



'Valley Forge'

The American Rhododendron Society

VALLEY FORGE CHAPTER

P.O. Box 715 Southeastern, PA 19399-0715

NEWSLETTER

January-February-March 2006

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum

Calendar at a Glance

January. 15 (Sunday)

2 p.m.

Steve Henning:

“2005 ARS Convention
and Gardens in Victoria”

February 19 (Sunday)

2 p.m.

Richard W. Lighty:

“Native Deciduous
Rhododendrons and Their
Friends”

March 16 (Thursday)

7.30 p.m.

Dale Hendricks:

“Perennials for the Local
Landscape”

Future Events:

February 5-12:

Philadelphia Flower Show at Philadelphia Convention Center

May 5-7:

Chapter Plant Sale

May 12-15:

National Convention in Washington, D.C.

June 25:

Picnic and Annual Meeting with Election of Officers

Date TBD

Cuttings Exchange and Plant Auction

October

Pacific Region Intern. Rhodo. Conf. In Burnie, Tasmania, Australia

President's Message

Last week was leaf gathering and getting the banquet plants into the ground. This week, it is shoveling snow. From fall to winter in a snap!

Everyone enjoyed a delightful annual banquet in Exton. We had a good turnout, and I am sure all who attended will agree that Don Hyatt gave a great presentation. Penny and Tony D'Alessandro and Dennis MacMullin did a fine job organizing the event.

We have many activities scheduled for the winter months. At the January meeting, our own Steve Henning will present slides and commentary from the 2005 Victoria Convention. The February joint meeting with the Philadelphia Chapter will feature Dick Lighty at the Uwchlan Meeting House. Our March meeting will feature Dale Hendricks of North Creek Nursery. Please see inside this newsletter for details. You can also visit our website www.valleyforgears.org for details and directions.

The new District 8 Director and Alternate are Karel Bernady of the Philadelphia Chapter and Harold Sweetman from our chapter. Please congratulate each as you see them. I wish all of you a wonderful Holiday Season and a bountiful 2006.

Bob Smetana—vfarssmetana@yahoo.com

January 15 (Sunday), 2 p.m.

Steve Henning

**“Trip to 2005 ARS Convention
and Victoria and Vancouver Island Gardens”**

Steve will take us on a tour of the many private gardens that were open to conventioners and to some famous public gardens on the Island, such as the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific Garden, the Government House Garden, Butchart Gardens, Finnerty Gardens, and Milner Gardens. In addition to garden photos, Steve will show photos of trusses of the many species and hybrid rhododendrons grown in the Victoria area and of spectacular scenery on Vancouver Island, such as Victoria Harbor, bald eagles, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Quw’utsan Cultural Center.

This is the next best thing to having been there. Steve has been taking rhododendron pictures for many years and now is using a digital camera, which he claims allows the photographer to compensate for color problems due to different kinds of lighting.

Refreshments for January meeting:

Members whose last names start with the letters **P to Z** are asked to bring fingerfood desserts. Beverages will be provided.
(see also Volunteer Opportunities)

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

Richard W. Lighty

**“Native Deciduous Rhododendrons and Their
Friends”**

This well-known horticulturist, who founded and retired from Mt. Cuba Center for the Study of Piedmont Flora in Greenville, DE, gardens, was previously associated with Longwood Gardens for many years. He has lived in Kenneth Square for 46 years, where he gardens with his wife, Sally, on seven acres of land. Having named and introduced more than 30 species and cultivars and explored for plants in many parts of the world, he has served on the Board of many plant-related organizations and been the recipient of a number of prestigious awards.

Meeting is held jointly with Phila. Chapter.

For this joint meeting, **refreshments** (wine, soft drinks, hors d’oeuvres), are provided by the two chapters; in charge is Anne, who would appreciate help. Guests are welcome.

For Directions, see insert.

March 12 (Thursday), 7:30 p.m.

Dale Hendricks

North Creek Nursery

“Perennials for the Local Landscape”

Dale, who has received an award from the American Horticultural Society for introducing many new varieties, will show and discuss perennials that are ideal companion plants for rhododendrons and azaleas.

Refreshments for March meeting: Members whose last names start with letters **A to J**.

**October 2006 Pacific Region International
Rhododendron Conference in Australia**

If you are interested in attending this conference, starting October 20, please go to the website: www.jobfuturestas.com/rhodoconf2006 for details.

New Members:

We welcome the following new members:
Laura Levy (primary member)

Maria Sanibaldi/Jerry Sowa (associate members—primary members: Princeton Ch.)

Darnell Phillips,

If you live near a new member, please call, welcome, and invite him/her to come along with you to a meeting.

Membership Renewal--Reminder:

The deadline for membership renewal was December 1. If you misplaced your renewal envelope, simply send your check, payable to Valley Forge Chapter ARS, to treasurer **Chris Smetana**, 14 Northwoods Rd, Radnor, PA 19087 **ASAP:** \$35/individual, \$40/couple or family, or \$8 Associate (primary affiliation with another chapter required). If you still wish to receive the Winter issue of the ARS Journal, add a \$3 late charge to the dues amount.

Also, please give us your e-mail address so we can check it against our records, to communicate with you between newsletters or as necessary.

E-mail address changes:

Bill and Ellen Steele: wfsteele@verizon.net

Tom Ahern: tcahern@verizon.net

Anne/Win Howe: wahowe@verizon.net

An up-to-date **Member Directory** will be sent to you ASAP.

Volunteer Opportunities:

For the chapter to run smoothly, we still need a **First V.P.**, a **Second V.P.**, and a **Corresponding Secretary**. Except in the summer months, Board meetings are held usually on the first Tuesday of the month, starting at 7.30 p.m. and usually not lasting more than 2 hours.

Also needed are a **Membership Chair**; **Greeters** who make new members and visitors feel welcome at meetings; **Hosts and Hostesses** who set up the refreshment table at monthly meetings; a **Refreshment Coordinator**; and a **Truss Show Chair**.

If you are willing to fill or **share** any one of these volunteer positions, or have other skills to offer, please call **President Bob Smetana**, who will be happy to hear from you. He also will appreciate any suggestions.

Metal Plant Labels

The plant labelling machine, donated by the Chapter to Jenkins Arboretum a number of years ago, is again available to us for making permanent metal labels during January and February. Eligible are members in good standing, i.e., members who are up to date in their dues. Priority is given to members who help with the plant sale and other functions. The cost for up to 96 permanent labels/member or family is **\$20**. This amount will be given to the Arboretum for providing the material. The labelling information must be submitted first in paper draft form and then in diskette or CD form. For detailed instructions, please contact Wenner Smith or Eva Jackson.

“AND DIDN’T IT RAIN.....”

by Reed Warren

Well, the rain came with a vengeance to the Delaware Valley [earlier last fall], and not a moment too soon. We had lost some plants to the drought; with a well, we had to limit our watering. After the rain (11.7 inches on our neighbor’s professional rain gauge), everything perked up overnight, and we heaved a sign of relief.

When watering prior to the drought, sometimes just getting the leaves wet with a hose seemed to do the trick for a few days. After the rain, I discovered something that baffled me. Under a thin layer of leaves in what we describe as our dry upland woods, the lower layer of leaves and the soil around many of the rhodies were bone-dry! Bone-dry after over 11 inches of rain! To be sure, rhodies usually have shallow root systems close to the top of the soil, but still, just a thin layer of leaves down the roots had not as yet received any moisture. I assume that there will be some seeping down of the water over the next week or so and that the damp and rain of the week following the storm will help. But, there is no doubt that the rivulets that ran through our property carried a lot of water to the storm sewers and onto the adjoining roads.

There’s a lesson for growers here—namely, that even when we think that watering our plants should do the trick, those plants that are very stressed won’t survive, if the water does not get down to their roots. This is true for plants in the ground as well as for plants that are still in pots. And, in our situation, there are giant tulip poplars and red oak vying for the water also.

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Valley Forge Chapter
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Southeastern, PA 19399-0715**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL



NEWSLETTER

January/February/March 2006

Board members:

President:	Bob Smetana	('07)	
First Vice President	Vacancy	Second Vice President:	Vacancy
Treasurer:	Chris Smetana	('06)	
Rec. Secretary	Bill Dennis	('07)	
Corr. Secretary	Vacancy		
NL Editor	Eva Jackson	('07)	

Directors (6):

Joe Bellanca	('06)
Joan Warren	('06)
Steve/Darlene Henning	('07)
James Willhite	('08)
John Edinger	('08)

You are encouraged to send news and other contributions to the Newsletter Editor:

Eva Jackson, e-mail: noeleva_jackson@juno.com

ARS (national) Web Site <http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html>

Valley Forge Chapter Web Site: <http://valleyforgears.org>