



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Calendar

Winter Newsletter: January 2015

- * **January 18, 2015** – PVC Regular Meeting, Potomac Community Center
- * **March 6 – March 8, 2015** – North Carolina Plant Trip
- * **March 22, 2015** – PVC Regular Meeting, Potomac Community Center
- * **March 26-29, 2015** – ASA Convention, Nacogdoches, TX
- * **April 17-19, 2015** – Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS Meeting, Raleigh, NC.
- * **April 22, 2015** – PVC Field trip to Pennsylvania Nurseries.
- * **April 25, 2015** – PVC Flower Show, Annapolis Farmer's Mkt. in morning
- * **April 25, 2015** – Maryland PVC Member Garden Tours in the afternoon
- * **April 26, 2015** – Virginia PVC Member Garden Tours
- * **May 6-10, 2015** – ARS National Convention, Victoria, BC.
- * **late May (TBA)** – Cape Cod Field Trip, Sandwich, MA
- * **mid June (TBA)** – Native Azalea Field Trip, Roan Mt. & Gregory Bald, NC/TN

Chapter Officers

President: Dan Neckel
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Vice President: Ginny Mohr
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Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
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Our Next Meeting:

Gardens of Germany and Denmark

by Bob and Rosa McWhorter

Also, Photography Contest and Share Session

Date: January 18, 2015

Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Potomac Community Center

Last May, Bob and Rosa McWhorter joined a small group of other ARS members who took a remarkable trip to see public and private gardens in Northern Germany and Denmark, some of the finest rhododendron gardens in the world. That region has been a center for rhododendron hybridizing, too.

This fall, the McWhorters have been going through their images, selecting the best to put in a PowerPoint show so they can share some of that wonderful trip with us. Our next meeting will be a chance to enjoy images of their trip including lovely landscapes and gorgeous flowers. Don't miss this opportunity to see places few of us will ever visit!

It has been a tradition to hold our annual our Chapter Photography Contest at our January meeting and that is still on the schedule. The guidelines are listed on the next page but our rules are simple. We have three categories and we just ask that people not enter more than two pictures in any one of them. Attendees will vote on their favorites, and we will award prizes at the end of our meeting.

At our January meeting, we usually have a "Share Session" but we haven't had many participants recently. That is one reason we asked Bob and Rosa to be the main program. If you have something to



Bicolor Rhododendron 'Hans Hachmann' from Germany

share about your garden, a place you visited, or have a question about something, you can bring pictures on a memory stick or CD. We'll fit you into the program, but please limit the time to about 5 minutes.

Refreshment Duty: Unload your holiday treats!

For the past few years, we have made this meeting a Winter Party and ask everyone to bring some left over finger foods or snacks to share. If you have holiday treats, freeze them and bring them to our meeting. If you don't have leftovers, don't worry. Just come anyway. There is always plenty to eat.

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

PVC Photography Contest Rules

We have established the following rules for our local chapter photography contest.

Category I: Flowers – Close-up of flowers, such as a rhododendron truss or an azalea 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: pictures of foliage, creative effects, people, 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 2014.
4. Photos must be naturally occurring, no composites.
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.

Attendees will vote for their favorites, and the entries with the highest popularity vote will receive prizes at the end of the meeting. A single individual can only win one of the prizes so all those who enter usually get something. Be sure to enter!

North Carolina Nursery Trip:

March 6 – March 8

As winter wanes and “cabin fever” is reaching toxic levels, some of us really look forward to our annual field trip to a number of nurseries in Southern Virginia and North Carolina. It is a chance to pick up some rare plants that we often don't see at local nurseries, and have an outing with good friends. Spring is earlier down there so we do see flowers!

Details are finalized, but if you are interested in joining us, please keep in touch with one of your

chapter officers or the newsletter editor. We will send out an email update of our itinerary later, so be sure we have an updated email address for you.

The trip is very informal. People arrange their own transportation and hotel reservations. We just hang out together since it is more fun to do these activities with good friends. We talk plants at “Happy Hour” in the hotel meeting room and then we usually go to one of the local restaurants for dinner.

We stay at the Comfort Inn in Garner, NC, for two nights and use it as our base of operation. They give discounts for AARP or AAA, but as you cross the state line from Virginia into North Carolina, stop at the North Carolina Welcome Center and check out their Discount Coupon Books. If the hotel is listed this year, you might even get a better price.

Comfort Inn – Garner

126 Cleveland Crossing Drive
Garner, NC 27529 (919) 773-1110

Several of the nurseries are mail order and not open to the public except during a few “Open House” weekends. There are some other attractions in the area including the J. C. Raulston Arboretum, but we usually visit the following nurseries:

Friday (on the way to Garner)

Pine Knot Farms - Hellebore Festival (10am - 4pm)
681 Rockchurch Rd, Clarksville, VA 23927
www.pineknotfarms.com

Friday afternoon and/or Saturday morning

Big Bloomers Flower Farm (9am – 5pm)
275 Pressly Foushee Road, Sanford, NC 27330
www.bigbloomersflowerfarm.com

Saturday afternoon, but possibly Saturday morning

Plant Delights Nursery - Open House (8am – 5pm)
9241 Sauls Road, Raleigh, NC 27603
www.plantdelights.com

Sunday morning, if we can make arrangements

Camellia Forest Nursery (Saturdays 10am – 4pm)
9701 Carrie Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
www.camforest.com



Hellebore 'Silvermoon' in bloom at Pine Knot Farms



Agave in the Display Garden of Plant Delights Nursery

Evergreen Azaleas from Germany

by Don Hyatt

When I visited Germany in 2010, I was very impressed with some of the evergreen azalea hybrids developed by German hybridizers like the late Hans Hachmann. He has made impressive advances in developing hardy, compact evergreen azaleas with attractive foliage for European markets. Some of these plants are just becoming available in the United States. Briggs Nursery has had five new German cultivars in tissue culture recently, and the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS did offer some for sale last year. I have been anxious see how they perform here, but I also wanted to use them in hybridizing.

Europeans do not call these plants evergreen azaleas, but use the term “Japanese azaleas” instead. Foliage persistence varies and not all varieties are that evergreen. None of the evergreen azalea species are native to North America since they all come from western Asia: Japan, China, Korea, Burma, and Thailand. The Japanese have been breeding azaleas for over 300 years, and they were the source for our early introductions including Kurumes and Satsukis. Calling them “Japanese azalea” makes sense, but I will continue to refer to them as evergreen azaleas.

A major hybridizing goal, not just in Europe but in the US, has been improving winter hardiness. Achieving that goal is not always easy, but it was a motive for developing the Glenn Dales and the Robin Hills. Two species often used to increase hardiness are *R. kiusianum* and *R. yedoense* var. *poukhanense*. Both can take winter cold but they have sparse winter foliage. Getting hardy plants in colors other than purple that have persistent winter foliage is not easy.

Hardiness is a complex issue. One problem with evergreen azaleas in cooler climates is that the new growth doesn't harden off in late summer. Many species need that summer heat to cause the plants to stop vegetative growth and set buds before fall. Even though a plant may be hardy to well below zero, if a plant is not in a dormant state it can easily be killed by very minor freezes. The culprit is “bark split”



Hans Hachmann's Popular Red Azalea: 'Maruschka'

where freezing sap rips away the bark. Without hot summers, some varieties keep growing late into the season and never harden off so they can be easily killed by the first autumn frosts. Other varieties do suffer in the heat, but that is another problem.

Since the flowering season lasts but a short time, people are interested in the year-round landscape value of their plants. Many of us, including the deer, admire the glossy evergreen foliage of azaleas like 'Glacier'. 'Johanna', a 1954 hybrid developed by the Vuyk Van Nes Nursery in the Netherlands, has lovely dark burgundy winter foliage. It can pass that trait onto its progeny, so it is often used in hybridizing.

Hans Hachmann started hybridizing azaleas in the 1950's, and he used 'Johanna' in many of his crosses. Hachmann's 'Maruschka' came from a 1976 cross [(‘Rubinstern’ x ‘Rubinetta’) x ‘Johanna’] and has set a very high standard for foliage quality. It is a compact plant with glossy, dark burgundy to chocolate winter foliage from 'Johanna' and single red blooms. The dwarf stature came from the other parents in its pedigree since they both contain 'Kermesina' (also known as “Pink Kiusianum”) which is quite petite.

Similar to 'Maruschka' is the azalea 'Maraschino' introduced by the Klaus Stöckmann Nursery in Germany. It also has glossy, deep burgundy winter foliage. People say it is a double flowered sport of 'Maruschka', or possibly a sister seedling from the



Winter Foliage of 'Maruschka'



Winter Foliage of 'Maraschino'

same cross. In Germany, they claim it retains that dark foliage for nearly 10 months of the year, but it may not do so in warmer climates. I see differences in both plant habit and foliage with 'Maraschino' being larger in all respects. They are lovely azaleas!

In Scotland, Peter Cox crossed compact hardy species like *R. kiusianum* and *R. nakaharae* with larger flowered azaleas to produce a number of popular hybrids. His 'Lemur' is a compact red from a cross of *R. nakaharae* with 'Johanna'. He used the Glenn Dale 'Everest' to cross with a white form of *R. kiusianum* to make 'Panda', a dwarf single white.

Hans Hachmann's son, Holger, has continued to breed evergreen azaleas. 'Feenkissen' is his compact white hybrid that came from crossing 'Melina', a pink sister seedling of 'Maruschka', with 'Panda'. It has better foliage and is more compact than 'Panda', and is often called 'Fairy Pillow' in the U.S.

Double flowered azaleas are popular, and one parent that can impart hardiness and double flowers is 'Elsie Lee'. It has been frequently used by many US hybridizers. Hans Hachmann used 'Elsie Lee' in his breeding program, too. From the single cross ('Elsie Lee' x 'Purpurkissen'), he got 'Maischnee', a single frilled white, and several doubles including 'Schneeperle' (white), 'Babuschka' (pink), and 'Thekla' (lavender). 'Purpurkissen' is yet another sister of 'Maruschka', but with a deep rose color.

Another popular Hans Hachmann hybrid is the deep pink 'Canzonetta' made 1974. It forms a small mound and has deep pink, single blossoms and excellent foliage. 'Johanna' is in its background but it



Holger Hachmann's 'Feenkissen' ('Fairy Pillow')

does not seem to have that dark winter foliage. 'Rosinetta' is a popular double light pink with glossy leaves but Hachmann was not certain of the cross.

Of course, we do not know how well these hybrids from Germany will do for us until we actually grow them. They do seem to have some superb qualities, but I am more anxious to start crossing them with other azaleas with unique flowers or striking foliage.

I have been tending toward dwarf plants in my garden for years since I have run out of space. Having gardened on this same ¾ acre for over 60 years, my yard is dominated by huge old plants like the azalea 'Dream', now 10 ft tall and 24 ft wide, and my rhododendron 'Caroline' that is 18 ft tall and 33 ft wide. I know could have hundreds of smaller plants in that same area, but I would miss the impact of those massive specimens. I guess I really want it all!



'Maischnee' ('May Snow')



'Babuschka'



'Hachmann's Thekla'



'Schneeperle' ('Snow Pearl')



'Canzonetta'



'Rosinetta'

Some Other Hachmann Evergreen Azalea Hybrids

Your 2015 Rhododendron Calendar

We wanted to give you a preview of the other activities your officers have planned for the coming year. Our calendar on the front page has a couple of non-chapter events such as the Azalea Society National Convention and the Middle Atlantic Chapter ARS spring meeting in Raleigh, NC. Many of our members belong to those groups and so we try to include them when we can to assist in planning. Below are a few details about our chapter activities:

Speaker and Plant Exchange: *March 22*

This will be a regular meeting at the Potomac Community Center. We will announce our details in the next newsletter, but expect a plant exchange, too!

Pennsylvania Nursery Trip: *April 22*

We will visit three outstanding nurseries to buy rare woody plants, conifers, perennials, and annuals.

Flower Show and Plant Sale: *April 25*

For the past two years we have been having our Flower Show and Plant Sale on a Saturday morning in April at the Annapolis Farmers' Market. We do have to be flexible on this event because it does depend upon our chapter being to secure a space.

Maryland Garden Tours: *April 25*

Since many of us will be in Annapolis at the Farmers' Market that morning, we plan to visit some of our members' gardens in the area that afternoon.

Northern Virginia Garden Tours: *April 26*

On Sunday afternoon, we expect to be visiting members' gardens in Northern Virginia, primarily in the Fairfax to Annandale area. We could use a few more gardens so let us know if we can visit you!



Spring Tulip Display at Butchart Gardens

2015 ARS Convention, Victoria, BC: *May 6 – 10*

Although we list the location of this year's ARS convention as Victoria, BC, the convention site is in the nearby town of Sidney, about 20 minutes away. Butchart Gardens is quite close, and although it is one of the gardens on tour, you might want to visit there on your own so you have more time to enjoy

Since this convention will likely be very heavily attended, we suggest you register early if you plan to go. For details, check out their website:

www.2015rhodo.ca



Rhododendrons at Heritage Plantation

Cape Cod Trip: *Late May (date TBD)*

Since the late 1980's, many of us have enjoyed going to Cape Cod to see the Dexter Rhododendrons. Their plants are usually coming into bloom about the time our gardens are finished. Before we travel that far, we like to know if spring is early or late so we can see peak bloom. Thus, we haven't set a date yet. The trip will last about 5 days, one day driving to the Cape, two to three days in that area visiting Heritage Plantation and some private gardens, and another day to drive home. We will have more details in our next newsletter, but expect that trip between May 20 and May 29. Keep those dates open if you want to join us.



Rhododendron catawbiense in bloom on Roan Mountain

Roan Mountain and Gregory Bald: (date TBD)

We haven't set a date yet for our annual field trip to see the native azaleas and rhododendrons in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee either. We want to go hiking there when the flowers are in peak bloom, too. We do anticipate leaving sometime about June 10 to June 15 and we usually stay about 5 to 6 days. Our next newsletter will have more details.

Chapter Picnic: September 20

We have decided to move our chapter picnic to September next year instead of holding it in July. It seems like the summer weather has been too hot for many, and we had no air conditioned alternative.

Eastern Regional, Long Island: October 16 - 18

The ARS will hold an Eastern Regional meeting with tours and speakers on Long Island next fall.

Fall Banquet: November 7, 2015 (tentative)

We hope to return to the Wildfire Restaurant in November and will seek another great speaker.

District 9 Director's Report

By Donald W. Hyatt

As 2014 comes to a close, I want to thank the members of District 9 for your kindness and support during the past year. Our three chapters have held many exciting activities, and although I missed some due to schedule conflicts, we had a great season and I look forward to a wonderful new year!

I certainly appreciate the large turnout for our District 9 luncheon at Tyson's Corner in October. We cut costs close for that event, and I am happy to say we did break even with a few dollars to spare. I heard many compliments including the food at the Wildfire Restaurant, the great program given by our speaker Harold Greer, and the wonderful favors and auction plants, most of which were donated by Carolyn and Paul Beck. We owe the Becks a special note of thanks, but we thank all who assisted!

One motivation for this event was to test out some critical details that we wanted to resolve prior to hosting the 2016 Convention. The online registration approach using credit card payments set up by Dave Banks and Paul Beck worked flawlessly. For me, the real thrill was getting my computer to display on two projectors simultaneously. It is the configuration we will need for 2016, so I feel confident that will work!

Sadly, there were some unsettling changes at the national level of the ARS recently. Prior to the fall ARS Board Meeting in Everett, WA, ongoing friction between President Bruce Feller and Secretary Kath Collier led Bruce to submit his resignation. Kath resigned several weeks later. Fortunately, an able leadership team has taken over quickly. West Coast Vice President, Bob MacIntyre, has assumed the role of interim President. He is relying on the capable input from Past President Don Smart and our own East Coast Vice President, Ann Mangels. We also have an interim secretary, Mrs. Linda Derkach. She was the nominee for the next ARS Secretary and was scheduled to take office at the National Meeting in May. She has stepped in slightly ahead of schedule, as has Ken Webb, the nominee for West Coast VP.

The ARS does have some serious financial issues,

a common problem facing many plant societies with declining memberships. When our District 9 hosted the 2006 Convention, the ARS had over 5000 members and it easily covered operating expenses through dues, the \$30 they keep out of our \$40 membership fee. Since then, the number of members has fallen to 2800 which means a serious loss of income. The two major expenses of the ARS are the Executive Director's office (about \$87,000) and the cost of publishing and mailing of the Journal (\$65,000). The income from dues barely covers half the amount needed so the ARS has used donations, investment income, and other assets to cover operating expenses. This financial drain cannot continue so we need to make some tough decisions.

The minutes of the fall board meeting will be published in the next issue of the ARS Journal and I won't discuss all the details here. Most actions were unanimous, but I do want to clarify my position on a controversial motion to raise dues. It was defeated by a narrow margin of one vote. As your Director, I did vote against that proposal. Every prior dues increase has resulted in a decrease in membership and no increase in income. Many of us feel that we need to reduce operating costs while looking for ways to increase membership, and not rely on dues increases on a dwindling few. Sam Burd, the new ARS Treasurer, did propose budget cuts of \$19,500. Those were approved but more must still be done.

At the ARS Convention in Victoria next May, Dave Banks will assume the position of District 9 Director, and Bill Meyers will become our next Alternate. Please let ARS officers know how you feel on such issues so we can represent our District's interests when making such difficult decisions.

Yes, it will be April 2016 before we know it, and that is when we will be hosting the Joint ARS/ASA Convention in Williamsburg. We seem to be in good shape with respect to the initial plans. The dates are April 21 – 24, 2016. Staging such a major event will be primary focus of our District for the 18 months. Please check out our website to see our plans:

www.arsasaconvention2016.org

We will need many volunteers for various tasks, so please help out when you can. Thanks!

Sad News: David S. Goodkind

One of our enthusiastic chapter members, David Goodkind, passed away on November 8 at the age of 75 due to heart problems. David was an active hiker in his youth, and was particularly interested in our native azaleas and rhododendrons. He joined us on at least two prior chapter hikes to Gregory Bald. In the fall of 2011, he helped plant flame azalea seedlings back on Hooper Bald. He will certainly be missed.

2015 Seed Exchange – Potomac Valley Chapter ARS

The following seeds are offered to chapter members and associate members at \$0.60 per packet including postage. People are limited to one pack in any lot since available seed is divided among those who request the selection. Thanks to our donors: Norm and Jean Beaudry (**Be**), Joe Brusco (**Br**), Susan Clark (**Cl**), Frank Fujioka (**Fu**), Don Hyatt (**Hy**), Paul James (**Ja**), George McLellan (**Ml**), June Sinclair (**Si**). Please return orders to Don Hyatt with payment to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS by February 5, 2015. Seed will be distributed after that date.

Species, collected in the wild (cw)

1. *arborescens*, white, cw, Macon Cty, NC (Hy, Ml)
2. *calendulaceum* ‘Hooper’s Copper’, Graham Cty (Hy, Ml)
3. *calendulaceum* ‘Hooper Duke Rankin’, orange (Hy, Ml)
4. *calendulaceum*, Hooper mixed, orange to red, (Hy, Ml)
5. *calendulaceum*, Hooper Salmon, Graham Cty, NC (Hy)
6. *calendulaceum*, Roan Little Yellow, Mitchell C., NC (Hy)
7. *calendulaceum*, Roan mixed, Mitchell County, NC (Hy)
8. *calendulaceum*, Roan #1 red, Mitchell Cty, NC (Hy)
9. *calendulaceum*, Roan #2 apricot, Mitchell Cty, NC (Hy)
10. *calendulaceum*, Roan #3 lemon, Mitchell Cty, NC (Hy)
11. *calendulaceum*, Roan #4 orange-red, Mitchell C. NC (Hy)
12. *catawbiense*, (900 ft elev.) Amherst Cty, VA (Hy)
13. *catawbiense*, (3000 ft elev.), Nelson Cty, VA (Hy, Ml)
14. *catawbiense*, (5500 ft elev.), Mitchell Cty, NC (Hy)
15. *prinophyllum*, pink, Bedford County, VA (Hy)

Species, Garden Origin, open pollinated (op)

16. *augustinii*, Sinclair’s best blue selection (Si)
17. *calendulaceum*, ‘Big Bird’, tall yellow, op, (Be)
18. *calendulaceum*, ‘Cahay’s Mt. Bicolor’, (Ja)
19. *carolinianum*, pink, Ring compact selection (Ja)
20. *eastmanii*, white, (Br)
21. *fortunei*, Haag white form, (Ja)
22. *makinoi*, Hyatt form, pink, (Hy)
23. *metternichii*, Hyatt form, pink, (Hy)
24. *niveum*, ball shaped purple trusses, (Si)
25. *prinophyllum*, fragrant pink (Cl)
26. *vernicosum* aff. R 18139 #2 (‘Kulu’), apricot (Ja)
27. *yunnanense*, pink w/ red blotch (Si)

Notes on the Seed Exchange

Collecting seed for our exchange was difficult this year. I was doing a great deal of traveling and weather conditions at time were very difficult with heavy rains and flooding in the mountains. Some pods we collected seemed to develop mold anyway, so unless the seed looked good I didn’t list it.

I did manage to get some choice selections from the West Coast including selections in the gardens of Frank Fujioka and June Sinclair. One of Frank’s hybrids I labeled as “Unknown” I had photographed previously and it had large flowers in creamy blush with a dark flare and it was next to a yellow. It had large pods so I was hope that the bees crossed those two. I also got quite a few pods from his dark blue purple hybrid called ‘Vibrant Violet’ that is hard to grow in the east, but maybe some seedlings will adapt.

That was the same motivation behind collecting species seed from some choice plants in June Sinclair’s garden. Most of those are difficult for us but if we raise enough seedlings we may get some to grow. If I can get anything close to her blue *R. augustinii* to live, I will be thrilled.

Elepidote Rhododendron Hybrids (op)

28. Brevard Bouquet, Haag light pink and yellow (Ja)
29. Casablanca, Haag large cream (Ja)
30. Cloud Nine, Haag white w/ gold blotch (Ja)
31. Golfer, compact white, (Si)
32. Haag 87-0, red, (Ja)
33. Hardy Giant, white with blotch, huge leaves (Be)
34. Harold Amateis, red (Ja)
35. Jim Dandy, Haag rosy peach (Ja)
36. Mainstay, pink, Haag gold blotch, Haag (Ja)
37. Nip and Tuck, Haag light yellow /w pink edges (Ja)
38. (Madfort x houlstonii), Ring’s large white, op (Ja)
39. Sparkling Star, cream w/ red, narrow petals (Fu)
40. Sunbow, yellow?, (Ja)
41. Tuffet, Haag white w/ pink blush, small leaves (Ja)
42. Unknown Fujioka, blush w/ red blotch (Fu)
43. White Water, NC, Haag white (Ja)

Lepidote Rhododendron Hybrids (op)

44. Bowie, pink (Ja)
45. Vibrant Violet, purple (Fu)



Yellow and Pink Haag Hybrid: ‘Nip and Tuck’

We did get some wonderful seed from Paul James including many of the Haag hybrids in those artistic blends of yellow and pink. Another spectacular Haag plant is their white *R. fortunei* with its huge, fragrant blossoms. These are open pollinated seeds so the bees did the crosses, but at least we know one of the parents. They could be selfed or crossed with something else in the garden. All are pretty!

We also have seeds of a plant Paul saved from the garden of the late George Ring who was one of the founders of our chapter. It also has huge white flowers and came from a cross of Gable’s ‘Madfort’ (‘Madonna’ x *fortunei*) with the species *R. houlstonii*.

