



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

Web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER

August/September 2012

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum

Calendar at a Glance

August 19 (Sunday)	1:30 pm Cuttings Exchange/Auction at Debby Schmidt's (Chadds Ford)
September 20 (Thur.)	6:30 pm, Plants for Members featuring John Doppel hybrids. 7:30 pm, Rick Colbert, Tyler's "John C. Wister Rhododendron Garden"
October 18 (Thur.)	7:30 pm, Joe Minahan, "Rhododendrons of Central Pennsylvania"
November 11 (Sun.)	2:00 pm, Annual Banquet at St. Davids, Program: "Chanticleer Gardens"

President's Message

Many meaningful events have occurred in the last few months. The chapter had a successful plant sale, many chapter members participated in the GPARS and VFARS joint cut flower competition, and we had a great turnout for the chapter picnic. Steve Henning was distinguished at the national meeting in May with the Silver Award for his exceptional work promoting the "Save the Azaleas" campaign.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Aug 19 District 8 Cutting Exchange and plant auction hosted by Debbie Schmidt. Members are encouraged to donate rhodys, azaleas, and companion plants for this worthwhile fundraiser that benefits the Endowment Fund and Species Foundation. Details appear nearby.

Our first chapter meeting of the 2012-13 year will start an hour early (6:30) on September 20 at Jenkins with rooted cuttings from John Doppel's gardens featured in our Plant for Members (P4M) sale. John's hybrids are a must for every garden. We only try to cover our costs on this event so they are a real bargain. John will be on hand to answer any questions. The chapter meeting will commence at 7:30 with Rick Colbert of Tyler Arboretum as our speaker.

I'm looking forward to a great year and continued growth of our programs.

Regards,

Bob Smetana (610) 688-5249, vfarssmetana@yahoo.com

Chapter's web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

Members of ALL area chapters are invited to the
**RHODODENDRON & AZALEA CUTTINGS EXCHANGE
AND PLANT AUCTION**

(Auctioneer: Karel Bernady)
at Debby Schmidt's, 51 Blue Stone Drive
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
(610) 388-8573

Sunday, August 19, starting at 1:30 p.m., rain or shine

Proceeds benefit the ARS Endowment Fund and the Research Foundation

1:30 pm: Staging of cuttings.

Cut 3 or 4 large-leaf (elepidote) or 4-6 small-leaf (lepidote) cuttings, preferably early in the morning and low on the plants. Place in a plastic bag with a few drops of water. Named varieties only, please! Please label the bags with a waterproof marker or pencil and add, if possible, info about characteristics or parentage.

2:00 pm: Cuttings exchange/sale.

Cuttings are 25 cents a bag for everyone and are an easy and inexpensive way to increase one's collection of azaleas and rhododendrons (see **propagation**).

2:30 pm: Plant Auction: Karel Bernady

Please **donate rhodies and azaleas**, as well as other garden-worthy plants that you feel others would like.

It will help the auctioneer and the potential bidder if you write a brief description of a plant or plants that you donate for auction. Having such info will make for lively bidding, especially for one-of-a-kind or special plants.

3:00 pm: Propagation.

Frank Brouse will expertly demonstrate how to propagate from cuttings.

About 3:30 pm: Dessert.

Please bring your favorite **fingerfood** dessert. (You also may bring a box lunch and eat it any time.)

Beverages will be provided.

Please bring your own chair(s).

If possible, **RSVP to Ellin Hlebik by 8/11** or contact her for questions at 610/584-9764 or leftwall@yahoo.com

Here are the directions to the Schmidt's:

Going south from the Chadds Ford Post Office on Route 1.

Go west 1.9 miles and turn right on Chandler Rd.

[1st street after stop light at Pennsbury Way and Ponds Edge Dr.]

Go 0.6 mi & take the 3rd right on Fox Run Dr.

Go 0.2 mi and turn left on Blue Stone Dr.

Go 0.1 mi to "51 Blue Stone Dr." on left.

Cape with pinkish-tan shutters.

Going north from Longwood Gardens on Route 1.

Go east 2.5 miles and turn left on Chandler Rd. [just before stop light]

Go 0.6 mi & take the 3rd right on Fox Run Dr.

Go 0.2 mi and turn left on Blue Stone Dr.

Go 0.1 mi to "51 Blue Stone Dr." on left.

Cape with pinkish-tan shutters.

Lots of on-street parking.

Also see our website:

www.ValleyForgeARS.org

On Sep. 20 (Thursday), P4M at 6:30 pm and Program at 7:30 pm:

Plants for Members (P4M): “John Doppel Hybrid Rhododendrons”

We will have a selection of rooted cuttings of John Doppel’s hybrid rhododendrons available to members at very reasonable prices. The photo below illustrates the plants we expect to have available. These are outstanding plants that John has hybridized in Berks County, near Kutztown, PA. He grows his plants in his yard, which was an open field near the top of a hill and still doesn’t have much shade or wind protection, so they are tough varieties. The ones he has named are the best of the best. This is a unique opportunity.



Rick Colbert: "The John C. Wister Rhododendron Garden"

At 7:30 pm, following the P4M sale, Rick Colbert, Executive Director of Tyler Arboretum, will speak on "**The John C. Wister Rhododendron Garden**" at Tyler Arboretum.

Rick Colbert graduated from the University of Delaware with his bachelor’s degree in plant science in 1978. He became Executive Director of the John J. Tyler Arboretum in 1991. He will describe Tyler's John C. Wister Rhododendron Garden, a heritage collection of over 1,500 specimens in a 12-acre natural setting.

The rhododendron collection was started in 1952 by Dr. Wister, Tyler's first director. Today, Tyler is in the midst of a major project to improve the health of current plants, add new plants and companion plants, build pathways to assist visitor access, and add educational discovery stations.

On Oct. 18 (Thursday) at 7:30 pm:

Joe Minahan: "Rhododendrons of Central Pennsylvania"

Joe has been a member of the American Rhododendron Society for 49 years and is a charter member of the Susquehanna Valley Chapter. He has hybridized many rhododendrons including "R. John Paul II" and "R. Howard Roberts". Having bred one of the best reds, he is now working to breed a good yellow. He shares the beauty of his plants at our rhododendron flower show and has won many ribbons and trophies. Thanks to Joe and other area hybridizers, central Pennsylvania is the home to a number of new and exciting rhododendrons.

The ARS Western Regional Conference

This conference, which will be held in Nanaimo on September 21-23, 2012, is less than 2 months away!!! To give all ARS members a chance to view the registration details in the summer issue of the ARS Journal, **the early bird registration deadline has been extended to August 21st!** You can also find registration information at our conference website: <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/> Don't miss out, register now, we're filling up quickly!



See you in Nanaimo!

**June Bouchard
Conference Registrar**

2012 Rhododendron and Azalea Flower Show Winners

The 4th year of the joint Greater Philadelphia and Valley Forge Chapters combined flower/truss show competition was very successful. The early bloom changed the entire complexion of the show. The major winners for 2012 are:

- Best In Show: R. viscosum 'Delaware Blue' – Michael Mills & Randy Dalton
- Best Species: R. viscosum 'Delaware Blue' – Michael Mills & Randy Dalton
- Best New Hybrid: John Paul II x Harold Amateis 82-4-037 – Joe Minahan
- Best Rhododendron Hybrid: (Mary Belle x Mars) x Phipp's Yellow 95-19-010 – Joe Minahan
- Best Evergreen Azalea: Cream Ruffles – Joe Minahan
- Best Deciduous Azalea: R. viscosum 'Delaware Blue' – Michael Mills & Randy Dalton
- Best Foliage: Mary Belle x Mars 84-12 – Joe Minahan

Point Totals	Entries	1st	2nd	3rd	Points
Bob Stamper	32	8	11	7	53
Michael Mills & Randy Dalton	30	10	7	6	50
Bruce & Marianne Feller	18	8	1	4	30
Cathy Keim	12	3	5	0	19
Bob Smetana	8	2	3	1	13
Joe Minahan	8	5	3	0	21
Mark & Susan Thomson	7	1	1	4	9
Tom Lloyd	7	2	4	0	14
Wil Smith	5	2	1	1	9
Maris Ogg	3	0	1	1	3
Jim Willhite	1	0	1	0	2

Congratulations to everyone who entered for the great show.

For a complete list of all trophies, ribbons, etc. look at **2012 Flower Show Results**

<http://ValleyForgeARS.org/files/2012flowershowresults.pdf>

Fred Winter 1919 – 2012

Joan Warren

The Valley Forge Chapter of the ARS lost one of its oldest and dearest members when Fred Winter died at the age of 93, on June 21, 2012. He died at home surrounded by his wife Barbara and their family.

Fred and Barbara joined this chapter in 1973, and Fred was president twice, from 1980 to 1984 and from 1986 to 1988. They received the ARS Bronze Medal from the Valley Forge Chapter in 1984. Fred was Alternate District Director from 1982 to 1985, and was an associate member of the Greater Philadelphia chapter. During his tenure as president, the chapter membership grew and programs were greatly improved. Fred encouraged member participation in meetings, Truss Shows, plant exchanges and garden tours. He opened his garden every year for tours including those from conventions, shared plants with members, and had very wide horticultural interests.

In 1984, the chapter published “A Guide for the Hungry Gardener”, a collection of members’ recipes plus gardening hints, and Barbara was chair of the committee. The impetus for the cookbook was the Bourbon Slush served by Barbara whenever the annual picnic or any other function was held at their house.

The Winter's garden is a joy to behold and very different from the property that they bought. ‘It was a shambles’ then, but hard work by Fred and Barbara and their sons and daughter over the years created a beautiful



masterpiece. It is known as Company Farm, and has a history going back to when the nearby Schuylkill Canal was built between 1816 and 1825. Their renovated barn was used to house the barge-towing mules, and the path to and from the canal is now the rhododendron garden. The garden was selected to be included in the Archives of American Gardens, Horticulture Services Division, Smithsonian Institution, in 2002.

Fred had a long and interesting life along with his career as a radiologist. He loved to sing and joined the local singing group, enjoyed opera and musical theater and would often burst into song when amongst friends. Kathy Van Veen will remember him giving her an old RCA Victor LP of Romberg’s “The Student Prince” (her favorite), and then bursting into song in his Mario Lanza style.

Fred cared about people and started a program to teach children about the health hazards of tobacco and other addictive substances, visiting many classrooms during his retirement. He volunteered with CARE-MEDICO and trained radiology residents in Afghanistan and Thailand. He also joined a polio group helping to immunize children in India. He was an avid skier and he and Barbara traveled extensively worldwide. As a member of the Navy Medical Corps he served in WW11 and the Korean conflict.

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ARS Convention, May 4-7, 2012, Asheville N.C.

Joan Warren



Karel Bernady and Don Smart present Silver Medal to Steve Henning

A few members of the Valley Forge and Philadelphia chapters attended the convention in Asheville this year. It was well attended by members from all parts of the country, and abroad.

The gardens that we visited were beautiful, but a lot of the bloom was over as they had an early spring.

The main event of the convention was the banquet, when awards are given to members who have excelled in their work with the ARS. This year, we were delighted to see Steve Henning receive a Silver Medal from the society for the work that he has done to bring attention to the plight of the azaleas in the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. He has made frequent trips to Washington and

has used his computer skills to make azalea lovers throughout the country aware that the National Arboretum collection was in danger of being destroyed. He created the website: SaveTheAzaleas.org. Now, money has been donated to save these plants, many of them special to the society.

Steve was also applauded for his efforts to create a website about rhododendrons <http://rhodyman.net/rasite.html>, which all members can use to identify and know more about the rhododendron genus.

We were all very pleased to see Steve receive this award, and offer him our congratulations.

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Utilize our website:

<http://ValleyForgeARS.org>

The main sections of our website are:

- **Join Us:** Membership Application
- **Links:** Information, Gardens & Sources
- **Events:** Our Events Calendar
- **News:** Flower Show Results & Newsletters
- **Contact Us:** Our Mailing Address
- **Members Area:** Chapter History Pages
- **Gallery:** Photo Gallery for Members



We got good news from RareFind Nursery in Jackson, NJ.

After Hank Schannen's tragic death in 2009, it was his heirs' desire to sell the nursery and property. It was important that they found a new owner who would share their vision and commitment to making RareFind Nursery better than ever.

Effective June 29, 2012, the new owner is Oliver LaFarge Hamill of Lawrenceville, NJ. Oliver is a long-standing customer of RareFind and is a self-described 'plant nut'. He's was a Landscape Architect and is a co-owner of Cherry Grove Farm of Lawrenceville, NJ. Cherry Grove Farm is a 400-acre certified organic, sustainable and diversified farm that produces handcrafted cheese, whey-fed pork, pasture raised chickens and grass-fed beef and lamb. (www.cherrygrovefarm.com)

RareFind hopes to make some changes that have been on hold since Hank's death, but do not anticipate changes in staff, products or service, except where improvement is needed!

Watering, Drainage & Mulch

Speaking of Hank Schannen, he always mentioned the 3 most important things in raising rhododendrons and azaleas were Drainage, Drainage and Drainage.

Because the fine roots of azaleas and rhododendrons are easily blocked by fungi, excellent drainage is important. To test drainage, dig a hole 6 inches deep in the bed and fill it with water. If the water has not drained from the hole in four hours, install drainage tile to carry away excess water, or build raised beds. Moist well-drained soil is a must for most varieties. This sounds difficult, but it means to not let the soil dry out completely and don't get it too wet. Thoroughly water if necessary and then let it become almost dry. Most gardeners do this by planting in a well-drained area and mulching to hold the soil moisture in.

Watering is seldom necessary except during long dry periods in summer or winter.

Rhododendrons do best when they have about a 2" to 3" layer of mulch to hold in moisture, prevent weeds, and keep the roots cool. Since most mulches are organic, they need to be topped off periodically, usually about every year or two.

Do not make the mulch over 3" thick. Keep the mulch about 2" to 3" back from the trunk/stem of the plants to avoid collar rot, bark split and rodent damage.

Do not use peat moss as a mulch. It is a soil amendment to be used when preparing the soil in a bed and can cause severe problems when used as a mulch including dehydrating the soil and preventing moisture from reaching the soil. It also tends to blow around.

It is best to mulch with a 2-inch layer of an airy organic material such as pine bark, pine needles, or rotted oak leaves. A year-round organic mulch will also provide natural nutrients and will help keep the soil cool and moist. Mulches derived from conifers like pine are good because they are naturally acidic when they decay.

Officers and Committees:

President: Bob Smetana (610) 688-5249
Vice President: Alice Horton (610) 430-0196
Treasurer: Chris Smetana (610) 688-5249
Secretary: Joan Warren (610) 913-0005

Directors:
Steve Henning ('10-'13) (610) 987-6184
Darlene Henning ('10-'13) (610) 987-6184
Debby Schmidt ('11-'14) (610) 388-8573
John Ryan ('11-'14) (610) 971-2368
Ellin Hlebik ('12-'15) (610) 584-9764
Kathy Woehl ('12-'15) (610) 644-6249

Newsletter Editor: Steve Henning (610) 987-6184
Webmaster: Jim Willhite (484) 887-0232
Membership: Darlene Henning (610) 987-6184
Plant Sale: Chris Smetana (610) 688-5249
Truss Show (V.F.): Bob Smetana (610) 688-5249
Plants-for-Members: Jim Willhite (484) 887-0232

Chapter's web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

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Valley Forge Chapter
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