

GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODOGRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society :::::::::: Summer 2016

Lola wins 'Best in Show'

Proof that you don't need names to win ribbons at the truss show

Among the many entries submitted by Marc and Susan Thomson at the Cut-Flower Competition in May was a spray of a salmon-pink azalea for which they had no name – a “lola” in rhodospeak, for “lost label.”

First, it got the blue ribbon in its section. Then it won best in class for evergreen azalea hybrids. Next up: the Maxine West Trophy for Best Evergreen Azalea. And no one, judges or show crew members, recognized it or knew its name. Finally, the judges had before them four entries from which to choose Best in Show: the Best Rhododendron Hybrid (the Gressmans' 'Wynterset White'), the Best Deciduous Azalea ('Pink Lights', also from the Thomsons), the Best Species (Joe Minahan's *R. kiusianum*), and the nameless evergreen azalea spray.

Lola took the prize. It is the first time Marc and Susan have won Best in Show at the Greater Philadelphia show. As luck would have it, they found the tag before the deadline for trophy engraving: 'Aya-kanmuri', a Japanese Kurume hybrid that according to the International Rhododendron Register and Checklist has been around since 1918.

The Thomsons were presented with their three trophies at the June 19 Annual Meeting and picnic.

Planting this fall?

Hie thee to the Cutting Exchange

As the August nights lengthen and the shade of trees expands thanks to the lower angle of the sun, the gardener's mind drifts to plans for fall rejuvenation and planting, perhaps some culling to make room for must-have cultivars.

The place to get a head start is the District Eight Plant Auction and Cutting Exchange, to take place on August 28 at the Flourtown home of Maris Ogg.

Proceeds of the sales go to ARS Endowment Fund and the ARS Research Foundation, and what's always delightful about the event is the serendipitous mix of the plants available. Prices tend to be ever-so reasonable, though sometimes a bidding frenzy results for choice items.

Some plants are donated by chapters, some by individual members. Most years, John Bartlett of Gettysburg Garden brings an ooh-ahh assortment of non-rhododendrons. Headquarters of the RhodoGravure, for instance, holds a number of delights from auctions past, such as a corkscrew willow

Joe Minahan also took home three trophies: The Joseph J. Becales Trophy for best new hybrid ('John Paul II' x 'Orange Ruffy'), the Dan and Betts Layman Trophy for best foliage ('John Paul II' x 'Harold Amateis'), and the Francis J. Sholomskas Trophy for Best Species (*R. kiusianum*). As mentioned, Bud and Marilyn Gressman won the Ross B. Davis Jr. Trophy for best rhododendron hybrid ('Wynterset White').

The Judi Meade Sweepstakes Trophy was won by Michael Martin Mills, who racked up points with 10 blue ribbons in various sections.

This year's show took place on May 7 at Morris Arboretum, in conjunction with the annual plant sale. Circumstances



A spray of this cultivar took the top prize. But what is it?

were more challenging than in the past, since the tent for the show was on lawn, and not a putting-green-perfect lawn. Maris Ogg cut planks in her woodworking shop to place under the table legs, and a deft crew of ARS members wielded levels and shims to get all the tables level. (Top-heavy bottle-and-truss combinations do not go well with tilting tables!)

The show chair, Michael Mills, is particularly grateful for three pinch-hitting judges. Defying all odds, four of the seven people he had lined up for judges were unable to carry through. Steve Wright of Jenkins Arboretum and chapter members Tom Lloyd and Linda Hartnett filled the void on short notice, joining Jerry O'Dell of Tyler Arboretum and veteran judges Mich Steele and W. Robert Stamper.

Thirteen competitors submitted 120 entries. This was the eighth year of the combined Greater Philadelphia-Valley Forge competition. Next year's show will be under Valley Forge auspices at Jenkins Arboretum.

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Plants and Propagation: Karel Bernady & Linda Hartnett

The American Rhododendron Society is a horticultural organization devoted to the genus *Rhododendron* – which includes azaleas. At the national level, the society holds annual conferences, publishes the quarterly *Journal of the ARS*, and fosters plant research and conservation. Its website, www.rhododendron.org, is a trove.

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter gathers eight times a year. Sunday afternoon meetings are held September, October, and January at Morris Arboretum. February through August we are mobile, with a banquet, plant sale and picnic at various sites. Latest meeting information may be found at www.GPChapterARS.org.

Dues are \$40 per year, for chapter and national membership and a subscription to the *Journal*. Contact the president or treasurer (see above) for a form or go to www.GPChapterARS.org; click on “Join us.”

Excellent primer on the menace of ticks

The May-June issue of the Valley Forge Chapter’s newsletter has an informative takeout on ticks and Lyme disease (plus mosquitoes, West Nile virus and other related unpleasanties). Anyone who gardens outdoors would be well-advised to read up and take appropriate precautions.

The newsletter, edited by Steve Henning, may be found at <http://valleyforgears.org/files/news0516.pdf>. Readers without an internet connection at home might wheedle a wired friend into downloading the newsletter or could go to a local library and use a computer station to access it. Requests for paper copies of the tick article may be sent to Michael Mills, 632 Burnham Road, Philadelphia, Pa. 19119. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A souvenir of May



M. Mills photo

R. ‘Honeybrook’, hybridized and registered by Tom Ahern.

Cutting Exchange

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propagated by Steve Wheeler of State College (now pushing 25 feet tall) and the remarkable *Campylotropis macrocarpa* from Gettysburg Gardens, a shrub with an enviable floral display for five weeks at the end of summer. Karel Bernady has been invited to reprise his role as auctioneer.

Savvy rhododendron growers swarm the cuttings on offer, for rooting cuttings is the cheapest way to expand one’s collection, and it’s guaranteed that desirable rarities will be among the cuttings on offer. With luck we’ll again have Frank Brouse giving a how-to demonstration of rooting cuttings at home.

This year’s event will be even better than past years, since the hosts, Maris Ogg and Bob Smith, will be grilling burgers and hotdogs (including veggie burgers). Folks are asked to bring desserts and appetizers. Beverages will be provided.

The Ogg-Smith address is 507 E. Mill Road, Flourtown, PA 19031. This is two blocks from the Flourtown/Route 73/Church Road exit of the Route 309 expressway. (Go one block west on Church Road, turn left onto Mill Road. The driveway is on the right, directly opposite Sycamore Street. There are three residences on the driveway; 507 is the first, on the left. Limited parking along the driveway; best to park on Sycamore Street.)

If donating cuttings, please arrive around 1 p.m. Use plastic bags for each cultivar, clearly labeled. Three to four lepidote cuttings per bag, five to six lepidote or evergreen azalea cuttings per bag. Best to take cuttings early in the day, ideally from the lower portions of the shrub; if there has been a dry spell, water the night before. Add just a few drops of water to each bag. Transporting the bags in a cooler is also a good idea.

Burgers and hotdogs will be served at 1 p.m., cutting sale at 2, auction at 2:30, dessert at 3:30.

Planning for 2019

Convention committee ponders hotels

May of 2019 may seem far off – more than halfway through the next U.S. president's term in office in fact – but District Eight ARS members are definitely at work on the national convention to be held here then.

At the most recent meeting of the working committee, chaired by Steve Henning, three hotels were under consideration, the Desmond Hotel in Malvern, the Valley Forge Raddison (part of the casino complex), and the Wyndham in Lionville, which under a different name was site of the 2009 fall regional conference (you remember, the one when we shared the hotel with a large gathering of motorcyclists). Steve and Michael Martin Mills made a site visit to the three, and the task now is to get a bid from each that will work with the convention budget.

Four itineraries are being contemplated, with a mix of outstanding public gardens (Longwood, Mount Cuba, Chanticleer and others) and fine private gardens of members. There will probably be three days of tours to choose among. Evening speakers are being considered, and in addition to a plant sale (essential for attracting attendees and for the bottom line), a truss show and photo competition are envisioned.

Anyone interested in working on the planning committee is invited to contact Steve Henning (rhodyman@earthlink.net). Closer to the convention, many more members will be needed to carry out a variety of duties – tour docents, plant sales, goodie-bag stuffing, staffing the registration table and more. The fact is that some ARS conventions in recent years have struggled for success. The national organization does not underwrite conventions, which have to be self-supporting. Based on the 2009 fall regional convention and presuming a healthy level of member participation in pulling it off, this could be a very memorable convention. But it does require people to pitch in.

Calendar

Important: If you do not receive this newsletter electronically, you will not receive email reminders a week before events. Please use this calendar to mark your own.

August 9, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting. Home of Kim Kopple.

August 28, Sunday, 1 p.m. District 8 Plant Auction and Cutting Exchange. Home of Maris Ogg. See article on Page 1.

September 11, Sunday, 1:30 p.m. Plants for Members sale and monthly meetings of Greater Philadelphia and Valley Forge Chapters. Morris Arboretum.

September 11, Sunday, afternoon 2019 Convention Planning Committee, Morris Arboretum following Plants for Members sale.

September 30-October 2 ARS Fall Regional Conference, Newport, Oregon.

October 9, Sunday, 1:30 p.m. Greater Philadelphia Chapter monthly meeting, Morris Arboretum. Speaker, Jerry O'Dell, head of the rhododendron garden at Tyler Arboretum.

October 11, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting. Home of Kim Kopple.

November 13, Sunday Valley Forge Chapter Annual Banquet and Greater Philadelphia Chapter monthly meeting. St. David's Country Club.

December 13, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting. Home of Kim Kopple.

January 8, 2017, Sunday, 1:30 p.m. Greater Philadelphia Chapter monthly meeting, Morris Arboretum.

Two more memories of the recent spring



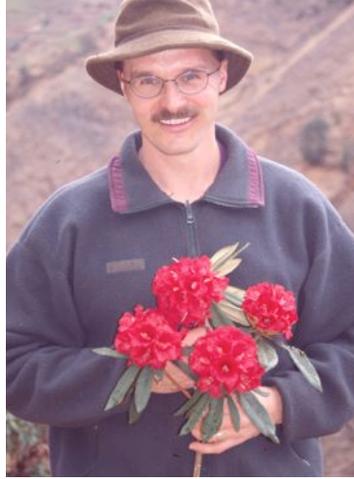
The unnamed "864-1" (left) was propagated for Plants for Members from a plant in the garden of Paul James. R. 'Beechwood Pink' (right) is a sister seedling of Gable's 'David Gable,' blooming a little later.

Well-traveled rhododendron expert joins board

Continuing the intermittent custom of holding the Annual Meeting and Picnic at a horticultural institution in the area, members gathered at Awbury Arboretum in the Germantown section of Philadelphia on June 19.

A pre-picnic tour of Victorian houses associated with Awbury was led by Mark Sellers and Najjia Mahmoud, who live in a fascinating 1922 house built for one of the descendants of the Cope family, progenitors of Awbury. Both the arboretum and the private homes adjoining it elicited comments of surprise and admiration for a little-known gem tucked into hyper-urban Germantown.

The principal action of the Annual Meeting, election of officers and board members, was with one exception a matter of reelection. Kimberly Kopple, Linda Hartnett, Myo Myint and Michael Martin Mills were re-elected to their posts of, respectively, president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. Kim's new term as president is for one-year, per the "Betts Layman amendment" in the bylaws; the others will serve two-year terms. Re-elected to a two-year term on



Ron Rabideau (with *R. arbo-
reum* ssp. *delavayi*).

the board was Gary Ammon.

Joining the board for the first time is Ron Rabideau, late of RareFind Nursery. Ron's knowledge of and devotion to the genus should be a significant addition to the leadership of the chapter. He is the only board member who has been on plant exploration trips in Asia and other climes. Bud Gressman cycled off the board, after several years of much driving.

Awbury is the fourth institution to host the picnic in recent years. Previously, Stenton in Germantown, Bartram's Garden and Chanticleer in Wayne were sites for the picnic.

One of Awbury's current endeavors is "The Country in the City," in which a fascinating 1903 series of articles about plants growing in Germantown is republished weekly as a blog. The articles were written by one Edwin Jellett, whose plant knowledge was encyclopedic, and

whose writing style gives a flavor of horticulture and life in Edwardian Philadelphia.

Anyone may subscribe to the series for free. Start by going to <http://awbury.org/blog-post/july-3-1903/>.