

The Rootball News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER — THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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Happy Holidays!

Picture Perfect Weekend in Ohio

On Friday, May 21, The Midwest Chapter embarked on one of its most adventurous trips, visiting the Holden Arboretum and The David G. Leach Research Station in Madison, Ohio.

We also visited a spectacular private garden and still had time for shopping sprees at two garden nurseries.

They say timing is everything and that certainly was the case with our trip. The rhododendrons were at peak bloom and although it was a rainy weekend, we were extremely fortunate as all of the rain was during the evenings.

The motor coach arrived at our hotel late Friday afternoon after picking up 16 members at two pick-up points in the Chicago area. Total driving time was approximately 7 hours but the time went by quickly with all of the gardening talk going on.

After a night filled with heavy rainstorms, Saturday morning was bright and sunny to our relief. We boarded our bus for a short ride to The Holden Arboretum where two guides met us at the entrance. After a brief introduction to the arboretum, we were split into two groups and led through the rhododendron gardens.

The Holden Arboretum has a splendid collection of rhododendrons and azaleas with many of the plants towering over us as we strolled throughout the gardens. The gardens are in a beautiful setting amidst a small lake and creeks that were roaring with the recent rains. Quite a picturesque setting to say the least!

After spending a couple of hours at the gardens, we boarded the bus after a quick lunch and visited a private garden nearby.



5-21-04
traveling in style!



The bus is jam-packed with plants to bring home

Sited at the foot of a large hill on 17 acres of wooded terrain, this garden truly takes your breath away as you enter through the front gates. Many flowering and hardwood trees along with a wide variety of rhododendrons, azaleas, conifers, and perennials are blended together creating a magnificent garden.

The design of the garden invites strolling through grassy pathways and along wide sweeping borders with a visual surprise at each turn. All of the plants are sited perfectly with a combination of color and texture creating a truly spectacular site.

We were led on tours by the three gardeners that tend the garden and one of us even got the VIP golf cart limo treatment! (See photo of Etta Gray).

The owner of the garden, who prefers to remain anonymous, opens this garden primarily to visitors with a deep interest in horticulture. We were very fortunate to have this garden on our tour and are thankful to the owner and staff for being so generous with their time.

Our next stop was Bluestone Perennials where we loaded up on perennials and small woody plants. The retail greenhouse was enormous with all of their perennials arranged alphabetically for easy shopping. There was also an area with small woody plants including deciduous azaleas. Everything was grown in 3 and 4-inch pots so our purchases did not take up much room in the bus.

On Saturday evening we held a chapter dinner where Dr. Steve Krebs, head of The David Leach Research Station attended with his two assistants, Ami De La Fuente and Don Whitney. Each sat at one of the three dinner tables sharing their expertise with us and was very interested in what we are growing in our locale.

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A breathtaking sight



perfect blooms



Etta's chauffeur

► OHIO (continued from page 1)

This set the tone for what was to come on Sunday morning when we visited The David Leach Research Station after a visit to the Girard Nursery.

The Girard Nursery kindly opened early for us on Sunday morning. When our bus arrived, we must have appeared like a cage of mice let loose as we scattered throughout the nursery looking for plants to purchase.

Finally when things calmed down somewhat, we were taken on a tour of the display gardens by a member of the Girard family. The garden included many unusual conifers as well as azaleas and rhododendrons. We then headed off to our last visit, The David Leach Research Station, after stuffing our bus to the gills with plants.

Steve Krebs and his staff greeted us upon our arrival at the research station and guided us through the 30-acre property, which was donated, to The Holden Arboretum in 1986. David Leach selected this site in the early 1970's for it's sandy loam along with a lake moderated climate ideal for growing rhododendrons.

THOUGHTS WHILE ON THE BUS

By Beth Paschall

*My heart leaps up when I behold
The greenness of the earth.
The leaves invisible for months
Miraculously appear.
All this free gift spread out for us
The meanest and the great,
Reminding us that God's grace comes
Unearned, no trumpets,
Quiet joy.*

Nearly 12 acres of the grounds are display areas separated into strolling gardens with approximately 2000 rhododendrons. Some of the rhododendrons are over 50 years old and include the original Leach hybrids.

Our tour also included the nearly 5 acres of field growing space where approximately 8000 rhododendrons are being evaluated. For lovers of rhododendrons, this was like looking into a crystal ball seeing what plants are being evaluated for future introduction. The timing was perfect since the plants were at peak bloom giving us a rare opportunity to see what lies ahead in the future world of rhododendrons. Yes, more yellows are on the way!

One interesting study the research station is in the midst of conducting is the benefit of deadheading. In areas of the display garden where 3 mature plants of the same variety are growing together, only two of the three plants are deadheaded and interestingly to date there does not seem to be any difference in bloom quantity. This research is continuing.

All good things must come to an end and after spending a couple of hours at the research station; we boarded our bus for the return trip home.

A lot of work goes into putting a trip like this together and a special thanks to John Golab and Barbara Wetzel for making the arrangements. We all had a memorable time.

*A Perfect Day
Had by All*

Holden Arboretum



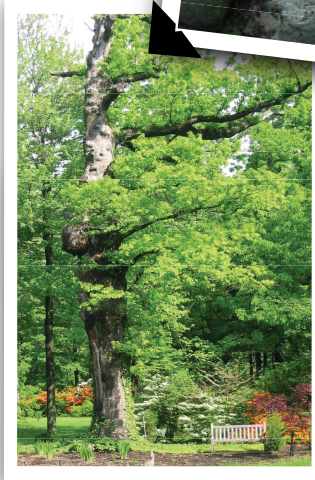
Part of the group



A spectacular sight



Everestianum



300 year old oak tree



Dr. H. C. Dresselhuys

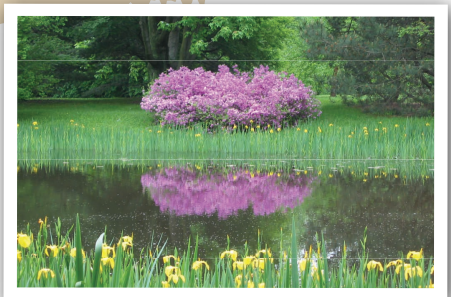
David G. Leach Research Station



Steve Krebs



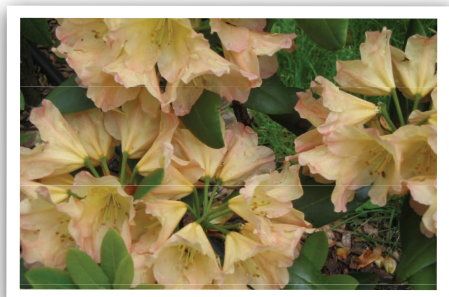
In peak bloom



Elsie Lee's reflection of beauty



A sniff of Elsie Lee



Under evaluation

Letter

from the president



winter • 2004

Greetings from western Michigan. It is an honor and a privilege to be president of the Midwest Chapter of the ARS. Thanks to the members for giving me this opportunity. If you have any questions or comments about our chapter, please feel free to contact me or any of our board members. We want to hear from you.

I also want to thank Fred Stanton for stepping up and accepting the position of vice president, Roger Dunlap for staying on as VP, Tony Greco as secretary, Tad Dauksza as membership chairman and Ken Kasza as temporary treasurer until we find a replacement. Kenny has filled this position for many years and decided it's time to take a break. So any members interested in this position please contact any board member or me. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped out at our annual plant sale. You all are truly needed.

Now that the fall season is upon us and winter is just around the corner, plans for the upcoming season are in the making. Our winter meeting is expected to be in February, plant sale scheduled for Mothers Day weekend and a overnight trip to northern Michigan in June. Thanks to Roger Dunlap for organizing this trip. Two years ago we visited western Michigan here in Saugatuck, and this past season it was Ohio. Thanks to our past president John Golab for getting the buses rolling, so lets remember to keep them rolls to a new destination each year.

This past August, we had an exceptionally memorable trip to Monmouth, Illinois for our summer meeting. Terrific weather, great meals, beautiful gardens and a timely well deserved ice cream stop. Thanks to Fred Stanton and Jim Blender for hosting this event.

I encourage all of our members to get involved with our activities. The trips we have and our meetings are well worth it. Meeting new friends, discovering different ideas for your own garden and let's not forget the possibility of obtaining an unexpected plant.

Finally I encourage our members to take some time out this winter and submit an article or some photos of your garden for *The Rootball News*. Tony Greco will gladly assist anyone willing to participate. Your experiences with rhododendrons and azaleas are priceless. Please feel free to share your stories with all of us.

John Migas

Midwest Chapter President

ARS & ASA

CONVENTIONS

By Tad Dauksza

There's nothing quite like an American Rhododendron Society (ARS) or the Azalea Society of America (ASA) convention!

It's a great big family reunion of sorts, an exciting kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, and smells, and an unusual exposure to the world of rhododendrons, azaleas, annuals, perennial, woodland flowers, trees and other shrubs all rolled up into one wonderful experience.

These conventions are many things. They are hectic, informative, nostalgic, very friendly, fun. You walk a lot—great exercise after breakfast. You sit a lot—on the bus. You talk a lot. (And you've never lived until you and some 45 other Rhodoholics scramble on and off the bus time and time again—school days of old).

Seminars by great speakers about subjects they know first hand from experience. Happy hours. Waiting in line. Book sales. Eating. Clapping. Getting up early. Going to bed late.

Losing your nametag. Speeches. Reports. Laughing. Reminiscing. Taking pictures. Packing and Unpacking. Rain. Heat. Meetings. Door prizes. Auctions. Awards. Checking in and out. Rushing to catch the plane. Looking for the closest in parking place. Loading the copious amount of plants that you bought. Elevator rides. Trying to read/decipher plant tags. Trying as heck to recall people's names.

You ooh and ah through gardens, arboretums that you wished your garden would look like but never does. Rhodies, azaleas, companion plants; you jot their names. You see breathtaking sights—mountains, lakes, sunrises and sunsets.

And then there's the Plant Sale! A no-holds barred battle royal of normally nice civil folks temporarily crazed by the thought that someone else might get the plants he or she can't live without. Waiting for the plant sale to open (usually after dinner) is like watching a group of great white sharks circling for the kill on the Discovery channel. The tactics of the veteran plant sale shopper on out-maneuvering, out-conniving (that plant does not do well) should be studied as to what drives us to this madness.



“ARS and ASA members are the greatest in the world...Nowhere is the charm and friendliness of members more apparent than at our conventions.”

Rhodoholics go to great lengths in driving long, long distances, emptying the trunks of their cars for more room, packing the plants (UPS should study the methods), it's a yearly event after all. What's the normal response you usually hear - "I don't know where I am going to plant these!!"

But the main attraction of the convention is "People".

ARS and ASA members are the greatest in the world. I never met a member I didn't like. Nowhere is the charm and friendliness of members more apparent than at our conventions.

Attendees come from all areas of this globe—all walks of life. Some are professional—many are amateurs. You see old friends—and make many, many new ones. You place their faces on the articles that they wrote in our Journal or The Azalean, their gardens that you have visited on the tours; you thank them for sharing their corner of the world with you. You meet our "Volunteer leaders". You hear about where we're heading and where we have been. You hobnob with the greats, and the greats-to-be. You talk with legends. You stand and pay tribute to the people who have made our societies what they are today.

A lot of truly dedicated people knock themselves out to make our conventions exciting and trouble-free. They spend an unbelievable number of hours to accommodate a very diverse group of people. It's a frustrating, Herculean task—but some-

how, they do it, never asking for dime in return. We are lucky that we have human beings like that.

If you like Rhodies and Azaleas, you'll like an ARS or ASA convention. If you like new things, new places, new excitements, you'll enjoy an ARS or ASA convention. If you like people, you'll love an ARS or ASA convention.

On behalf of the Lake Michigan Chapter of ASA, I cordially welcome all my friends in ARS and ASA to attend the annual ASA convention scheduled for May 19-22, 2005 in Holland, Michigan.

From Evanston to Easton

The following letter is from Reta Wells-Howell to Tad Dauksza about her gardening experiences in Easton, Pennsylvania, where she and her husband David have recently relocated from Evanston, Illinois.



Dear Tad,

I enjoyed your note and am pleased with the idea of writing about my garden adventures here in my new home in Easton, Pennsylvania.

As you know, David and I moved to Easton, PA exactly a year ago. Before that move, we had gradually uprooted as many plants as we could take from our Evanston garden. Fortunately, it was overcrowded, so that they were hardly missed. We took many rhododendrons and perennials in several U-Hauls and gradually planted them in our new garden in Easton. I really loved my Evanston garden and parting from it was difficult, so it helped to bring some of my favorites to my new home.

One of the first things I planted were bulbs and that was a rude awakening. I couldn't use my bulb planter or even a small shovel. After about a half inch, I hit rock. For every cup of dirt, I removed at least two cups of rock. David and I soon realized why the former owner had left behind a 7-foot iron bar – to pry rocks out of the ground. Most holes are dug by me, on my knees, using a three-pronged fork and hand shovel with major assistance from David and the pry bar. We are situated on a rocky, wooded hillside – a beautiful location – but not a gardener's paradise. Our neighbors think we're crazy.

We have a large herd of deer roaming our hillside which complicates matters further. So our garden is limited to a small fenced in enclosure around our swimming pool. We recently had a stone wall built around the garden area and a new stone patio laid. It was built by a landscape designer, Bruce Kayser, who is a member of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Rhododendron Society of which we are now members. The garden is still a work in progress but it is pretty and we are proud of our work.

We have had an excessive amount of rain this year and last year – that after a 3-4 year drought. Since all of our water comes from a well, we do not want a garden which will need an excessive amount of water to keep it going. I had no idea how fortunate I was to live in Evanston with real dirt and a fairly predictable weather. On the plus side we do have the deer, wild turkey, owls and an occasional bear. On the minus side we have the rocks, poison ivy, deer ticks, skunks, moles and voles. Life is not boring.

We really do enjoy living in Pennsylvania. Easton is about half the size of Evanston and has many lovely, historic homes. We overlook a valley, which used to be farmland but is now full of houses and neighbors from New Jersey and New York. When we need a big-city fix, we go to New York or Philadelphia which are about 70 miles away. There are lots of activities to keep us occupied. Last week, we helped a local winery harvest grapes!

So, hello to all of our old friends in the Midwest Chapter. Hope to see some of you at upcoming conventions.

Regards,

Reta Wells-Howell



Mammoth Meeting in Monmouth

Fred Stanton hosted the summer meeting this year on August 7 and 8 at Monmouth College that included an overnight stay to allow enough time for all of the activities Fred planned.

After a chapter meeting on Saturday afternoon, Fred arranged for a guided tour of the Mormon Arboretum in Nauvoo, Illinois. Arborist, Darrell Nelson of the Mormon Church, conducted the tour. The arboretum covers many acres and is sited on a hill overlooking the Mississippi River.

After the arboretum tour, the group continued on to fellow Midwest Chapter member Jim Blender's farm, to tour his garden and enjoy a wonderful dinner.

The following morning included a tour of Fred's garden prior to the return trip home to round out a most enjoyable weekend.

Not only was the weekend enjoyable, it was newsworthy where two of the local papers, *The Henderson County Quill* and *The Daily Review Atlas* ran articles with photos.

Thanks to Fred and Jim for their hospitality and hard work that went into making it a most enjoyable weekend.



New Officers

The following officers were elected at our summer meeting:

President – John Migas

VP Programs – Fred Stanton

VP Administration – Roger Dunlap

Secretary/Communications – Tony Greco

Membership – Tad Dauksza

Treasurer – Ken Kasza

Ken Kasza has served as our treasurer for several years and we are looking for a volunteer to assume this responsibility. Essentially, the treasurer controls the checkbook, which does not require a great amount of time. If interested, please contact Ken. In the meantime Ken will continue to serve in this capacity until a replacement is found.

THE BRONZE MEDAL



Midwest Chapter Bronze Medal Recipients

Roger Dunlap and Tony Greco were awarded Bronze Medals this past summer in recognition of their contributions to The ARS Midwest Chapter.

Congratulations and thanks for all you have done to better our chapter!



membership

The Midwest Chapter currently has 101 members, thanks in great part to Tad Dauksza's diligent work recruiting and working hard on getting renewals. At press time, there were still 27 members that have not renewed so please do so to remain current.

The Midwest Chapter welcomes the following new members that have joined our chapter this past year:

Kathleen Blinn, Marion, IN

Mary Drury, Wilmette, IL

Cara Lichtenstein, Highland Park, IL

Dr. David Lloyd, Lake Forest, IL

Kathryn Malecka, Chicago, IL

Kathleen Occhipinti, Chicago, IL

Patti Whittaker, Wanda, MN

The following members of our chapter have upgraded to Lifetime membership:

Susan Boatman

Tom Horner

Lloyd Hahn

Patrick Tatum



Coming Attractions



2005 Field Trip

Traverse City, Michigan

Preliminary plans are being made for a spring trip **June 10 - June 13** for a spectacular weekend in Traverse City, Michigan. The rhododendrons should be at peak bloom in northern Michigan so we'll have a second bloom season to enjoy.

Traverse City is located on the shore of Lake Michigan and enjoys a climate that is conducive to rhododendron culture. Located in zone 6b, we will see cultivars not easily grown in other Midwest locales.

Plans are to visit the garden of Ed Cole in nearby Empire, Michigan. Ed, a past member of the Midwest Chapter is currently a member of the Ann Arbor chapter. Ed has a fabulous garden on the shore of Lake Michigan that will be something to see.

We will also visit Roger Dunlap's summer home to see his rhododendron collection and at least one other garden and a plant nursery. Roger is putting this trip together which promises to be another memorable weekend so mark your calendar accordingly for a fun weekend.

We are planning to drive up in our own cars and will offer arrangements for car-pooling, as we get closer to the event. Traverse City is a vacation destination and has exceptional golf and fishing for those who may want to extend their stay.

More details will be available at our winter meeting next February.



2005

Plant Sale

The plant sale will take place at The Chicago Botanic Garden on **May 6 and 7** so mark your calendars accordingly. Plants once again will be purchased from three Michigan growers.



THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY MIDWEST CHAPTER



Purpose

A non-profit organization whose aim is to promote in the midwest region the objectives of The American Rhododendron Society, which are to encourage interest in and to disseminate knowledge about rhododendrons and azaleas. To provide a medium through which all persons interested in rhododendrons and azaleas may communicate and cooperate with others through education, meetings, publications, scientific studies, research and other similar activities.

Meetings

Meetings are held 4 times a year, generally in March, May, August and October. Members are encouraged to attend and participate in the transaction of business at these meetings and to profit by the knowledge gained from our knowledgeable members and Guest Speakers. *Visitors are always welcome!*

Membership

Membership is open to all persons interested in the growth and culture of rhododendrons and azaleas as provided by the Chapter By-Laws. Membership includes one year (4 quarterly issues) of the ARS Journal and affiliation with the chapter of your choice. Annual membership dues for an individual is \$35.00. Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact the Membership Chairperson whose name and address appears below.

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Calendar of Events

FEBRUARY

Winter Meeting

2nd or 3rd weekend in February at The Chicago Botanic Garden

MAY

Plant Sale

May 7 and 8 at the Chicago Botanic Garden

JUNE

Traverse City Field Trip

June 10 - June 13



The Rootball News

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