



Web Site: <http://ValleyForgeARS.org>

## **NEWSLETTER**

**January/February/March 2012**

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### ***Calendar of Events in 2012***

**Jan. 15 (Sunday), 2 p.m.:** Don Hyatt: *America's Treasure, Our Native Azaleas*

**Feb. 19 (Sunday), 2 p.m.:** Bob Stamper, Michael Mills, Karel Bernady: *Azaleas in Japan*,  
at Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House, Lionville

**Mar. 15 (Thursday), 7:30 p.m.:** Kay and Herb John, Point Phillip Nursery, *Companion  
Plants for Rhododendrons*

Apr. 19 (Thursday), 7:30 p.m.: Randy Kobetich on Magnolias

May 4-6 (Fri-Sun): PLANT SALE at **Jenkins Arboretum**

May 4-7 (Fri-Mon): Joint convention of ARS/Azalea Society of America in Asheville, N.C.

May 12 (Saturday): Joint Greater Philadelphia/Valley Forge Flower Show at **Morris Arboretum**

June 24 (Sunday): Annual Chapter Meeting and Picnic

Aug. 19 (Sunday): Valley Forge-organized District 8 Cuttings Exchange and Auction

Sep. 20 (Thursday): Plants-for-Members Sale (John Doppel Plants)

**Unless specified otherwise, meetings and events will be held at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon**

***A Happy and Healthy New Year!***

### ***President's Message***

Our fall was one for the record books. It started off very dry early in summer. Then, in late summer, it became extremely wet. On August 23, we had one of the strongest earthquakes ever on the East Coast, shutting down some power plants. Soon after, hurricane Irene brought record-setting rains. Then on October 29, we had a foot of wet snow in some areas, while leaves were still on many deciduous trees, which brought down limbs and trees everywhere. Rains and snow knocked out electric power in areas throughout the region, for over a week in some cases.

This extreme weather didn't prevent an active fall schedule. In September, Bob Smetana organized our Plants-for-Members sale, and Jenkins Arboretum's Maggie Knapp demonstrated the basics of pruning. In October, Lehigh Valley Chapter's Tom Ahern had a beautiful program on his two passions, nature photography and rhododendron hybridizing. In November, our banquet speaker, Doug Jolley from West Virginia, gave a beautiful program on his passion, photographing native orchids and native ericaceous plants. Thanks to Kathy Woehl for an excellent job making all of the arrangements for the banquet.

I look forward to seeing all of you and encourage you to visit our chapter's website (**see above**)

**Steve Henning** (rhodyman@earthlink.net)

## *Upcoming Programs*

**January 15 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. at Jenkins Arboretum**

**Don Hyatt: “America’s Treasure, Our Native Azaleas**

Nowhere in the world will you find deciduous azaleas that rival our American natives. These 17 species offer colors and fragrances that are almost beyond description. Don Hyatt, foremost expert on these beautiful rhododendrons, will show you the magnificent areas where they grow in the wild. Through his excellent presentation and photography, he will share with you why you should bring the wonderful world of deciduous azaleas into your garden. You will enjoy Don’s enthusiasm and energy while he expands your knowledge of a subject that is so dear to his heart.

**Refreshments:** Those whose names start with letters P to Y are asked to please bring fingerfood treats.

**February 19 (Sunday), 2:00 p.m. at Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House, Lionville**

**Karel Bernady, Michael Martin Mills, Bob Stamper  
"Travels of Rhododendron and Azalea Lovers in Japan"**

Karel, Michael, and Bob will treat us to the best of their recent, but separate, trips to Japan. Most of us know all three speakers. Each is an expert in his own right. Together, they encompass a very wide range of interests and knowledge. This program should be both entertaining and informative.

**Refreshments** will be provided by the two chapters

**Directions to Uwchlan Quaker Meeting House, 5 N. Village Ave., Exton, PA 19341.**

**From Exton Mall** at Rt. 100 and Lincoln Highway: Go north on Rt. 100 for 2.9 miles, turn left on Rt. 113, Uwchlan Ave. and go 0.4 miles, turn right onto Eagleview Blvd. (at 2nd light from Rte. 100), make a right and then another right at Dowlin Forge Rd. (2nd light from Rte. 113), and come in to the Meeting House.

**From Pennsylvania Turnpike** Exit 312 at Rt. 100: Go south on Rt. 100 for 1 mile, turn right onto Rt. 113, Uwchlan Ave. and go for 0.4 miles, then turn right onto Eagleview Blvd. (2nd light from Rte. 100), make a right and then another right at Dowlin Forge Rd. (the 2nd light from Rte. 113, and come in to the Meeting House.

**March 15 (Thursday), 7:30 p.m. at Jenkins Arboretum**

**Kay and Herb Johns of Point Phillip Perennials, Danielsville, PA  
"Companion Plants for Rhododendron"**

This informative and beautifully illustrated presentation will take a look at plants that function well in the same conditions as rhododendrons, that can be used to provide shade for rhododendrons, can be intermingled with them, and can be planted under and around them. Kay will speak about perennials, and Herb will speak about woody plants.

**Refreshments:** Those whose names start with letters A to J are asked to please bring fingerfood treats.

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### **Welcome to our newest member:**

Gerald O'Dell, 1485 Waterford Ave, Phoenixville, PA 15460, cell 610/608-2018, westdell9@verizon.net

### **Reminder: Membership Dues for 2011-2012**

If you have not paid yet your dues, please do so ASAP by sending your check, payable to Valley Forge (credit card payment is only for international members), to our Treasurer, Chris Smetana, 14 Northwoods Rd, Radnor, PA 19087 .

### **Saving Storm-Damaged Woody Plants**

Most of us have cleaned up the broken limbs and downed trees. But we still have damaged branches and stubs where branches broke off. Normally, fall and winter pruning is not advised because it can delay plants going dormant. But if there is already a break, clean it by pruning away the damaged area now. Then do general pruning of healthy parts next spring before new growth starts.

Many rhododendrons that were crushed by fallen tree limbs have sprung back. However, broken branches will not recover and must be cut back. Also, check if the weight of snow and downed limbs uprooted any woody plants. If so, see if the plant can be uprighted and saved. If one-half to one-third of the original root system is still in the soil, with the remaining exposed roots compact and undisturbed, it might be possible to upright the plant and brace it with three or more lines to stakes.

Many studies have found that wound dressings are not necessary and can be harmful. However, if you have a crack that seems minor and you want to prevent it from getting worse, use grafting wax to facilitate mending of the crack and support the branch to prevent the crack from becoming worse.

### **Are You Going Peat-Less?**

by Joan Warren

The use of peat has fostered many debates, but most gardeners still use peat or peat-based mixtures. Peat bogs lock up carbon, and each time a peat bog is harvested, carbon dioxide is released--a few acres of bog can release thousands of tons of carbon a year. The UK was targeted to be 90% peat-free by 2010, and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England, has been peat-free for some years now and had successes with peat-free mixes.

This country imports most of its peat from Canada, whereas a small amount comes from Michigan. Peat-free alternatives are available and have been displayed at the Philadelphia Flower Show, where Coir products, eco-friendly peat alternatives made from compressed coconut fiber were promoted. So, go "Green" and cut down on the use of peat. It will be healthier for you, who shouldn't be inhaling the dust from it anyway.

### **Officers**

President: Steve Henning	610/987-6184	rhodymn@earthlink.net
Vice President: Bob Smetana	610/688-5249	vfarsmetana@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Chris Smetana	610/688-5249	cpsmetana@yahoo.com
Secretary: Joan Warren	610/913-0005	srwjmw@dejazzd.com
<b>Directors:</b>		
Ellin Hlebik ('09-'12)	610/584-9764	leftwall@yahoo.com
Kathy Woehl ('09-'12)	610/644-1337	msmith5242@comcast.net
Alice Horton ('10-'13)	610/430-0196	alichelk@msn.com
Darlene Henning ('10-'13)	610/987-6184	mdhenning@earthlink.net
Debby Schmidt (11-'14)*	610/388-8573	debbyeschmidt@comcast.net
John Ryan (11-'14)	610/971-2368	ryanjkjke@comcast.net
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b> Eva Jackson	215/402-8649	noelevajackson@comcast.net
<b>Webmaster:</b> Jim Willhite	484-318-7019	jwillhite@comcast.net

\*Debby, who was a very active member in the Eighties, before moving out of the area, has returned and recently was invited to join the Board. Welcome!

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**Urgent Call for Volunteers for 2012 Philadelphia Flower Show, March 3 -11**

Linda Hartnett (215/233-0458) <lindahartnett@gmail.com>, president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, would appreciate hearing from volunteers who are willing to help with setting up the show entry, hosting the exhibit for a few hours (morning, afternoon, or evening), and/or disassembling the exhibit at the end of the show. Please contact Linda ASAP for scheduling purposes. This is a unique opportunity to see the show (free passes are provided to volunteers).

**Jenkins Arboretum Gift Shop**

At any time of the year, consider shopping here for gardening friends. In addition to greeting cards and gardening and related books, the shop has some very unique gifts.

If you receive the **newsletter** by the **USPS** rather than email, even though you have e-mail, we may not have your correct e-mail address on file. Please inform Steve Henning of any changes ([rhodyman@earthlink.net](mailto:rhodyman@earthlink.net)) and help us keep the chapter's expenses down.

**American Rhododendron Society  
Valley Forge Chapter  
P.O. Box 715  
Southeastern, PA 19399-0715**

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**



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