

# GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODO GRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society : : : : : Summer 2018

## Bronze Medal for Maris Ogg

Her 'thoroughness, expertise and a beaming smile' are cited

A highlight of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter's April 14 banquet was the presentation of the ARS Bronze Medal to Maris Ogg.

As is de rigueur in these matters, the presentation was a surprise to both the banquet attendees and the honoree herself. In fact, she had to be coaxed away from managing the drinks and book able to come back into the dining room to hear the citation.

In the ARS, the Silver and Gold Medals are the province of the national honors committee. The Bronze Medal is the chapter-level top recognition of a member's outstanding service to the organization, and, given that Maris is a board member, there was an email and phone process afoot among all the remaining board members. Needless to say, it was a unanimous decision by those board members to honor Maris.

In the 61-year history of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, 29 people have received the Bronze Medal. A third of them



Michael Mills Photo

**Chapter President Craig Conover reading the Bronze Medal citation for Maris Ogg at the annual banquet.**

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## Our man in Germany

A report from the ARS convention

**By Karel F. Bernady**

The 2018 ARS Annual Meeting was held in Bremen, Germany, as a joint activity with the German Rhododendron Society. I attended this spectacular event and did some touring for a few days



Don Hyatt Photo

**The author with 'Herzblut' at the Hachmann garden.**

beforehand. The gardens and people did not disappoint. The weather, however, was very warm, dry, bright and sunny for a couple of weeks prior to arrival, which shortened and compressed the bloom period.

Big and beautiful is a theme for any trip to this area. The Rhododendron Park Bremen exhibits massive plantings of ironclad rhododendrons installed in the mid-1930s. They reach 25 feet in height. These are impressive mounds to walk by, with flowers from top to ground. Similar plantings were found at Bruns Nursery and at Bremer Bürgerpark, a privately funded park begun in 1866 and located in the center of Bremen.

Big also includes plants for sale for instant landscaping. Bruns Nursery, the largest in Europe, offers huge plants and trees in many shapes and forms. For large rhododendrons the Van den Berk Nursery is the vendor of choice.

Big encyclopedic collections of rhododendrons are found at Rhododendron Park Bremen, Bruns Nursery, and Park de Gärten, all on tour. These are in woodland settings and sometimes planted alphabetically, to the chagrin of some.

A trip to Hachmann's Nursery north of Hamburg produced a few surprises. Exploring the display garden we came across a 6-foot-tall plant of Joe Minahan's hybrid 'John Paul II'. It was in full bloom as a wonderfully successful grafted plant. In the sales area Bill Rhein's hybrid 'Maroon Sappho' was offered at 25 euros (almost \$30) for a 24-inch plant. An exciting new hybrid of Holger Hachmann, 'Blueberry Kiss', was on display;

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Truss Show: Michael Martin Mills; Philadelphia Flower Show: 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.GPChapterARS.org); click on “Join us.”

## Bronze Medal

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are still with us: Marshall “Bud” Gressman (1993), Marilyn Gressman (1993), Michael Martin Mills (1999), Cathy Keim (2004), Tom Lloyd (2004), Pauline Raughley (2004), Karel F. Bernady (2006), Linda Hartnett (2008), Myo Myint (2011), Maris Ogg (2018).

Here is the text of this year’s citation: “The Bronze Medal is awarded to Maris Ogg for outstanding service. When this dynamo takes up an endeavor, it is invariably accomplished with finesse, speed, thoroughness, expertise, and a beaming smile. Her activities for this chapter have been numerous and wide-ranging: propagation, energetic plant sale duty, key board member, hands-on Flower Show exhibit work, membership growth, and sharing her diversely curated shade garden for ARS events. Her tenure as president was one of distinct clarity and efficiency. If anyone can cut to the chase, it is Maris Ogg, and the Greater Philadelphia Chapter is indebted to her for doing so on our behalf.”

## Truss show winners

### Thomsons repeat for Best in Show

A brilliant yellow-orange deciduous azalea spray took the John Wister Best in Show Trophy at the May 12 cut-flower competition at Morris Arboretum: ‘Kennell’s Gold’, entered by Susan and Marc Thomson. It was also winner of the Walter Kern Trophy for Best Deciduous Azalea. The Thomsons won Best in Show at the previous Greater Philadelphia competition.

A total of 136 entries were received for this year’s truss show, as ARS traditionalists will always call the competition (that name does have a tendency to make non-rhodo people crack up). From them, the judges winnowed everything down to six trophy-worthy entries.

In addition to the double-trophy ‘Kennell’s Gold’, these were the honors:

Best Rhododendron Hybrid, Ross B. Davis Jr. Trophy: ‘Solidarity’, Bud and Marilyn Gressman.

Best Evergreen Azalea, Maxine C. West Trophy: ‘Salmon Pincushion’, Michael Martin Mills.

Best New Hybrid, Joseph J. Becales Hybridizers Cup: ‘Scintillation’ X ‘John Paul II’, Joseph Minahan.

Best Species, Karel F. Bernady Trophy: *R. austrinum*, Michael Martin Mills.

Best Foliage, Dan and Betts Layman Trophy: ‘John Paul II’ X ‘Harold Amateis’, Joseph Minahan.

Sweepstakes, Judi Meade Trophy for Most Points, Michael Martin Mills.

The Best Species award was previously the Francis Sholomskas Trophy, but it has been retired, and the board of directors – minus one person and operating under the radar screen – decided to recognize Karel Bernady in inaugurating the new species trophy. In addition to his abundant service to the chapter and the national ARS, Karel is one of the best when it comes to the names and nuances of North American species rhododendrons. Felicitously, the first winner of the Bernady Trophy was a native American, *R. austrinum*, the Florida azalea.

An interesting factoid is that the winner of the Becales Hybridizers Cup, Joe Minahan’s ‘Scintillation’ X ‘John Paul II’, is the sixth sister seedling of a 1989 cross to win the award, the first dating to 1998.

Judges for the show were Norman Beaudry, Kimberly Kopple, Adam Levine, Ron Rabideau, Harold Sweetman, and Joan Warren. Kim and Adam were first-time judges. He is the editor of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s *Grow* magazine. Kim, former chapter president, is akin to the longtime nurse who knows as much as the doctor, as she has clerked for the truss show for many years, absorbing the vocabulary and techniques of numerous judges through the years.

This was the tenth year of the joint Greater Philadelphia-Valley Forge competition. It was the first year with heightened coordination; earlier in the year, Joan Warren and Michael Mills merged and adjusted the entry sections and the catalogue of previous entries to eliminate discrepancies.

Next year’s truss show will be one of those periodic special versions. It will be part of the national convention in Malvern, with the possibility of entries from all over the country.

# Picnicking together

## Two chapters, one genus

Continuing their efforts to diminish duplication and enhance efficiency, the Valley Forge and Greater Philadelphia Chapters held a joint picnic with annual meetings on June 17. The affair took place at the Henry Botanic Garden in Gladwyne.

Betts Layman's declaration of many years ago – "It never rains on the rhododendron picnic" – held true once again, with a sunny, warm day. Both chapters held elections to fill board positions that were expiring. In each case, no sooner had the board's slate been announced than someone offered a motion that nominations be closed. To no one's surprise, those motions carried without dissent, and each chapter's slate was declared elected.

For Greater Philadelphia, it was a matter of re-election: for all five positions in the biennial rotation, the incumbents were rewarded with another two-year term. They are Myo Myint, treasurer; Michael Martin Mills, secretary (i.e., newsletter editor); Gary Ammon, Linda Hartnett, and Maris Ogg, directors. (To adhere to the bylaws' stipulations about term limits, the board at its regular bimonthly board meeting in June voted, without dissent, to waive the limit for Gary, Linda, and Maris.)

Valley Forge elected Perc Moser and Kathy Woehl to the board, and officers Alice Horton (vice president), Bob Smetana (treasurer), and Joan Warren (secretary).

The great majority of attendees were visiting the Henry garden for the first time. Susan Treadway, president of the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research and a granddaughter of founder Mary Gibson Henry, made brief comments about the history and status of the foundation and garden. She also revealed that Mary Henry's hand-written book on native American rhododendrons is in the process of transcription and editing for publication. Ms. Treadway described her grandmother as a latter-day John Bartram, clambering through the mountains of the southeastern United States looking for new-to-science deciduous azalea species or variants of known species. "She was definitely splitter," Susan told the RhodoGravure.\* The RhodoGravure hopes to publish an excerpt of the Henry rhododendron book in a future issue.

ARS members were encouraged to become members of the foundation to help expand its funding base. In appreciation of being hosted at the Henry garden, the RhodoGravure is happy to endorse such membership. For individuals, an annual membership is \$50; dual membership is \$75. Checks should be made payable to and mailed to Henry Foundation for Botanical Research, 801 Stony Lane, Gladwyne, Pa. 19035.

\* "Splitter." This word, and its counterpoint, "lumper," are the casual, and sometimes snarky, sobriquets for plant people with pronounced opinions on taxonomic arcana. Bluntly stated, splitters think lots of variants should be elevated to subspecies or species status – or even a new genus. Lumpers think anomalies are just that and that many separate subspecies or species are really the same thing. The lumpers prevailed in getting *R. yakushimanum* and *metternichii* lumped in with *degronianum*; the splitters managed to get *R. eastmanii* split off from *arborescens*.

# 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 14, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.** Board of Directors meeting. Home of Craig Conover.

**August 19, Sunday, 1 p.m.** District 8 Cutting Exchange and Plant Auction. Sherwood's Forest Nursery, 27 Camp Road, Westtown, PA 19362

**September 16, Sunday, 1:30 p.m.** Chapter meeting: Plants for Members sale. Morris Arboretum.

**October 9, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.** Board of Directors meeting. Home of Craig Conover.

**October 14, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. NOTE TIME!** ARS Chapter meeting with potluck brunch. Morris Arboretum.

**October 18, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.** Valley Forge Chapter meeting. Speaker: Cricket Brien of Tyler Arboretum. Jenkins Arboretum.

**October 19-20** ARS Eastern Fall Conference, Chattanooga, Tenn.

**November 3-6** New Zealand Rhododendron Association annual conference, Nelson, South Island, New Zealand.

**November 11, Sunday, 2 p.m.** Valley Forge Chapter Annual Banquet/Greater Philadelphia meeting. St. David's Country Club.

**May 16-19, 2019** ARS Annual Convention, Desmond Hotel, Malvern, Pa.

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## Buying twice, eating twice

As the calendar above notes, ARS members (and any friends being coaxed into our orbit) have two special plant-acquisition opportunities coming up. The August 19 Cutting Exchange and Auction can yield choice cultivars, and not just of rhododendrons. Folks always hope John Bartlett of Gettysburg Gardens attends with his rarities. Members are also encouraged to donate plants for the auction, which will feature Karel Bernady reprising his role as auctioneer. Gardeners who do things from scratch can get fresh cuttings to root at home.

Four weeks later the Plants for Members sale of rooted cuttings and grafted rhododendrons will have an amazing selection of hard-to-find cultivars. Talk about affordable! No increase in prices from last year.

Hungry? Back by popular demand will be the October Brunch meeting at Morris Arboretum on the 14th. (The speaker for that meeting was being finalized at press time.) And four weeks after that is the Valley Forge luncheon banquet, with Peter Zale of Longwood Gardens giving a presentation.

Reminder notices will be sent for all of these activities.

# Report from Germany

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the flowers have bluish purple edges and large dark purple blotches. Hachmann's Nursery never ceases to please the visitor.

The Schröder Nursery was on tour the last day of the conference. Heat took its toll of the blooms as many of the varieties held browned flowers. The great visual effect of large blocks of blooming rhododendrons was lost. The nursery still produces 1.5 million grafted plants per year. The growing strength of the Polish economy has caused wages to soar making it more expensive to produce grafted plants in Poland. Timo Schröder is considering bring all production of grafted plants back to Germany. The nursery continues to use 'Cunningham's White' as understock for 80 percent of the grafts. Inkarho® understock is used in the remaining 20 percent.

One disturbing note is that Germany wants to build a new *autobahn* (highway) through the Schröder production fields. Change keeps happening.

One of two presentations given by Kenneth Cox was a wonderful talk titled "Rhododendron in Art, Music and Daily Life." It was light, amusing, and thoroughly informative. Rhododendrons on coins, stamps, wallpaper, clothing, and even tattoos were shown. In an example of music Kenneth lead the audience in responding on cue to the French humorist Sim (Simon Jacques Eugène Berruyer) in a video of "J'aime pas les Rhododendrons"

("I Do Not Like rhododendrons"; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjWwzFzvh5k>).

The quadrennial rhododendron show "Rhodo 2018" in Westerstede introduced 'Bloombux', a cultivar of *R. micranthum* that has the qualities and appearance of boxwood. The plant can tolerate trimming into shape or into a low hedge. It grows in normal garden soils and has soft pink flowers in June.

One side-trip took us to a 1,200-year-old oak, the Friederikeneiche, in Hasbruch, near Oldenburg. This is the oldest living oak in Lower Saxony.

Overall, the annual meeting was well planned and executed. I thank the organizers for their great work and success.

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*For electronic readers: more photos, starting on Page 5.*

## *From little cuttings . . .*

Over the course of four spring days, 40 trays of rooted cutting and 639 grafted propagations were transplanted into pots for growing on and sales.

Eleven members did the honors (an asterisk indicates multiple days): Stuart Brooks\*, Bud Gressman\*, Linda Hartnett\*, Tom Lloyd, Michael Mills, Perc Moser\*, Myo Myint\*, Maris Ogg, Steve Torongo\*, Joan Warren and Karel Bernady\*.

Thanks to all potter-uppers.

# Rhodo-PhotoGravure

For electronic partakers of the newsletter



*Homage  
to deadheaders*

Michael Mills Photo

*Views from  
the ARS  
meeting and  
tours in  
Germany*

**All photos by Karel F.  
Bernady unless noted  
otherwise**



**Above:**  
At Bruns Nursery,  
said to be the largest  
in Europe.

**Left:**  
'Torero' at Van den  
Berk Nursery.



**Left:**

Don Hyatt with 'John Paul II' in the Hachmann display garden.

**Below left:**

'Blueberry Kiss', new from Hachmann.

**Below:**

'Scintillation' responding to unseasonable heat.

**Bottom:**

Big plants ready to be shipped from Van den Berk.





**Left:**

Some conventiongoers were temporarily stranded on high when the viewing lift malfunctioned at Van den Berk.

**Below:**

Karel Bernady in the Hachmann garden, examining 'Yellow Pom-pom'; left foreground plant was tagged 'Happiness'.



Don Hyatt Photo