

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society



May 2007 Newsletter

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LO, THE APOGEE APPROACHES. The annual planetary conjunction is set for the second weekend in May – the Greater Philadelphia Chapter’s Plant Sale and Cut-Flower Competition (truss show) at Morris Arboretum, with all the attendant preliminaries the week preceding. The chapter’s leaders are prepared – are you?

For months, the Plants and Propagation Committee led by Karel Bernady and Linda Hartnett have been working to gather a stunning collection of plants to tempt both casual gardeners and devotees of our favorite genus. In addition to typical ready-to-plant sizes, there will be a number of landscape-size specimens, a selection of kalmias, and a table full of small ever-so-choice varieties propagated by the chapter. Nothing compares to the selection we offer, so bring your friends and your checkbook. (Remember, friends don’t let friends buy rhododendrons at the likes of Home Depot.)

Sale hours: Friday, May 11, members only (that is, Morris members and ARS members), 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, May 13, noon-4 p.m.

The **truss show** is one of those delightful mysteries – what will be in peak bloom in the competitors’ gardens this year? This much is certain: Anybody can win ribbons and trophies. If you’ve been hesitant to enter in the past, get out in your garden and cut some entries. And to get more people into our favorite genus, bring a new competitor with you. Our competition is open to anyone, not just ARS members. That neighbor who has a reliably floriferous azalea in the front yard? A perfect candidate. Have him or her bring a spray (better yet, several) to the competition. The truss show crew will assist any novices with getting trusses and sprays ready. (Important reminder: We do not require the name of the cultivar; “unknown” entries are perfectly acceptable.)

Truss show schedule: Entries accepted, Saturday, May 12, 7:15-8:45 a.m. Open to the public, Saturday *and* Sunday, noon-4 p.m. (For tags and brochure, contact Michael Mills, 215-844-6253 or mmm19119@earthlink.net.)

THE GREAT DISCOUNT Here’s how to get 20 percent off your purchases, both from the chapter’s collection and all of the plants in the Morris sale itself: be a volunteer worker for our

plant sale or the truss show. Volunteer workers get a coupon good for a one-time 20 percent discount on all plants (coupon is good Friday or Saturday). To sign up to work, contact Linda Hartnett (for the sale: 215-233-0458, gehartnett@aol.com) and Michael Mills (for the truss show: 215-844-6253, mmm19119@earthlink.net). Although Saturday is the big crunch, we need workers for setup *all week*. Don't miss out on that 20 percent discount!

POT-A-RAMA - Scillions of cuttings were stuck last fall for our Plants for Members program. And now it's time to transfer them to individual pots. Karel Bernady needs nimble fingers on Saturday, May 19. The potting party takes place starting around 9 a.m. at Steve Kristoph's Nursery in Central Jersey, easily reached from I-195 not far from Six Flags Great Adventure. It's always fascinating to see now those dinky little plant bits have turned into junior rhododendrons. Contact Karel at 610-827-0113 or kbernad@earthlink.net to sign up and get driving directions. (BYO lunch.)

IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR FRIEND - Late last year, Joe Minahan registered R. 'Howard Roberts.' It's a cross of Mary Belle X Odee Wright, a yellow with a red basal blotch. Chapter president Michael Mills visited Joe's garden in 2005 and saw it in stunning bloom (this was before it was named and registered). Joe has raised several seedlings from this 1983 cross (and won the Becales New Hybrid Trophy in 1993 for one named 'Camp Hill Sunrise'). Joe reports that Howard had greatly admired this plant and knew that Joe planned to name it 'Howard Roberts.' The current Journal has the registration information and a photo (which doesn't do it justice). People who acquired cuttings from Joe of Mary Belle X Odee Wright 83-7-042 can now retag their plants as 'Howard Roberts.' With such a name and appearance, there will certainly be demand for it among our members, so let's hope Joe's plant continues to flourish and provide cuttings for the future.

INTO THE SUMMER - The chapter's annual picnic – which is also the Annual Meeting of the organization – will be June 10 at the historic Stenton Mansion in Germantown. Election of board members and officers will be conducted, and trophies from the truss show presented. Stenton is one of the unknown gems of Philadelphia, an impressive 18th-century mansion that is in pristine shape – the descendants of the Logan family never updated for electricity or the like, and it has been maintained as a historic property for 100 years. More details in the next newsletter.

SAD NEWS - Polly Hill, a remarkable figure in rhododendrons and horticulture, has died. She was a longtime member of our chapter, and was a speaker on several occasions. At the age of 50, she started what is now the Polly Hill Arboretum on Martha's Vineyard – *from seed!* She was a recipient of the ARS' Gold Medal and introduced many cultivars, notably the North Tisbury series of low-growing, late-blooming azaleas. Polly had her 100th birthday earlier this year. For a wealth of information, go to www.pollyhillarboretum.org. A memorial service will be Saturday May 5, 10 a.m., at Cokesbury Village, where she most recently lived, 726 Loveville Rd, Hockessin, Del. (For directions, call 302-234-4444.)

BANQUET ADDENDUM. The program for the banquet omitted one national medal winner: Lloyd Partain won the ARS Silver Medal. There are a few extra copies of the banquet program. If you were unable to attend and would like one, contact Michael Mills (till supply lasts).

SUMMER WANDERLUST? The Holly Society is offering a tour of English gardens, Aug. 20 – 30, with departure from Philadelphia. Kew Botanic Garden, Windsor Castle and Great Park and Stonehenge are included, plus lesser known gems. Greater Philadelphia Chapter member Ron Solt is the tour host. Call Ron at 240-422-5683 to get a flier and details.

CALENDAR

May 11-13, Friday-Sunday, plant sale at Morris Arboretum.

May 12-13, Saturday-Sunday, cut-flower competition (truss show) at Morris Arboretum.

May 19, Saturday, Plants-for-Members potting day at Steve Kristoph's nursery in Central Jersey.
See above.

May 19, Saturday, Valley Forge Chapter tour of gardens in the Lehigh Valley (Stamper, Kline, Doppel). For information, see <http://valleyforgears.org/events.html> or contact Valley Forge president Bob Smetana.

June 5, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. – Board of Directors meeting, home of Betts Layman

June 10, Sunday, Annual Picnic – Historic Stenton Mansion, Germantown

August 19, Sunday – District 8 cutting exchange. Details in a future newsletter.

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.