

The Rootball e-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER ARS

VOL 2, NO 4, JUNE 7, 2012



Gardens and Nurseries Near U. of W. Arboretum

Below is a listing of nurseries and horticultural gardens compiled by Ted Nyquist and Dave Hinde that may be of interest to members who plan to extend their trip.

MADISON, WI

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
<www.olbrich.org>

Allen Centennial Gardens
<www.allencentennialgardens.org>

STOUGHTON, WI

The Flower Factory
<www.theflowerfactorynursery.com>

Stonewall Nursery
<www.stonewallnursery.com>

JANESVILLE, WI

K&W Greenery
<www.kwgreenery.com>

Rotary Botanical Gardens
www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org

ROCKFORD, IL

J. Carlson Growers, Inc.
8938 Newburg Road
info@jcarlsongrowers.com

Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden
<www.klehm.org>

Anderson Japanese Garden
<www.andersongardens.org>

Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens
<www.rockfordparkdistrict.org>

Mike Heim, from Hayward, Wisconsin will be our Guest Speaker on July 14.

Midwest Chapter Annual Meeting Will Be Held In Madison, Wisconsin

To make chapter meetings more accessible to members who live north of Chicago, our next members' meeting will be held in Madison, Wisconsin at The University of Wisconsin's Botanical Garden. The meeting is scheduled to take place in The Visitors's Center on Saturday, July 14 at 11:00 AM.

Scheduling a meeting in Madison will not only be convenient for our northern members but also provide an opportunity for the rest of us to tour The U. of W. Botanical Garden, local nurseries and gardens in the Madison area. See sidebar for some suggestions.



Midwest Chapter member, Mike Heim from Hayward, Wisconsin, will be our guest speaker. The title of his talk will be "Pushing Hardiness Limits, Rhododendrons and Their Companions in The Northwoods."

We all look forward to learn about Mike's work in zone 3 growing various broadleaf evergreens including rhododendrons and other exotic and unusual plants. Additional information about Mike's background and a brief synopsis of what he will talk about can be found on page 2. Guests are more than welcome as this talk will be of interest to all gardeners.

Our business meeting will include an election of officers for president, treasurer, membership and secretary. Existing officers can be renominated. There will also be a recap of year to date activities and future plans for our chapter including our upcoming 50th Anniversary dinner party on Saturday, September 8.

We are making arrangement to have some 1gallon rhododendrons available for sale at the meeting. These will be new varieties from a propagator in Pennsylvania and should grow well in our area. A list of the plant varieties is on page 9 of this newsletter.

We're hoping for a good turnout. Please confirm with Ted Nyquist your plans to attend and if you will bring guests by July 7. Ted can be reached at 630-215-5022 or <t.nyquist@sbcglobal.net>.

For additional information about the U of W Arboretum, go to the following link. Then click on 'Visit' for driving directions.
www.uwarboretum.org/about/visitor_center/

Pushing Hardiness Limits: Rhododendrons and their Companions in



The Northwoods

Article and Photos by Michael Heim

The cold winters of northwestern Wisconsin can be a trying environment for woody plants, particularly broadleaved evergreens. However, the well-drained acidic soils throughout much of the region can be a boon to growing members of the Heath Family (Ericaceae) and other acidophiles. The results of my research with these plants in this Zone 3 climate will be discussed along with their aesthetic possibilities in a naturalized setting.

Michael Heim Biography

While growing up in the Chicago area, my family often went on excursions to the coal strip mines to collect fossils. The remains of these extinct plants led to an interest in “rewilding”; reestablishing trees such as ginkgo, dawn redwood, and bald cypress (along with ericaceous plants such as box huckleberry) which grew in Wisconsin before the last ice age. While in college I worked on an urban forestry project, participated in Lycopodium (clubmoss) research, and did some work in the further development of the ‘Lights’ azaleas. My thesis concerned the allelopathic effects of trees. I met Louise, my wife, while working as a grad student at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.



Hartford Fern climbing Mt. Ash

In the nearly forty years that I have been living in northwestern Wisconsin, the northwoods have become a testing ground for a myriad of exotic, interesting plants. Bamboos, cacti, elepidote rhododendrons, mt. laurel, and even palms pique my interest. Many of these plants I collected as cuttings or seed from the coldest portions of their natural ranges in order to test the limits of their hardiness. Some say that I have a serious case of “zone denial”. My research has been published in the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society* and the *Minnesota Horticulturist* among others. In 1999 I received the Bronze Award from the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation for my work on cold-hardy plants.

For close to twenty years I’ve been teaching science at a tribal high school. One project with my students involves the rewilding of the rare box huckleberry in cooperation with the National Arboretum. I also teach ethnobotany as an adjunct professor. My two daughters comment that I “totally geek-out” on science and nature. That seems like a fair assessment.



Mike's Woods



Meconopsis, self sown seedling

a message from the president . . .



One Year Later

*S*ometimes you have to look back in order to determine the amount of progress you have made and lay out a path for the future. In preparation for this newsletter, I reviewed my first article for the Rootball News dated June 6, 2011 wherein I described my thoughts and plans for the Chapter. Following is the progress we have accomplished meeting those goals over the past twelve months.

MEMBERSHIP

First and foremost we had to determine our membership status. Susan Garland, our Membership Chairperson, has periodically reported on our progress throughout the year and as of October, 2011 our Chapter count showed 36 confirmed members. Thanks to Susan's concerted effort for renewals and our recent plant sale recruitment incentive, that number has climbed to 72. Great progress!

We never created a formal "validation list" but many of you have helped to spread the word about our Chapter and the wonderful plants we cultivate. I ask that each of you consider trying to recruit one new member for our Chapter over the next year. This would help ensure our future.

FINANCE

With the growth in membership we have experienced, our financial future looks positive. A great deal better than most states and the nation!

Under the guidance of John Golab, we had our best plant sale in several years in spite of providing significant discounts to members. The exact financial totals will be

reported by our Treasurer, Dave Hinde, after the final results of the plant sale are tallied.

All this occurred while at the same time we were funding necessary expenses updating recruiting literature and promotional materials.

MENTORING

A Mentoring Program has been created to aid new members in getting off to good start. The program provides one on one assistance to members seeking help planting and growing their rhododendrons. Thus far the new members have been teamed up with existing Chapter officers. As we grow, it is hoped other experienced Chapter members will be available to assist in this effort as well.

PUBLICITY

We believe giving talks to local garden clubs will help us promote the word for rhododendrons and recruit new members. To be successful in this effort we need a first class presentation.



Ingrid Mehlquist

We are currently in the process of producing a digital presentation and once completed, we can start to solicit speaking engagements. A DVD of the presentation along with a script will be available to all members to present to local garden clubs. We also plan to acquire a digital projector for the Chapter which will find frequent use in giving presentations to garden organizations.

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One Year Later

continued from page 3

One of our original goals was to contact botanical gardens to determine if we could conduct classes on growing Rhododendrons. Once our presentation is completed, we can pursue this goal. The next time I report on this activity, I hope to be able to report that this effort has become a reality.

We believe that presenting lectures and providing information is essential for recruiting and promoting interest in Rhododendrons.

COMMUNICATIONS

We have made a major effort to increase communications within the Chapter. Tony Greco has created an outstanding Newsletter, *The Rootball e-News*, that includes chapter news along with contributions from numerous members of our Chapter.

Amongst those contributors, Roger Dunlap located in Traverse City, Michigan, prepared an article on the success he is having growing Rhododendrons in the upper midwest. This article is also under consideration for publication in *The ARS Journal*.



Lavender Ice

Also, Betty Ann Addison from Minnesota reported on her ongoing efforts to develop hybrids with increased hardiness. Mike Heim from Hayward, Wisconsin has an article in this issue of *The Rootball e-News* with background for his upcoming talk at our July 14 meeting at The University of Wisconsin at Madison Botanical Garden. Also, in the January, 2012 issue, Gerald Firak contributed an article on native Rhododendrons in Illinois.

A calendar of events is included in each Newsletter that updates members with details of important upcoming activities and their dates. A separate "Upcoming Event" communication was also developed to provide last minute e-mail reminders to our members.

As far as utilizing additional means of communication, Jack Strom continues to maintain our Chapter website,

www.midwestars.org that includes all back issues of our newsletter, plant photos, a calendar of events and other chapter information. This year our site has been expanded to include our Chapter By-laws and chapter roster. Videos on growing Rhododendrons have been included as well.

We recently added a blog site for posting the latest up to date news about chapter activities. The blog is accessible through our website and can become an excellent vehicle for members to post any news they care to share.

We produced a new recruiting brochure that includes cultural and chapter information to introduce The Midwest Chapter to potential new members. A copy of the brochure was sent to each member and additional copies are available to promote our chapter. Just contact me with the number you need.

We are reaching out to all states in our chapter for information and speakers. Remember we are responsible for eight states. An almost impossible task in itself.

We haven't attempted video conferencing yet as a means of communication, but your officers did utilize teleconferencing successfully for a winter meeting when logistics prevented a face to face meeting. We are open to hearing from each of you as to additional avenues we should try.

I look forward to another year and would appreciate hearing from each and every one of you as we move forward. Hopefully, I will be able to visit with many of you at our July 14 meeting in Madison, Wisconsin.

Regards,

Ted Nyquist

Welcome !

The following new members joined our chapter or renewed since our last newsletter. Our membership is now up to 72 members.

A warm welcome to our new members and we look forward to meeting you personally at an upcoming chapter event.

Thomas Borders
Winnetka, IL

Carol Cohen
Wilmette, IL

Angie Dik
Indian Head Park, IL

Timothy J. Downes
Woodstock, IL

Eva Hyndman
Prospect Heights, IL

Becky Maganuco (Renewal)
Glencoe, IL

Jill Peckham
Burr Ridge, IL

Rene Silims
LaGrange, IL

Kathy Vargas
Schaumburg, IL



Genevieve Schmidt

2012 Plant Sale and Truss Show

A Rousing Success

by A. P. Greco

The Midwest Chapter's Plant Sale and Truss Show at The CBG was very successful attracting hundreds of visitors on May 12 and 13.

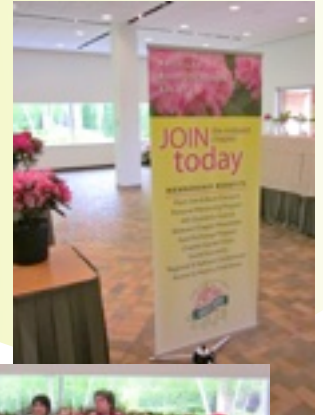
The truss display was spectacular and the plants we offered this year were outstanding with some new varieties being offered for the first time. We sold all but two of the 140 plants we ordered and the net profit to the chapter was three times that of 2011.

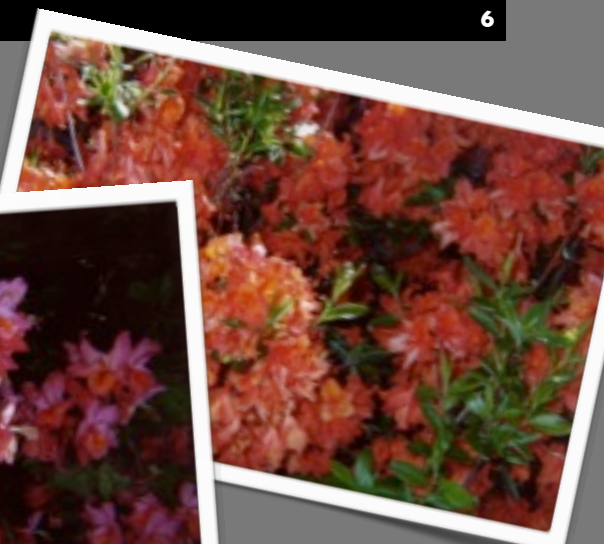
This year our chapter instituted a new policy offering a discount to existing members as an added benefit. The same discount was also offered to new members who joined during the sale. As a result, we added 7 new members plus a renewal increasing our roster to 72 members.

The Plant Sale is very important to our chapter as it is our primary source of revenue. Equally important, our sale and truss show is a great way to personally introduce gardeners to the world of rhododendrons. This venue creates a great opportunity for us to meet one on one with visitors and provide cultural information, answer questions and provide assistance. It's also rewarding to see past customers return and hear how pleased they are with the plants they bought at previous sales.

A special thanks to the many volunteers who helped make this year's sale the success that it was.

Now the planning begins for next year's sale!





A MEMBER'S GARDEN
Barbara Kurtzhals

ONE OF OUR NEWEST MEMBERS, BARBARA KURTZHALS, WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SEND US THESE LOVELY PHOTOS OF HER SUBURBAN GARDEN IN ELMHURST, ILLINOIS. BARBARA FIRST STARTED GROWING DECIDUOUS AZALEAS 40 YEARS AGO AND HER COLLECTION HAS GROWN TO INCLUDE 35 PLANTS.

THANK YOU BARBARA FOR THESE COLORFUL PHOTOS .AND WE HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON AT ONE OF OUR EVENTS.



2012 ARS/ASA JOINT NATIONAL CONVENTION

Appalachian Spring

Article and Photos
by Ted Nyquist

With the extremely warm conditions the eastern United States experienced this past winter and spring, many, including myself, were fearful there would be no plants in bloom for the ASA/ARS Joint Convention in Asheville, North Carolina.

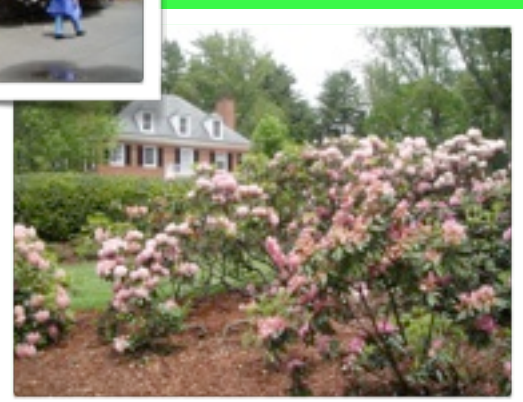
While it is true that the bloom period was well "past peak" for many of the Rhododendrons and Azaleas, there was still much beauty to behold; from the trusses that greeted members at the Crown Plaza Hotel when we arrived, to the many gardens that we toured during our visit. For those who had never visited the Asheville area before, beautiful sites were there for our enjoyment.

I don't have the exact registration numbers, but it was said that well over 400 members attended and as many as 500 traveled on some of the garden tours. The Midwest Chapter was well represented by myself and my wife Gidget, Susan Garland, Dave and Ellen Hinde, John Migas, Marty Anderson and Barbara and Bob Wetzel.

Of the many tours that were offered it was hard to pick a favorite.



Baltimore Conservatory



continued on following page

In The News

Congratulations to Midwest Chapter members, Barbara Wetzel and Ted and Gidget Nyquist for recent articles published about their beautiful gardens. Also, Barbara and Ted had their gardens included on The Garden Conservancy's Chicago Western Suburbs Garden Day Program on May 19 where several hundred visitors toured each garden.

Barbara Wetzel

The April issue of *Midwest Living* featured Barbara's garden with some lovely photos. You can access the article from the link below.
<http://www.midwestliving.com/garden/featured-mwl/illinois-woodland-garden/>>.

Ted Nyquist

The *Chicago Tribune* published a wonderful article about Ted & Gidget's garden on April 29. Follow the link below to view the article.
http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-04-26/classified/ct-sun-garden-0429-nyquist-conservancy-20120426_1_stunning-gardens-garden-rooms-garden-conservancy-open-days

Appalachian Spring

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The Biltmore and all its majesty lived up to its incredible reputation. The grounds were enormous and the gardens inspiring.

Another highlight for me was the Charles D. Owen Family Gardens with their awe inspiring Dexter Rhododendrons in full bloom. Many had to be nearly twenty feet tall.

The Stewart, Collins and Stelloh woodland gardens with their never ending Rhododendrons in bloom were incredible and well worth the visit. Some of the mountain laurels were over six feet tall. We were unable to go on all the tours. A good reason to revisit this incredible area of the country again.

There were a number of interesting speakers. A true highlight was Don Hyatt who talked about the rich botanical diversity of the Southern Appalachian Mountains ("Chasing the Bloom"). He is an incredible speaker.

I did have a chance to socialize with many Rhododendron lovers who I had never met before, including a number from around the world and learn about their experiences and challenges. The next national convention will be held in Seattle.

I can't wait until next year.



Photo: D. Hinde

Dwarfed by the Dexters

Left to Right - Gidget Nyquist,
Ted Nyquist, Ellen Hinde



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer Meeting

Saturday, July 14, 2012

PLACE: University of Wisconsin at
Madison Botanical Garden
1207 Seminole Highway
Madison, WI
608-263-7888
The Visitor's Center

TIME: 11:00 AM

Mike Heim will be our Guest Speaker,
"Pushing Hardiness Limits, Rhododendrons
and Their Companions in The Northwoods"

Chapter 50th Anniversary Party

Saturday, September 8, 2012

PLACE: Edgewood Valley CC
LaGrange, IL

TIME: TBD



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Midwest Chapter Officers

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The Midwest Chapter ARS
midwestars.org

BLOG: midwestars.org/wordpress

A special thanks to Mike Heim, Dave Hinde, Barbara Kurtzhals and Ted Nyquist for their contributions to this issue.

Editor/Design/Photography
A. P. Greco

Plant Varieties On Order For The July 14 Meeting Sale

Catalina (Red)

Asterid (Red)

Rimini (Yellowish)

Very Nice Margy (Pink Bicolor)

George Frazer (unk)

White Bird (Yak)

Independence Day (Red/White Bicolor)

Peppermint Twist (Pink/White)

Fragrant Affinity (Azaleadendron)

Roadworks (unk)

2014 ARS CONVENTION

The Great Lakes Chapter has recently voted to accept an invitation from The ARS to host the 2014 National Rhododendron Convention on May 16-18. The location of the convention will be on the East side of Cleveland and The Rhododendron Expansion Garden at Holden Arboretum will be a highlight tour. More details will follow as plans are formulated.

A Call For Articles

We are always looking for articles or photos to publish in "The Rootball e-News". They can be about your rhododendrons, companion plants, garden experiences etc., anything you think would be of interest to our members.

Please submit your materials to the editor at
[<apgreco@sbcglobal.net>](mailto:apgreco@sbcglobal.net).

What's Your Favorite Rhododendron?

We'd like to hear from all of you about your favorite rhododendron. Tell us a little about why this variety is so special to you and include a photo or two. Our hope is to feature a different variety in each issue of *The Rootball e-News*. This will also be an excellent way to introduce different varieties to our newer members.

Submit your materials to the editor.