



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Late Spring Newsletter: May 2023

Chapter Officers

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csegree17@outlook.com

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Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar – 2023

- May 19 – 21: Joint Meeting with MAC, Orkney Springs, VA
- May 19 – 20: White's Nursery - Open House Sale, Germantown, MD
- June 12 – 19: Appalachian Mtns. Trip, North Carolina & Tennessee

A Busy Spring!

By Don Hyatt

For many of us, this was a very busy spring if you tried to do everything. I knew that was not possible so I focused on the joint ARS/ASA Convention in Atlanta and tried to work in other activities as I could.

Unseasonably warm weather brought an early spring for us in the Eastern U.S., but that was also accompanied by destructive freezes that ruined some of the early blooms, especially the magnolias and small leaved lepidote rhododendrons in my garden. I did have a few days to enjoy the large white blossoms of my magnolia 'Sayonara' that I had planted off of my deck. The March 19 freeze turned them brown and it hit the Yoshino Cherries in the neighborhood, too. My redbud Cercis 'Appalachian Red' and Kehr's pink magnolia 'Daybreak' in the front yard bloom later and were spared. The daffodils came through the freeze just fine. Reminder to self... plant more daffodils!

The Joint ARS/ASA Convention from April 19 – 23 was my big event. Since I planned to drive, I added other sightseeing activities along the way. George McLellan and I met on I-81 in Virginia on our way to Atlanta, and then explored early spring along the Blue Ridge Parkway prior to the meeting. Spring was well underway at lower elevations, but the dogwoods and early wildflowers including trillium were just opening



'Sayonara'

'Appalachian Red' & 'Daybreak'



Daffodil 'British Gamble'

at 4000 ft elevation. Above 5000 ft, the plants were still dormant but beginning to awaken.

Spring gradually works its way up the mountains because of the "lapse rate." For every increase of 1000 ft in elevation, the temperature drops 3.5 degrees. That delays spring in the mountains but also ushers in an early autumn. Normally, the *R. vaseyi* near Mt. Pisgah is in bloom about the first week in May, but spring was at least 3 weeks early. *R. vaseyi* was just opening along the Parkway prior to the meeting which meant it should be in full bloom on our way home. The late freezes that hit many gardens did no damage to plants at the upper elevations. They were still dormant and should bloom normally.

I will have more on the convention and additional side trips to Callaway Gardens and other places. As soon as I got home, I was pleased to see a few more flowers blooming in my own garden. I couldn't make the first garden tour to see the McWhorters' azaleas. I did manage to buy some deer-resistant bedding plants to replace my daffodil display but I haven't planted anything yet.

Carol Segree, Karel Bernady, Norm Beaudry, and I visited London Town many times in relation to the memorial bench for Jean. It is now in position and the hillside is landscaped with rhododendrons that Norm donated and plants propagated by Karel's chapter. Norm did hold a private dedication primarily for his family and we will hold one later for our chapter. The setting is lovely and we encourage you to visit when you can. The bench has an engraved remembrance:

In loving memory of Jean Beaudry, 1942 – 2022

A creative and nurturing gardener who shared her warmth and expertise with her adoring family and countless friends.



Jean Beaudry Bench at London Town Gardens



Rhododendrons on the hillside at London Town



Carol Segree climbs the garden steps on the hillside

I did catch the second local garden tour to Bob and Rosa McWhorter's home as well as Carol Segree's garden. Their rhododendrons were lovely. Look for pictures elsewhere in the newsletter.

Now I am getting ready to head out to the joint meeting with the Middle Atlantic Chapter at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs, VA. Sadly, I will miss the Open House at White's Nursery in Germantown, MD, but I haven't planted last year's treasures yet.

Some may be interested in a new rhododendron hybrid introduced at the convention in Atlanta called 'Kenny Mac'. It is a seedling that Norm and Jean Beaudry raised from a cross made by Sandra McDonald. It is a rich, purplish-red with a dark blotch and looks suitable for a coronation. Sandra has named it in honor of her late husband, Ken. There is now one at London Town and there should be a plant available in the auction at Shrine Mont.



New Rhododendron 'Kenny Mac'

There is a hike planned in the Appalachians during the third week of June. George McLellan and I are no longer hosting those but are relying on others to lead the way but we intend to tag along for at least part of that trip. More details later.



Flame Azaleas on the Appalachian Trail at Roan Mt.

Atlanta 2023 by Don Hyatt

The attendance at the 2023 Joint Convention of the ARS and ASA in Atlanta was quite low. I think the planners were expecting about 225 people for the break-even point but there were only about 130 attendees which was disappointing. Some people cited the high cost as a reason to stay home. Others mentioned the program and garden tours were not publicized well. Even so, those of us who attended had a great time. The weather was perfect and the plant sale was awesome. Here are a few highlights.

I hadn't been to a convention since the one in Philadelphia in 2019 so seeing good friends was a priority for me. Several of us decided to design our own tours, too. I included the trip down the Blue Ridge Parkway on the way to Atlanta. On the way home, I meandered through scenic spots as well.

Callaway Gardens

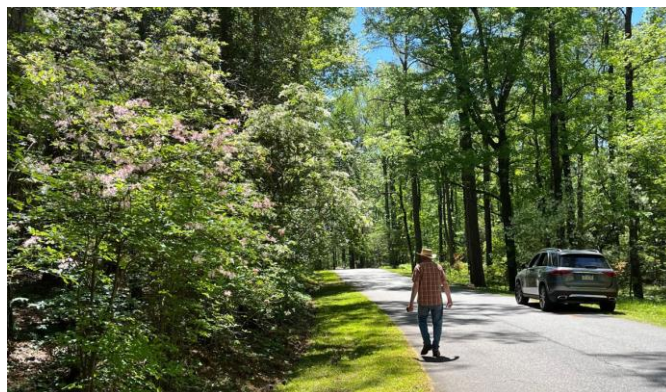
Karel Bernady, George McLellan, Carol Segree, Barbara Bullock, and I decided to substitute the Thursday convention tour to the sights in Atlanta with a day-long trip to Callaway Gardens instead. This 2500-acre garden resort was only 2 hours from our hotel and I would hate to be so close and miss it. We were not disappointed!

On my first trip to Atlanta at the ARS Convention in 1984, I remember meeting Fred Galle at Callaway. He gave us a tour of his azalea plantings including natives like *R. austrinum* and *R. canescens*. I have been back to Callaway many times since then and I knew the early azaleas would be through. Their signature plantings of *R. prunifolium* wouldn't be open until midsummer, but we managed to catch the fragrant pink and white *R. colemanii* and brilliant orange to red *R. flammeum* in peak bloom. Some *colemanii* plants were 10 to 12 ft tall and very spectacular. The native *Kalmia* was glorious, too.



Carol - *R. flammeum*

Carol and Karel - *R. colemanii*



Stopping in Callaway to smell *R. colemanii*

Until recently, most plants of *R. colemanii* were thought to be the species *R. alabamense* but they are quite different. It is tetraploid, more vigorous, gets quite tall and has larger flowers. It has a very sweet fragrance but does not smell like lemons. It comes in a wider range of colors from pure white to deep pink. It is one of the most common azaleas at Callaway!



R. colemanii color variations



R. flammeum color variations

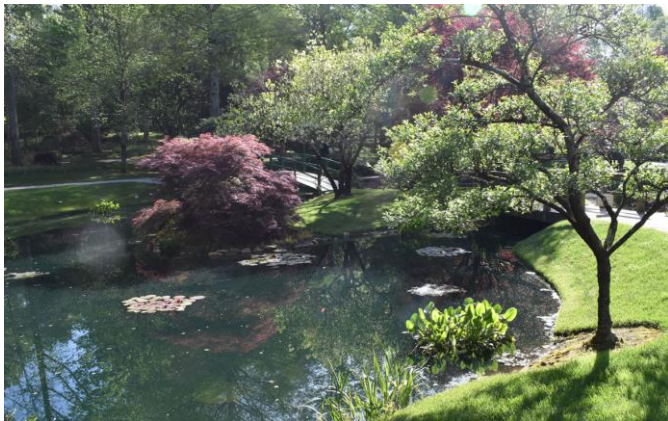
Gibbs Gardens

I did try to stay on schedule for the rest of the meeting. For the Friday tour, our bus stopped at Gibbs Garden first. I had been here before and like Callaway, if I am in the area, I will always try to see this place. The guidelines for Gibbs Garden suggest allowing at least 4 hours to see the 336-acre estate which has about 250 acres that are meticulously landscaped and maintained. Sadly, we had only 2 hours at Gibbs since the bus had to get to our lunch destination. I would have preferred to skip lunch and spend the entire day at Gibbs Gardens.



Pond Reflections at Gibbs Garden

In an email version of our March Newsletter, I had erroneously said that the owner, Jim Gibbs, had passed away. That was some link I followed on the web to a different person. I am so thankful that he is fine and sharing his garden with the public.



Monet Bridge and Waterlily Pond

The place is huge and there are at least 20 separate gardens with extensive collections of many plant groups. They have 50 acres of daffodils and close to 1000 Japanese maples. The garden has 24 ponds, 19 waterfalls, and 32 bridges including one inspired by Monet with a waterlily pond. I spent most of my time in the 40-acre Japanese Garden which is one of the best in the U.S. It really is lovely!



Azalea 'Mrs. G.G. Gerbing'



Vistas in the Japanese Garden

After touring the Japanese Garden, there was not much time left but we did climb the hill past the rhododendrons to the Manor House. Then we had to rush down the hill past the Inspiration Garden and conifer collection to get back on the bus.



Climbing the hill to the Manor House



Barbara Bullock relaxes near the Manor House

Lunch at Babyland General Hospital

Reluctantly back on the bus, we headed off to Babyland General Hospital at Eula Springs where we would have lunch. I must admit that I was not aware of the historical significance of this place. It is where a fad called the Cabbage Patch Kids began in the early 1980s. These were hand stitched, chubby-faced dolls that were quite the rage 30 to 40 years ago. Apparently they are still being marketed here.



Before we could eat, we were led through sales rooms where a very serious woman told us about the dolls, “births” where new Cabbage Patch babies appear in a whorl of cabbage leaves, and how we could officially adopt an orphaned Cabbage Patch Kid and give it a good home. They provide adoption papers and the “parents” can even apply for a name change. They actually offer Gender Reveal parties.



Where Cabbage Patch Kids are “Born”



Cabbage Patch Gender Reveal Dolls

The people in my group were amused by Cabbage Patch adoptions but I think we would prefer to rescue abused plants. With cabbage everywhere, I wondered if the buffet would include a cabbage-based side like coleslaw to go with the chicken tenders. It did not.

We would be at Babyland for 2.5 hours. We were expected to see their azalea display. At the far edge of an open field there was a lake which I presume was Eula Springs. It wasn’t really landscaped but they planted native azaleas at the water’s edge and there were rhododendrons, too. It looked like poor farm soil but most were alive. It reminded me of home since the deer had been heavily grazing their floral buffet, too.



Deer damaged plantings at Eula Springs

The traffic around Atlanta is actually worse than what we have in D.C. The Interstates are 6 to 8 lanes wide in each direction but they become parking lots at rush hour. There was no time to see the private garden of John Kohli, so we returned to the hotel instead.



Atlanta Traffic Woes

National Awards



ARS Silver Medal: Carolyn and Paul Beck

We were so pleased that Carolyn and Paul Beck received the ARS Silver Medal at the Saturday Banquet. Our Potomac Valley Chapter nominated them for the award for their many contributions to our Eastern Region. Their citation is listed below:

Carolyn and Paul Beck, you are a dynamic duo and beyond compare. Your tireless efforts in support of evergreen azaleas and rhododendrons is exemplary and accomplishments profound. Carolyn is a skilled horticulturist, propagator, and photographer who has amassed an enormous azalea collection featuring new introductions from many local hybridizers. You generously propagated and shared plants with local chapters and helped establish several legacy collections at public gardens. Paul used his technology expertise and Carolyn's azalea resources to create an online database with over 11,000 cultivars. Paul has revolutionized plant sales using barcodes on plant tags and attendee badges. Checkout is very efficient using scanners and credit card sales, and has become standard at local conferences. In grateful appreciation, the ARS awards you its Silver Medal.



ARS Gold Medal: John and Sally Perkins

John and Sally Perkins received the ARS Gold Medal for their research in polyploidy of native azaleas and rhododendrons. The Massachusetts Chapter nominated them for this award. The citation will be published in the Journal.



ASA Distinguished Service Award:

Leslie and Dave Nanney

At the ASA Banquet on Friday night, Leslie and Dave Nanney received the Distinguished Service Award from the Azalea Society. Congratulations!

Pioneer Achievement Award:

Dr. Erik Nilsen

At the ARS Banquet, we heard that Dr. Erik Nilsen, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech, received the Pioneer Achievement Award. He was not able to attend.

Other Convention Highlights

One of the innovations at this convention was that the ARS provided funding for a number of graduate students to attend the meeting. Some gave poster sessions where they spoke informally about their research. Some were involved in panel discussions. What an excellent idea!

I have been impressed with the work that Dr. Tom Ranney, a Horticulture Professor at NC State University who is at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Fletcher, NC. After the convention, we visited with Tom and one of his students I met, Irene Palmer. She breeds rhodos and other plants. We must start sending them pollen! Below is a hybrid from 'Holden's Solar Flare'. Nice!



Irene Palmer and Tom Ranney

Traveling Home from Atlanta

Rhododendron vaseyi

On the way home from the Atlanta Convention, George McLellan and I told Steve Wright of the Jenkins Arboretum and Ralf Bauer from Germany that we would try to show them where some of the deeper forms of *R. vaseyi* are located in the wild. The footprint of that species is rather small and only covers about 17 miles on the Parkway near the Pisgah Inn and the Devil's Courthouse Overlook.

This species is usually in full bloom around May 10 but due to the early spring, we saw lots of good bloom by April 23 this year. Below are a few photos.



Ralf photographs a light pink *R vaseyi*

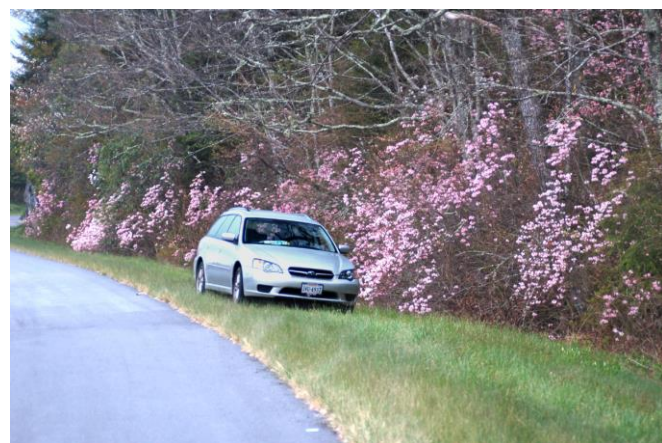
There are several dark pink to “red” forms and two of them were open. We were able to point out one that was still in bud, too. Steve has a permit that will allow him to collect and propagate cutting material this summer and now he knows which plants to get.



Karel photographs one of the “red” forms

One thing that we found frustrating is how the Park Service hacks into some of the native azalea stands when they try to trim vegetation on the side of the road. One of the prettiest places to see the azaleas along the Parkway was at milepost 425.

There was a grassy area where cars could pull off the road and admire the plants up close. Over the winter, the Parkway staff must have used a rotary saw on an extension rod to completely obliterate most of those plants. I guess we won't be seeing azaleas at this location for many years.



Before: *R. vaseyi* display at MP 425



After: stumps of *R. vaseyi* masqueraded at MP 425

Reminder: White's Nursery Open House!

You won't want to miss the two-day special pricing event at White's Nursery! They have an amazing inventory of Azaleas and Rhododendrons that will be on sale this coming weekend.

Friday & Saturday, May 19 & 20, 2023

9 am to 5 pm

Mike and Deb White

22531 Wildcat Road

Germantown, Maryland 20876

Phone: 301-788-3293 or 301-471-5958

Email: whiteaz@verizon.net

Website: <http://www.whites-nursery.com/>

June Mountain Hikes

Below is the proposed schedule for the June hikes to see native azaleas and rhododendrons this year. Don Hyatt and George McLellan have “passed the torch” so the trip is being coordinated by Charlie Andrews with input from Steve Wright of the Jenkins Arboretum. If you want to join the group for any or all of the tour, contact Charlie for more info:

candrews@mindspring.com

June 12, Monday

Dolly Sods, WV

Mon night: Super 8 by Wyndham, 420 Beverly Pike, Elkins WV.

June 13, Tuesday

Spruce Knob, then Elk Mountain (Rt. 112). WV

Tue night: Econo Lodge Marion VA I-81, 1420 N Main St, Marion, VA

June 14, Wednesday

White Top Mountain, VA

Wed night: Comfort Suites Boone-University Area, 1184 Highway 105 Boone NC

June 15, Thursday

Roan Highlands or Elk Knob and Snake Mt.

Thu night: Comfort Suites Boone-University Area, 1184 Highway 105 Boone NC

June 16, Friday

Roan Highlands or Elk Knob and Snake Mt.

Fri night: Comfort Suites Boone-University Area, 1184 Highway 105, Boone NC

June 17, Saturday

Head to Franklin NC with stops all along the Blue Ridge Parkway

Sat night: Microtel Inn Franklin, 81 Allman Dr, Franklin NC

June 18, Sunday

Wayah/Wine Spring Balds. Then lunch in Robbinsville on way to Hooper Bald.

Sun night: Rodeway Inn, 731 S Main St, Sweetwater TN

June 19, Monday

AM to East Fork Nursery, 2769 Bethel Church Rd, Sevierville TN

Purchase plants; travel home

WARNING! The Great Smoky Mountains National Park now requires Parking Passes, \$5 per day

<https://www.nps.gov/grsm/planyourvisit/fees.htm#11/35.5956/-83.4988>



Vistas on Roan Mountain

Funeral Services for Bill Scott

We have learned more about the funeral services for William Haines Scott III “Bill” who passed away on April 24, 2023. He was the beloved husband of Gabrielle for 55 years. An obituary was published in the Washington Post on May 14:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/washingtonpost/name/william-scott-obituary?id=51920743>.

Bill will be laid to rest at the historic Saint Thomas’ Parish Episcopal Church on

Saturday, May 27th, at 11 AM

SAINT THOMAS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

14300 St. Thomas Church Rd.

Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

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

Condolences

Mrs. William H. Scott (Gabrielle)

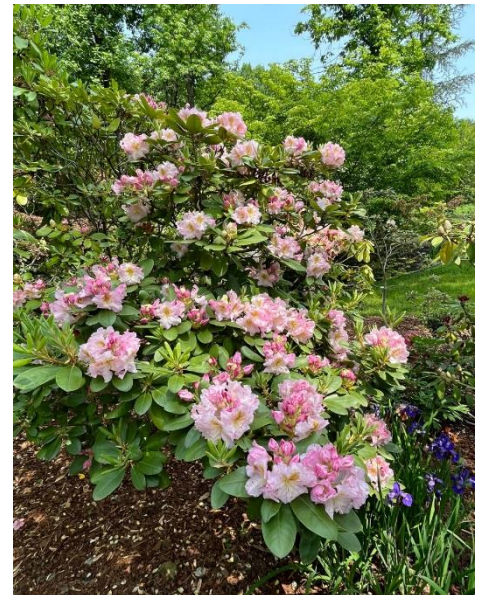
Garden Tours: *May 10*

Here are few images of the gardens we visited on May 10. The season was early and the main azalea bloom was over but there were many later rhododendrons and companion plants in bloom.

Bob & Rosa McWhorter Garden



Carol Segree Garden



Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
Donald W. Hyatt, Editor
donalddyatt@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
- Access to Chapter Library Books

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

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

www.arspvc.org

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

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

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

www.rhododendron.org

Membership Application *American Rhododendron Society*

Name_____

Address_____

City/State_____

Zip/Country_____

Telephone_____

E-mail:_____

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

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

**Associate Members must identify home chapter*

☐

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

To join our chapter, send this form with payment to:

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER ARS
PVC-ARS Chapter Treasurer
prittwoman@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