

# MID-ATLANTIC RHODODENDRON NEWS AND NOTES

A Publication of the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the American  
Rhododendron Society

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May 2019

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS

Nov 9, 2019

Roslyn Center, Henrico, VA

**American Rhododendron Society**

<http://www.rhododendron.org/>

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<http://www.macars.org/>

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**Old Quarterly Bulletins & JARS**

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

**Rhododendron Blog**

[www.rhododendron.org/blog/](http://www.rhododendron.org/blog/)

**Friends of the National Arboretum**

<http://savetheazaleas.org/>

**FONA's Save the Azaleas and Boxwood site**

## SPRING MAC MEETING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

Twenty-four people attended at least parts of our meeting at the English Inn in Charlottesville. In Addition to the registered attendees, there were several guests for various parts of the meeting, including Jowanda Sampson and of her some family members. Jowanda was helpful to David Banks in working out an ARS mailing problem. Friday evening many of us went to the nearby, famous Bodo's Bagels for a quick supper. Then Rick Bauer who is currently President of the Azalea Society of America (ASA) gave a presentation on a very worthwhile project that the ASA is doing.



Rick Bauer. Photo by S. McDonald.

The Legacy Project was started to help ensure the continuation of knowledge of azalea hybridizers and their plants and maintain true specimens of the plants.

Project leaders gather biographical information on each hybridizer along with listings of their plants and information about the plants. They want to have photos of all the plants named and numbered

and prepare presentations on each hybridizer. The presentations can be shown to other chapters.

They want Legacy Keepers to maintain the plants and encourage members to take on projects of hybridizers whom they are especially interested in. Much valuable data is being collected in this worthwhile project.

| Current Legacy Hybrids |                |              |                |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Hybrid Group           | Legacy Lead    | Hybrid Group | Legacy Lead    |
| Aromi                  | Sherri Randall | Linwood      | Ronnie Palmer  |
| Beasley                | John Simmons   | Marshy Point | Donald Hyatt   |
| Bowie Mill             | Robert Thau    | McDonald     | Rick Bauer     |
| Glenn Dale             | Ronnie Palmer  | Sommerville  | Ronnie Palmer  |
| Harris                 | Robert Thau    | Stewart      | Carolyn Beck   |
| Holly Springs          | David Nanney   | Strickland   | Kevin McCorkle |
| Huang                  | Ronnie Palmer  | Varnadoe     | Kevin McCorkle |
| Klimavicz              | Carolyn Beck   | Vineland     | Nick Yarmoshuk |

On Saturday we had plenty of exercise visiting four lovely gardens in the area. We started at the garden of **Toby and Mike Zakin**. A few old timers may remember Toby Zakin in the 1990s when she was a MAC member. In 1988 Toby and Mike moved to a home they built on the west facing slope of the Ragged Mountains. Many of her plants are from early Plants4Members sales. She was a friend of past MAC

President Terry Scheuchenko and one of her favorite azaleas is ‘Terry’, a large purple hybridized by Augie Kehr.



Toby Zakin and Susan Bauer. Photo by S. McDonald.

Our second stop was at Grand View, the garden of **Dr. Jay Gillenwater and his wife Shirley**. Jay also has a nursery there. The land was purchased in 1978 and Jay finally retired in 2003. Jay had purchased and planted hundreds of rhododendrons from Hachmann nursery in Germany. There were many mature rhododendrons and azaleas in bloom along the trails in the 5 acre garden around the house. Interesting sculptures and other garden objects are here and there in the garden as well as a stream, waterfall, and pond.

Jay had contributed countless azalea and rhododendron small plants for many years when he was our Plants 4 Members chairman. At the end of our tour of his garden we were able to purchase some plants from his greenhouse area.



Dr. Jay Y. Gillenwater. Photo S. McDonald.

**Cathy and Chris Kramer’s garden** with mountain views was third on our tour. The Kramers moved there in 1999 and had help of many

gardeners in building the four-season garden filled with many winter flowering shrubs, spring ephemerals, hostas, and ferns, and plants with good fall color. There is a parterre garden, many vines and a very large Lady Banksia rose. Kathy is also a beekeeper and has a pollinator border and linden trees for the bees.



Cathy Kramer. Photo S. McDonald.

The fourth and final garden was **Fran and Andrew Boninti’s garden** which was described as “in harmony with nature” and follows the principles of design and conservation. There are woodland rooms, lots of native plantings, a lovely glen, and hardscaping with recycled or reused materials.



Fran Boninti. Photo S. McDonald.

A buffet dinner on Saturday evening was followed by a talk about the McIntire Botanical Garden project in Charlottesville. Linda Seaman and Joan Swanberg gave the presentation.

#### **Election of New Officers and directors**

Vice President Theresa Brents presided over a short business meeting Saturday evening to elect officers. The following slate was elected.

President: Theresa Brents

Vice President: Sharon Horn

Secretary: Teri Bennett

Treasurer: Debby Sauer  
Directors with terms expiring 5/2022:  
David Banks  
Barbara Hall

**THE LEWIS GINTER PROJECT** - by Debby Sauer

Many years ago in the mid 1980s, several volunteers from the MAC Chapter planted some Consolini rhododendrons donated by General Bob Porter, some named varieties and a special compact seedling selection of *Rhododendron minus* donated by Le-Mac Nurseries, and some plants donated by other MAC members in the woodland area behind



Al Hall, Debby Sauer, Jeanne Hammer, Theresa Brents.

what is now the Children's Garden at Lewis Ginter. David Lay, MAC president from 1985 to 1987, had worked out an arrangement with the garden for the project.

Over time, the area has been overgrown by groundcovers and "scrub" saplings. The MAC project was organized last year by Barbara Hall and Debby Sauer to reclaim and replant this area. John Morse, Chief horticulturist, was our contact who helped us set up two work days with the goal of clearing out the under growth, pruning any dead wood and removing any unwanted saplings. Two work days were determined: March 21st and April 12th. Jeanne Hammer, Al Hall, Debby Sauer and Theresa Brent gathered to accomplish this first stage of the project. The staff had cleared a great deal of

the poison ivy and English ivy for us so our task was made much easier. After two days, we finished the cleanup and are now ready for Stage 2!

With the generous donation from the MAC chapter, we will recommend suitable rhododendrons, and native deciduous azaleas to replant this area. We will be setting some dates and times for the planting later in the Fall. We can always use enthusiastic members to assist with this project! Please contact either Barbara Hall or Debby Sauer to receive information on the next work dates.

**WINDBEAM WAY WANDERINGS MAY 2019** - by Doug Jolley

It is May 12th and the last frost experienced here is a distant memory; maybe early April. This spring blooming season has outperformed last spring which in itself was terrific. Davetta and I remember the spring just a few years ago



Doug Jolley.

that we hosted a MAC Chapter garden tour. It was the first weekend of May. One plant was in bloom that Saturday; an un-named lepidote from Doc Tolstead. It was gorgeous but was all alone in sharing



*Kalmia* 'Bullseye'. Photo by Doug Jolley.

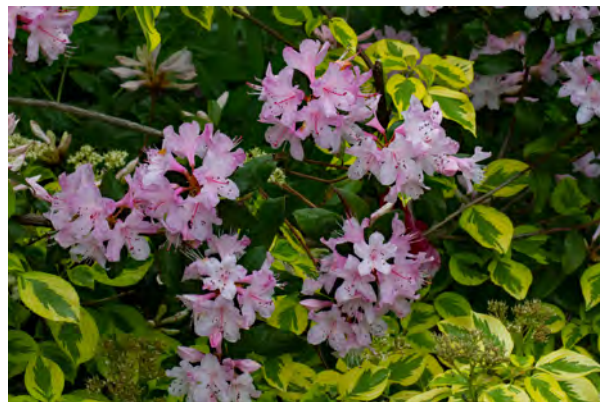
its flowers with our chapter members. Dozens and dozens of rhododendrons and azaleas remained tightly budded and quite unsociable for the event. Now let's compare the garden as of this year's first weekend of May. Bloom was at a peak and now this

past second weekend of May, many rhododendrons and azaleas are on the wane and a bounty of later hybrids and *Kalmia* are opening.



Yellow Lady's Slipper. Photo D. Jolley.

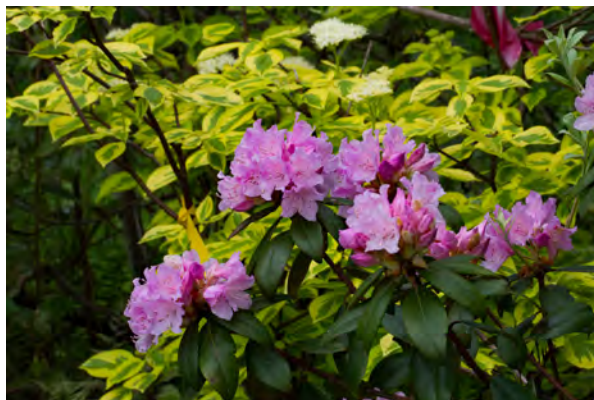
Companion plants have also provided the icing for this spring's cake. A single clump of yellow lady's slipper planted many years ago now boasts 46 flowers. Our native wildflowers are for the most part in seed pod stage which is testimony to the bountiful trilliums, jacks-in-the-pulpit, green dragon, spring beauties, squirrel corn flowers, and more that never experienced adverse conditions.



*R.* 'Wise Chap' and *Cornus* 'Golden Shadows'. Photo D. Jolley.

Still a favorite rhododendron here is *R.* 'Wise Chap'. We have distributed several plants to multiple ARS Chapters and it grows well in all sites here. The plant is a result of *R. minus* var. *chapmanii* pollen which I collected in the late 1980's near Hosford, Florida. Harry Wise pollinated one of his *R. minus* var. *minus* plants and the resulting seedlings have been heat and sun tolerant

as well as cold tolerant. In 30 years of growing this cross, I don't recall a winter temperature here that damaged flower buds. I later placed *R.* 'Wise Chap' pollen on my *R. minus* var. *minus* obtained from General Robert Porter decades ago. The resulting seedlings turned out to exhibit darker flowers, earlier



*R. chapmanii* x *R. minus* and *Cornus* 'Golden Shadows'. Photo D. Jolley.

blooming time, and a loss of the crinkly leaf texture. The new foliage of *Cornus alternifolia* 'Golden



Native azaleas at The Greenbrier. Photo D. Jolley.

*Shadows*' makes for a perfect backdrop for these two plants.

Probably the biggest pleasant surprise this spring was the show put on by our *R.* 'Mist Maiden'. In the fall newsletter I included a photo of 'Mist Maiden' sporting actually nice October trusses. Thinking this rhododendron was probably ruined for this spring, I

was surprised when ‘Mist Maiden’ has bloomed nicely and for nearly a month.

Finally, a work assignment took me to The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV. While not noted for its rhododendrons and azaleas, one planting included mature and full blooming, slightly fragrant and small flowered pink native azaleas: a nice surprise.

The editing of our garden continues with cutting down, limbing up, removing and adding items but working in it this spring has been a visual delight to ease any sore muscles.

### IN THE CROZET GARDEN by Lloyd Willis

As I sit down to write this article, it is a very wet with dew May 7, 2019, at 10 am. Maybe the grass will be dry enough to mow today by 11 am. Aren’t gardeners a hopeful lot?



Lloyd Willis.

We were able to take the morning walk in our garden and these are the reflections. We did have two yellow rhododendrons in bloom this year. One was ‘Big Deal’ and the other may be an older larger version but it did bloom earlier. Our earliest red rhododendrons such as ‘Taurus’ were a delight but are no longer in bloom. We are now enjoying several ‘Vulcan’, the red currently in bloom. The ‘Rabat’ rhododendron that came back with us from the Holden Arboretum a few years ago had its first lovely deep red truss. Of course, the three ‘Rabat’ that were bought this spring at a local store have just bloomed with wonderful deep purple trusses not the red it should have been.

The most common fern in the garden is the autumn fern (*Dryopteris erythrosora*) whose early reddish fronds are looking quite nice. We have plans to add more. They are waiting patiently in the holding bed. The most common hosta is ‘Patriot’. At present, about half of them are back to full size. The others were tasty food for the rabbits and deer. There are at least three varieties of bluebells currently in bloom. We are pleased.

This spring it appears that all of our Japanese maples made it through the winter. We are trying two of the ‘Orangeola’ Japanese maples in full sun. The one in the shade is doing well. There are still lots of Japanese maple seedlings not dug and potted but about thirty have gone into pots in the last eight days. As you come up our driveway, there is a mound covered with dwarf mondo grass and one weeping Japanese maple. From that mound, I have removed about 50 weed-tree seedlings each day for at least a week. Good news—there were only 49 seedlings in the bed to remove this morning.

So where is the humor in this article? About a week ago, Mrs. Willis (Margaret) asked a simple question, “How many hostas do you have in pots that you need to transplant?” Six to twelve was my answer. She then suggested that I go count them. I quietly went to count and at 42 decided to stop my count (and decided not to share my count with her). Later that day she asked, “How long have you had the three mouse ear hostas in pots to transplant?” I quickly answered that I wasn’t sure since I couldn’t remember if it had been two or three years. That evening when Margaret went to water aerobics, I got the three mouse ear hostas planted in a triangle shape in an area we walk by each day. She saw them at dusk when she returned. However, when she came home and started texting the children and grandchildren, she did not tell me that she had seen the new planting. While she was texting, I went outside and put the three hostas in a straight line. When she left the next morning, she noted to herself that the arrangement had been changed. While she was gone, I added another four mouse ear hostas and now it again looked like a triangle. This arrangement was pleasing to both of us. Since none of my excellent helpers were available, I had gone ahead and planted these by myself. Seven plants—seven plantings when I have a helper. Seven plants—49 plantings since my helpers weren’t available.



**Remember all photos can be seen in color and ENLARGED at MACARS.ORG. Click on Newsletter on left panel.**

**PHOTOS FROM MAC SPRING MEETING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE**



David Taylor auctioning plants.



Speaker Linda Seaman on McIntire Botanical Garden.



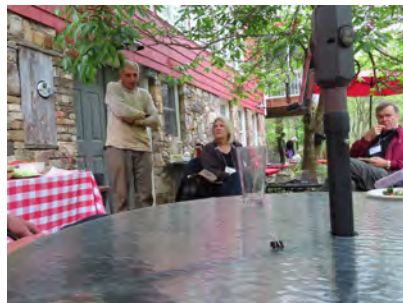
Lloyd Willis displaying a rhododendron.



Fran Boninti's garden statuary. Photo D.Taylor.



Fran's wildflower glade. Photo J. Hammer.



Fran Boninti's back patio. Photo D. Taylor.



Toby Zakin's rhododendrons. Photo David Taylor.



Margaret Willis, Debby Sauer, and Theresa Brents at Toby Zaiken's. Photo D. Taylor.



Waterfall in Toby Zakin's garden. Photo S. McDonald.



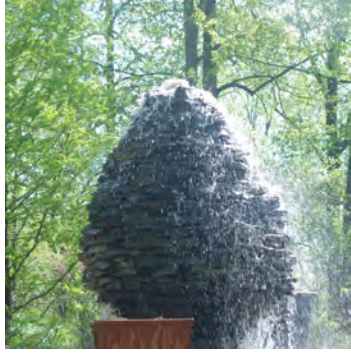
Sharon Horn, guest Jowanda Sampson and family. Photo by S. McDonald.



Touring the Zakin garden. Photo S. McDonald.



Zakin home. Photo S. McDonald.



Jay Gillenwater's stone fountain. Photo S. McDonald.



A grand view at Jay Gillenwater's. Photo S. McDonald



Rhododendrons in Jay Gillenwater's garden. Photo by Jeanne Hammer.



Lovely garden path In Jay Gillenwater's garden. Photo by Jeanne Hammer.



Lloyd Willis and Dave Horn in Jay Gillenwater's garden. Photo by J. Hammer.



Margaret and Lloyd Willis in Jay's garden. Photo by J. Hammer.





Rhododendron in Jay's garden. Photo by David Taylor.



Azalea 'George Lindley Taber' in Jay's garden. Photo D. Taylor.



Rock collection display. Photo D. Taylor.



Part of Jay Gillenwater's nursery and his view. Photo D. Taylor.



Jeanne Hammer in Jay's garden. Photo S. McDonald.



Jay doesn't want us to get lost! Photo by S. McDonald.



*Acer palmatum* specimen in the Kramer garden. Photo D. Taylor.



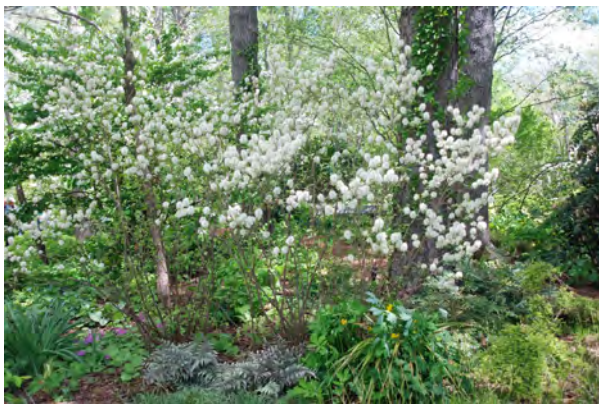
Yellow leaved *Hosta* in the Kramer garden. Photo D. Taylor.



Vista with azaleas at Kramer's. Photo D. Taylor.



Cathy Kramer's fine specimen of Lady Banksia rose. Photo D. Taylor.



*Fothergilla* in the Cathy Kramer's spring garden. Photo S. McDonald.



View from Kramer garden. Photo S. McDonald.



MAC members touring the Kramer garden. Photo S. McDonald.



Formal garden at Kramer's. Photo S. McDonald.



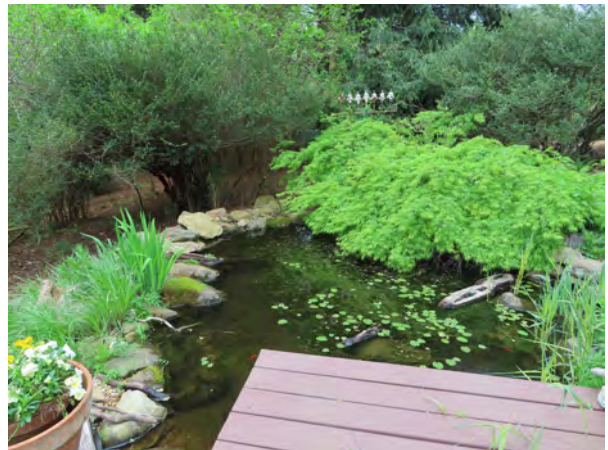
Rhododendron in Fran Boninti's garden. Photo J. Hammer.



*Phlox divaricata* in Fran Boninti's garden. Photo by D. Taylor.



Fran's woodland garden. Photo D. Taylor.



Fran's fish pond and water garden. Photo D. Taylor.

**Memberships and renewals should be sent to our Membership Chairman Jeanne Hammer at 231 N Robinson Dr, Macon, NC 27551.**

Annual membership dues are \$40 per year.

Miscellaneous inquiries may be sent to the editor (address below) for forwarding to proper individual.

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