

The Rootball e-News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER ARS

VOL 2, NO 3; MAR 28, 2012



PLANT SALE VARIETIES

RED

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

PINK

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

PURPLE/LAVENDER

Tapestry
Minnetonka

YELLOW

Yellowstone*

WHITE

Calsap
Janet Blair
Sugar Puff

PEACH

Percy Wiseman*

* New Varieties for 2012



Percy Wiseman

Chapter Plant Sale and Truss Show on May 12 and May 13

2012 Plant Sale Will Feature Several New Varieties

The Midwest Chapter ARS will hold its annual Plant Sale and Truss Show on Mother's Day weekend, May 12 and 13 at The Chicago Botanic Garden. Hours of the sale are from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM each day.

Our plants have been ordered once again from Rosebay Nursery in Saugatuck, Michigan and include several new varieties we have never offered before. See the sidebar for a listing of plants on order. We also plan to include some evergreen azaleas from John Migas' nursery. Varieties will be determined based on availability.

Members' Discount . . . 10%, 15% or 20% off!

Your board has instituted a new program where chapter members will receive a discount on plant purchases this year; 10% for one or two plants, 15% for three to five plants and 20% for six or more. The discount will not apply to last day clearance reductions if offered. Non-members, who make purchases and decide to join The ARS during the sale will receive the discount as well. Along with being an added benefit for our members, we're hopeful this incentive will encourage some new members to join our chapter as well.



Show Off Your Trusses!

Our Truss Show is always a crowd favorite generating much conversation with visitors and members alike. We encourage all members to bring some trusses for the show as it is always interesting to see the wide range of rhododendron varieties our members grow. Plan to arrive at 9:30 AM to allow enough time to label your trusses and help set up the display.

Volunteers

The Plant Sale and Truss Show is considerable work and volunteers are always needed. We particularly need help setting up the show on Friday, May 11 when the plants arrive and on Sunday afternoon to assist in tearing down the show. If you can help out or have any questions about the Truss Show or Plant Sale, contact John Golab at 847-382-1674 or e-mail John at

<e.j.golab@gmail.com>.



Photo: R. Dunlap

SOME OF OUR 2011 VOLUNTEERS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Chuck High, John Golab, Bill Dietrich, Roger Dunlap, Tony Greco and Ted Nyquist

a message from the president . . .



Spring Plant Sale

Last fall all the weather predictions I read spoke of a hard winter for Chicagoland with significant snowfalls. Wow, were the weather forecasters wrong! The snow has been light and the temperatures warmer than expected. Remember we are now a zone 5b. So much for the experts and their weather models. People don't complain as much when the weather is better than predicted, so predicting a harsh winter is safer than predicting a mild winter and having reality worse than expected.

In a "usual" winter in the Chicago area, we are hoping that the temperatures don't go too low, but we want some snow to insulate our Rhododendrons from winter's harsh ways. In light of the weather we have experienced, I expect we will have an earlier than normal bloom season with one exception. If the buds get hit with some late hard frosts, we are in for trouble. Where possible, we need to protect our plants with some cover. Prepare for the worst and enjoy a fantastic spring bloom.

Two of the goals we set out for the Chapter last year were to recruit more members and to offer value to our existing members. At our upcoming plant sale at the Chicago Botanical Garden "CBG" on May 12 and 13th, we hope to accomplish both. Individuals who are members at the time of the plant sale and have paid their dues on or before the days of the sale will be offered a discount on their purchases. One to two plants purchased will receive a 10% discount, three to

five plants a 15% discount and six or more plants a 20% discount.

This offers a significant discount to members whereby they can receive a major portion of their membership dues in return. This also offers a big incentive to other individuals at the sale to become members. The entire cost of joining the society can be earned by becoming members that day.

Occasionally near the end of day two of the plant sale, large price reductions are given on the few remaining plants so we don't have an unsold surplus. The members' discount will not apply to any discounted plants at the end of the sale.

So come one and come all to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. Hopefully we will be rewarded with two beautiful Spring days as part of the sale.

I hope to see you in May!

Ted Nyquist

10% 20% 15% 10% 15% 20% 20% 15%

BREEDING RHODODENDRONS

Flower to flower

Betty Ann Addison was Guest Speaker at March 17 Chapter Meeting

article and photo by Ted Nyquist

Attendees at the Chapter meeting on March 17 at the Chicago Botanic Garden were treated to a detailed and exciting presentation by Betty Ann Addison. The weather cooperated with sunny skies and temperatures which hovered near 80 degrees making it feel more like June rather than a blustery March day.

Those present included a number of Chapter members, horticulturalists from several nurseries, the Director of Horticulture from Cantigny Gardens, John Migas, President of the Azalea Society of America, and the horticulturalist from Morton Arboretum who is responsible for their Rhododendron and Azalea collections. A distinguished and experienced group of gardeners indeed!



Midwest Chapter member Betty Ann Addison, founder of Rice Creek Nursery near Minneapolis, Minnesota gave a presentation with the focus on breeding hardy varieties for Zone 4 climates. Betty Ann's talk began showing results of her hybridization efforts starting with

hardy varieties she has grown successfully for years in her Nursery and then transitioned into a detailed explanation of her methods of breeding and growing her hybrids. Notes covering her presentation including an evaluation of numerous rhododendrons in her garden were provided to the participants.

John Migas donated a plant which was raffled off to raise funds for the Chapter.

Thanks to Betty Ann for the time and effort she devoted to enlighten all those present. She helped dispel the notion that "you can't grow rhododendrons in our climate."

BETTY ANN RATES!

Below is a list of hybrids Betty Ann grows that include her rating system for each.

- 1 Excellent leaves after winter
- 2 Good leaves
- 3 Extensive damage

- 1. Aglo
- 3. Alena
- 3. America
- 3. April Reign
- 1. April Rose
- 1. Besse Howells
- 2. Big Deal
- 3. Bluenose
- 1. Boule de Neige
- 1. Bubblegum
- 2. Capistrano
- 1. Coral Dancer (GRC, unreg.)
- 1. Crete
- 1. Golden Harvest
- 1. Haaga
- 2. Helikki
- 1. Helsinki University
- 1. Henry's Red
- 1. Mikkeli
- 1. Hong Kong
- 2. Janet Blair
- 3. Landmark
- 2. Lee's Best Purple
- 3. Lemon Dream (covered)
- 1. Marjie K. Hinemann
- 3. Noble Mountain
- 1. New Century (no leaf curling)
- 1. Pearce's American Beauty
- 3. Purple Passion (dry?)
- 2. Serendipity
- 1. Skookum
- 3. Solidarity
- 3. Trinity
- 1. Vinecrest
- 1. Visiting Angels (extra nice, big buds)
- 1. White Peter
- 1. Windbeam
- 3. Yaku Princess
- 3. Yellowstone



Blue Baron

John Golab has made special arrangements with RareFind Nursery for Midwest Chapter members to receive a 30% discount on plant orders from their 2012 catalog. If you do not have a copy of the current catalog, visit RareFind's website at <rarefindnursery.com> for an online version.

Midwest Chapter Members Receive A 30% Plant Discount from RareFind Nursery

by John Golab

*H*ere are the conditions for purchases from RareFind.

First, select the plants you want from the catalog. Take the price and multiply by 25% for shipping, then take 30% of the price as a discount against the purchase price. Add the two and this is what you would pay. All payments will be made directly to RareFind when you place your order.

Along with the plants in their catalog, the following are available but not in the catalog:

Makinoi x Max ---1 gal (10-15 inches) \$30. Pink and White

Mackantrus---1 gal (10-15 inches) \$30. Lavender

Marquis Waterford---1 gal (10-15 & 15-18 inches) \$30.-\$55. Red

Mountain Marriage (half Max X Yak) ---1 gal (6-10 inches) \$30. Pink

Contact RareFind to place your order at 732-833-0613 or <rarefindnursery.com>.

Allow 1 week for processing and 1 week for shipping. Members should identify themselves as Midwest chapter members as all plants will be shipped at one time to my address. I will then bring the plants to the CBG Truss show and Sale the Friday before Mother's day. If you are not coming to the show or sale, then members should make different arrangements with RareFind directly.

For additional information, contact John Golab directly at 847-382-1674 or <e.j.golab@gmail.com>



A Transplanted Chicagoan's Experience Growing Rhodies in Northern Michigan

RHODODENDRON PASSAGE

article & photography by Roger Dunlap

Upon retirement in the summer of 2006, I moved to my present home nestled between a hardwood forest and a beach along the west side of the Old Mission peninsula near Traverse City, Michigan. This is a region that has long been recognized by agricultural interests for its extended, stable growing season. The Old Mission peninsula, best known for a robust tart cherry industry, also touts a world renowned wine producing “appellation.”



Having been an avid Rhody collector since the early 90's, I brought my “rhodies” north with hopeful expectations. One quarter of the moving van was reserved for my precious cargo, much to my wife's dismay! As it turned out, the transfer of the plants was the easy part; getting over certain pre-conceived notions about Rhody culture specific to the Chicago area, was another.

Those who still reside in the Chicago area and upper

Midwest can attest to the “harsh hand” dealt by Mother Nature: a wind-swept hardiness Zone 4-5, clay soil, hot-humid summers (to name a few cultural obstacles). It didn't take long to realize that I was actually situated in a more benign climate 300 miles northeast of Chicago and close to the 45th Parallel. To this day, my Rhody compatriots continue to razz me about “Banana Belt North” which in horticultural circles would be more properly termed as USDA Zone 6B.

I have a preference for and have achieved the most success with growing elepidotes. I am fortunate in that this unique micro-climate/location is ideal for

growing elepidote rhododendrons. I have amassed a collection of well over 250 plants during the past 20 years. It turns out that the combination of the northern latitude and proximity to Lake Michigan is conducive to growing rhodies more “tender” than the locally grown “ironclads” typically recommended for our area. The nearby presence of Grand Traverse Bay has a moderating/stabilizing influence on temperature and humidity

throughout the year. As a consequence, I have been successful in growing “west coast” hybrids with a bud hardiness rating of minus 5 degrees F ranging all the way up to Midwest hardy “Ironclads” (minus 20 to 25 degrees F). All that being said, my experience most certainly would not apply to those Michigan Rhody growers living just 5 miles or more inland.

In our area Rhodies can be grown in nearly full sun provided some shelter is provided from the prevailing winds and the late-mid afternoon sun in winter. My plants are set back from the beach in the shelter of an open hardwood forest with a minimum of 10' spacing between plants. It took a few years to realize that the sparse rhody bloom was due

in large part to insufficient sunlight. The opening up of the forest canopy by limbing up some trees and thinning out of others has indeed increased the sunlight. The peak season for rhododendron bloom in my garden is generally the first 10 days of June.



RHODODENDRON PASSAGE

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I've been a member of the Midwest Chapter ARS for 20 years, the original creator of the chapter newsletter, The Rootball News and served one term as chapter president. I retired in 2006 and now reside on a 20 acre wooded parcel along West Grand Traverse Bay (Michigan) where I write and attend to my collection of rhodies full time.

18929 Whispering Trail, Traverse City, Michigan 49686
PHONE: Summer 231-223-7101 - Winter 239-331-8767
Koukla18833@yahoo.com

In response to the high sand content and to counteract the alkaline pH in the soil (around 8), a fine textured pine bark and ground sulphur is used during the planting process. I have experimented with several time-release fertilizers. Lately I have found that a generous application of Holly-tone® (an organic fertilizer) deepens the leaf color and increases the overall vigor of the plant while minimizing the risk of "burning" the roots. I am lucky in that insect damage has been negligible. I have been able to limit intermittent deer browsing by the application of bird netting particularly on the few plants "preferred" by deer (fortunei hybrids).

Below is a partial list of some of the varieties I have successfully grown which are familiar to most Midwest gardeners. Additional photos of some of these varieties can be viewed on our website <midwestars.org>.

The Ironclads**Bud Hardy to -25 F**

Casanova
English Roseum
Henry's Red
Joe Paterno
Maxecat
Nepal
Purple Passion
Rio
Roseum Elegans
Wyandanch Pink
White Peter

The Tweeners**Bud Hardy to -15 to -20 F**

Besse Howells
Blue Peter
Dexter's Champagne
Dexter's Victoria
Firestorm
Fantastica
Hachmann's Charmant
Goldkrome
Independence Day
Janet Blair
Mary Belle
Mrs. Furnival
Peter Alan
Roslyn
Sandwich Appleblossom
Scintillation
R. yakushmanum 'Ken Janeck'

The Exotics**Bud Hardy to -5 to -15 F**

Belkanto
Cape White
Chapeau #251
Nancy Evans
Pleasant Dream
Sapporo
Tamarindos
Taurus
Virginia Richards



Weekend Garden Tours in Southwest Michigan on May 18, 19 and 20

2012 Michigan Spring Meet

The Lake Michigan Chapter of The Azalea Society of America (ASA) invites any and all gardeners to a weekend adventure on May 18, 19 and 20 in southwest Michigan along the shores of Lake Michigan. Members of the Tri-state Chapter of the ASA, Great Rivers Chapter of the Holly Society and ARS District 11 chapters along with all others will spend a 3-day weekend touring gardens and enjoying evening speakers. A separate announcement will be sent out confirming all of the gardens once plans are finalized.

A banquet is planned for Saturday evening at the Haworth Inn. The hotel is offering a bus service along with passenger vans for up to eleven riders, if needed.

Contact John Migas for additional information at 269-857-1505 or <azaleajohn@yahoo.com>.



Photos, J. Migas

Schedule of Events

Friday, May 18

Registration, 3 gardens (early bird) on tour for afternoon visits, evening speakers. dinner on your own)

Saturday, May 19

Breakfast at hotel, garden tours including lunch, evening banquet and speakers, including plant auction.

Sunday, May 20

Breakfast at hotel (Optional), head for home or visit local gardens and nurseries in the area.

Rates

Hotel

\$95.00 per night (up to 4 guests) including breakfast.

WHEN REGISTERING, PLEASE MENTION CODE: ARS512

Tours

Flat rate of \$55.00 for all garden tours.

Saturday Banquet: \$27.00

Registration fee: \$10.00 per person

Registrar: John Migas

P. O. Box 561

Saugatuck, MI 49453

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ARS & ASA Joint National Meeting

May 4 - May 7, 2012

PLACE: Asheville, North Carolina

DETAILS: Refer to ARS Journal

Chapter Plant Sale & Truss Show

May 12 and 13, 2012

PLACE: Chicago Botanic Garden

TIME: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Daily

Michigan Garden Visits

May 18, 19, and 20, 2012

PLACE: Saugatuck/Holland, MI

DETAILS: TBD

Summer Meeting

July 14, 2012

PLACE: University of Wisconsin

Botanical Garden

The Visitors' Center

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

LaGrange, IL

TIME: TBD

Midwest Chapter Officers

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The Midwest Chapter ARS
midwestars.org

BLOG: midwestars.org/wordpress

A special thanks to Roger Dunlap, Daniel & Barbara Guhanick, John Migas, John Golab and Ted Nyquist for their contributions to this issue.

Editor/Design/Photography
A. P. Greco

February Frost

by Daniel & Barbara Guhanick

On February 4, 2012, the whole state of Minnesota was under fog caused by the unusual temperatures and moisture in the air. Crystals formed on everything, including our 5 ft tall by 5 ft wide Rhododendron Mikkeli and 2 - 3 ft tall holly plants. With the change in the USDA map as published in the recent issue of *The Rootball e-News*, our location, Fridley MN is now in zone 4b. Time will tell how that works for us with the completely open winter and no snow protection.

Here are some pictures of frost on our rhodies and holly.



Photography - Daniel & Barbara Guhanick