

The Rootball News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER — THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



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Chapter Plant Sale on Mothers Day Weekend

Do you need to rid your garden of some rhodie toxic assets after our last brutal winter?
Is your garden in need of a stimulus plan to add some new rhodies to your collection?
If so, plan on attending our annual plant sale and truss show and pick up some new rhododendrons to renew your garden.

The Midwest Chapter's annual plant sale and truss show will take place on Mothers Day weekend, May 9 and 10 at The Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) in Glencoe, Illinois. Hours are between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM each day.

Mother's Day weekend is one of the busiest at The CBG so we're anticipating a large turnout from what we experienced last year. We once again will accept credit cards which we feel greatly helped our sales last year.

We encourage all members to participate in the truss show as it helps acquaint visitors with the diversity of rhododendrons and azaleas we grow in our Midwest gardens. If you plan to participate, arrive prior to 10:00 AM to allow enough time to place your trusses in the provided vases and prepare name cards for each.

John Honkisz, our plant sale coordinator, has once again selected a nice variety of rhododendron cultivars from Rosebay Nursery in Michigan. Refer to the list of varieties that were ordered, but as always, there may be substitutions due to availability. Also, some of the varieties

are in limited quantities so arrive at the sale early for best selection.

John Migas will once again provide a variety of evergreen azaleas for our sale from his nursery in Saugatuck, Michigan. John once again volunteered to deliver the plants from Rosebay to The CBG on Friday, May 8.

If by chance you need a large order of plants, contact John Honkisz at 708-499-0542, jhonkisz@yahoo.com to see if he can preorder them for you and have them held at the sale. All preorders must be purchased by whoever places the order and the price will be determined at the sale based on size and variety. Last year's prices were in the \$35-\$45 range.

We always need volunteers to set up the plant sale on Friday and close the show out on Sunday. If you can help out, contact John Honkisz.

The plant sale is our only event to raise revenue for our chapter's programs so we ask for all of our members support. Bring some friends and take home a new rhododendron. What a perfect Mother's Day gift!



2009 PLANT SALE VARIETIES

Biloxi Blues
Bixby
Calsap
Capistrano
Dorothy Swift
English Roseum
Roseum Elegans
Faisa
Haaga
Karen Seleger
Olga Mezitt
Pana
Pearce's American Beauty
Spring Dawn
Today & Tomorrow
Weston's Pink Diamond
Yaku Princess
Yaku Prince
Janet Blair
Assorted Evergreen Azaleas

Letter

from the president

FRED STANTON



Following in my grandparents' and parents' footsteps, I gradually became a gardener in the middle 1960s. Early endeavors were helping my parents with a vegetable garden and observing my father's efforts to landscape our yard. I was mildly disappointed when nearly all of the deciduous plants and trees became bare and there were no longer any leaves on the plants. One day in driving around Monmouth, I observed a large green-leafed plant in the midst of winter and thought that it was very impressive and incredible in that it kept its leaves all winter. It wasn't long before I planted four new Rhododendrons southeast of our house under a spreading Sugar Maple. Two of the four slowly died and the remaining two survived and became quite large as the years went by. One of the plants is Ignatius Sargent and the other is Roseum Elegans.

As the years went by my enthusiasm increased as did my experimenting in growing many different Rhododendron varieties along with deciduous Azaleas. Early on I realized that nearly all evergreen Azaleas don't survive in our winters, but several of the Deciduous Azaleas grew to heights of 15 feet tall and 10 feet across and were spectacular when in bloom.

At some point in the early 1980s I learned about the Midwest Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and that they met at the Chicago Botanical Garden on the north edge of Glencoe, IL. I was delighted in finding the Rhododendron enthusiasts, sharing our experiences in growing Rhododendrons and our successes and failures, comparing notes on old and new varieties and becoming friends through the years.

As some of you know, there are a number of us that are still members of our chapter since the early days. Many of the members we have acquired over the past twenty-five years have become dedicated members and some have gone on their way. As with most organizations, membership is difficult to maintain or to increase in recent years. Perhaps with the downturn in our economy, we will see a greater interest in gardening and growing such premier plants as the Rhododendrons and Azaleas.

The coming spring will undoubtedly reflect our disappointment in the loss of some bloom, but I hope that overall our 'ironclads' and hardier varieties will still present us with their beautiful compliment of blooms to our spring season.

Hope to see many of you at our plant sale Mother's Day weekend, May 9th and 10th!

Vireyas From The Land Down Under

On October 10, 2008, we were fortunate to have Kaye Hagen, a Vireya expert from Tasmania and past president of The Australian Rhododendron Society address our chapter. Her presentation was about Vireyas which she grows at her home in Hobart, Tasmania.



Kaye's presentation included an overview of the growing conditions in her garden and the cultural requirements needed to grow these colorful plants.

The average temperatures in Hobart are between 50°F and 70°F with only approximately 24" of annual rainfall. Temperatures rarely exceed 95°F and the record low is +19°F.

Her presentation featured many beautiful photos of her plants that include a plethora of vibrant colors. reds, yellows, oranges, pinks, bi-colors and so forth. In addition to their wonderful colors, vireyas have a beautiful fragrance.

It was interesting to learn some vireyas bloom three times a year so she has plants in bloom literally all year long. Also, some varieties exhibit a color shift depending which season they are in bloom which adds to their interest.

A lunch, arranged by Fred Stanton our new chapter president, preceded the presentation with approximately 30 people in attendance.

A special thanks to Marty Anderson who helped arrange for Kaye to address our chapter.

Gene Paschall In The News

Gene Paschall's garden continues to receive well-deserved publicity and recognition with the recent feature article in the March 2009 issue of *Better Homes & Gardens*.

The entire country now can read about Gene's fabulous garden; something we have been fortunate to witness for many years.

In addition to the beautiful color photos of his garden, including one of his own hybrids, the article includes Gene's growing mix recipe and his suggestions for successful rhododendron culture in our harsh Midwest climate.

Congratulations, Gene!



Midwest Chapter Participates in CBG Lecture Series

By Fred Stanton

Commencing at 2 o'clock on February 22, 2009, three members of the Midwest Chapter of the A.R.S. made presentations for the benefit of Chicago Botanical Garden members and for chapter members.



The first presentation was by John Golab, a long time member of our chapter (25 plus years) and who has served as chapter president several times. John showed pictures of many of his showy Rhododendrons that he has grown in his yard in Barrington, IL, giving information relative to the color of the flowers and hardiness of some of the plants. He expressed our concern for the spring, 2009 flowering season, knowing that some of our plants will have experienced bud blast (ruination of the flowers by the extreme cold experienced during January, 2009). John also discussed the differences between lepidotes (small leafed) and elepidotes (large leafed) Rhododendrons and variation of their shade requirements according to the variety.

The second presentation was by John Honkisz, who is a fairly recent member of our chapter, but has shown great interest in growing rhododendrons and azaleas. John gave an in depth discussion of the proper types of soil to use in which to successfully grow Rhododendrons. John also elaborated on not only the proper chemical combination that affords the most amenable soil in which the Rhododendron thrive, but also the actual source of those acidic, aerating, fast draining materials.

The last presentation was by Fred Stanton who showed his pictures of Kew Gardens taken in late April, early May of 2007. It turned out to be one of the best times to see a majority of the Rhododendrons and Azaleas in full bloom as the photos revealed. The venerable 150 plus year old Rhododendrons that were planted at Kew Gardens in the 1800s towered over 30 feet tall! Hard to believe that some of our varieties will actually become that large, if they live that long. Fred does have several large Rhododendrons in his yard that are nearly 40 years old and at least 12 feet tall, probably not too bad considering our extreme Illinois weather.

GET THE Scoop

Midwest Chapter Spring Garden Visits

Gene Paschall and Ken Kasza have generously agreed to host tours of their lovely gardens on Sunday, May 17. The parameters for the tour are as follows:

- The tour will take place from 12 Noon to 4 p.m. with time split equally and sequentially for each garden.
- The first garden tour will start at 12 Noon at Gene Paschall's garden and will include lunch.
- At 2 p.m. the guests will drive to Ken's house (less than a mile away) where they will enjoy dessert and a tour of his garden.

If you plan to attend, please contact Gene or Beth Paschall at 708-448-5798 no later than May 10 so they can make luncheon plans.

Gene Paschall
7640 123rd Place
Palos Heights, IL
708-448-5798

Ken Kasza
11723 Holmes Avenue
Palos Park, IL
708-448-1426

Calendar of Events

May 9-10

Chapter Plant Sale and Truss Show
The Chicago Botanic Garden
Glencoe, Illinois
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

May 17

Chapter Members Garden Visits
Noon - 4:00 PM
Gene Paschall & Ken Kasza's Residences

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 here.

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