

# The Rootball e-News



## The Rootball e-News

*In an attempt to communicate with our Midwest Chapter members in a more timely and frequent manner, we developed an electronic version of our chapter newsletter, The Rootball News with this being the first issue.*

*The content will include the latest news from our chapter, along with upcoming events and activities.*

*Sending chapter newsletters via e-mail also saves us postal and imaging expenses and is environmentally friendly.*

*We welcome articles and news from our members for future issues and appreciate any comments and suggestions you may have.*

**Tony Greco**  
Editor



Gibraltar

*a message from the president . . .*



## Looking Ahead

This is my first but not my last communication to all of our Midwest Chapter Members. I am honored that I have been elected to serve as your President. It is not often one receives the opportunity to lead such a distinguished organization. I have to be open with you and state that I did not seek to be an officer of the organization much less the President when I joined the ARS, but when asked I felt obligated and enthused to serve for two reasons.



First, all the members of the ARS that I have called upon since I have been a member have been extremely helpful to me no matter how mundane the question. I have not found anyone who was not willing to help. I felt a need and responsibility to return the advice given to me then I joined.

Secondly, I want to make certain that I do my part to carry on the fine tradition of the Society and to spread the word and knowledge about our beautiful plants. Too many individuals in the gardening world from the Midwest have been discouraged growing rhododendrons because they either heard that they were too difficult to grow in the Midwest or they tried and failed. I have found this to be true for both many professionals as well as amateurs.

I want to make sure that we are able to guide these individuals and help them achieve success with our favorite plants. When I look out the windows of our home at this time of year and see the rainbow of exciting colors, I just want to call anyone who will listen to me and tell them to come and see what we can accomplish with our plants in the Midwest. Now on to the business of the Chapter.

*continued on following page*

## Looking Ahead

*continued from preceding page*

The last few years have been lean ones in terms of membership and participation for garden clubs and related organizations and ours is no exception. One of the early goals of the officers of the Chapter is to establish a current membership list. I will report to you once we know that number. There is no doubt that the membership has declined over the last several years for a number of reasons and notably the poor economy has contributed to this decline. Also, the participation of the existing members has declined as well with lower than desired attendance and participation in Chapter activities.

While the officers are still in the process of evaluating and prioritizing our goals and plans, clearly we must find avenues to attract new members, create interest and value for existing members to remain with the Chapter and to increase communication within our organization.



I am at an early stage of laying out plans to accomplish these and other goals and welcome the direct input from all our members as we move forward. Please contact me (630-215-5022) ([t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net)) with your suggestions now or at any time in the future. Your input can only make us better. Our Chapter serves eight states which makes the need for more effective communication even more of a challenge.

Summarized below are some of my early thoughts on goals and plans for our Chapter. I am writing to you before these have been fully developed and reviewed by the other officers so please consider this as a draft. I will write to you again after our plans have been fully developed and hopefully it will contain some of your direct input.

### **Determine Status of Our Organization and Activities**

1. We are currently updating our membership list between what the National organization shows and what our officers have on record. This is not as easy as it sounds. We will send out a copy once the process is completed.
2. By-Laws - I just received a copy of the Chapter bylaws (1986) from Laura Grant, Executive Director of the ARS. We were not entirely sure that such a document existed.
3. Officer Duties - Each officer of the Midwest Chapter is formalizing what they consider their responsibilities are as officers of the Chapter.
4. Finances - Our Treasurer, Dave Hinde, is finalizing a statement of our Chapter's finances after our recent plant sale. We don't spend much in any one year so our outgo is small. Once we all know where we are then we can consider if there are areas where we can invest in our future.

### **Grow Our Membership**

Once we determine an accurate membership list we can develop plans to increase our numbers. Here are some brief thoughts on activities we are considering:

1. Contact previous members to encourage renewing their membership.
2. Create a "validation list" within our Chapter of individuals who would be willing to talk to prospective members.
3. Update our chapter and recruiting literature. We can use the National Literature (I just received a shipment from Laura Grant) but we need a few pieces that are unique to our members and our specific growing conditions.

*continued on following page*

## Looking Ahead

*continued from preceding page*

5. Contact the major botanical gardens and arboretums in our areas To determine if they would be willing to have our chapter members give classes on growing rhododendrons. Too many individuals have said that they either failed at growing these plants or heard that you can't grow them in our climates. We just completed a successful garden tour through the Open Days program and demonstrated to hundreds of visitors what we can do with rhododendrons in our climates.
6. Create a "mentoring" program within our chapter to attract new members and to directly give advice to new members so that their goals with rhododendrons can be achieved.

### Communication and Programs

1. Consider additional avenues of communication such as audio and/or video conferencing with our members. Our geography is so vast that individuals can't be expected to attend all events and meetings in person. A picture is worth a thousand words.
2. Meetings - The officers will be meeting shortly to discuss plans for the remainder of the year and our future. Once that is held we will publish Chapter meeting dates. One to put on your calendar is the National meeting next year. Held jointly with the Azalea Society in Asheville, NC, it should be exciting event with large attendance.
3. We could add video instruction on our web site regarding our rhododendrons such as planting, pruning, mulching, fertilizing, plant sources, etc. I realize much of this is old hat to many of you but to a new member the information would be much appreciated. One thing I have learned since being a member is that there are many ways to be successful growing rhododendrons.

I am excited about our Chapter and its future. Just viewing the plants in our garden makes me want to share our knowledge with others and give them the gift that we all enjoy. I have been growing deciduous azaleas for approximately fifteen years and a few rhododendrons such as PJM's. Membership in the Chapter has allowed me to vastly expand my horizons successfully to a much broader variety. I should have studied botany and horticulture in school but a couple of degrees in chemistry along with some landscape photography hobbies have served my gardening interests well. I look forward to your input and meeting and talking with each of you in the future.

Warmest Regards,

Ted Nyquist



*English Roseum*

### Midwest Chapter Officers

Ted Nyquist  
President  
[t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net)

David Hinde  
Treasurer  
[dwh123@charter.net](mailto:dwh123@charter.net)

Susan Garland  
Membership  
[s-boatman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:s-boatman@sbcglobal.net)

Anthony P. Greco  
Secretary/Communications  
[apgrec0@sbcglobal.net](mailto:apgrec0@sbcglobal.net)



**The Midwest Chapter ARS**  
[www.midwestars.or](http://www.midwestars.or)

*Editor/Design, A. P. Greco*