

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

Web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

NEWSLETTER

October / November 2016

Unless specified otherwise, meetings are at Jenkins Arboretum in Devon
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Calendar at a Glance

Oct. 20 (Thu.)	Greg Thompson, "Fungal Diseases Affecting, Rhod., Azaleas, & Trees"
Nov. 13 (Sun.)	VF ARS Banquet at St. Davids Golf Club
Jan. 15 (Sun.)	Bob & Rosa McWhorter, "Gardens of Germany and Denmark"
Feb. 19 (Sun)	Joint VF and GP meeting at Uwchlan Meeting House

President's Message

I don't know about you, but I'm still watering, especially the plants I bought at the CutX and Auction. We had a great turnout at Maris and Bob's house and their hospitality was even better. The chapters raised \$679 which will be split between the ARS Endowment Fund and the ARS Research Foundation.

The GP Chapter once again had a great selection of rare rhodies from cuttings, seedlings and graftings. I know I got my share and hope you did too. They do a great job and we're lucky to have access to this event.

Our October meeting will be back at Jenkins 7:30pm Thursday Oct 20 featuring arborist Greg Thompson. Greg will educate us on tree and shrub fungal diseases in our area in his presentation "Our Grandfather's Garden".

I have two requests: 1) Please sign up soon for the Nov 13 banquet at St David's. It really helps when we have a head count well in advance of the event. Our speaker, Bruce Feller, has a great presentation on woody companion plants. 2) It's ARS membership renewal time. Send in your money early so there will be no lapse in receiving the Journal.

Looks like rain Sunday so I can plant those P4M plants I bought last week without getting out the pickaxe.

See you in October:

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

Visit the Chapter's web site: www.ValleyForgeARS.org

On October 20, 2016, (Thursday), at 7:30 pm:

Greg Thompson: “Our Grandfather’s Garden”

Gregory Kent Thompson is a Certified Arborist and Tree Surgeon and owner of Pennsylvania Tree Service, Inc. in Phoenixville. In a conversation about the beauty and importance of gardens, Gregory will highlight the crisis of destructive insects and diseases that are putting the Rhododendron family of plants at risk.



Sadly, it is not our grandfathers’ garden any more. Yet there are things we can do to thwart those dastardly insects, and steps we can take to safeguard our beloved plants, flowers, and trees from those dreaded diseases – especially our beloved Rhododendrons. In some ways we can adapt and change our gardening to stay ahead of the changes we see in our growing green spaces.

Years ago, the world seemed so much simpler, winters were cold and summers were warm. Lately, the winters have trended warmer and the summers hotter. And for warm weather fans that’s great, but alas, warmer temperatures are an open invitation to insects, and plant, tree, and shrub diseases. Yuk! These insects have become more pervasive and resistant to current controls, and the diseases more destructive and harder to cure.

Our gardens may not be as glorious as our grandfathers’, but we can be our gardens’ heroes.

Greg has been a tree surgeon for about thirty years. Much of that thirty years he has been a Certified Arborist and Pesticide Applicator. He has lived and worked in the trees for some forty years. He is an expert tree climber and a life-long outdoorsman and naturalist.

On Nov. 13 (Sunday) at 1:00 pm:

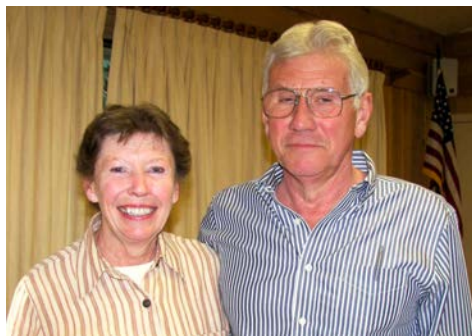
Annual Banquet at St. Davids Golf Club

Social Hour and Cash Bar at 1:00 p.m., Dinner at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker: Bruce Feller, ARS President

Program: “Woody Companion Plants for the Rhododendron Garden”

Bruce Feller has been a member of the New York Chapter for 27 years. During this time, Bruce has served in nearly every office in this chapter and in the ARS national organization. Bruce ran the 2010 ARS National Convention. He recently completed his term as American Rhododendron Society President. He also is active in the American Conifer Society.



When Bruce retired from business in 1998, he and his wife, Marianne, began work on the landscape around their home in Old Field on Long Island. Their 28-years-and-counting labor of love has taken on the dimensions of a full-time job. Over the years they have designed and maintained their landscape to provide, as they describe it, “a tapestry of color, texture and form.” Many of us were fortunate enough to visit Bruce and Marianne’s showcase garden at the 2010 Long Island Convention. Their garden features an outstanding collection of Japanese

maples, conifers and rhododendrons as well as a broad selection of other plants, all of which are very well-sited and grown.

As their landscape has evolved over the last 25 years, they have had many opportunities to experiment with plant groups that taken in

combination, provide an ongoing display of color, form and texture throughout the year. They've learned many lessons along the way through a series of successes and failures. Bruce's presentation will focus on those lessons.

See enclosed flier with registration form. RSVP today!

The Valley Forge Chapter of the
AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

cordially invites ARS Members and Friends to the

Annual Dinner

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2016

1:00 p.m.

ST. DAVIDS GOLF CLUB

845 RADNOR STREET ROAD • WAYNE, PENNSYLVANIA

610-688-2010 • www.stdavidsgc.com

Social Hour and Cash Bar at 1:00 p.m.

Dinner at 2:00 p.m.

Speaker

Bruce Feller, past ARS president

“Woody Companion Plants for the Rhododendron Garden”

RSVP: Please Return Reservation • Proper Attire

On January 15th (Sunday), at Jenkins Arboretum at 2:00 PM.

Bob and Rosa McWhorter: Gardens of Germany and Denmark

In May of 2014, Bob and Rosa McWhorter joined a small group of other ARS members who took a remarkable trip to see public and private gardens in Northern Germany and Denmark, some of the finest rhododendron gardens in the world. That region is a center for rhododendron hybridizing, also. The McWhorters went through their images, selecting the best to put in a PowerPoint show so they can share some of that wonderful trip with us. Our January meeting will be a chance to enjoy images of their trip including lovely landscapes and gorgeous flowers.



Diversity – A Product of the “Silent Struggle” by Bruce Feller



[Editor’s note: Many people say plants do certain things to survive. That is certainly true, but that is not a conscious decision since plants have no central nervous system. In this article Bruce Feller, our banquet speaker, explains how plants in our garden have adapted to survive. The photos are of Bruce and Marianne’s garden taken at the 2010 ARS Convention. This article first appeared in the Fall 2015 American Conifer Society NE Region newsletter, Coniferous Contemplations. His program at our banquet will be about the use of conifers and maples as companion plants in our rhododendron gardens.]

No, this article deals not with political or sociological issues, but silent and often invisible phenomena in the world of flora and fauna. In the “Darwinian” universe, one overarching imperative trumps all others – that all of the “players” must survive to the age of reproductive capability to extend the existence of their kind. The complex inter-play among plant and animal life in this process is an ongoing drama of competition within and among species.

The concept of “natural selection” which some think should more accurately be called “advantageous selection” is a key component in this “dance of life”. It is based upon the supposition that over eons, life forms in both the plant and animal kingdoms gain an upper hand on the competition within and beyond their own species through subtle changes in

form or behavior. These changes emerge as a dominant characteristic in successive generations based on the greater likelihood of survival and reproduction by those possessing them. Most of you will recognize this concept as the fundamental mechanism presumed to account for the evolutionary process on the planet.

Most easily and often dramatically demonstrated by examples in the animal kingdom, the same “dynamic” prevails in the plant world as constituent taxa vie for survival and the opportunity to reproduce themselves. Often these “strategies” to prevail within and beyond plant species are not nearly so apparent. These processes of selection and adaptation have the secondary consequence of creating the extensive diversity of plant life forms in our world.



As a simple example, let’s consider trees. To survive they need to sustain life and growth through photosynthesis – requiring adequate exposure of leaf tissue to sunshine. To meet this basic requirement, a tree must compete with others of the same and different species. Some varieties adopt a narrow, vertical form in this race for sun exposure. Others adopt a spreading branch habit to maximize leaf surface exposure. Still others adopt a weeping form as the most effective strategy. Some of those that grow in a narrow, upright shape will bend toward the sun in response to canopy

shade – White birch is a notable example. Other varieties continue in perfect vertical growth in their race for sun exposure regardless of encroaching shade patterns on their way up.

To survive and reach the age of reproductive capability, trees have also to develop strategies to successfully compete in a world of grazing herbivores and an infinite variety of insects for which tree foliage is a main dietary component. Some plants develop thorns, others chemical compounds that render their foliage unpalatable or even toxic to grazing animals and/or insects. Most pines have developed the capacity to manufacture and exude pitch or “pine tar” at points of bark penetration where it often traps invasive insects. Long solidified pitch is better known as amber – the material often used for jewelry – and just as often occurring with inclusions of intact insects trapped eons ago.

Trees having obtained sufficient age to reproduce, have adopted equally diverse strategies to assure the fertilization, seed formation and dispersal in ways favoring germination, growth, and continuity of the species. Flowers, occurring in an almost

infinite variety of colors and forms, produce nectar as they compete to attract the various



pollinators in the animal world. Seeds embedded within all manner of edible fruits assure their transportation and eventual dispersal by “unwitting co-conspirators” who consume them for their own sustenance.



The fundamental role these processes play - assuring survival and reproduction – can be observed all around us. Less apparent, however, is their direct effect on the extent of diversity one encounters in nature. Each adaptation attempts to secure the continuity of the species in an incredibly complex and inter-

related “arena” of competing interests. That arena is a dynamic and ever changing work in progress, as environmental and other factors impose their respective challenges. In turn, those challenges perpetuate the cycles of adaptation and “advantageous

selection”, and the corresponding diversity we observe in plants and animals on our planet. Contemplation of these differences within the context of the processes having created them can provide a much expanded and enjoyable appreciation of the natural world in which we live.

Landscape Use of Rhododendrons and Azaleas

[ARS Rhododendron Plant Care at rhododendron.org.]

From Rhododendrons grow in all sizes and shapes - from low growing ground covers, to medium-sized shrubs, to tree-size plants. Some varieties naturally have a rounded, ball-shaped plant habit, others are open and spreading, while other rhododendrons have an upright growth habit. You can find a rhododendron to fit any specific garden need.

Rhododendrons can be planted in the garden as specimen plants, or incorporated in a bed or border with other shrubs and plants. Tall growing rhododendrons make ideal screens while medium-sized rhododendrons and azaleas are well suited for island beds and borders. Low-growing rhododendrons can be placed in front of other rhododendrons or used as foundation plantings.

Commonly, rhododendrons are grouped together to achieve various designs, considering plant size, leaf size and texture, flower color, bloom time and other factors. Evergreen azaleas look nice placed together in masses using varieties that bloom at the same time and colors that blend nicely together. Planting rhododendrons in groups of three is suggested to avoid creating a too "spotty" looking landscape.

Consideration should be given to the mature height of rhododendrons when planting. If they are not placed with height in mind the taller growing plants can shade out the shorter plants. Plant height estimates after 10 years for rhododendrons and azaleas are

provided in the web site's searchable rhododendron and azalea databases.

Rhododendrons have shallow, fibrous roots so if they do need to be relocated for any reason they can be easily transplanted.

Rhododendrons have leaves in many shapes, colors, textures and sizes that add interest and beauty to the garden at any time of the year. The

underside of rhododendron leaves sometimes are covered with plastered silver, tan or brown indumentum which can be seen when the leaves are ruffled by the wind. Some varieties have strikingly-colored new leaves that add dramatic beauty as the new leaves unfurl.

One common misconception is that rhododendrons should be planted in deep

shade. This often results in plants that have very few flowers. Light is the primary factor that stimulates flower bud development. Spring blooming rhododendrons set buds in the late summer to early fall and it's essential that they receive adequate light as the buds develop. Rhododendrons should be planted where they receive sufficient light so that the plants set flower buds, but not in too sunny a location that leaf damage occurs.

More information about how to include rhododendrons and azaleas in your landscape can be found in the following Journal ARS articles:

- [Landscapes With Rhododendron](#) by Clive Justice, JARS V41, N4
- [Rhododendrons in the Landscape](#) by Doan R. Ogden, JARS V24, N1
- [Rhododendrons for Foliage Effect](#) by Felice Blake, JARS V39, N1
- [The Rest of the Year](#) by Parker Smith, JARS V38, N4



Scene from the Howard Phipps Estate in 2010

ARS 2017 Spring Convention

**April 27-30, 2017 - Eureka, CA
Red Lion Hotel & Sequoia Conf.
Center**

The Eureka Chapter of the ARS will host the 2017 ARS convention in Humboldt County, CA.



The Red Lion Hotel will be our host hotel, with a rate of \$99 per room per night. The rate includes a full breakfast and an airport shuttle. The new, Sequoia Conference Center, three blocks from the hotel will be our meeting and program venue. Convention attendees can walk, drive or take a shuttle between the hotel and the center.

Humboldt County has the greatest concentration of ancient redwood groves. Prairie Creek Redwoods State park contains herds of Roosevelt Elk and Fern Canyon was one of the sites used in filming "Jurassic Park". Patrick's Point State Park shows off replicas, still in use, of local first-nation buildings and magnificent views of the rugged coastline cliffs and beaches where you can find agates

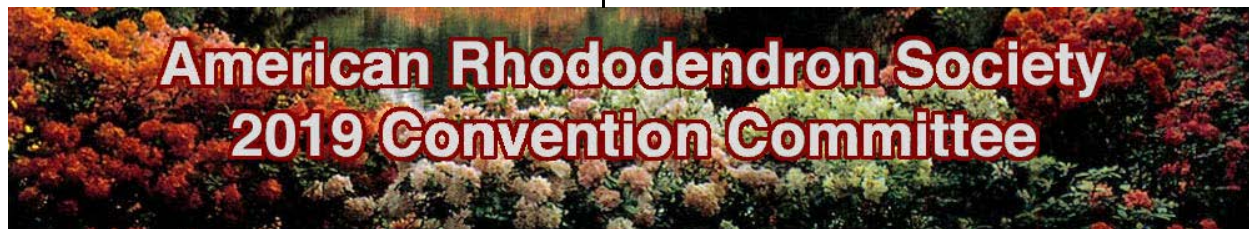
Rhododendron macrophyllum can be found in abundance among the redwoods. Many open areas in the county host the Western Azalea, *Rhododendron occidentale*. There are many Victorian buildings in Eureka as well as in the Victorian Village of Ferndale.

For more information visit:

<http://eurekarhody.org/convention.php>

ARS 2018 in Germany Plus

ARS 2018 Spring Convention will be in Germany plus optional tours to visit gardens in Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Plans are to have this international convention entirely in English. Planning is well under way.



Region 8, will host the 2019 ARS International Convention

The Greater Philadelphia, Lehigh Valley, Susquehanna Valley & Valley Forge Chapters of the ARS will host the 2019 Convention.

May of 2019 may seem far off, but District 8 ARS members are definitely at work on the national convention to be held here then.

At a recent meeting, the committee selected Karel Bernady and Steve Henning to be Co-Chairs for the convention. The committee chose The Desmond as the convention hotel. It is planning one banquet off site at the American Helicopter Museum which is about 10 minutes from The Desmond.

Tour itineraries are being contemplated, with a mix of outstanding public gardens (Longwood, Mount Cuba, Chanticleer and others) and fine private gardens of members. Three days of evening speakers are being considered, and, in addition, a plant sale, a truss show and photo competition are envisioned.

Anyone interested in working on the planning committee is invited to contact Steve Henning (rhodyman@earthlink.net). Closer to the convention, many more members will be needed to carry out a variety of duties – tour docents, plant sales, goodie-bag stuffing, staffing the registration table and more.

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

FIRST-CLASS MAIL



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Page 3 Jan. 15, “German & Danish Gardens”	Directors:
Page 4 “Diversity – A Product of the Silent Struggle”	Alice Horton ('14-'17) (610) 430-0196
Page 6 “Landscape Use of Rhododendrons”	John Ryan ('14-'17) (610) 971-2368
Page 7 ARS 2017 Spring Convention ARS 2018 in Germany Plus ARS 2019 Convention Committee	Ellin Hlebik ('15-'18) (610) 584-9764
ARS websites: rhododendron.org ARSStore.org ARSOoffice.org	Kathy Woehl ('15-'18) (610) 644-6249
	Michele Hawk ('15-'18) (610) 687-9120
	Darlene Henning ('16-'19) (610) 987-6184
	Jerry O'Dell ('16-'19) (610) 608-2018
	Membership: Darlene Henning (610) 987-6184
	Newsletter Editor: Steve Henning (610) 987-6184
	Plant Sale: Chris Smetana (610) 688-5249
	Plants-for-Members with Greater Philadelphia Chapter
	Truss Show (VF): Debby Schmidt (610) 388-8573
	Webmaster: Steve Henning (610) 987-6184
	VF Chapter’s web site: ValleyForgeARS.org

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).

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Valley Forge ARS Banquet Reservation

(Must be received by November 10, 2016)

Please Indicate The Number Of Persons

_____ *Hot Lunch Buffet -- \$35 per Person*

If received before November 1, you will receive a \$5 drink chit for each person

Appetizer: Cream of Mushroom Soup to be served to table.

Chicken Francaise

Atlantic Broiled Salmon

Flank Steak with Wild Mushroom Demi Glace

Seasonal Vegetable Medley

House Salad, Caesar Salad, and Potato Salad

Iced Tea, Lemonade, Tea and Coffee

Dessert: Ice Cream served to table after buffet.

Please send check, made payable to Valley Forge ARS

In the amount of \$ _____ to:

Kathy Woehl

143 Old State Road

Berwyn, Pennsylvania 19312

610-688-9173

Name(s): _____