

MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

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Rhododendron Society

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MAC MEETINGS

Sept 24, 2010	Hilton Garden Inn, Winchester, VA
Spring 2011	To be determined
Oct. 23, 2011	Doubletree Inn near Richmond airport (with ARS Board Meeting)

Rhododendron Web Site Addresses:

American Rhododendron Society	http://www.rhododendron.org/
MAC Website (UPDATED REGULARLY)	http://www.macars.org/
U VA Science & Engineering Libraries	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm
UVA Special Collections	http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/
Henry Skinner Website	http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/collections/projects/rhodo/skinner/
Old Quarterly Bulletins ARS	http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/

MAC FALL MEETING : SEPTEMBER 24-26th

Your Fall Meeting notice should already have arrived for our upcoming meeting in Winchester, Virginia. You will also find the notice available online at

<http://macars.org/events.html> where you can register and pay by PayPal if you so desire. The meeting is very early this year. The registration deadline is September 8th.

We have some exciting places to visit on the tour and excellent speakers scheduled. Don't miss it. Make your reservations right away!

NEWS OF A FORMER MAC MEMBER

(Extracted from an article in the Seasons Plus section of June 11, 2010, issue of The News Leader.)

The News Leader featured an article about Ted Scott who many long time MAC members remember well and may have wondered about his whereabouts. The article is "Active Seniors: Swimmer Ted Scott." Ted learned to swim 13 years ago thanks to a Sunnyside employee and as a result is in better physical condition now than before he retired in 1977. Ted learned to swim at age 78 and is now 90 years old. Ted swims 36 laps three times per week.

Ted's son often joins his father in swimming laps. Ted was encouraged to learn to swim by his doctor when he had an ankle injury.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF MAC by Jane McKay

After a damaging snow and ice winter, that I've yet to finish cleaning up, this summer has been unusually hot with almost no rain and several days with temperatures over 100 degrees. The highest I saw on my thermometer was 104.8. July was also extremely dry with my rain gauge only showing 0.2 inch only twice during the month.

I was in New York the first week of August and it was with a great deal of trepidation that I left my garden but sometimes family and the fact that my son had bought two very expensive tickets for us

to go to a Yankee game comes first. In case there are any baseball fans reading this, we were at the stadium to see A-Rod hit his 600th home run – Awesome. Fortunately in the middle of the week I was away we had 2 inches of rain so my garden was alright.



Jane McKay

The excessive heat has damaged quite a few plants. My Star Magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*) had every leaf burned and now about a month later it is blooming and new leaves are beginning to sprout. I can only hope it lives thru the winter. Many conifers show some browning, the dwarf spruces more than others. Some are so bad that I'm considering removing them but I think I will wait for spring to see what happens. The hollies and *Pieris* show no sign of damage from either the heat or the lack of rain. The large hemlocks are fine but the dwarf forms show slight burning but not enough to consider removal.

The rhododendrons are the first to let me know they are thirsty. *Rhododendron fortunei* is number one when it comes to the 'droopies'. Rhododendrons with *R. fortunei* somewhere in their background follow not far behind. I have not been able to note any difference between any other species, but I certainly am not an expert. I do have a great deal of 'dieback' on the rhododendrons but whether the winter, the heat or disease I have no idea. I will start pruning as soon as I can stop watering.

When it comes to heat and drought deciduous azaleas hang their heads fairly quickly. *Rhododendron prunifolium* along the stream bloomed normally but the younger plants in a bit more sun only showed color in their buds but never fully opened. The 'evergreen' azaleas, and here I want to separate them into shiny leaf and fuzzy leaf, the shiny leaved azaleas never have shown any sign of distress, the fuzzies only slight more. They all look great.

A few days ago I received the fall (September) issue of 'Virginia Gardener'. In this issue a group of 'Experts' were asked to name the perfect plant and why. Being me, I disagreed with all of them, my pick would have to be the azalea.

In the latest *Journal* (Summer 2010) I noticed the passing of an old friend, Dr. Frank West. The articles also mentioned the Linwood Hardy Azalea 'Dr. Franklin West'. I have a large plant of this so if anyone wants cuttings please let me know. If anyone wants cuttings of anything I

have please let me know. I'm more than willing to share.

DUES, DUES, DUES

It's that time again – I will be mailing dues notices early in September and I will be at the fall meeting if you want to save postage. Jane

NOTES ON ARS ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 14, 2010 by District 9 Director Ann Mangels

The spring board meeting of the ARS was very well attended with all districts being represented either by the director or alternate. All officers were present and many committee chairs, including Ray Smith, Plant Awards, and Norm Beaudry, Seed Exchange, from District 9.

Some areas of discussion included:

- Membership numbers continue to be a topic of concern, although we lost only 104 members during the year. The Chattahoochee Chapter (AL) has dissolved for lack of membership, but quite a few chapters have increased their membership by 10% or more over the past year. There are currently 3525 members primarily in Massachusetts (188), Danish (142), Portland (130), Swedish (102), and 102 non-chapter. Canada, in various chapters, has 479 members. A major expense is created when Journals are returned because of incorrect mailing addresses – membership chairs are being urged to make corrections to Laura as soon as they are notified of changes.

- Chapters are reminded that they need to file an annual 990 series tax return. The tax exempt status for the society as a whole could be affected if not filed.

- The proposed budget for 2010-2011 was reviewed. Current salaries will be maintained by the Journal Editor, Assistant Journal Editor and Executive Director.



District 9 Director Ann Mangels

- The ARS roster database will be available online to all members. There will be safeguards to protect the data.

- The Seed Exchange showed an estimated profit of \$4000 this year. This money will be used to support future seed collecting expeditions. Seeds were donated from 70 members in 9 countries and 160 orders were filled going far and wide. A Seed Exchange China Seed Collection Expedition conducted by Jens and Remi Nielsen was funded at \$6000 and proved successful with good participation.

- The Endowment Grant Program resumed this year with the awarding of \$3500.00 funded to the Niagara Parks and School of Horticulture for the purchase of rhododendrons and azaleas. An endowment bequest was received in the spring from the estate of a former member.

- The Honors Committee recommended only one Gold Medal this year and Don Voss was the recipient. Although he wasn't in attendance, Don Hyatt and I called him after the meeting to congratulate him on this happy occasion. The Potomac Valley Chapter held a luncheon in June where Don actually received the medal and citation.

Other winners of Silver Medals were: Paul Anderson, California Chapter; Chris Callard, France; Werner Brack, New York Chapter.

Upcoming events include ARS Regional Conference in Florence, OR, October 8-10, 2010. Next year's Annual Meeting will be held in Vancouver, WA from May 11-15, near Portland International Airport. I was delighted to announce that the Regional Conference next fall will be held near the Richmond International Airport, hosted by Middle Atlantic Chapter on October 21-23, 2011. Other dates of importance are May 4-8, 2012 in Asheville, NC for the Annual Meeting and Western Regional in 2012 will be held in Nanaimo, BC.

Thank you for allowing me the pleasure and privilege of serving as the Director for District 9. Please let me know if you have any concerns that you would like brought up at board meetings or to chairs of committees you may have some questions for. I will be happy to communicate them either from individual members or chapters.

DEATHS

Former MAC member **Joseph Svobota** died this summer. He was an ophthalmologist in the Richmond area.

Former MAC member **James R. Randall** of Willoughby, Ohio, formerly of St. Albans, WV, died on May 23rd. Jim worked at Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Company, a division of Union Carbide, South Charleston, West Virginia, where he knew Harry Wise.

MAC BOARD SUMMER BOARD MEETING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

MAC officers and board held their summer board meeting on Saturday, August 7th at the Gordon Library in Charlottesville. Chapter business and upcoming meetings were discussed. Ann Mangels thanked the chapter for their support.

An article about Jay and Shirley Gillenwater's garden which appeared in the *Piedmont Virginian*, Spring 2010, was passed around. The board again thanks Jay for his valuable contribution of growing plants for the Plants for Members (P4M). It is a very popular program and much appreciated.



MAC President Celia Dollarhide, Margaret Willis, and VP Lloyd Willis at MAC Board Meeting. Photo by S. McDonald

MAC AND THE U.S. NATIONAL ARBORETUM

MAC President Celia Dollarhide passed along information that the U.S. National Arboretum will have enough money to hire an Azalea Garden intern for next summer. MAC, Potomac Valley, and the Mason-Dixon Chapters of ARS along with the Northern Virginia Chapter of the Azalea Society of America have donated enough money to cover the \$6,400 cost for the intern next summer.

MAC PROJECT REPORT by Debby Sauer

As your treasurer, I am delighted to report to the membership the status of some of our major projects: Gregory and Hooper Bald. Each year, a group of MAC members accompanied by members of other chapters and visitors from abroad, trek to the top of Gregory Bald to see the wonders of this azalea swarm of natural hybrids. Because of the uniqueness of this area, MAC has made a number of contributions to assure the preservation of these azaleas. In 2006, the MAC chapter applied for and received a grant of \$2,963.00 from the American Rhododendron Society to fund a power mower for the U.S. Park Service to use in the maintenance of the bald - keeping the grasses and other brush from encroaching on this unique area. In order to maintain the bald, the U.S. Park Service uses summer help in the form of a "summer intern" and MAC chapter has contributed \$2500 toward the summer intern salary in 2008, 2009 and 2010. You may remember that the MAC chapter of ARS received a citation of thanks from the U.S. Department of the Interior for our outstanding support in the maintenance of Gregory Bald.

MAC has also been contributing to the maintenance of Hooper Bald by providing additional workers and lunches for the volunteers who contribute their time and effort to preserve this area. In addition, Dr. Deborah Van Vechten donated a mower similar to the one used at Gregory Bald valued at \$1500.00. MAC paid \$282 to have the mower brought into factory specifications and then donated it to the Hooper Bald maintenance workers.

The Gregory and Hooper Bald projects would not be possible without the generous support of the MAC membership by attending our biannual meetings, purchase of the auction plants and the Plants for Members Sales (P4M). In addition, many of our long-time MAC members have contributed to generously to the chapter funds. Without your support, the maintenance of these two precious azalea treasures would not have been as successful.

WANTED: AN ESTABLISHED GARDEN

MAC member Sharon Allender is interested in finding a property in the Short Pump area of Richmond or Henrico County. She is hoping to find something in the next year to year and a half. If you know of such a property, you can get in touch with Sharon at sallender@midnspring.com or call her at 301-365-4028.

KUDZU, MORE OF A MENACE THAN WE REALIZED by Sandra McDonald

A paper by Jonathan Hickman, Shiliang Wu, Loretta Mickley, and Manuel Lerda published by the National Science Foundation in May has reported a link between kudzu (*Pueraria montana*) and ozone. We all are well aware of how invasive kudzu is in the south and how it blankets the landscape, but now it has been found that kudzu has the potential to raise ozone levels in the region by increasing nitric oxide emissions from soils as a consequence of increasing nitrogen inputs and cycling in soils. Nitric oxide emissions from invaded soils were more than 100% higher than non invaded soils. Kudzu produces isoprene and nitric oxide which when combined with nitrogen in the air form ozone, an air pollutant that causes significant health problems for humans as well as hindering the growth of many kinds of plants.

Kudzu has already become a problem because of its effect on biodiversity.

Kudzu, native to Japan and China, was introduced to the United States in the 1800s and was promoted for erosion control in the 1930s, but has expanded well beyond its originally intended area. It occupies over 7.4 million acres in the U.S. and is spreading at the rate of 120,000 acres annually. It can grow a foot per day or 60 feet per season.

In recent milder winters, kudzu has expanded its range northward into Pennsylvania and New York.

WARNING: MULBERRY WEED IS A NEW GARDEN PEST

Note from Bill Bedwell

Mulberry weed or Hairy Crabweed (*Fatua villosa*) is far more aggressive and threatening than most any other weed I have coped with, partly because it is so prolific with seed production. I suspect Preen, sprinkled on the soil when warm weather arrives, will prevent the seeds from germinating, but you have to clear out all weeds before using it because after application you cannot disturb the soil to pull weeds or it will ruin effectiveness. It kills germinating weeds. At least that is my understanding. You can use Preen around established plants and even annuals that have had a while to become established (read the label). I have used it in the past with success but I did not notice

that some mulberry weeds were hiding under shrubs or garden plants and they re-seeded.

Mulberry Weed is an annual so you must remove it before its spreads seeds to completely control it. It is easy

to pull up unless the ground is dry but you have to make sure to completely get rid of the plants and NEVER put them in compost piles where the seeds will germinate later when the compost is used.

That is how so many of us spread our infestation. Of course, when we get new garden plants from nurseries, we must keep close watch to make sure the weed does not come up from their potting soil. It only takes one plant to have many more the next year and I am sure they produce seed at a young enough age that the seed can germinate in the same season. Seeds start forming when the plant is 2-3 inches tall and usually hiding under other plants. The weed will eventually get more than a foot tall.



Mulberry weed

Several MAC members got it as a free plant from nurseries! It will grow in rather heavy shade under shrubs and become a hidden source of seeds because you fail to look under there.

Information obtained from various Internet sources:

<http://www.walterreeves.com/gardening-q-and-a/mulberry-weed/>

Mulberry weed is an annual weed which can be prevented with the proper pre-emergent chemical. The above Web site suggests the best pre-emergent for broadleaf weeds is isoxaben (Greenlight Portrait). Apply the chemical in late March and again in mid-May. If you have a huge mulberry weed population, make a third application in early July.

Herbicides like Ortho Weed B Gon, Greenlight Wipe Out and any of the glyphosate (Roundup) products will kill mulberry weed, but you must pull

or kill the weed before it drops seed, which it can do only a few weeks after germination.

<http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/plantoftheweek/articles/mulberryweed.htm>

Seedling mulberry trees look similar to the weed when it's about 4 inches tall with five or six leaves. But mulberries have smooth stems while mulberry weed has prominent hairs on the leaves and stems.

The following description is from the above Web site:

It grows stiffly upright to about a foot tall with alternate leaves that are toothed, indented with prominent veins, hairy and yellow-green in color. The leaves have a triangular outline with the petiole about half the length of the leaf blade.

The flowers appear as tannish, pea-sized clusters at each node. Unfortunately, mulberry weed is in a hurry to produce seed, so flowers usually appear when plants have only three leaves on them. Plants 2 inches tall are capable of producing copious amounts of seed. According to one source, the seeds are explosively discharged and spread up to 4 feet from the original plant.

History, growing conditions, and control

Mulberry weed was first identified in Louisiana in 1962. Little was heard of it until 30 years later. It probably spread on nursery stock sometime in the mid 1990s to gardens across the southern states.

It prefers a moist, shaded site and requires light for germination but germinates at temperatures from 60 to 90-degrees.

Seeding is heavy in September and October. A two inch layer of mulch gives some control.

Chemical weed control can be achieved using any of the direct contact herbicides, but because it grows in such close association with other garden plants, this method is difficult.

Surflan and Gallery are two common pre-emergence herbicides that have given good control when applied in late March.

http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/456/456-017/Section-4_Nursery_Crops-5.pdf

The above Web site for Virginia Tech has information in pdf format about control of mulberry weed.

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