

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society



March 2007 Newsletter

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HERE'S AN ASSUMPTION MADE WITHOUT FEAR OF CONTRADICTION: You want fewer weeds in your garden. Well, you've joined the right club. Author Lee Reich will be our speaker at the March chapter meeting, and his title for the evening is "My Weedless Garden." Mr. Reich's books include *A Northeast Gardener's Year*, *Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden* and *The Pruning Book*. Of his 2001 book *Weedless Gardening*, Roger Swain of television's *The Victory Garden*, says: "The deepest wisdom gardening has to offer. Do as Lee Reich says." So get off your knees and head for Morris Arboretum on Thursday, March 8. As always, we gather at 7:30 p.m. for conversation and refreshments, with the program beginning at 8 p.m.

PERFECT TOGETHER - That's the name of our exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show, March 4-11 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Center City. Kim Kopple and Ted Stecki have worked their usual magic, and we hope you'll attend the Flower Show and admire their work. One aspect of the exhibit will be a departure from past years: All the flowering rhododendrons and azaleas are one color, white. The exhibit will capture the soothing allure of a white garden, such as that made famous by Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst in Kent in the south of England, except here with only one genus. Many a gardener has a monochromatic planting in this or that corner of the landscape; the exhibit portrays such a composition, rather than trying to cram in the whole panoply of rhododendrons. (What's "Perfect Together"? The title refers to rhododendrons and the Irish climate.) Particular thanks to Linda Hartnett and Randy Dalton for their hours of work, plus an indispensable cast of worker bees.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW - Our annual banquet will be held on Saturday, April 21st, again at the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, just around the corner from Morris Arboretum. This being the chapter's 50th year, we will take a portion of the evening

to highlight some of the milestones and prominent personalities in our chapter's history. In addition to table favors, Rhododendron Roulette, and a fine meal, we will have a presentation by Morris Arboretum director Paul Meyer on his ventures in the Caucasus Mountains of Georgia.

Please note: With the 50th anniversary, the banquet invitation is being sent to a wider audience than usual. Please make your reservations as soon as possible.

SAD NEWS - Howard Roberts, former president and longtime member of our chapter, died Feb. 10. He was 80 and had been ill for several months. In addition to serving the chapter as president, 1993-97, Howard was a key man in the plant sale for the last several years and had a key role on the host committee for the national ARS convention here in 2004. For many years, he maintained a local seed exchange for growers and hybridizers in this area, an outgrowth of his own hybridizing efforts. A visit to his garden in May was always a revelation, with such a diversity and number of plants in a normal-size home garden. Prominent, of course, were his yellows, and who could not take delight in the plant 'Smarty Joan's,' registered in 2004, from seed hybridized by Allan and Shirley Anderson. Howard took full advantage of the national ARS seed exchange, and won the chapter's Seed Exchange Trophy *ten times* from 1993 through 2006! Above all, Howard was a person of great generosity and a twinkling smile, a true gentleman. The chapter extends warmest condolences to Joan Roberts and her family.

CALENDAR

March 4-11- 2007 Philadelphia Flower Show.

March 8, Thursday- Chapter meeting, 7:30, Morris Arboretum. Author Lee Reich will be the speaker. (See above)

March 10, Saturday – Northeast Hybridizers Meeting, noon, Holly House, Rutgers University. BYO lunch. " For more info and directions, call or email Al Fitzburgh at 973-226-5796 or arfitz@earthlink.net.

April 12-15 – ARS National Conference, San Francisco (see Journal)

April 21, Saturday- Annual Banquet, with Paul Meyer, director of Morris Arboretum.

May 10-13, Plant Sale, Morris Arboretum.

May 12, Cut-Flower Competition, Morris Arboretum.

June 10 – Picnic and annual meeting, Stenton mansion in Lower Germantown.

E-MAIL NOTIFICATION- If you want to receive notifications electronically please notify Debby Evans via e-mail (dfevans@msn.com). We will continue to mail notices to those who prefer it. Please contact Debby if you are still receiving paper mailings in addition to the e-mail notice.