

The Rootball e-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER ARS

VOL I, NO 4, OCT 10, 2011



New Chapter Blog Site

The Midwest Chapter of the ARS now has its own blog.

In it we will be featuring our members' gardens, how-to tips, and comments on rhododendron events.

Check us out at: <http://midwestars.org/wordpress>

Anyone will be able to visit the blog but to make a posting will require a password.

Jack Strom, our webmaster, will shortly send a letter to each member with instructions on how to get one.

We're hopeful this blog will become a popular way our members can share and exchange information and ideas.



a message from the president . . .



The First Five Months

Your Chapter Officers met once again on September 23 at the home of Susan Garland in Winnetka, Illinois to continue to discuss and follow up on the programs that were initiated earlier in the year.

Susan reported on her efforts to confirm our current membership list and to contact previous members. Shortly after mailing the membership renewal letter, Susan reported that she has already received thirty seven renewal responses. If you have not heard from Susan yet, please contact her to receive your notice. Susan has called all present and past members from our 2010 and 2011 member lists and will now be contacting individuals from our 2009 list.

The revised copy for the recruiting brochure has been completed, thanks to considerable effort by John Golab. Final edits are being made in preparation for the completion of the related artwork and printing. We will announce when we have the brochure in hand so that those members who find this useful in recruiting new members may order copies.



Capistrano

In our continuing effort to increase communication within our Chapter, we are working on several initiatives. First we would like to profile a member of our Chapter in each Rootball Newsletter. I am asking for volunteers. If you or someone you know has made a contribution to further the genus Rhododendron that should be shared with other members, please let me know. I shall also be calling individual Chapter members to solicit contributions. (Ted Nyquist; 630-215-5022; email t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net).

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The First Five Months

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I have been calling each of our Chapter members that I have not met or heard from to get to know them better, explain what the Chapter is doing and to solicit their input as to how we can better fulfill their needs. With the wide geographic area we are responsible for, face to face communication is a challenge. Members would like to attend our meetings but distance makes it nearly impossible for many. With that in mind, we plan to hold a Chapter meeting next year outside of the greater Chicago area to try and give more of our members a chance to interact directly with each other. Several locals are under consideration.



Madrid

but will evolve and progress with time. Many of you are collectors and are involved in developing or have tested new hybrids for us to consider and this type of information would be excellent to place on the blog site. In a separate article, Tony Greco, our secretary, together with Jack Strom are going to describe the blog site, its goals and access in more detail.

Jack is also providing links to interesting and valuable videos on the selection, planting and caring for Rhododendrons on our Chapter web site www.midwestars.org that should be useful to current and future members alike.

In order to better accommodate the planning needs of our members, a calendar of events is being added to our Newsletter. We are in the process of scheduling a holiday party on Saturday, December 3 at Moretti's Restaurant in Schaunburg, IL. Details will be provided as plans are finalized.



Floda

Plans are also underway for our 50th Anniversary celebration in 2012 which will be reported later.

After I finish this article I am out to our garden on this fantastic autumn day to start preparing a garden bed for next year's Rhododendron plantings. Even though it is getting colder, I am already thinking spring and the beauty and excitement to come. Yesterday I traveled with John Golab and Tony Greco to Michigan to place the Chapter order for next year's plant sale to be held at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

I look forward to talking and meeting with more of our members as the holidays near.

Warmest Regards,

Ted Nyquist

Companion Plants with Rhododendrons

Plectranthus 'Mona Lavender'

If you're looking for a lovely plant that blooms from late summer to frost, you may want to search out a relatively new variety of Plectranthus, 'Mona Lavender'.

I came across this plant at a local nursery about 10 years ago and I've been growing it ever since. I was first attracted to its beautiful foliage; but it's the flowers that make this plant so special.

Mona Lavender is an annual, grows approximately 24 inches tall and likes dappled or even full shade. It's ideal planted among rhodies and when planted en masse creates an eye catching display.

Related to Swedish Ivy, Mona Lavender was developed in South Africa and introduced to the public in 1990. It's worth growing for the foliage alone, a nice glossy dark green with contrasting purple undersides. There will be some intermittent flowers in the summer, but as the days shorten it literally explodes with blooms before Labor Day.

This plant also makes a great container plant taking over for annuals that start fading in late summer. I've also read Mona Lavender is an excellent houseplant which I have not yet tried.

Mona Lavender may be difficult to find in garden centers in the spring, most likely because it's not flowering then, but many garden centers and big box stores carry it in the autumn along with other fall blooming plants. Since I like to plant these in drifts, I take cuttings in the fall to overwinter. They easily root within two weeks or so without a need for rooting hormone or special care.

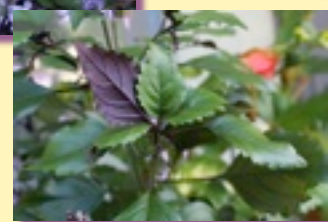
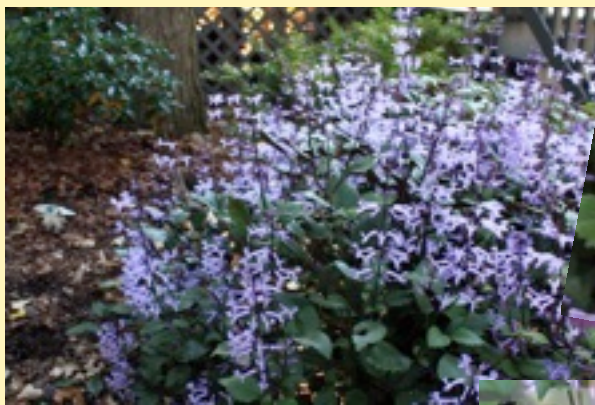
So if you're looking to add some late summer pizzazz to your garden, consider planting Mona Lavender. I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Tony Greco

A CALL FOR ARTICLES

To help make our newsletter more interesting and informative, we would like to include articles from our members about various topics related to rhododendrons. They can be about a favorite rhododendron or companion plant, photos of your garden or any topic you think fellow members might find of interest.

Send your articles, photos or ideas to the editor at <apgreco@sbcglobal.net>.



2012 Plant Sale Order

Three of our chapter's officers recently visited Rosebay Nursery in Saugatuck, Michigan to place our order for next spring's plant sale. The following list of plants includes several new varieties marked with an asterisk (*) that we will be offering for the first time.

You can find photos of some of these varieties on our website <midwestars.org>.

RED

Pearce's American Beauty
Commonwealth*
Keith Brown*
Landmark
Bixby (Evergreen Azalea)

PURPLE/LAVENDER

Tapestry
Minnetonka

WHITE

Calsap
Janet Blair
Sugar Puff

PINK

Wyandanch Pink
Mikkeli
Scintillation
Hot Dawn*
Weston's Pink Diamond
Besse Howells
Maximum Roseum
Tina Heinje*

YELLOW

Yellowstone*

PEACH

Percy Wiseman*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Holiday Party

Saturday, December, 3, 2011
PLACE: Moretti's Restaurant
Schaunburg, IL
TIME: 2:00 PM

Chapter Plant Sale and Truss Show

May 12 and 13, 2012
PLACE: Chicago Botanic Garden

Michigan Garden Visits

May 19, 20, 21, 2012
PLACE: Saugatuck/Holland, MI

Chapter 50th Anniversary Party

Date and Place: TBD

VIDEO

Click below
to see the late Hank
Schannen of
RareFind Nursery
talk about
rhododendrons on a
YouTube video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLQR6OCzdx8&feature=email>

Midwest Chapter Officers

Ted Nyquist, President
t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net

David Hinde, Treasurer
dwh123@charter.net

Susan Garland, Membership
s-boatman@sbcglobal.net

Anthony P. Greco, Secretary/Communications
apgreco@sbcglobal.com



The Midwest Chapter ARS
midwestars.org