

The Rootball e-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER ARS

VOL 2, NO 5, AUGUST 4, 2012



50th ANNIVERSARY PARTY

DATE:

Saturday, September 8, 2012

PLACE:

Edgewood Valley Country Club
7500 S. Willow Springs Road
LaGrange, IL
708-246-2800

TIME:

6:00 PM - Cocktails
7:00 PM - Dinner

COST:

\$40.00 Per Person
Cash Bar

RESERVE:

Make your check payable to

The Midwest Chapter ARS

Remit by August 25 to:

Anthony P. Greco
6497 Cherokee Drive
Indian Head Park, IL 60525
708-642-8782

apgreco@sbcglobal.net

Save The Date!

Midwest Chapter 50th Anniversary Dinner on September 8

*T*his year our chapter will commemorate it's 50th anniversary with a dinner on Saturday evening, September 8th. The dinner will be held at Edgewood Valley Country Club in LaGrange, Illinois. Cocktails are at 6:00 PM followed with dinner at 7:00 PM.

We are in the process of finishing our plans and want to make sure you reserve the date for this festive occasion. We have a lovely room reserved for the party with a private terrace overlooking the grounds for what promises to be an enjoyable evening.

The menu will include several entrees from which to select and if anyone has special dietary restrictions they can be accommodated.

The price per person is \$40.00 and includes soup or salad, entree, dessert, soft drinks, coffee/tea, gratuity and tax. There will also be a cash bar for cocktails and wine. Each attendee will receive a rhododendron that was especially selected for this occasion and purchased by the chapter from W. W. Nurseries and Research Center in Indiana, PA.

Please make your check out to Midwest Chapter ARS and mail it to Tony Greco by August 25. Refer to the sidebar on the left for details. If you can let Tony know your plans to attend beforehand, it will be very helpful for us to plan the evening since it is difficult to project how many members and guests will attend. Your check can then be sent later by August 25.

This event will provide a great opportunity to socialize with chapter friends and we're hopeful for a good turnout.

More details will follow as plans are finalized. Contact Tony Greco with any questions or suggestions.

THE MIDWEST CHAPTER

Celebrating
Fifty Years

by A. P. Greco

The Midwest Chapter of the ARS is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2012. Fifty years ago Dale McCurdy, a public school teacher from Aurora, Illinois, developed a strong fascination for rhododendrons which at the time were not widely grown in the upper midwest. He did extensive research to find cultural information for these plants and found very little available for our area. Dale met others from the Chicago area with similar interests leading to the formation of the Midwest Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

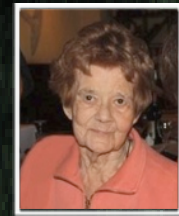
On February 14, 1962, the first meeting of the Midwest Chapter was called to order in The Morton Arboretum Library. Twenty-two people attended and with this meeting our chapter was born.

Mr. McCurdy became our chapter's first president. The story on page 3, reprinted from The April 16, 1962 ARS Quarterly Bulletin, includes an excerpt of a letter to the ARS from Dale McCurdy. His letter describes his goal to acquire more cultural information about growing rhododendrons in the Midwest and to disseminate this information to others. Also, included on this page are the chapter minutes from the first meeting.

We owe a lot to the founders of our chapter who indirectly introduced many of us to these wonderful plants. Their avid interest resulted in research advances to improve hardiness and encourage breeders to develop cold tolerant varieties for our growing area. Now, one can drive through virtually any midwest neighborhood on a spring day and see rhododendrons ablaze with color.

This is the legacy our charter members left us beginning fifty years ago.

IN MEMORIAM



KAY MOATS

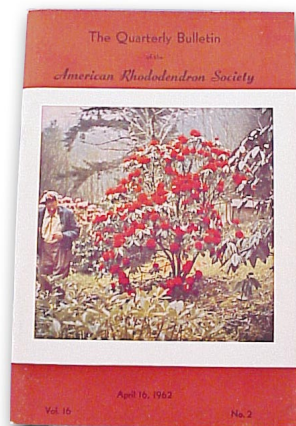
It was with deep sadness to learn Kay Moats, a longtime member of The Midwest Chapter, passed away on July 17.

Kay will be fondly remembered for her love of gardening. She was active with many garden organizations including The Midwest Chapter where she was a chapter member for 27 years, served as president, and was the recipient of the highest chapter award, The Bronze Medal.

Our deepest condolences go out to her family.

continued from page 2

Celebrating Fifty Years



The ARS Welcomes Midwest Chapter

[excerpt from a letter to the ARS from Dale McCurdy, April 16, 1962]

The Midwest Chapter was organized on February 14 by a group of enthusiastic rhododendron members at Aurora, IL. A need for this chapter is expertly given in the following excerpt from a letter received from Mr. Dale McCurdy who is now president of the Midwest Chapter.

"Many of us who have devoted a great deal of time and energy in trying successfully to grow rhododendrons and azaleas in this most trying of climates, have often discussed the advantages that would accrue, if somehow we could pool all the knowledge that has been gained in this area in growing these plants. Much of the contemporary knowledge and especially that concerning hardiness, is not applicable in our area, (the westward or windward side of The Great Lakes). In fact, a very large climatical differential exists between our area and those areas in Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, where so much progress has been made, of recent years in growing these magnificent plants. The information gained from these areas has been extremely helpful in our efforts, but so much of it has been gained in a climate tempered by the ameliorating effects of the Great Lakes. The products of our efforts are exposed to winds which have an unhindered continental sweep and are exposed consistently to very low winter temperatures. Consequently, there is a need to gather all the endemic "growing" information and to disseminate new information, peculiar to our area, as it develops. It is my firm belief that we are one of the real frontiers in rhododendron hybridization."

On March 15, 1962, the National Board of Directors unanimously voted approval to the Midwest Chapter and gave their heartiest welcome. 🍀

The Quarterly Bulletin of the
American Rhododendron Society
Vol. 16, No. 2
April 16, 1962



Minutes of Meeting
Midwest Chapter, The American Rhododendron Society
February 14, 1962

The first meeting of the Midwest Chapter of the ARS was called to order at 8:30 p.m. in the library of the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois, by the temporary chairman, Mr. Dale McCurdy.

Dale McCurdy introduced the members of the organization committee. He explained how and why the group started, emphasizing the importance of forming a chapter in the area of Chicago and Lake Michigan. The rest of the 22 people present introduced themselves.

The slate of officers was approved. President, Mr. Dale McCurdy, Vice-president, Mr. Allan Galloway, Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Audrey Halpern, Directors: Webster Crowley, Sol Halpern, Ray Michel and Carl Moser.

The By-laws were then approved.

There was a brief discussion of some of the possible activities of the chapter. Eldred Green felt that a bulletin would be an excellent means of communication. Al Galloway thought that the particular problems of our area should be of primary importance.

Sol Halpern showed slides sent to him by Orlando Pride of Butler, PA. Al Galloway, Ray Michel and Al Rouffa showed slides of some of the plantings around their homes. Web Crowley showed slides of a few of the species that the Arboretum is experimenting with.

After refreshments were served, a tour of the Arboretum's greenhouse and propagating facilities was enjoyed by the members.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Halpern, Secretary-Treasurer

FEB 14 1962

If any of our longterm members have any recollections of our chapter's early days that they would like to share in a future issue of "The Rootball e-News," please contact Tony Greco at <apgrec@sbcbglobal.net>.



COLLECTING RHODODENDRON SEEDS IN

The Appalachians

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY DARRELL KROMM

When my wife Mary and I head for the Appalachians each fall to gather small amounts of Rhododendron seed to grow in our nursery, we usually walk the mountains of West Virginia first.

Cheat Mountain is often our first stop to walk along Shaver's Fork of the Cheat River and the high country nearby. Shaver's Fork has some nice rather dwarf Rhododendron arborescens along its banks. Some of these R. arborescens are in the lowest flood plain and are washed over nearly every year by flash floods. The glossy leaves and maroon/red fall color are invigorating.

Along these banks just above the lowest flood plain are glorious examples of Rosebay (Rhododendron maximum). Their July flowers vary from apple blossom blush pink to fairly deep pink. At another site farther north along Bull Run Creek on the main Cheat River, the Rhododendron maximum petals fall into Bull Run cascades and pools in the most magical atmosphere. You listen to the rushing cascades of the creek and watch the petals float by on their way to lodging on rocks below.

Nearby east of Cheat Mountain is Gaudineer Knob, an old growth forest of Red Spruce, mountain blueberry (Vaccinium erthyrcarpum) and Mountain Laurel (Kalmia latifolia). Here the humus layer is thick and some of the Red Spruces are right on top of large

boulders. The forest is underlain with a scattering of Mountain Laurel with the pink/purple flowers glowing in the damp shaded forest floor. Along the road up to Gaudineer Knob are many Magnolia fraseri with 8-10" white flowers and large 'squirrel ear' based leaves.

After a day on Cheat Mountain, we often travel east to Spruce Knob or Dolly Sods. Spruce Knob is the highest elevation in West Virginia. Red Spruce and balds cover upper slopes and the summit. Mountain Laurel, Mountain Holly (Ilex mucronatus), Minibush (Menziesia pilosa) and Roseshell Azalea, (Rhododendron prinophyllum) compete for sunny spots among the Spruce.



Magnolia fraseri



Spruce Knob, West VA; Red Spruce, Rhododendron prinophyllum, Menziesia

It is easy to detect the direction of the prevailing winds up here. None of the exposed Red Spruces are able to retain much growth facing the west. The groundcover plants here are the same as those of my boyhood wanderings in Vilas Co. WI. Snows come early on the summit and paints all in a beautiful flocking of white.

The roads to Dolly Sods are slow to travel but the scenery is exquisite. The fall colors of

continued in page 4

continued from page 3

The Appalachians

Red and Sugar Maple, Tuliptree and American Beech rival those we've seen anywhere. Dolly Sods is a long wide ridge top with several vistas of a few miles on top and many valleys below.

At the south end of the Sods is an area of large cobbles and boulders of white pudding stone. Among these rocky trails are Rosebay (*Rhododendron maximum*) with white flowers and yellow throats in a mixture with Roseshell Azalea and Mountain Laurel. The stunted trees are Yellow Birch, Red Maple, Beech and American Mt. Ash.

There are perched bogs toward the north end of the sods. These are filled with Large and Small Cranberry. The trails to the bogs pass through large expanses of Blueberry, Huckleberry and Black Chokeberry. Off in the far distance are what look like small trees, they are actually 10-15' tall Mountain Holly. A very nice campground is found in the middle of the Sods at Red Creek. If you want to see all the stars and the glory of the Milky Way, this is the camp to spend a night with the bears.

After another day or two enjoying the mountains of West Virginia, we try to get to Warm Spring Mt. in western Virginia. We pass through the town of Warm Springs with its large old resorts and hotels built for visitors to the warm mineral springs in this valley. Apparently the Appalachians are still alive, somewhere below the earth's heat finds a way to rise to the surface.



*Rhododendron
catawbiense*

Darrell and Mary Kromm are members of The Midwest Chapter and operate Reeseville Ridge Nursery, a small wholesale/retail nursery in Reeseville, Wisconsin. Darrell and Mary have degrees in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Their plants are all small in size and are used for restorations, homeowner planting and growing to larger sizes by many other nurseries.

Visit their website for additional information.
www.reesevilleridgenursery.com

It is a long drive to the summit of Warm Spring Mt. Just below the Airstrip on the summit is a fascinating *Rhododendron* and *Pinus rigida* bald. Most of the land is owned by a hunting club but you can walk along the edge of great expanses of *Rhododendron catawbiense*. Mixed in patches are Roseshell Azalea, Mountain Laurel and Black Tupelo. Just to the west the bald drops into a mix of Striped Maples and *Pinus rigida* with the form of Mugo Pine. Among the pines are Witchhazel, Roseshell Azalea and American Mt. Ash.

These are a sampling of some of our favorite mountains. The Virginias hold vistas and scenic drives throughout. We've been exploring them for more than 30 years and find new adventures every year.

a message from the president . . .



Summer Activities

*I*f you have experienced the same hot weather that we have in the Chicagoland area, you have spent a major share of your time watering your garden to make sure your plants survive the summer. I haven't been able to do much on the creative side during these hot weeks. I don't want to tempt the elements and try to establish new plants in the garden only to see them perish for lack of adequate water and an established root structure.

A highlight for me this summer was attending the annual Chapter meeting at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in Madison, Wisconsin on July 20. A reason for having the meeting in Wisconsin was to continue your Board's effort to reach out to Chapter members across the geography that we are responsible for and allowing them to more easily participate in Chapter activities. We were rewarded with good attendance from members in Wisconsin and Illinois and augmented by several invited guests. On my trip to the meeting I was able to visit Tom Horner's garden in Waterford, WI and Bob Williamson's garden in Madison, WI. In addition to the fantastic rhododendrons, Tom showed me his extensive collection of magnolias and Bob walked me through his prizewinning Dahlia beds. What a treat!

Mike Heim, Chapter member from Hayward, Wisconsin gave an enlightening presentation entitled "Pushing Hardiness Limits, Rhododendrons and Their Companions in the Northwoods." Remember that Hayward is located in Zone 3 so most of us can't complain about harsh conditions. It was exciting to see what he has been able to grow and prosper in the northwoods. Thank you Mike and Louise for coming and sharing your successes with us.

At our annual meeting the current board members were reelected to another one year term. Note that the chapter By-Laws do not specify election terms so these terms are for one year. Elected were Ted Nyquist as President, David Hinde, Treasurer and Susan Garland, Membership. Tony Greco who has served in a non elected position has agreed to remain in his position as Secretary until a replacement is found. He will continue to focus on our communications. No additional nominations for officers were made at the meeting. It should be noted that the Chapter has grown rapidly over the last year and the Chapter needs volunteers to serve in various positions to help the chapter continue to grow and to relieve current officers who have served the Chapter for many years. Please let us hear from you as to what role you are willing to play over the next year and beyond. Thank you in advance for your anticipated suggestions.

Last but not least at the annual meeting, a number of plants were sold to members. These were obtained by John Golab from www.nurseries in Pennsylvania. Not only did the members enjoy the receipt of a beautiful new rhododendron but it helped enrich the coffers of the Chapter. Thank you to those who purchased plants.

Next on our agenda is the 50th Chapter anniversary celebration on September 8 at the Edgewood Valley Country Club in LaGrange, IL. Please let Tony Greco know of your intentions regarding attendance. More about this event is to be found elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope to see many of you there! It should be a fun filled evening for all.

Regards,

Ted Nyquist

*Photos, left to right:
Fairy Mary, Faiza, Yellow Lights*



*A Warm
Welcome To
Our Newest
Members!*

JANET NEWLANDS
Verona, Wisconsin

PAUL & JANET TOLZMANN
Golden Valley, Minnesota



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Chapter 50th Anniversary Party

DATE: September 8, 2012
PLACE: Edgewood Valley CC
LaGrange, IL
TIME: 6:00 PM

ARS Western Regional Conference

DATE: September 21-23
PLACE: Nanaimo, B.C.

<http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/>

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, Communications
apgreco@sbcglobal.net

Jack Strom, Webmaster
stromjack@yahoo.com



The Midwest Chapter ARS
midwestars.org

BLOG: midwestars.org/wordpress

A special thanks to Darrell Kromm, and Ted Nyquist for their contributions to this issue.

Editor/Design/Photography
A. P. Greco

VOLUNTEER WANTED

The Midwest Chapter has a vacancy for Chapter Secretary and is looking for a volunteer to fill this position. Please contact our president, Ted Nyquist, for more information.

Annual Meeting Held In Madison Wisconsin

The Midwest Chapter's Annual Meeting was held on July 14 in Madison, Wisconsin at The University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum. An election of officers was conducted and Ted Nyquist (President), Dave Hinde (Treasurer) and Susan Garland (Membership) were re-elected for another term. The position of Chapter Secretary is still open.

Ted reviewed chapter activities and accomplishments of the past year including a financial update. He also discussed plans for the future including his goal to increase membership.

A highlight of the meeting was Mike Heim's talk titled "Pushing Hardiness Limits: Rhododendrons and Their Companions in The Northwoods". It was fascinating to learn about Mike's work raising broadleaf evergreens in Zone 3 and to see the beautiful images of his garden, particularly those photographed in winter.

We also held a small plant sale to help raise some revenue for the chapter

Conducting the meeting in Madison made it convenient for our Wisconsin members to attend and enabled some of us to meet personally for the first time. Altogether, there were 23 in attendance including several non-member guests.