



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Fall Newsletter: September 2024

Chapter Officers

President: Carol Segree
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Secretary: Diane Reinke
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Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
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Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar – 2024

- September 22: Chapter Picnic, Seneca Creek State Park
- September 28: Park Authority's Open House at the White Garden
- December 4: Fall Banquet & Speaker: Richard Bradshaw's Place

Potomac Valley Chapter Picnic

Where: Seneca Creek State Park

11950 Clopper Rd

Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: Sunday, September 22, 2024

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM

We are returning to Seneca Creek State Park for our fall picnic. The date is Sunday, September 22 from 1 – 4 PM. Please join us. We always have a great time.

The Fawn Pavilion is the large covered picnic facility we have used for many years and is located on the south side of Clopper Lake. Follow the signs, or ask for directions at the gate. The park does charge a nominal entry fee per person collected at the gate.

The chapter will provide fried chicken, eating utensils, and bottled water. We ask attendees to bring something to supplement a typical picnic meal such as a salad, veggies, chips, other side dishes, or a dessert. Reminder: Alcoholic beverages are *not allowed* in the park.

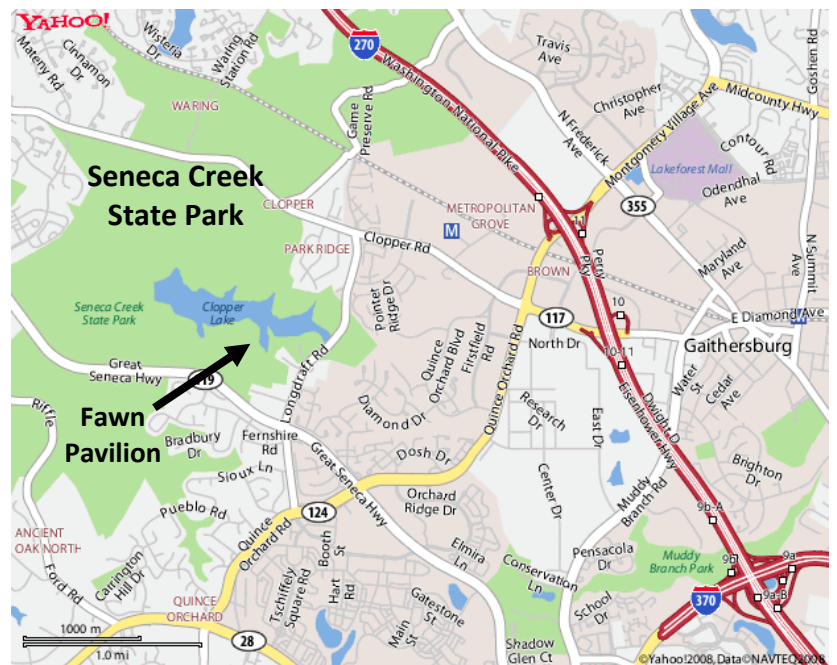
RSVP by Wednesday, September 18. Please let Carol Segree know if you are planning to come so we can order enough chicken for our group.

csegree17@outlook.com

We should also have some rhododendrons left over from our District Meeting available for sale. If your garden suffered from the heat this summer, here is a chance to pick up a few replacements.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Take I-495 to I-270N toward Frederick
2. Merge onto I-270 Local N
3. Take the Exit #10 West, toward MD Rt. 124
4. Turn RIGHT onto MD 117 (Clopper Rd)
5. Turn LEFT into the Park: 11950 Clopper Rd



PVC Fall Banquet

Where: Richard Bradshaw's "Hidden View Farm"
702 Defense Hwy, Crownsville, MD 21032

<https://hiddenviewfarm.org/>

Date: Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Time: 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Speaker: Steve Kristoph

Richard Bradshaw has kindly offered the use of his pavilion for our fall banquet. We intend to use the same caterers from Annapolis who provided the delicious dinner at our District meeting. Registration materials and details will be sent later. **Save the date: 12/04/2024**

We are excited to have Steve Kristoph back again as our speaker. He gave a wonderful banquet presentation to us in 2015 and has an arsenal of talks we have not heard yet. Steve teaches landscape architecture at Rutgers University and also owns a nursery where he grows choice woody plants including rhododendrons.

Dues Are Due!

Your 2025 renewal notice with a return envelope should be arriving soon. Please make checks payable to Potomac Valley Chapter ARS and return to our chapter treasurer, Phyllis Rittman. Dues must be received by Dec. 1 to get the Winter Journal.

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER ARS

Phyllis T. Rittman, Treasurer

rittwoman@gmail.com

Category	Cost
Regular - (one or two people in the same household)	\$40
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

As long as your membership has not elapsed, it is possible to renew online using a credit card or Paypal but you will need your membership number. That is located on the address label of your Journal. Here is a link to the ARS Office where you can access that page.

<https://www.arsoffice.org>

New members or those whose memberships have already elapsed can access an online membership form at the main ARS website:

<https://www.rhododendron.org>



White Garden after removal of the house

The White Gardens “Open House”

Can You Join Us?

September 28, 10 AM to 12:00 noon

We just learned that the Fairfax County Park Authority is celebrating National Public Lands Day by holding an “open house” at the White Gardens on Saturday, September 28, from 10 AM. to noon. This day is designed to pay tribute to volunteers who help preserve and maintain our public lands.

As outlined in your last newsletter, there were recent changes to the 13-acre estate that Margaret White donated to Fairfax County. It was clearly one of the finest rhododendron gardens in the region. We hoped that the house and the garden room where she spent most of her time could be used as a meeting place. That won’t happen since the county tore down the house after it was hit by a huge tree this spring.

Margaret passed away in 2010 just shy of her 104th birthday. That is when Fairfax County took control. In 2012, voters passed a bond referendum providing \$500,000 to start development of the park. Many of us kept waiting for progress but year after year, nothing happened. Invasive plants and weeds took over many of the plantings and the field.

In April of 2022, we discovered that the Park Authority was planning to turn the property over to a new Resident Curator Program. They were ready to sign 25-year lease that would delay any development of the park. Thanks to the many letters expressing outrage from people in the ARS and ASA, members of the White family, and others in the community, we were able to stop that insanity. The County heard our voices. They are now moving in the right direction.

I have always hoped that the White Garden would become a horticulture treasure similar to many I have visited like the McCrillis Gardens, Mt. Cuba Center, the Garden in the Woods, and the Jenkins Arboretum. These are not massive tourist attractions but smaller gems, often nestled in residential communities.

I will give an update at our picnic but I think it is important to have a strong turnout on September 28. Rather than showing contempt for past actions, if the ARS and ASA can be positive and offer to share both knowledge and some resources, we can help build the kind of garden Margaret envisioned. Please join us!

John C. and Margaret K. White Gardens

6722 Princess Anne Lane

Falls Church, VA 22042

Link to the Park Authority Announcement:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/park-news/2024/community-involvement-celebration-white-gardens>

Beware of Ticks and Mosquitoes!



Wayne Mezitt (right) accepting an award from Ken Webb

It was indeed a shock to learn that Wayne Mezitt, renowned horticulturist, author, and nurseryman, passed away on July 18 from a tick bite. Wayne was the keynote speaker at the 2022 ARS Fall Regional in Gettysburg. He accepted the Pioneer Achievement Award honoring his late father, Ed Mezitt. (above)

Wayne was apparently bitten by a blacklegged tick or deer tick. It is much smaller than the common wood tick or other species that attack gardeners. Deer ticks are easy to overlook. Deer ticks are noted for giving people Lyme disease, a bacterial infection. Wayne did not contract that illness but got one of the other diseases ticks can carry, babesiosis. It is caused by a microscopic parasite in the tick that also attacks human red blood cells. Wayne was such an active and robust person, it seemed impossible that he would be laid low in a matter of weeks due to a tick bite.



Deer Tick

Photo: Pexels

The Mezitts have been icons in the ARS for decades and established the very successful Weston Nurseries in New England. They introduced many award-winning rhododendrons including 'P.J.M.' and other early blooming Lepidotes like 'Olga Mezitt' and 'Weston's Aglo', as well as a host of deciduous azaleas and other plants. He will be greatly missed.

When people get Lyme disease, they usually develop a characteristic red ring around the tick bite. Antibiotics can treat the disease. With Babesiosis, there is just a slow onset of flu-like symptoms. As the infection spreads, if the red blood cells are destroyed faster than the body can replace them, the disease can progress to life-threatening hemolytic anemia. Sadly, antibiotics will not work. Oh yes. It is possible to get both Lyme disease and babesiosis at the same time.

Another tick called the Lone Star Tick is normal size but with a white dot on its back. It can cause a different problem, Alpha-gal Syndrome. When the tick bites someone, it transfers a sugar molecule that can cause a powerful immune response making the person allergic to red meats like beef, pork, and lamb.

A new tick arrived in New Jersey in 2017, the Asian Longhorned Tick. A single female can lay 2000 eggs and it doesn't need a mate to reproduce. Egad!



Asian Tiger Mosquito

Photo: Pixabay

It is important to mention a plague that many gardeners are facing right now, mosquitoes. Some scientists consider them to be the deadliest animals on earth. Blood sucking mosquitoes are responsible for a transmitting several diseases, some of which can be fatal. Among recent mosquito-borne diseases in the news are West Nile virus, Zika virus, Dengue fever, Malaria, and Eastern Equine Encephalitis or EEE.

Dr. Fauci, former head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, caught West Nile virus this year. He said it "hit him like a truck" and he had never been so ill in his life. After spending time in the hospital, fortunately he is on the mend.

According to the CDC, 52,944 Americans have been infected with West Nile since it arrived in the US in 1999 and 2,463 of them died. To keep things in perspective, the US reported 111 million cases of COVID-19 in just 5 years with 1.2 million deaths.

It is still wise to prevent mosquito bites. I keep a can of insect fogger by the door that I spray as I come and go. I wear long pants, flannel shirts, and a wide hat in the 100° heat. I spray all exposed skin with repellent. That way I can stay outside for 10 minutes.

Daffodils

Every year I try to add a few more daffodils to my garden. There are lots of new varieties to try and I can usually find a place to put a few along the shrubbery border. New flowers are always exciting! I also like to add some old favorites. I rarely tire of a good thing. With daffodils, at least I know I will have something blooming when spring finally arrives. They will not be eaten by hungry deer and will survive those late freezes which seem more often due to climate change.

I have always admired the small, delicate reflexed blossoms of 'Thalia' pictured to the right. This year, I tried four more varieties. 'Quail' is a deep yellow that is popular in Europe. George McLellan recommended three new varieties in Brent Heath's Sensation series that were shades of light yellow, cream, or white. All were wonderful. 'Avalon' is elegant and refined. The miniature 'Tete-a-Tete' is almost a weed and I used to plant them around hostas to discourage voles.



'Quail'



'Sunlight Sensation'



'Starlight Sensation'



'Moonlight Sensation'



'Thalia'



'Avalon'



'Tete-a-Tete'

More Daffodils

These are a few larger flowered varieties I like. Some were varieties I haven't seen for several years since they stopped blooming when my garden became too shaded. After all of my oak trees died, my garden is getting more sun and they started blooming again. Others are new varieties I have added recently.

I am really fond of 'Fellow's Favorite', one of Brent Heath's hybrids. It has medium sized blooms that may seem ordinary but the color is a glowing lemon yellow and it lasts longer than any daffodil in my garden, at least 3 weeks. It multiplies well, too. Brent has not been offering it recently so I am glad I ordered a bunch of them when I had the chance. Add a few daffodils to your garden this fall.



'Fellow's Favorite' – Great Landscape Plant



'Delibes' – Striking Contrast



'Pineapple Prince' – Delicate Pale Yellow



'British Gamble' – Ruffled Pink Trumpet



'Pink Charm' – Deep Edge



'Sentinel' – Light Coral

Rhododendron Species

Most rhododendron collectors realize that foliage is much more important than flowers the other 50 weeks of the year. Many of us start growing species rhododendrons due to the foliage. It is amazing to see the wide variation in some species. Of course, some of the species have outstanding flowers, too.

Here in the Middle Atlantic region, many species that come from high altitudes in China or Alpine regions cannot take our heat and humidity. They can be very challenging to grow. However, there are some species from Japan and Taiwan that seem well adapted to our climate. *R. metternichii* from Japan is my best rhodo. Most of our native azaleas are very happy here but can sulk in cooler climates. Most evergreen azaleas come from Japan and they are well adapted.

The late Hank Schannen of Rarefind Nursery in New Jersey used to talk about the “species look.” These were rhododendron hybrids that had foliage that looked like those difficult species we cannot grow. They are often primary hybrids using one parent with great foliage and the other that can take our climate.



Species: *R. yakushianum* ‘Bob Furman’



Species (*R. makinoi*) and Hybrids (Joe Brusio Garden)



Species: *R. makinoi* ‘Margaret White’ (Beaudry Garden)



Species: *R. makinoi* ‘Wing Fong’ (Beaudry Garden)



“Species Look” Hybrid: (*R. makinoi* x *R. yakushianum*)

The Rhododendron Species Foundation near Seattle has the best species collection anywhere in the world. I encourage you to join them. They need our support to maintain their collection. Members receive several publications and the garden is a “must see” whenever in Seattle. They sell rare plants, seed, and pollen. Members get first choice and they ship! See the flier elsewhere in this issue.

More Species



Species: *R. bureavii*



Species: *R. meternichii* (Hyatt Garden)



Species: *R. pachysanthum*



R. meternichii (*R. degonianum* ssp. *heptamerum*)

Coming Soon – Giant Joro Spiders – Yikes!

What new Hell is this? It seems like there is always some new horror ready to invade our gardens. The giant Joro Spider which is native to East Asia arrived in Georgia in 2013. They now have millions of them.

The spiders are moving north and are due in our area soon. Female spiders are the size of a human hand and can measure up to 8 inches across. They are not poisonous so if one bites, no antivenom is needed but it will feel like a bee sting. I don't need that!

I must admit that I do have an irrational phobia about spiders. I think it is left over from some childhood trauma. Yes, ***I really hate spiders!*** Unless they are big enough to catch deer, I don't want them anywhere near my garden.



Hybrid: (*R. yakushmanum* x *R. pachysanthum*)

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

The Best Adventures Start in the Garden!

Join today to access exclusive member benefits.

The RSBG is 22-acre woodland botanical garden located in Federal Way, WA that is home to the largest collection of *Rhododendron* species in the world.

Explore More!

Visitor Center • Plant Shop • Rutherford Conservatory
Victorian Stumpery • Gazebo • Magnolia Grove
Big-leaf Rhododendron Garden • Azalea Collection
Alpine Garden • Pond Garden • Blue Poppy Meadow



Membership perks include:

- FREE year-round admission
- Discount on additional guest admissions
- Invitation to members-only events
- Early access to Spring & Fall Plant Catalogs
- 10% off in Gift Shop & RSBG Nursery*
- 10% off Spring & Fall Plant Catalog orders*
- Discounts on webinars and lectures*
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Annual Rhododendron Species Journal
- AHS Reciprocal Admission Privileges

*Depending on member level.



To learn more and to join visit: RhodyGarden.org/JOIN
or call 253-838-4646 to get started today!

Follow us on social media: @rhodygarden





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
rittwoman@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