

# The Rootball e-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER ARS

VOL 2, NO 1, JAN 5, 2012



*a message from the president . . .*



## Membership

Since the last newsletter, our membership has grown and now stands at 58, thanks in great part to our membership chairperson, Susan Garland.

## Welcome

A warm welcome to our newest members Mark and Sharon Sperro of St. Charles, IL. and Jeff Sibley of Northbrook, IL. We look forward to meeting each of you personally at an upcoming chapter event.



*Sweet Sixteen*

## Holiday Party

On December 3, fourteen Chapter members gathered at Moretti's Restaurant in Schaumburg, IL for our annual Christmas luncheon.

Ted Nyquist provided some brief remarks about plans for the coming year and a moment of silence was observed for our members that passed away in 2011; Sharon Dragula, Linda Horner and Eileen Golab.

## The Start of a New Year

Your Chapter Officers met once again on Wednesday November 30, followed by our annual Chapter Holiday Party at Moretti's Restaurant in Schaumburg, Illinois on Saturday December 3. It was enjoyable to host the party in a new venue and visit with several of our members who we have not seen for a while.

As we enter the New Year I am excited to announce that through the leadership and dedication of Susan Garland we are now at 58 members. This is far more than I anticipated when I first took over responsibility as President of the Midwest Chapter. Thanks not only to Susan but to all of you for help in making this happen. We now have a solid base as we enter the New Year. We need to set a goal of attracting at least 10 new members for 2012. Talk to your friends and associates to see if they would consider joining the ARS. Being a non profit, their dues would be tax deductible.

Under separate correspondence, Susan Garland is sending you a list of our members. This was promised to you earlier in the year 2011. We are working on a project to provide you with a password protected link on our website where we will be able to update our membership list on a frequent basis. This will provide you a more accurate list of current members and help keep Chapter costs low without the need for frequent mailings.

Also under separate correspondence our new and updated Chapter Brochure has been completed under the leadership of John Golab with design and printing by Tony Greco. Each of you should have received a copy by now from Tony Greco. A great recruiting tool! If you require more for speaking engagements or to attract potential candidates, please contact me for your needs. They are

## The Start of a New Year

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complimentary to Chapter members. (Ted Nyquist e-mail [t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net); 630-215-5022). I want to update you on the several meetings that have been scheduled for the coming year. Our first will be held on March 17 at the Chicago Botanic Garden in the Garden View Room. The meeting will start at 11:00am. We expect to hold a brief business meeting first, followed by a presentation by Betty Ann Addison. Betty is one of our Chapter Members and hails from Minnesota and is the owner of Gardens of Rice Creek, a full service design-build firm and small nursery. Betty will speak about "Breeding Hardy Rhododendrons". A complete biography is noted elsewhere in this Newsletter.

I have previously described the several meetings that are taking place in May including the National Rhododendron Society meeting to be held jointly with the ARS May 3-6 in Asheville, North Carolina. The Midwest Chapter Plant Sale will be held at the Chicago Botanical Garden on May 12 and 13th. A special member's discount will be offered to Chapter Members on plants they purchase at our sale.

In an effort to reach out and offer greater opportunities for our members in other states to participate in our events, we are holding a Chapter meeting at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in Madison, Wisconsin. This will start at 11:00am on July 17. In a format similar to the March meeting we will hold a brief business meeting first followed by a presentation by our speaker Mike Heim of Hayward,



*Pink Delight*

Wisconsin. Mike will discuss his work and experience growing various cold hardy plants in northwest Wisconsin including Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Mike is also a Midwest Chapter Member. I can't wait to hear Betty Ann and Mike's presentations. I hope those of you who live in neighboring states can make it to one or both of these meetings. It will be a time to interact with fellow Chapter members and gain an abundance of knowledge about growing our plants in some of the Midwest's most extreme conditions.



*Yellow Eyes*

Not to be forgotten is our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion banquet to be held Saturday, September 8 at the Edgewood Valley Country Club in LaGrange, IL. I have visited the Club and the room where we are going to hold the Banquet is first class. The name of our speaker will be announced later. I hope to see you there! A calendar of events is listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

As I sign off on my last letter of 2011 and the first of 2012 I wish you all a Happy New Year. The weather here in Chicagoland reminds me of early spring. If I didn't look at the calendar, I would be outside prepping our beds for planting. Today the temperature is in the upper 40's and tomorrow Tom Skilling says we might hit 50 before we move back toward reality. But wait, we still have three more months of winter.

Happy New Year,

**Ted Nyquist**

## Winter Meeting to Feature Speaker from The Midwest Chapter

A members' meeting is scheduled at The Chicago Botanic Garden in The Garden View Room on Saturday, March 17 at 11:00 AM.

In addition to a regular business agenda, we are very pleased and fortunate to have one of our very own members, Betty Ann Addison from Minneapolis, MN, as our guest speaker.

"Breeding Rhododendrons, Flower by Flower" is the title of Betty Ann's presentation. It will be interesting to learn what varieties are being grown successfully in her Zone 4 climate.

You may have read Betty Ann's article about her technique for growing rhododendrons from seed in *The ARS Journal*, 2111 Summer Issue.

Additional information about Betty Ann's background and work is in the accompanying story on this page.

This promises to be a terrific meeting to help kick off the spring 2012 growing season. So mark your calendars and we look forward to seeing a large turnout.



April Rose

## BREEDING RHODODENDRONS



# flower by flower

BY BETTY ANN ADDISON

Long Island was a horticultural paradise when I was growing up. Besides an agreeable climate and soil, handsome native specimens and extensive public gardens, there existed a deep appreciation for plants and landscaping in the culture. My first garden, at age eight, was a mossy hideaway, in a woodland glade. The New York flower show was fabulous in those days, and my agricultural-horticultural college campus had numerous landscaped garden rooms bordered with clipped beech hedges.



White Peter (Addison)

My mother and I shared an abiding passion for all things growing and we constantly sought out new public and private gardens to explore. Westbury Gardens was one of our favorites for its exquisite array of plants and garden designs. Thirty-foot rhododendrons towered over walkways there, while huge Cedars of Lebanon, flowering dogwood and evergreen azaleas in great drifts were seen even in ordinary gardens.

Imagine my dismay after settling in Minnesota some years ago, when the only evergreen trees in the nurseries were spruce, mugo pines and arborvitae, shrubs were mainly potentilla and spirea and perennials were limited to peonies and "both" kinds of daylilies. Everything else of note was "not hardy". Luckily, my dear mother sent me care packages of perennials and wildflowers, and to my delight they grew. On visits back home she and I visited more private gardens whose owners generously shared their knowledge and favorite plants with us. Dwarf conifers became a collecting focus and in their mature years now they serve as design features and the foundation of many garden aspects here.

Rice Creek Gardens was started at my home, one acre on Rice Creek over 45 years ago. While my four children were growing up it was a small back-yard nursery for dwarf conifers and alpiners. When they left home I purchased a 17 acre site a few miles away, where we expanded to a full line of rare plants: flowering trees, rhododendrons and other shrubs, conifers, perennials and alpiners, with extensive display gardens to demonstrate their landscape uses.

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## BREEDING RHODODENDRONS

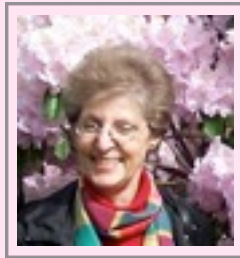
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Now that parcel is sold, and I am back to a small nursery on the one acre home site. The gardens have been completely redone to accommodate rhododendrons in addition to alpine and conifers. I have tested and killed thousands of plants over the years, because hardiness has always been my primary concern. The plants offered for sale are propagated from those that have been grown for years in the gardens. Rice Creek plants are well known for cold and drought tolerance. My current business is the design and build firm of Gardens of Rice Creek. We build unique landscapes and I enjoy incorporating rhododendrons and magnolias in them.

Because of my love of rhododendrons, I began growing them from seed 40 years ago. On the advice of David Leach, I stuck with hardy species and have now accumulated a small stable of rock-hardy parents for which I am collecting almost-hardy paramours with more exciting features. Many new plants have been more hardy than expected. There are lots of surprises.

In the presentation, I will show photographs of hardy parents, demonstrate how to pollinate flowers and tell in detail how to grow the seedlings on to flowering stage. Flower to flower, in summary.

## I N M E M O R I A M



*We were all deeply saddened to learn that our dear friend Eileen Golab passed away peacefully on December 2nd with her devoted husband John at her side.*

*Eileen will be remembered for the tireless work she did for our chapter especially at our yearly plant sale and the many events she graciously hosted at her home. But most of all, we'll remember Eileen for being such a good friend and caring person. She will be greatly missed.*

*Our deepest condolences go out to John for his loss.*

*If you care to reach John Golab . . . .  
583 Bedlington Drive  
Barrington, Illinois 60010  
1-847-382-1674  
e.j.golab@gmail.com*

*John Golab has expressed his deep appreciation for the lovely flowers that were sent from The Midwest Chapter as well as all of the thoughtful cards and messages he received from chapter members.*

# Locating Native Rhododendrons Growing in Illinois

by *Gerald Firak*



The *Rhododendron prinophyllum* has always fascinated me due to the fact that it spans a geographical distance from upper New England through the Appalachian chain way down to the Ozarks. What malleable genes. So returning from a trip from Arizona I decided to take a not so little detour to locate if I could the only known natural location of a rhododendron of any sort that grows in Illinois, that being *Rhododendron prinophyllum* (formally known as *R. roseum*). This just didn't pop into my head at the moment since I had done a bit of prior research

if you call it that and consulted *The Flora of Illinois* by Jones and other sources.

The areas where the plants are found are in the Shawnee National forest but more specifically in a unit if I recall correctly the La Rue-Pine Hills unit. After spending the night in Cape Girardeau Missouri just a very short trip across the Mississippi River you enter a large raw area with back water ditches and dirt roads leading to who knows where. There's no welcome (interpretive) center or any signage to guide you. After driving around in this vast area I did run into some wild turkey hunters who apparently spent the night there with their breakfast ready, an open bottle of Jack Daniels. I must say they were cordial and the only advice they could give me was don't come up suddenly on other hunters or I might get shot.



*R. Prinophyllum*

I continued to drive this vast area when I luckily came upon this lone individual, it was serendipity because he said he was out here that last weekend with a nature study group and yes they were taken to a stand of *prinophyllum*. He gave me general directions using landmarks and I found the described spot to pull off and venture into the forest. Well it was a very, very steep decent down the slope dry as a bone and if it wasn't for the tattered pink blossoms guiding me down I would have never found them. It wasn't a large stand and growing in a chert rock laden ground and very isolated. This isn't the only stand in union county I strongly suspect.



*Pink Lights (Firak)*

While I was writing this little adventure it occurred to me about reading in a past issue of the *ARS Journal* about a Raspberry Knob in Arkansas. Well, I gave all my past issues of the journal to the Chicago Botanical Garden library so I couldn't go back and search out this article but it occurred that I could possibly google it. A google search

fortunately found that particular article and it was in the July 1967 vol 21 number 3 issue. I recommend that you read it as it illustrates the heat tolerant nature of *prinophyllum* and how it can well fit into our climatic situation (hint: google Raspberry Knob Arkansas). The fact that it grows in Arkansas alone speaks to its heat tolerance.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Chapter Winter Meeting

March 17, 2012  
 PLACE: Chicago Botanic Garden  
 The Garden Room  
 TIME: 11:00 AM

*Betty Ann Addison is Guest Speaker.  
 "Breeding Rhododendrons, Flower by  
 Flower"*

### ARS & ASA Joint National Meeting

May 3 - May 6, 2012  
 PLACE: Asheville, North Carolina

### Chapter Plant Sale & Truss Show

May 12 and 13, 2012  
 PLACE: Chicago Botanic Garden

### Michigan Garden Visits

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

### Summer Meeting

July 17, 2012  
 PLACE: University of Wisconsin  
 Botanical Garden  
 TIME: 11:00 AM

*Mike Heim is Guest Speaker. "Pushing  
 Hardiness Limits, Rhododendrons and  
 Their Companions in The  
 Northwoods"*

### Chapter 50th Anniversary Party

September 8, 2012  
 PLACE: Edgewood Valley CC  
 TIME: TBD

*A special thanks to Betty Ann Addison,  
 Gerald Firak, Ted Nyquist and Fred  
 Stanton for their contributions to this  
 issue.*

Editor/Design/Photography  
 A. P. Greco

## Chapter Members will Receive a Discount at Spring Plant Sale

The Officers have decided to extend to all Midwest Chapter members a discount on their plant purchases at our spring plant sale. The sale will take place at The Chicago Botanic Garden on May 12 and 13.



Janet Blair

Non-members will be able to receive the discount as well if they join our chapter at the sale. We're hoping this will be a good recruiting tool to attract new members to our chapter.

A list of the plants on order was provided in a past issue of *The Rootball e-News* (Vol 1, No 4). Back issues can be accessed through our website. <[www.midwestars.org](http://www.midwestars.org)>.

Details about the discount will be provided in a future issue of *The Rootball e-News*.

# VIDEO

Watch a YouTube video of the late Hank Shannen and Ron Rabideau titled "Growing & Planting Rhododendrons"

CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02KxkPQdDd0>

### Midwest Chapter Officers

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The Midwest Chapter ARS  
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