



Potomac Valley Chapter

American Rhododendron Society

www.arspvc.org

Early Spring Newsletter: March 2025

Potomac Valley Chapter Calendar – 2025

- March 23: Joint Meeting with Northern VA Chapter ASA
- April 11 – 12: MAC Spring Meeting, Norfolk, VA
- April – May (TBA): Proposed Chapter Garden Excursions
- April 25 – 26: Rhododendron Species Symposium, Federal Way, WA
- May 7 – 9: ASA Convention, Jenkins Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
- May 29 – 30: Rhododendron Research Network – Virtual Conference
- June 5 – 8: ARS Convention, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada
- June 14 – Hooper Bald Native Azalea Festival, Robbinsville, NC

Chapter Officers

President: Carol Segree
csegree17@outlook.com
Secretary: Diane Reinke
Isabelle49@aol.com
Treasurer: Phyllis Rittman
rittwoman@gmail.com

Joint Meeting: ARS and ASA

Speaker: Don Hyatt

**“Garden Art and Accents,
plus a Touch of Whimsy”**

Where: Kirkwood Presbyterian Church
36 Carrleigh Pkwy,
Springfield, VA 22152

Date: Sunday, March 23, 2025

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM

We certainly hope you will join us for the joint meeting of our Potomac Valley Chapter and the Northern Virginia Chapter ASA on Sunday, March 23. We will be meeting at the Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Springfield, VA, from 1 to 4 PM. We will also have a plant exchange.

Our speaker, Don Hyatt, will present a new program focusing on garden art and accents, items that can turn a plant collection into a memorable landscape. Don has always had an interest in art that was encouraged by his mother and grandfather who were commercial artists. Although professionally a math and computer science teacher, Don feels fortunate that he could pursue his side interests in art and horticulture.

As Don discusses varying artistic tastes, he will show gardens with impressive hardscapes including arbors, patios, garden walls, and water features. He will share accents he has admired over the years including sculptures, innovative containers, garden signs, and more. Don has always valued humor so expect to see some whimsical landscape features, a few that are subtle but others that are bold and outlandish. Expect a few amusing stories from the past, too.



Arbor Structure
Pinkham Garden



Waterfall
Liesfeld Garden



Whimsical Tree
Paul James Garden



Leaf Castings
Elissa Steve's Garden



Pond and Fountain
Norfolk Botanical Garden



Frog Sculpture
Cam Williams Garden

Don will take you on a brief tour of several famous sculpture gardens like Brookgreen in South Carolina. He will also show the dramatic stonework at the Southern Highlands Reserve in North Carolina where artisans created a naturalistic landscape on top of one mountain by moving huge slabs of stone from another mountain. They didn't scar the rock surfaces!

Laughter is an invaluable tool in difficult times. In a world that seems to be filled with rage and divisiveness, we hope you will spend an afternoon with us as we reflect on gardening ideas, share pleasant thoughts, and laugh.



Don Hyatt



Painted Pig



German Root Sculpture



Victoria BC Fountain

Looking for Other Things to Do This Spring?

Middle Atlantic Chapter Spring Meeting in Norfolk, VA: April 11 – 12

If you are not an Associate Member of MAC ARS, consider joining for a mere \$10 a year so you can attend their spring meeting. Among other things on tour, we will return to the Norfolk Botanical Garden featured at our 2016 ARS/ASA Convention. Contact MAC president, Doug Jolley. (aplectrumwv@yahoo.com)



NBG Formal Fountain



Azaleas at Water's Edge

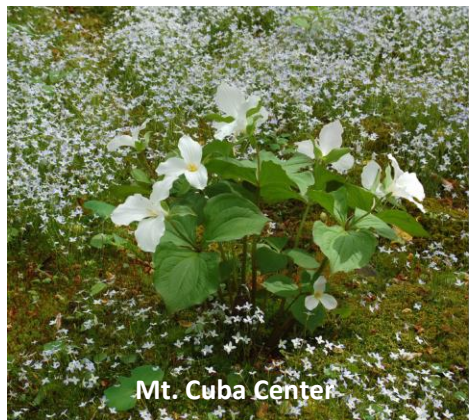


Shuttle to Azalea Woods

Even More Things to Do!

Azalea Society of America Convention in Malvern, PA: May 7 – 9

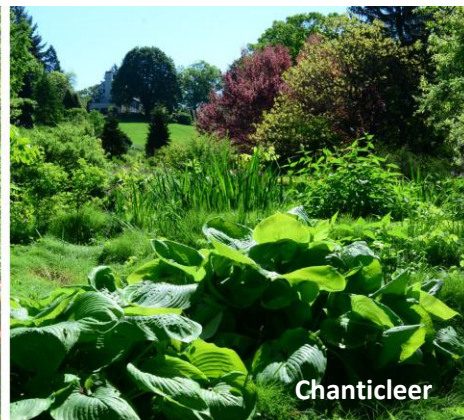
The Azalea Society has a great meeting this year hosted at the Jenkins Arboretum outside of Philadelphia, PA. It is similar to the 2019 ARS Convention and has tours including the wildflower display at Mount Cuba Center, the azaleas at Winterthur, perennials at Chanticleer, and other stunning gardens. (www.azaleas.org)



Mt. Cuba Center



Winterthur



Chanticleer

2025 Rhododendron Species Symposium in Federal Way, WA: April 25 – 26

In late April, the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden is holding its annual symposium near Seattle in Federal Way, WA. Steve Hootman has lined up excellent speakers, and then tour the Species Foundation garden which has one of the most complete collections in the world. (<https://rhodygarden.org/>)



R. macabeum



R. augustinii



R. insigne

American Rhododendron Society 2025 Convention in Nova Scotia: June 5 – 8

This year's ARS Convention is being hosted in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. They have extensive tours before and after the main program that look very enticing. (<https://ars2025.org/>)



Lovely Lepidote Rhododendrons

By Don Hyatt

We had a great Fall Banquet in December! We enjoyed a delicious meal at Richard Bradshaw's estate and heard Steve Kristoph's excellent talk on "Lovely Lepidotes." Lepidote Rhododendrons really are great plants but they are not as widely grown in our area compared to other forms.

Lepidotes are the smaller leaf rhododendrons like 'P.J.M' that we call "scalies" because they have waxy scales on stems and leaves and some have aromatic foliage that deer dislike. The plants are often confused with azaleas since they have a similar stature but the flowers can come in some amazing colors. Check out the yellows, apricots, and the awesome blues that are never seen in azaleas!

We have trouble with certain Lepidotes that cannot take our heat but there are some that do quite well. *R. keiskei* from Japan makes a good rock garden plant and it is a light yellow. There are very dwarf forms of that species like 'Yaku Fairy' but it is harder to keep alive.



R. keiskei



Paul Beck and Karel Bernady converse at the banquet while Steve Kristoph kneels as he prepares for his talk

The blue dwarf *R. impeditum* is a lovely species but it is almost impossible to grow here. It is an alpine plant that cannot take our heat and humidity.



R. impeditum

Augie Kehr's blush pink 'Southland' was derived from *R. keiskei* crossed with a Florida species called *R. minus* var. *chapmanii*. It has significant heat tolerance but so do many hybrids with another Eastern native species, *R. minus* var. *carolinianum*.



'Southland'



'Mary Fleming'



'Windbeam'

Nearing's apricot 'Mary Fleming' and light pink 'Windbeam' are excellent but they are not dwarf. They are medium size, comparable to an azalea. Lepidotes that are also medium in stature are bright pink 'Olga Mezitt' and 'Weston's Aglo'. Like 'PJM', they were developed from *R. minus* and *R. dauricum*, a species native to Eastern Siberia. They are not only winter hardy but also heat tolerant.

All Lepidotes require excellent drainage so even though they may be able to take heat and cold, they will not survive wet feet or sticky clay.



'Olga Mezitt'



'Weston's Aglo'



Karel Bernady with June Sinclair's *R. augustinii*

I wish I could grow *R. augustinii*. It is a tall plant that can reach 6 to 8 ft or more and is very impressive with flowers that can measure up to 3" across. The color typically ranges from shades of light to medium blue and purplish hues. It has trouble in our climate but there are some hybrids of it we can grow. One of the best is 'Blaney's Blue' which is a good deep blue, and 'Rhein's Luna' which is a lighter lavender blue.

My next project is to work on hardy blues. I am collecting blues. I purchased three forms of *augustinii* from the Species Foundation last year that I hope to keep alive long enough to make crosses. The trick is to raise as many seedlings as possible and plant them out without much special care. Then let natural selection eliminate the weaklings. Joe Gable did that with his species to get hardier forms. It's a plan!



'Blaney's Blue'

Potomac Valley Chapter ARS - Newsletter
Donald W. Hyatt, Editor
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Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

The Potomac Valley Chapter ARS is one of three American Rhododendron Society chapters located in District 9 which represents the Middle Atlantic region of the United States. Some of our chapter activities include:

- Regular Meetings with Speakers
- Annual Chapter Banquet
- Garden Tours
- Field Trips to Nurseries or to Wild Stands of Native Azaleas and Rhododendrons
- Local and National Seed Exchanges
- Plants for Members Program
- Informative Chapter Newsletters
- 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 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 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