

# The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society



## January 2011 Newsletter

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### **JANUARY CHAPTER MEETING – Sunday, January 9, 2011 – Morris Arboretum Hue of Lemon ... or Just a Lemon?"**

Every collector of rhododendrons runs into this sooner or later: All those little rooted cuttings turn into BIG BUSHES. Space becomes precious. And there in the midst of the GROWING collection is a dud. Well, maybe not a true dud but a rhododendron that -- knowing what you know now about its habit, its flowers, its growth rate -- you'd just as soon NOT have acquired. Michael Mills, with the expertise of Win Howe, Joan Warren and Ron Rabideau, will gently but frankly let you know which alluring plant descriptions you probably want to ignore as you proceed to accumulate a low-vexation collection of our favorite genus.

### **NOTE THE SEASONAL MEETING SHIFT**

For our January and February meetings, we gather on Sunday afternoon. We gather at 1:30 PM for conviviality and cookies, with the program to begin at 2 p.m. In the event of wickedly horrible weather, call chapter President Linda Hartnett (215.233.0458) to find out if it's still a go.

**THE PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW** - The excitement is building. The plants are all safe in their spot at The Horticultural Center of Fairmount Park under the watchful eye of Dan O'Brien for forcing. We cannot say thank-you enough to Karel Bernady for his major help procuring the plants and helping to bring them to the Hort. Center. The theme for the show this year is: Springtime in Paris. Our exhibit entitled, "Place Des Rhododendrons", will be a small public square in a charming quarter of Paris that provides a pedestrian short-cut that also goes around a small pool. Flanking the path are layers of rhododendrons and azaleas with companion plants. All is going well with the planning. Your help with setting, watching the exhibit, and taking it down will be needed. We will be setting up from March 1st to March 5th. The show runs from March 6 – March 13, 2011.

**NEW ADDITION TO THE BOARD!** – We are very pleased to welcome Maris Ogg, who is coming onto the board in the dual roll of Recording Secretary and Newsletter Editor. We still have one vacancy to fill, which was created by the loss of Brian Keim. The board is always strengthened by new members coming on with a fresh perspective, so please consider volunteering to take a turn. If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please contact Linda Hartnett, phone number above.

**SCHEDULING CHANGE FOR NEXT YEAR** – At our last board meeting the decision was made to switch all meetings to Sunday afternoon. Thursday evening meetings have not been well attended in the last two years, as many of our members don't enjoy driving at night, especially if the weather is not good. These changes will really only affect two meetings, October and November. We voted to try it for a year and re-evaluate attendance to see if it makes a difference.

**GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER WEBSITE**

Remember to visit the website at: [www.gpchapterars.org](http://www.gpchapterars.org). It will also be linked to the American Rhododendron Society website. The current and previous newsletters will be posted there, as well as lots of other helpful information, so drop in frequently for the latest updates on our chapter.

**UPDATED E-MAIL ADDRESSES ARE NEEDED!** – Please watch your mail in January for a postcard asking for updated e-mail address information. We are trying to clean up and update our database.

**SAVE THE AZALEAS AND BOXWOODS!** They need your help!

*“The U.S. National Arboretum holds the national collection of boxwood; its curator is the international registrar of the genus. If anyone in the world wants to introduce a new cultivar, they must apply to him. This is the place to go if you are interested in boxwood.*

*Many of the azaleas that create the look of spring in the middle-Atlantic states and beyond were developed in the last century at the Arboretum. The collection is filled with named and unnamed varieties and is a treasure trove of breeding material for new useful plants.*

*The U. S. National Arboretum has been under-funded for some time. Recently they learned that, in 2012, they would lose funding from a private source intended to supplement the care of the Asian Valley, a popular spot at the Arboretum. In fact, that private funding has been used for workers' salaries. To keep the Asian Valley going, the Arboretum decided to take workers from two other parts of the property, the boxwood collection and the azalea collection. They planned to send cuttings and rooted cuttings of the boxwood to other institutions and to turn the area into low-maintenance meadow. All the unnamed varieties of azalea are slated to be removed.”*

The above excerpt is a portion of an e-mail that your editor received from the horticulture chairman of the Garden Club of America. The members of board of the GCA have written a sample letter and have broadcasted it to all members and friends, along with names and addresses of possible recipients. We plan to post it on the chapter web site in the near future, should you choose to write a letter.



The Azalea Hill at the National Arboretum – slated to be destroyed.

## CALENDAR

- **January 9** – Sunday - Regular chapter meeting, 1:30 p.m., program – A Gaggle of Garden Tips
- **February 20** – Sunday – Joint meeting with Valley Forge Chapter, 1:30 p.m., program – Karel Bernady will speak about his journey to Germany
- **March 6 – 13** – Philadelphia International Flower Show
- **April 9** – Saturday – Annual Banquet – speaker will be Don Hyatt
- **May 5, 6, 7** – Rhododendron Sale at Morris Arboretum
- **May 7 & 8** – Truss show at Jenkins Arboretum hosted by the Valley Forge Chapter
- **June** – date TBD – Picnic

**BOARD MEETING** – There will be a board meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2011, at the home of Betts Layman. RSVP to Linda Hartnett or Betts Layman.

**E-NEWS** – If you'd like to switch over to electronic newsletter delivery contact Maris Ogg, moog@comcast.net. In fact, we strongly encourage you to do so, if at all possible, and may demand it in the future. We would like to send many notices that are time sensitive, in addition to the newsletter, by e-mail.

***Editor's Note:** This will be my last newsletter as Editor. I've been writing newsletters with the excellent help of Karel Bernady, Michael Mills, and Linda Hartnett since September 2003. It's time to pass the baton to the capable hands of Maris. Through the ups and downs (Remember the time that you got the Begonia Society newsletter instead of ours?), it's been fun, challenging, and oddly satisfying, but I'm ready to take a break.*