pm, there should be ample time to attend both. Save the date!



Brent Heath



Kathy Jentz

Spring Travels – MAC Meeting Norfolk

The MAC Spring Meeting from April 12 – 13 was a wonderful event. The garden tours paralleled some places we visited during the 2016 Convention.

Tidewater Arboretum

This arboretum was our first stop. It is an agricultural research center of only 5 acres with many native plants.

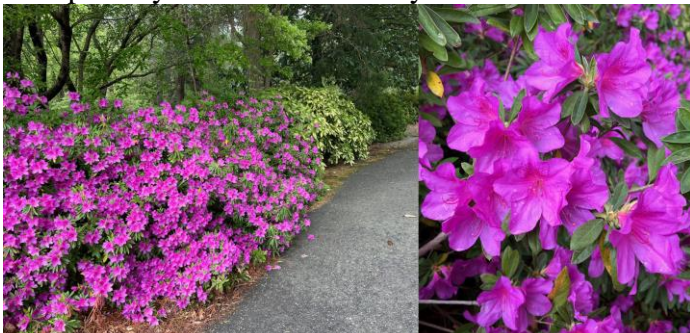


The Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*) on the left below has striking yellow and red blossoms. The brown blossoms on the right are from the pawpaw tree (*Asimina triloba*). It has edible fruits similar to a banana.



Norfolk Botanical Garden

The main event that day was the 175-acre Norfolk Botanical Garden. The early azaleas were just starting to bloom such as the large flowered 'Formosa' shown below and 'George Lindley Taber' to the right. When we hosted the 2016 Convention, we visited the NBG a week later in the season. Some of the other azaleas had not opened yet but there is always so much to see!



Norfolk Botanical Garden (cont.)

There are many fountains in the NBG including this one in a pond near the Camellia garden. Some camellias were still in bloom as well as the dogwoods.



I was impressed with the white rhododendrons at the NBG. They looked like *R. hyperythrum* hybrids.



I had never visited their Japanese Garden before but was drawn there by a large 'George Lindley Taber' shown below flanked by a bed of Bletilla orchids.



Norfolk Botanical Garden (cont.)

The Japanese Garden is one of 65 separate gardens in the NBG. It often takes a back seat to other features that may be larger and more highly publicized. It has significant stonework with ponds and streams, and challenging ways to cross them. Water features are everywhere in the NBG and I wondered how many people actually fall in every year. I am very careful now since I fell in a pool up to my neck on a tour in the UK.



A hardy orchid, *Bletilla hyacinthina* (below left), was planted beside “Taber” in the Japanese Garden. Great plant! They have many Crape Myrtles (center) which were just leafing out but the magnificent bark is a year round attraction. They used Chinese Ginger (*Asarum splendens*) for a ground cover. The NBG has the best Camellia collection in Virginia. Camellias (right) can be in flower there from November through April!



David Taylor Garden

On our way home from the MAC Spring Meeting, there were several private gardens open for us to see. David Taylor who has been a long time Associate member of our chapter has a lovely home on the water in Yorktown. What an incredible view! Those of us who live in the suburbs try to disguise the neighbors’ homes and parked cars with a wall of plants. It must be so inspiring to look out on a 180-degree waterfront vista every morning.



David (below) in his garden with ‘Koromo-shikabu’ that he used as a foundation planting.



One of his rhododendrons we really admired was a ‘Southgate Splendor®’ a new hybrid introduced by Steve Krebs of the Holden Arboretum. It is heat and disease resistant, a hybrid of *R. hyperythrum*.



Barbara and Alton Hall Garden

The second private garden I visited was Barbara and Alton Hall's incredible place. They live in Gloucester, VA, and were featured in our 2016 Convention tour. Their garden has one of the largest collections of rare plants in the region. It is like a landscape of everything in Tony Avent's "Plants Delight" catalog along with a collection of Japanese maples, rhododendrons, azaleas, and other plants accented with whimsical garden art.



Barbara and Al recently built a cabana near the pond to better admire the garden. Great place for containers!



Barbara and Al show Doug and Davetta Jolley around a newly planted area. It's a home for more treasures!



Established areas in the Hall garden remind me of a tapestry with careful attention to the overall color harmony and plant selections but then you need to look closely to see all the little details. To develop a garden like that requires artistic talent, horticultural expertise, and a lot of hard work over many years. Well done!



The azalea *R. serpyllifolium* (below) is so delicate with tiny leaves and pink flowers less than 1/2 inch across. It is easy to prune but Barbara showed us her favorite tool, a new DeWalt 20-volt cordless pruner. It can easily cut through branches that are 1 1/2 inches across. Power!!



I have no idea how many Japanese maple varieties they have but it must be in the hundreds. There are so many variations in plant habit, leaf color, and shape it is hard to choose a favorite. Below are just three: 'Butterfly' with its upright habit and variegated foliage in white and green, 'Katsura' with its graceful drooping branches and yellow-green leaves, and 'Rhode Island Red' which has a compact and dense habit with bright red foliage.



ASA Convention – Philadelphia

The Azalea Society of America held its convention in the Philadelphia area from May 7 – 9. Most of us are members and we toured many of the same places as the 2019 ARS Convention but a week earlier in the season.

Michael Martin Mills Garden

A few private gardens were open the day prior to the meeting and I did get to see the garden of Michael Martin Mills, the ARS Registrar. Randy Dalton, Michael's late partner, was a member of Joe Gable's family so I knew they grew many Gable hybrids.

The setting is an open expanse of lawn behind several estates and is like a park. There are tall trees, wide shrub borders and occasional beds that create a refined and artistic landscape with rare rhododendrons and choice of companion plants. It really is stunning!



We only had about an hour so it was a challenge to admire the vistas and flowers, take pictures, and look for labels. Below is 'Beechwood Pink', a Gable hybrid in the bed beside Carol Segree and Karel Bernady.



Below, Karel Bernady is photographing a rare Gable plant, 'James Allison'. It is a 'Mary Belle' hybrid.



Michael Martin Mills (below) shows a unique dwarf he raised from a cross of two large leaf rhododendrons.



The three lovely rhododendrons below are some that I really admired but didn't have time to identify.



ASA Convention Tour – Chanticleer

The first tour began with a visit to Chanticleer, an impressive 35-acre public garden near Philadelphia. They have 7 horticulturists, each of which is in charge of a separate section of the garden. There are no tags on plants but staff are around to answer questions and there are online materials, too. Below is the entry area where we got an overview. To the right is the ticket booth and also stairs to the sunken tennis court garden.



One prominent feature on the upper level is a stone structure built to look like an old ruin. It showcases vines, ferns, rock garden plants, a table-like reflecting pool, and many unique vistas of the garden.



The area shown below has a woodland garden to the left featuring many rhododendrons and a sunny gravel garden on the right for drought tolerant plants.



We were all impressed with an upright bush *Clematis integrifolia* 'Blue Ribbons' (below), a perfect companion with their yellow columbine. We want that plant!



The courtyard garden near the main house had a pink and lavender color scheme. It featured various shrubs and pastel tulip varieties. George McLellan started planning his fall bulb order. I went for the deer resistant tree peony.



ASA Convention – Jenkins Arboretum

Our next stop was the 48-acre Jenkins Arboretum which is located in Malvern, PA. It is a beautiful garden with a world-class collection of rhododendrons and azaleas. As we got off the bus, we headed for the plant sale (below). Then we had lunch and toured the garden.



Steve Wright and Tara Speers of Jenkins managed the entire convention alone and did a fantastic job. Since there was no plant sale at the hotel, we raided the Jenkins plant sale which would later open to the public. Their staff loaded up our purchases and took them to the hotel for us to retrieve. It worked beautifully. Thanks, Steve and Tara! (pictured in the inserts below.)



Jenkins uses native wildflowers extensively in the landscape such as the Wild Blue Phlox (*P. divaricata*) shown above and Eastern Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) in the photo below. Incidentally, seated on the left side of that bench is Senora Simpson in the bright pink jacket. She is one of the ASA Directors.



Above are some rhododendrons I admired. Steve is building an extensive native azalea species collection and has the *R. austrinum* forms near the pond (below).



These two are striking selections of *R. flammeum*.



ASA Convention – WynEden

WynEden is a private garden of about 10 acres that has an amazing collection of plants. There are several scenic ponds that provide peaceful reflections of the tall trees and flowers in the garden. The home sits on a high hill overlooking the largest pond.

One of the most impressive features is the sloping hillside below the house. It is planted with 10,000 hostas! What is amazing is there doesn't seem to be a chewed leaf in sight. This "Garden of Eden" apparently has no deer, slugs, snails, voles, or snakes.



Another pond reflects colorful shrubs and small trees including viburnums, maples, willows, and azaleas.



WynEden has many large rhododendrons including a number of Dexters like 'Always Admired' (below).



Some of his 400 hosta varieties form bands of green.



Azaleas as well as companion plants like primroses and other perennials add interest along the border.



ASA Convention – Winterthur

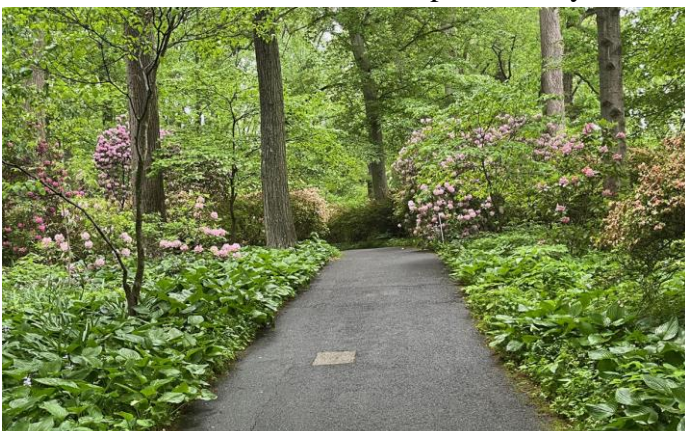
On the second day, we headed to nearby Delaware for two more world class public gardens. Winterthur, the estate of Henry Francis du Pont (1880 – 1969), was the first stop. Unfortunately, light rain moved into the area so we gathered on a sheltered patio at the visitor's center so Steve Wright and Tara Speers could explain the schedule for the day before heading out to the gardens. Later, we would return there for lunch.



Winterthur has about 1000 acres of land including rolling meadows, farmland, and wooded areas. The gardens comprise only 60 acres around the mansion. When we visited in 2019, most of the rhododendrons and azaleas were through but not this time.

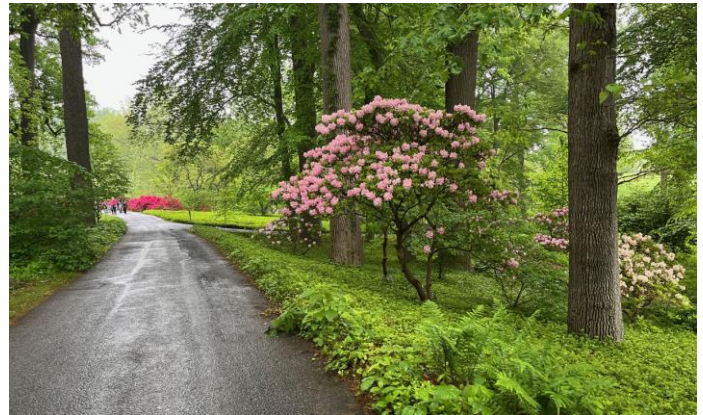


The garden has paved roads that motorized trams can use to assist visitor access to the plantings. There are also trails that allow closer exploration by foot.



Mr. du Pont had an artistic vision for the property. There were formal areas near the mansion that he maintained but when he expanded the garden into the adjacent areas, he preferred a more natural look.

He was fond of rhododendrons, especially in the light pink and apricot shades. He bought many plants from Joe Gable and Charles Dexter. He used mass plantings of evergreen azaleas in the Azalea Woods and spent much time adjusting colors to suit his tastes. He included large beds of bulbs, hostas, wildflowers, and companion plants to complete his design.



The mass plantings of azaleas are real show stoppers each spring but the beauty of Winterthur changes throughout the seasons. I have never seen the famous March Bank but the peony display we saw in 2019 was gorgeous. I have witnessed its brilliant fall foliage extravaganza, too.



Winterthur (cont.)

The 175-room Winterthur mansion can be seen through the trees in the distance to the left of the stone guard house below. My priority has always been exploring the garden and I have never considered any of the other options available such as a house tour or seeing the museum, library, or various exhibitions and collections. I remember glancing at a display of ornate tureens donated by the Campbell Soup Company on one visit. Formality is not my thing and I am just as happy with a cup of soup zapped in a microwave.



Winterthur has some very impressive trees including many old Japanese maples with artistically gnarled trunks. Mr. du Pont knew the importance of vistas which is why he preserved his 1000 acres of meadows and farm land but left occasional trees for accents.



ASA Convention – Mt. Cuba Center

The rain had stopped by the time we got to Mt. Cuba Center, the next stop. This was the former estate of Mr. Lamont du Pont Copeland and his wife, Pamela. The cultivated area is about 50 acres amid a large tract of about 1000 acres of land. Its focus is on native plants including native azaleas such as *R. atlanticum* in the container at the entry building below. The home is not huge like the mansion at Winterthur but a two-story brick colonial one might find in a wealthy DC suburb.



There is a formal garden at the main house with a pond and fountain. When I first visited in 2011, that garden featured masses of tulips, stately delphinium plants and pansies. They have now changed to using native plants like the tall yellow baptisia below, native azaleas, and selected wildflowers.



Mt. Cuba Center (cont.)

The actual garden area most visitors see is probably less than 10 acres. From the formal garden there are trails down the hill to the woodland garden and ponds. Featured there are a few rhododendrons, wildflowers including a huge collection of trillium species, some yellow lady's slippers, and various native azaleas.



The Yellow Trillium plants (*T. luteum*) were so showy!



Iris, primroses, and native azaleas were by the pond,



Their native dogwood display had suffered from the anthracnose disease but fringe trees (above) seem to be a good substitute. They are using rare native plant selections like a gold Oak Leaf Hydrangea (below) and colored forms of pitcher plants for container use.



On the way out, Mt. Cuba wisely directs visitors through the plant sale to buy things we had admired.



Save the Dates in 2026!

Looks like a busy spring next year. We'll provide more details later but mark your calendars. Both conventions should be great.

**April 12 – 15, 2026: ASA Convention
Athens, GA**

**April 21 – 26, 2026: ARS Convention
Vancouver Island, BC**

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
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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 (Digital).....	\$40.00
Individual (Print & Digital)	\$50.00
Student (proof of age required).....	10.00
Commercial/Corporate.....	90.00
Sustaining	75.00
Sponsoring.....	150.00
Life, single	1,000.00
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, send this form with payment to our Membership chair, Norm Beaudry. Please contact him by email for specifics.

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER ARS
PVC-ARS Membership Chair
Beaunorm@gmail.com

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

AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
P.O. Box 43
Craryville, NY 12521

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

www.rhododendron.org

More ARS National Contact Points:

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