

14 Northwoods Road, Radnor, PA 19087-

Chapter's Website: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER *August / September 2019*

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon

Calendar at a Glance

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| Aug. 18, 2019 (Sun.) | District 8 Cuttings Exchange and Auction at Jenkins |
| Sep. 8, 2019 (Sun.) | Plants for Members with Greater Philadelphia at Morris Arboretum |
| Sep. 27-29, 2019 | 2019 ARS Fall Conference, Parksville, BC |
| Oct. 17, 2019 (Thu.) | Speaker: Ken LeRoy, "Thomas Meehan, Father of Philadelphia Parks" |
| Nov. 10, 2019 (Sun.) | VF ARS Banquet, St. David's Golf Club |

President's Message

After a busy spring season, on Sunday afternoon, June 30th, we all had a chance to relax and enjoy a wonderful afternoon picnic hosted by Perc and Sally Moser at their beautiful home in Bryn Mawr. Once again, we teamed up with the Greater Philadelphia Chapter for this annual event and we had a nice turnout. Perc and Sally were gracious hosts, the food was fabulous; on a personal note - the kielbasa was especially delicious!! And I hope everyone had a chance to wander around their beautiful Rhododendron garden.

Our annual picnic is the occasion we use to elect/reelect Chapter officers and directors. This year I have no changes to report. Alice Horton will stay on as Vice President and Bob Smetana and Joan Warren will remain Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Bob Horton, Perc Moser, Darlene Henning, Kathy Woehl and Steve Wright remain as Directors and I will continue to serve as President. Thanks to all of you for serving on the Board.

Our next event will be the annual District 8 Cutting Exchange and Auction on August 18th at Jenkins Arboretum. Donors with plants and cuttings should arrive by 1:30. The cutting exchange/sale begins at 2:00 and the auction, once again led by Karel Bernady, will start at 2:30. Proceeds from the day's event will benefit the ARS Research Foundation and Endowment Fund so please be generous with your donations and auction bids.

In the upcoming year I look forward to continue working with all of the Chapter members as we continue to "encourage interest in and disseminate knowledge about Rhododendrons and Azaleas." Looking forward to seeing everyone at our Chapter events.

Sincerely,

Jerry O'Dell (610) 608-2018

westdell@verizon.net

VF ARS website: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

Rhododendron & Azalea Cuttings Exchange & Plant Auction

Jenkins Arboretum, 631 Berwyn Baptist Rd, Devon, PA 19333

Proceeds benefit ARS Endowment Fund and Research Foundation

Sunday, Aug. 18, starting at 1:30 p.m., rain or shine.

1:30 pm: Bring Cuttings: If donating cuttings, please arrive around 1 p.m. Use plastic bags for each cultivar, clearly labeled. Cut 3 or 4 large-leaf (elepidote) or 4-6 small-leaf (lepidote) cuttings. 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. Place in a plastic bag with a few drops of water. No unidentified cultivars, please! Please label the bags with a waterproof marker or pencil and add, if possible, info about characteristics or parentage. Transporting the bags in a cooler is also a good idea.

2:00 pm: Cuttings exchange/sale.

Cuttings are sold for 25 cents a bag for everyone and are an easy and inexpensive way to increase one's collection of azaleas and rhododendrons.

2:30 pm: Plant Auction: Karel Bernady auctioneer. Please donate rhodies and azaleas, as well as other garden-worthy plants that you feel others would like. Some plants are donated by chapters, some by individual members. Most years, John Bartlett of Gettysburg Garden brings an assortment of very special plants.

Important: It will help the auctioneer and the bidder if you write a description of 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 demonstrate how to propagate from cuttings.

About 3:30 pm: Dessert.

Please bring a dessert or appetizer to share.

Beverages will be provided.

On September 8, 2019, (Sunday), P4M at 1:00 pm at Morris Arboretum, Weidner Center.

Plants for Members (P4M):

On Sunday, Sept. 8, the Valley Forge (VF) Chapter will join the Greater Philadelphia (GP) Chapter for our joint Plants For Members. This will be held in the Weidner Center, at Morris Arboretum, 100 E Northwestern Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19118. At the gate, just say you are with the Rhododendron Society and admission is gratis. Rooted cuttings and 2-year grafts will be available. As part of this joint effort VF members are invited to join GP members for their propagation workshops. For more details on this and other GP ARS hosted events, visit their website at https://sites.google.com/a/gpchapterars.org/gpc_ars/home

On October 17, 2019, (Thursday), at 7:30 pm:

Ken LeRoy:

“Thomas Meehan: Father of Phila. Parks”

Ken LeRoy is a certified arborist dedicated to integrating trees and plants into urban and suburban environments. Ken has cared for old trees on historic sites with stories to tell. He pursued his interest at Temple University's School of Horticulture and is an arborist representative with John B. Ward & Co. Arborists. Arboretum Philadelphia is a community Facebook page that Ken LeRoy founded where one can document impressive trees and shrubs in the Philadelphia area.

Thomas Meehan was a noted British-born nurseryman, botanist, and author. He worked at Kew Gardens before moving to Germantown where he started a nursery. Meehan is considered to be the father of the urban park movement in Philadelphia. He campaigned to establish and preserve parks including Historic Bartram's Garden.

The Spotted Lanternfly Update: Good News and Bad News

By now most everyone has seen, if not experienced the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). Some of us have experienced severe damage and others have been spared. It is a mixed bag. The good news is that it appears to saturate an area and then move on in a couple years. Personally, I am near the epicenter of the infestation and were inundated with SLF for 2 years. Since then we seldom, if ever, see one near our home.

The rapid disappearance may be due to a pair of fungi. Researchers think a pair of native fungi could join the arsenal of controls on the polka-dotted insects, according to a study published at <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/116/19/9178.full.pdf>.



*An adult spotted lanternfly cadaver's wings and legs spread outward as *Batkoa major* spores release from its abdomen.*

According to the paper, a research group led by Cornell University scientists have identified two North American fungi, *Batkoa major* and *Beauveria bassiana*, that seem to be natural enemies of the spotted lanternfly. The *Batkoa* fungus makes a particularly spectacular show of killing off the insect pest by acting as a sort of mind-controlling parasite. The researchers believe once *Batkoa* infects a spotted lanternfly, the fungus compels its victim to ascend up a tree or vine; then, fungal fibers sew it to its final

resting place and spores burst out of the insect's body to shower down onto any remaining lanternflies below. The researchers think this helps them spread and infect even more insects. The other fungi, *Beauveria*, is already an ingredient in some EPA-approved biopesticides.

Pennsylvania agricultural officials first noticed the fungi in 2017 when they found dead lanternflies covered with white fuzz in Antietam Lake Park in Lower Alsace Township in Berks County, Pennsylvania, and sent over the samples to the Cornell lab. Researchers there cultured the spores, extracted DNA, and used molecular testing to identify the fungal species.

“We were shocked to see this level of mortality. These naturally occurring infections could move through them like a tidal wave,” says Eric Clifton, a post-doc at Cornell and co-author of the study. “It was very clear there was some kind of disease, but for a month or two, we had no idea what it was.”

For those tasked with dealing with the spotted lanternfly, “We don't know” is a common refrain when it comes to questions of how the pest lives, dies, eats, and reproduces. Experiments (at least 22 separate scientific endeavors, according to [state officials](#)) have explored the insect's flight behavior, its genetic makeup, and whether scientists might be able to use pheromones to disrupt its mating or insecticides to protect crops from damage.

Officials are trying to keep the bug penned in a 14-county quarantine zone in Pennsylvania—where the spotted lanternfly made its U.S. debut in 2014—but containment has proven to be a challenge since the spotted lanternfly will lay its eggs on just about any surface and hitchhikes in the wheel wells of road-tripping cars and the shipping crates of delivery trucks. Neighboring states like New York, where spotted lanternflies have been sighted in about a dozen counties, are preparing for infestation.

In Pennsylvania, 14 counties are currently under quarantine :

- Berks
- Bucks
- Carbon
- Chester
- Dauphin
- Delaware
- Lancaster
- Lebanon
- Lehigh
- Monroe
- Montgomery
- Northampton
- Philadelphia
- Schuylkill

District Township in Berks County was ground zero for spotted lanternfly; approaching the fifth anniversary of the Asian invader's arrival in the county, sightings are rapidly dwindling.

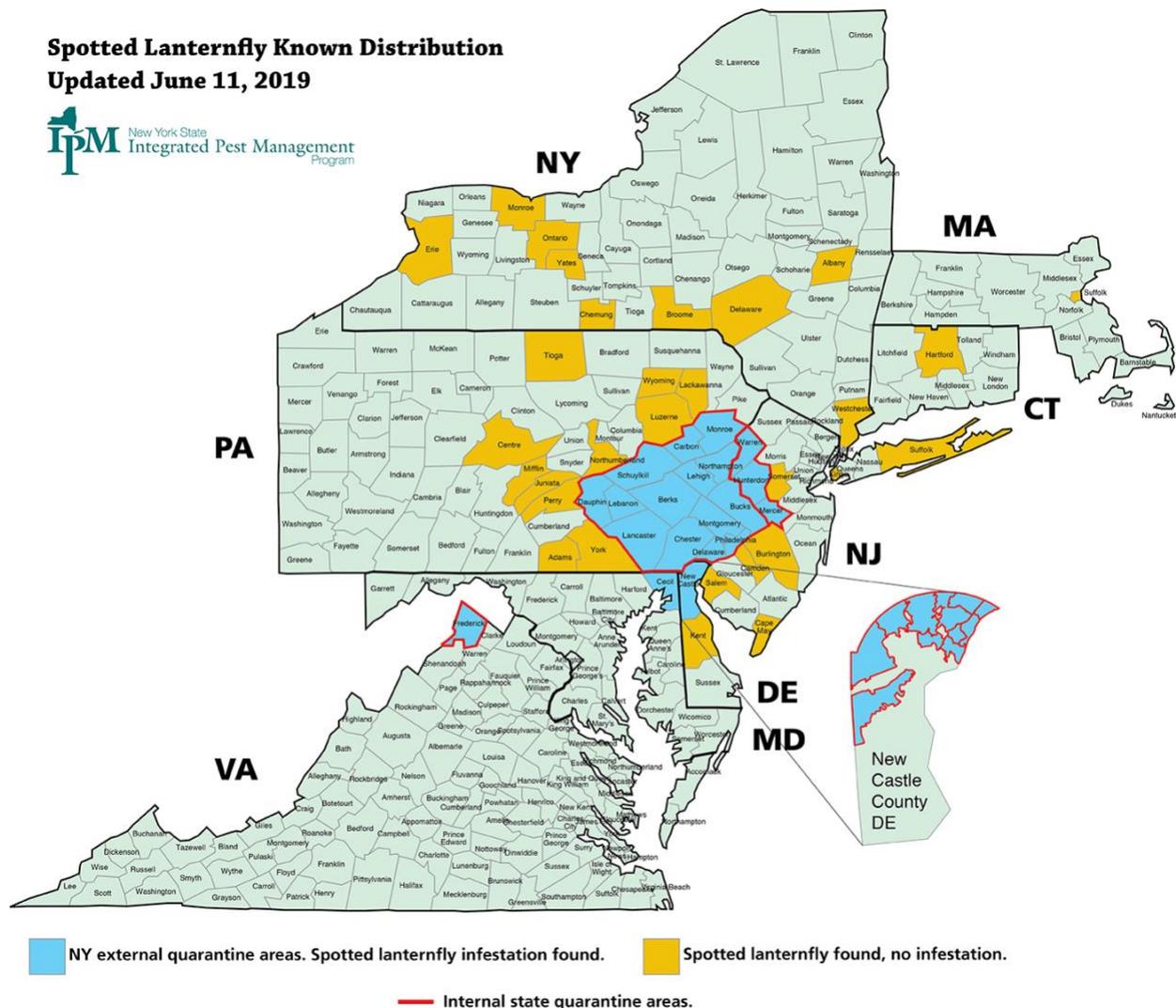
The spotted lanternfly, a mysterious pest from east Asia, found its way to Berks County,

possibly on landscaping stone shipped to District Township from Asia.

A state Game Commission agent discovered the insect on a nearby property in the township in 2014, its first sighting in the United States.

The spotted lanternfly population grew into a horde by 2017, damaging local grapevines and swarming backyards.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has quarantined 14 southeastern Pennsylvania counties. The spotted lanternfly is threatening Pennsylvania's grape, tree fruit, hardwood and nursery industries, which amount to about \$18 billion. The insect now has spread to three additional states: New Jersey, Delaware and Virginia. Pennsylvania has committed \$4 million to fight spotted lanternfly.



This summer, as the fifth anniversary of the insect's discovery approaches, residents in District Township and nearby municipalities in Berks say the spotted lanternfly surprisingly has receded from the summer landscape, from yards and trees, so much that some wonder if the pesky bug has died off or moved on to greener pastures.

There still are spotted lanternflies in District Township — or “ground zero,” as state officials and Penn State researchers studying the insects often refer to the township and neighboring eastern Berks municipalities. The bugs started growing into winged adults in July and will climb high into trees, out of view

If the nutritional content of the sap is better in another tree, lanternflies will prefer it, but that's just a theory.

Another explanation: Nature may be stepping in to control the spotted lanternfly population. Predators may be emerging, such as the pair of fungi that wiped out an infestation of the insects at Antietam Lake Park in Lower Alsace Township last October, the discovery recently verified by scientists. For similar reasons, the population of another invasive pest, the gypsy moth, has grown and ebbed over time.

Eastern Berks residents are surprised by the lack of spotted lanternflies they have seen this summer, and are hopeful the worst is behind them. A mild winter beginning in December 2016 could have contributed to the explosion in 2017, allowing adults more time to lay eggs before cold weather could kill them.

When the spotted lantern flies came, they ate cucumber and basil in gardens, and Virginia creeper that grows in the forest. They swarmed trees and excreted a sticky, clear goo, called “honeydew,” that fell to the ground.

Wooded areas smelled like cider.

More than 130 trees of heaven, a favorite food of the spotted lanternfly, were removed from along roads by the U.S. Department of

Agriculture, which has committed \$17.5 million in emergency funds to control the spotted lanternfly's spread.

This summer, however, the spotted lanternflies seem to be gone.

Neighboring areas aren't so fortunate. Neighboring states like New York, where spotted lanternflies have been sighted in about a dozen counties, are preparing for infestation.

"It's not 'if' it's going to happen; it's 'when'," says Tim Weigle, a Cornell University extension specialist who's leading the school's outreach programming for the spotted lanternfly. "It's such an excellent hitchhiker, they've had a hard time keeping it contained." Unlike the apple maggot or peach-favoring oriental fruit moth, the spotted lanternfly does not have discerning dietary preferences; it feeds on at least 70 plant species, from pine trees to grape vines, peach trees, shrubs, and the Ailanthus (tree-of-heaven), a preferred host that's widespread along highways in the Northeast. And it's hungry. The pest is thought to have caused major losses in recent seasons for Pennsylvania's nearly \$18-billion apple, pear, hardwood, and nursery crops.

And it's not just fruit growers and vintners who are concerned. Breweries will likely face impacts from the pest, which has a taste for hops.

A common advantage invasive pests have is that they often go unchecked in their new homes since they don't have any natural enemies there. But the pair of fungi found in Berks County could provide an example of the opposite: While North American insects have had thousands, if not millions, of years to adapt to living alongside the fungi, the spotted lanternfly appears particularly vulnerable to them—as if the fungi are a new strain of the flu, and the pest is unvaccinated.

The fungi probably won't knock out every single lanternfly, but we could see their populations dip, in part because of the fungi.

Look Before You Leave

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY, *LYCORMA DELICATULA*

Adult with Egg Masses | Eggs: October - May



Adults on *Ailanthus*



Egg Masses | Eggs: October - May



Early Nymph | May - June

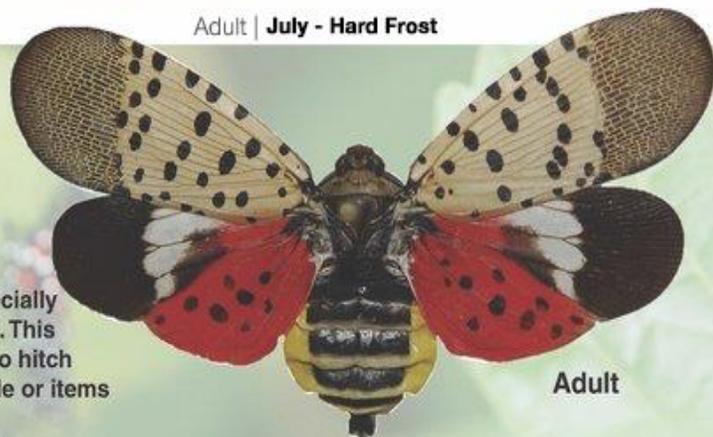


Late Nymph | June - July



Adult | July - Hard Frost

Spotted lanternfly threatens the Pennsylvania agriculture industry. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) are asking for your help in the eradication efforts of this pest. Look for the insect before leaving a quarantined area, especially after walking or parking near a tree line. This insect is not a strong flier, but may try to hitch hike a ride on your clothing, your vehicle or items sitting outdoors. For more information and the current quarantine, please visit:



Adult

WWW.AGRICULTURE.PA.GOV/SPOTTEDLANTERNFLY

***Phytophthora ramorum* Scare**

Indiana officials discovered that rhododendron plants imported into the state were infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*. Indiana authorities reported that potentially infested plants were received at more than 70 Wal-Mart stores and 18 Rural King stores. By the end of May, state inspectors have destroyed more than 1,500 rhododendrons and have put another 1,500 other plants on hold.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture says that Pennsylvania was among 28 states where retailers received rhododendrons exposed to *Phytophthora ramorum*. They state the pathogen causes infectious disease in popular Pennsylvania plants and shrubs, including rhododendron, mountain laurel, lilac, viburnum, and pieris.

Anyone who has recently purchased a rhododendron (in 2019) should monitor the plant for signs of disease, including leaf spots and shoot dieback.



Examples of Phytophthora ramorum in rhododendron

Other rhododendron problems may mimic the disease, but a lab test can confirm.

If you suspect your plant may have the disease, contact your county's Penn State Extension office for instructions on how to send in a sample for testing.

It's ironic that a disease known as sudden oak death (SOD) isn't particularly sudden, and it doesn't just affect oak trees.

Since this name is rather misleading, some have started calling SOD ramorum blight, ramorum dieback or Phytophthora canker disease, but whatever you call it, the disease is still devastating and there is no cure currently.

SOD is caused by a fungus-like plant pathogen called *Phytophthora ramorum*. It was first reported in the U.S. in 1995 in the San Francisco Bay area. The origin of *Phytophthora ramorum* is unknown.

It thrives in wet, cool climates, so it has primarily been a problem in northern coastal California, Oregon and Washington, but nurseries that mimic this microclimate can also foster *P. ramorum* in other areas. It wasn't until 2004 that the nursery industry was impacted by the pathogen.

More than 100 plant species are susceptible to the disease, typically only suffering from leaf spots and twig dieback. These plants serve as hosts and are one of the main ways this disease travels considerable distances. Rhododendrons and camellias are some of the main hosts for *Phytophthora ramorum*. For a full list of the known hosts as of 2013, click [here](#). Additional hosts added since 2013 are listed [here](#). These include maples, ferns, chestnut, heather, camellias, beech, coffeeberry ash, witch hazel, kalmia, tanoak, honeysuckle, laurel, magnolia, ironwood, pieris, Douglas Fir, rhododendron, rose, willow, redwood, lilac, yew, huckleberry, viburnum, dogwood, blackberry, vinca, and oak.

Phytophthora ramorum should not be confused with 2 relatively common Phytophthora strains found in our gardens: *Phytophthora cactorum* and *Phytophthora cinnamomic*.

Phytophthora cactorum causes Phytophthora Dieback where the central vein of a leaf turns brown and the discoloration extends to the petiole on tender new growth. The infection spreads outward from the midrib tissue and the leaf wilts. Infections are more severe on azaleas. This common disease thrives in poorly

drained or wet conditions. A wilted plant is usually the first sign of trouble. Rhododendron leaves will curl inward and droop. Drought can



cause similar symptoms. Roots of affected plants appear soggy or blackened, and the outer portion of the root easily pulls away from the inner portion. Crown rot causes the lower portions of the stem to have a brown discoloration of the wood near the soil line. This disease is favored in poorly drained areas or when plants are set too deeply. Plants may remain without symptoms until further stressed from drought or flooding.

Phytophthora cinnamomi, causes Phytophthora Root Rot: The symptoms of Phytophthora root rot vary with the cultivar. Some cultivars fail to grow or grow very slowly with pale green foliage and may die



after several years. Others suddenly wilt and die within a few weeks.

Roots are reddish-brown, brittle and often limited to the upper portion of the media in a container or very close to the soil surface (upper 2 inches). The reddish-brown discoloration advances to the larger roots and eventually to the lower part of the main stem. Phytophthora root rot is favored by high soil moisture and warm soil temperatures. The disease does not occur as frequently and may not be as severe on well-drained sandy soils as in heavy clays or poorly drained soils, etc. The disease is common and severe in areas where run-off water, rainwater from roofs, etc. collects around plant roots. Setting woody plants deeper than the soil level in the nursery or container, over-watering plants, or long periods of heavy rain favor disease. Phytophthora root rot must be prevented as chemicals are ineffective in controlling this disease after aboveground symptoms appear.

Avoid buying plants at big box stores. The health of your garden may depend up it.



ARSStore.org

Where every purchase benefits the American Rhododendron Society

Amazon drops ARSStore.org

Amazon terminated its agreement with [ARSStore.org](https://www.arsstore.org) and the approximately 5% commission the ARS received. AmazonSmile is still available and pays 0.5% to the ARS. What is even better is the Wal-Mart ARS Store. The online Wal-Mart ARS Store offers virtually the same products with free shipping and pays the ARS approximately 4% on online sales. **Use the Wal-Mart ARS Store at:**

[Walmart.ARSStore.org](https://www.walmart.com/cp/arsstore)



**Rhododendrons by The Seaside
2019 ARS Fall Conference
September 27-29 in Parksville, BC**

The Mount Arrowsmith ARS Chapter is hosting the Fall Conference in Parksville on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

The conference features twelve distinguished [speakers](#) whose overall theme is ‘Rhododendrons as the World Warms’.

Three [bus tour options](#) are included, along with a bulbs workshop and sale, two propagation workshops, [plant sale](#), [photo exhibition](#), and silent auction.

Saturday and Sunday breakfasts are included, along with Saturday lunch. In addition, a no-host bar and full-course buffet dinner are offered on Friday and Saturday evenings, providing lots of time for socializing, catching up with old friends, and making new ones.

Location: Parksville Community and Conference Centre
132 Jensen Avenue East, Parksville, BC

Dates: September 27 – 29, 2019

Time: 3:00 PM Friday September 27, 2019 to 1:00 PM Sunday September 29, 2019

Registration is required. Early registration is recommended as space is limited.

For more information visit their website at <http://marsrhodos.ca/ars2019/>

You're invited to the celebration!



World-renowned Keynote Speakers

Kenneth Cox • Jens Nielsen • Steve Hootman
Lionel de Rothschild • Steve Krebs • Valerie Sosa

**Tours to the Northwest's
Outstanding Gardens & Nurseries**

**The 2020 ARS Convention
April 29 to May 3, 2020**

Portland, Oregon/Vancouver, Washington

The chapters of ARS District Four in Oregon welcome everyone to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the American Rhododendron Society at the 2020 ARS Convention in the Pacific Northwest.

The 2020 ARS Convention will honor the founding of the ARS in Portland, Oregon, in 1945. The first ARS convention was held in Portland in 1961.

They have an impressive group of keynote speakers as noted above.

The garden tours will visit great gardens including the historic Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden, the Cecil & Molly Smith Garden, the Rhododendron Species Foundation Botanical Garden, the Portland Japanese Garden, Lan Su Chinese Garden, and Iseli Wholesale Nursery.

American Rhododendron Society

75th Anniversary

**20/20
VISION**



Looking forward, reflecting back

Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020

American Rhododendron Society

**Valley Forge Chapter
14 Northwoods Rd
Radnor, PA 19087**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL



NEWSLETTER

August/September 2019



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Please contact us with email changes or if you receive this **newsletter** by letter carrier rather than email, even though you have e-mail. Please inform Steve Henning of any changes (rhodyman@earthlink.net).