



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Late Fall Newsletter: December 2025

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS Calendar – Fall 2025

- December 3: PVC Fall Banquet, Hidden View Farm, Annapolis, MD
- March 6 – 7, 2026: Annual North Carolina Nursery Field Trip
- April 12 – 15, 2026: ASA Convention, Athens, GA
- April 21 – 26, 2026: ARS Convention, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada

Potomac Valley Chapter Fall Banquet

Speaker: Joe Bruso, “Rhododendron Hybridizing”

Where: Richard Bradshaw’s Hidden View Farm

**702 Defense Highway
Crownsville, MD 21023**

Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Time: 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Price: \$50.00

We are excited to have Joe Bruso, president of the Massachusetts Chapter ARS as our banquet speaker. Joe will be giving an update to his presentation at last June’s 2025 ARS Convention in Nova Scotia:

**“Rhododendron Hybridizing Results: What Works,
What Doesn’t, What’s in Demand.”**

Joe is one of the leading rhododendron breeders in the Eastern US and he will show some of his creations. Joe is particularly interested in foliage so he has focused on hybrids with big leaves, colorful indumentum and tomentum, and the “Red Max” effect where the red sap becomes visible in stems and leaves. He is also working on hardy hybrids with red or tropical colored blooms. Joe may be bringing a few of his plants for our auction.

Joe and his wife Nancy have an absolutely stunning garden in Hopkinton, a suburb of Boston. The 3-acre naturalistic landscape surrounding their home is blessed with many granite outcroppings which make perfect staging areas to display rhododendrons, azaleas, and wildflowers. See the separate article about their garden and his hybrids elsewhere in this newsletter.

We really appreciate Richard Bradshaw allowing us to use the pavilion on his estate Hidden View Farm again. We have contracted with the same caterer we used last year and the menu is quite similar. We sent the registration form previously but I will include another copy with this newsletter mailing.

Chapter Officers

President: Carol Segree
csegree17@outlook.com
Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
rittwoman@gmail.com
Membership: Norm Beaudry
beaunorm@gmail.com



Joe Bruso and Norm Beaudry in the Bruso Garden

We have three entrée options on the menu. Please select your preference when you register: **1) Roasted Whole Salmon Filets** with Herbs and served with a Dill Aioli, **2) Beef Bourguignon** with Sauteed Cremini Mushrooms, and the Vegetarian option, **3) Cheese Tortellini** with Sautéed Mushrooms and Creamy White Wine Sauce. The meal will include salad, roast vegetables, dessert, beverages, and wine.

Registration Deadline is Friday, November 21.
The cost is \$50 per meal. Please make checks payable to **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS** and send to:

**Carol Segree
csegree17@outlook.com**

If you are concerned about Carol getting your check in time, please give her a call or send email to confirm that your payment is on the way. Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, we have to give the caterer numbers of each entrée more than a week in advance.

Dues Reminder

Remember, dues must be paid by December 1st to insure delivery of your Winter Journal. The price of regular membership has increased to \$50 a year if you want a printed copy of the ARS Journal but you will also have access to the new digital version. If you only want the digital version of JARS, regular membership will remain at \$40 per year.

We appreciate our many Associate members, those who are already a member of another chapter and want to belong to our chapter as well. That way they will receive our newsletters and can attend our activities. The Associate Membership fee is \$10 per year.

Make checks payable to **Potomac Valley Chapter ARS** and mail to our membership chair:

Norman Beaudry
PVC Membership Chair
beaunorm@gmail.com

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

www.rhododendron.org

To save a stamp, if you are registering for our Fall Banquet and you want to pay your dues at the same time, you can send both checks to our chapter president, Carol Segree, and she will see that Norm gets your renewal information.

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

Planning Ahead

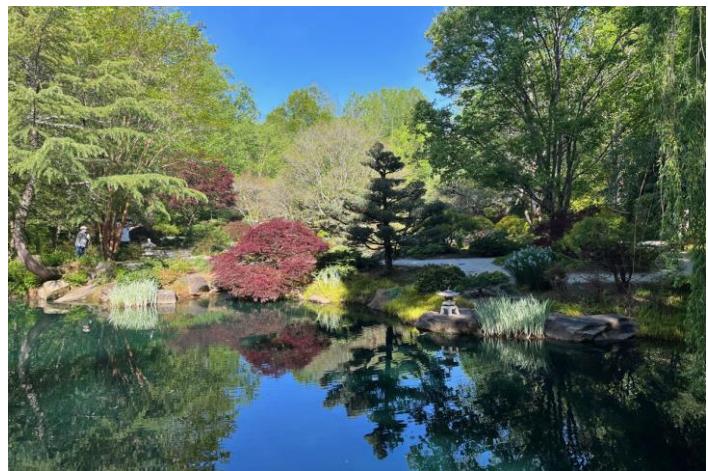
When you get your 2006 calendar, be sure to mark a couple of potential trips for next year. These are things you can do on your own but they are much more fun to do them with friends.

North Carolina Nursery Trip **March 6 – 7, 2026**

There are several mail order nurseries in North Carolina that have a few open house days during the year where you can visit and buy plants on site. We usually focus on the second week in March for our trip since it is a good antidote for spring fever.

On Friday, we first visit Camellia Forest Nursery in Chapel Hill, NC, and then head south to Sanford where we shop at Big Bloomers later that afternoon. We check into a motel and then go out to dinner.

On Saturday, we head back to Raleigh where we shop at Plant Delights Nursery and then go by Garden Treasures Nursery and possibly Pine Knot Farms before heading home.



ASA Convention and Gibbs Gardens **April 12 – 15, 2026**

Many of our members belong to the Azalea Society of America and expect to attend their convention next spring in Athens, GA. The convention starts on the Sunday evening, April 12, and finishes Wednesday morning, April 15. Athens is east of Atlanta and about a 9-hour drive from my home in McLean, VA. Seeing the problems with airline delays and cancellations due to the government shut down, I am not sure that the stressed-out air traffic controllers will have recovered by then. It will probably be faster to drive.

When several of us attended the 2013 ASA Athens Convention, we visited Gibbs Garden on the way down. Started in 1980 to enhance the views from the home of the president of the leading landscape firm in Atlanta, the 300-acre garden had just opened to the public. We were blown away. It is clearly one of the finest public gardens on the East Coast. It has multiple theme gardens featuring choice plant materials, 24 ponds and 19 waterfalls. We spent the whole day there. During the 2023 Atlanta Convention tour, we only had 2 hours which was woefully insufficient.

Gibbs is only 1.5 hours from Athens. Looking at the schedule, it makes sense to stop there after the meeting, spending Wednesday there before heading home.

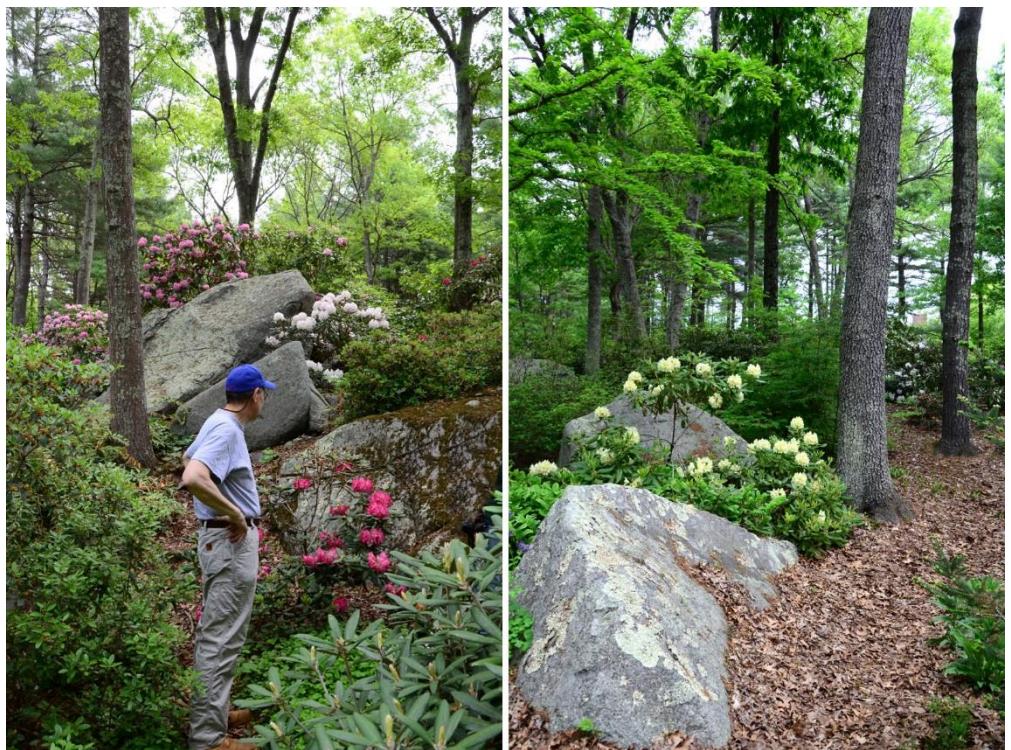


The Bruso Garden “Boulderwoods”

I have been to the garden of Joe and Nancy Bruso a couple of times. The setting is incredible with outcroppings of huge granite boulders that remained when the glaciers melted after the Ice Ages. They call it “Boulderwoods”

The Brusos have used that natural infrastructure to create one of the most impressive gardens I have seen in the Eastern US. Naturally, they had to remove some small trees and weedy shrubs to open up the canopy and then planted their rhododendrons and azaleas in the rock crevices to create a real show place. They also encouraged the native wildflowers like the Lady's Slippers. (right)

There are some level areas on the 3-acre property, and even a rock-free place to have a patch of lawn. Joe has some fenced nursery beds where he can set out seedlings and rooted cuttings to grow on.



Joe's Boulders in the Woods

The setting of the Bruso garden is reminiscent of many mountaintops in the Southern Appalachians. The native rhododendrons will often find footholds in crevices among the boulders and they love it!



A huge deciduous azalea 'Jane Abbott' makes a bold statement at the edge of the lawn behind the house. It is a hybrid of *R. prinophyllum*.



Vista of the garden looking back toward the house

The boulders create a perfect rock garden setting.

Joe's Hybridizing Goals

Joe has had a number of hybridizing goals. One is unusual foliage since the flowering season is but a small part of the year. Below, Joe is examining some of his *R. makinoi* plants which are known for their long narrow leaves. When the new growth expands in early summer, the color is often white due to a downy coating on the surface called tomentum. That eventually wears off and the leaves become dark green but they retain a tan felt on the underside called indumentum.



Joe with some of his *R. makinoi* seedlings

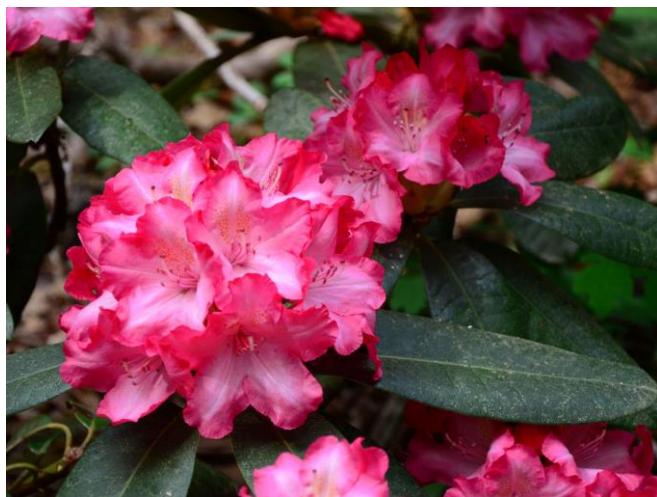


R. makinoi new growth

Photo: J. Bruso



Summer foliage on *R. pachysanthum* hybrids Photo: J. Bruso



Vulcan x (*yakushimanum* x *Pygmalian*)

Joe has also been breeding for red flowers. His hybrid pictured above is a lovely picotee. 'Vulcan' tends to throw bicolor flowers but it also needs to be the plant that carries the seed pod because it doesn't seem to have any pollen.

Building on the work of others is important for hybridizers. Joe obtained Don Vossburg's hardy red illustrated below that was a cross of our hardy native, *R. maximum*, with pollen from a relatively tender species from the foothills of the eastern Himalayas, *R. thomsonii*. To make a cross with *R. maximum* as the seed parent takes special care because the flowers tend to self-pollinate before the buds even open.



R. maximum



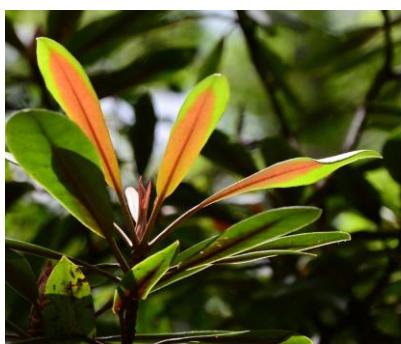
R. thomsonii



(*R. maximum* x *R. thomsonii*)



(Arthur J. Ivans x Hardy Hybrid) Photos: J. Bruso



The “Red Max” (*R. maximum*) Photos: D. Hyatt



Joe has been experimenting with hybrids that have colored leaf bracts and pigmented new growth. The image above is a plant from a cross of (Arthur J. Ivans x Hardy Hybrid) which has bright red leaf bracts.

Joe crossed it with a relatively new species introduction with rounded leaves called *R. yuefengense* pictured below. It is a precocious bloomer setting flower buds at an early age. He was very excited to see one of the seedlings from that cross which had not bloomed yet. It had red leaf bracts *and* red leaves! He commented, “With foliage like that, who needs flowers!”



R. yuefengense



Photos: D. Hyatt



maximum RP x [brachycarpum x (mallotum x proteoides)]

Below are a few more pictures of rhododendrons with exceptional foliage taken by Joe in his garden.



(Arthur J. Ivans x Hardy Hybrid) x *yuefengense* Photo: J. Bruso



‘Golfer’ (yak-pachysanthum)



Cinnamon Bear x Jade n Suede



‘Golfer’ and Friends Photos: J. Bruso



Norm Beaudry admires ‘Olin O. Dobbs’. It has “red genes.”

Remembering Frank Fujioka

The Rhododendron world lost another great in late October with the passing of Frank Fujioka. Born in Hawaii, he had a long career with the U.S. Forest Service specializing in fire meteorology. Frank was also a teacher and counselor with the Edmonds School District north of Seattle. We knew him as the hybridizer of spectacular rhododendrons for West Coast gardens.



Frank talking with Karel Bernady



Frank Fujioka

Frank was a kind and generous man, the epitome of grace. As a speaker, he was one of the best. He shared his knowledge and lovely photos, as well as his dry wit.

His home on Whidbey Island was perched on a high cliff overlooking Puget Sound. What a fantastic view!



Vista of the garden and Puget Sound from Frank's deck



Japanese maples and evergreens provide garden structure



Frank's unusual 'Starbright Champagne' is very popular due to its color contrast and sharply pointed petals.

The garden around Frank's house was pure artistry. Every vista was like a painting with carefully chosen trees and companion plants in perfect color harmony. The rhododendrons were primarily his own hybrids or rare species. He seemed to prune many of his trees to enhance the branch structure as one does with Bonsai.



'Bruce Briggs' growing under a gnarled tree



'Saffron Silk' with Japanese Maples in the distance



'Saffron Silk' is probably Frank's best yellow.



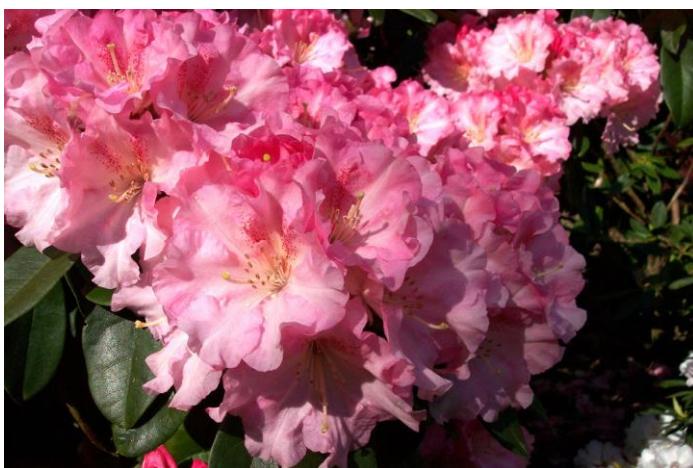
'Glowing Gold' has star-shaped flowers and really does glow



'Seaview Sunset' has not only become a popular landscape plant but has also proven to be a good parent in hybridizing

Before registering a new hybrid, Frank was very careful to evaluate the seedlings over a long period, typically 10 years or more. He wanted to be sure his plant was superior to other things already on the market.

Frank was looking for a way to help raise funds for Meerkirk Gardens which was also on Whidbey Island. He decided to auction off the naming rights to some of his new plants. That raised thousands of dollars for the public garden such as the one below, 'Louisa Wittrock'.



The naming rights to this plant raised \$10,000 for Meerkirk Gardens. The name chosen was 'Louisa Wittrock'.

Pictured below is Frank with one of his more famous hybrids, 'Midnight Mystique'. He often referred to it as "Midnight Mistake" because the plant habit was open and not quite to his liking. The plant has turned out to be an excellent parent for hybridizing other bicolor flowers including many in Germany developed by Holger Hachmann. Frank's popular 'Pomegranate Splash' had 'Midnight Mystique' as one parent.



Frank with his 'Midnight Mystique'



'Pomegranate Splash'



Humming Birds at Feeder

Frank would frequently invite visitors who dropped by to stay for lunch. He did the same with the humming birds that visited his garden. He had at least three feeders on his deck that he could watch from his kitchen. The birds were so entertaining as they flitted from one feeder to another trying to get a sip of nectar (sugar syrup).



The cliff provided awesome views but erosion was a concern.

Vignettes in Frank Fujioka's Garden

Visitors to Frank's garden at peak season were greeted by colorful scenes that he carefully planned. Some were harmonious shades of the same basic color, others were pastel blends, some were bold contrasts of complementary hues, opposite sides of the color wheel. Blooms don't last long so Frank was equally interested in foliage. That is why he grew so many species, too.



Hybrid of 'Seaview Sunset'
backed up by 'Glowing Gold'



'Seaview Sunset' with
'Vibrant Violet'



Warm Color Harmony: 'Glowing Gold' flanked by Pieris, other rhododendron hybrids, and Japanese maples.



Frank inspects the magnificent foliage of *R. clementiniae*.
It is a rather shy-blooming species. No buds this year.



'Vibrant Violet' and an unnamed yellow hybrid



Frank's 'Vibrant Violet' is an intense color



R. roxieanum var. *oreonastes*
has very narrow leaves



Pastel lavender *R. augustinii*
enhances 'Pink Pinwheels'

Frank's many friends are mourning the loss of yet another giant in the Rhododendron World. He left us a wonderful legacy of beautiful hybrids, especially for gardens in the Pacific Northwest. This is now a challenge for those of us in Eastern climes to follow his example and develop similar plants adapted to our region.

Chapter Picnic Reflections

We had a great picnic at Seneca Creek State Park in October. It was held during the week on a Thursday rather than a weekend so attendance was down slightly but traffic was not bad, at least for me. We appreciated all the excellent side dishes people brought to go with our entrée, fried chicken. Many people were asking for recipes so we will share two here, Richard Bradshaw's delicious Coconut Cream Cake and Don Hyatt's Calico Baked Beans. Enjoy!

Coconut Cream Cake – Richard Bradshaw

Ingredients

1 15¼ oz box coconut cake or white cake mix plus the ingredients needed to prepare that cake
½ cup self-rising flour
1 7 oz package sweetened flaked coconut, divided
1 15 oz can cream of coconut
1 14 oz can sweetened condensed milk
1 pint heavy cream
2 cups powdered sugar
1 8 oz package cream cheese, softened
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
1 6 oz package frozen fresh coconut, thawed

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour 13x9x2 inch pan or use cooking spray.
2. **Cake:** Prepare the cake according to the directions on the box but include the extra ½ cup flour and half of the 7 oz bag of sweetened flaked coconut
3. Bake per directions on the box until top is golden and toothpick stuck in the center comes out clean.
4. **Coconut Cream Filling:** After removing cake from oven, poke holes in the top with a fork or bamboo skewer while the cake is hot.
5. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the cream of coconut (not coconut milk) and sweetened condensed milk. Pour the mixture slowly over the warm cake and spread around so it is absorbed into the holes. Allow cake to cool completely and chill in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight.
6. **Frosting:** Beat together the heavy cream, powdered sugar, softened cream cheese, and vanilla, until light and fluffy. Spread over top of cake. (can use just whipped cream or Cool Whip)
7. Toss together the remaining sweetened flaked coconut with the thawed fresh coconut and spread evenly over the frosting.
8. Chill for one more day before serving.



Picnic Buffet Table in the Fawn Pavilion

Calico Baked Beans – Don Hyatt

Ingredients

½ lb bacon (I use slightly more)
4 medium onions, chopped
1 large can Bush's Baked Beans (28 oz)
1 can black beans (16 oz), drained
1 can dark red kidney beans (16 oz), drained
1 can light red kidney beans (16 oz), drained
1 can butter beans or limas (16 oz), drained
1 can garbanzo beans, (16 oz) drained
½ cup ketchup
½ cup brown sugar

Directions

1. Chop bacon into ¼-inch pieces and fry in large skillet. The bacon should be slightly brown but not necessarily crispy. That will happen in the oven.
2. Remove bacon but reserve at least 2 Tbsp of bacon fat. Saute onions in bacon fat until translucent and soft but not necessarily brown or caramelized.
3. In a large bean pot (2 quart or better), stir together beans, ketchup, and brown sugar. Note, sometimes I will increase the ketchup and brown sugar to 2/3 cup each, especially if I decide to add an extra can of cannellini or pinto beans to serve more people.
4. Top the beans with a layer of the onions and then sprinkle a layer of the bacon pieces on top of that.
5. Bake at 325°F for 1 to 2 hours or until bubbly.
6. When ready to serve, stir the onion and bacon layers into the rest of the baked beans.

Another Sad Note:

Gordon Wylie, past ARS President and 2001 Gold Medal recipient who provided so much legal advice to our society, passed away in late October. He was also a long-time member of the ARS Editorial Committee. He will be missed.

2026 Mid-Atlantic ROY Awards

Here are the 2026 Rhododendron of the Year Awards for the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Elepidote Rhododendron



Southgate® Splendor™

Photo: D. Hyatt

This patented hybrid was developed by Steve Krebs as part of his controlled breeding project. The plant is compact, winter hardy, heat tolerant, and is noted for its resistance to Phytophthora root rot disease. The flowers are 2.5 inches across, openly funnel shaped, moderate pink and white, with a prominent blotch of red spotting on the upper petal. They appear in rounded trusses that measure approximately 4 inches across to 5.5 inches tall and have 10 to 15 blossoms. The foliage is slightly recurved, dark green and glossy. (Plant Patent PP30235)

Lepidote Rhododendron



'Mr. Blue'

Photo: D. Hyatt

This plant registered by Michael Martin Mills was originally known as Joe Gable's hardy *R. augustinii*. It seems to be more tolerant of heat than most forms of the species. The plant is intermediate in growth, 5.5 ft high by 2.75 ft. wide in 8 years, and has pointed leaves of grayish olive green that measure 2.75 inches long by 0.9 inches wide. The light purple flowers are funnel shaped, 2 inches wide by 1.5 inches long, and appear in early spring in clusters of 3 to 4 blossoms. (Registration in JARS Vol. 72 No. 1, Winter 2018)

Evergreen Azalea

Donald H. Voss



'Donald H. Voss'

Photo: Joe Klimavicz

This evergreen azalea was developed by Joseph Klimavicz of Vienna, VA. The plant is intermediate in growth habit reaching 3 ft. by 3 ft. in 10 years. The foliage is moderate olive green, semi-glossy, with elliptical leaves measuring 1.2 inches long by 0.6 inches wide. The flowers are saucer shaped, semi-double to fully double, and measure 1.4 inches long by 2.5 inches wide with up to 18 wavy or ruffled lobes. The flower color is vivid purple with a deep purplish red blotch on the upper three lobes.

(Registration in JARS Vol. 72 No. 2, Spring 2018)

Deciduous Azalea



'Pink and Sweet'

Photo: Sallie and John Perkins

This is one of the late blooming deciduous native azalea hybrids developed by the Mezitt family of Weston Nursery. The shrub will reach about 3 ft. by 3 ft. in 7 years and has dark green, glossy leaves that are 2.5 inches long by 1 inch wide and mildew resistant. The fragrant flowers are openly funnel shaped, 1.5 inches across, and light pink with a yellow flare. (Named and introduced in 1978)

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



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

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 (3 issues) of their outstanding **Journal** in printed or digital form. It is 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 \$50 per year for both printed and digital form, or \$40 for just digital. It 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. Please 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 (Print & Digital).....	\$50.00
Individual (Digital Only)	40.00
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. Contact him for details.

**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:

Phone (631) 533-0375

Email: member@arsoffice.org