



The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

April/May 2015

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

SE-ARS Garden Visits, April & May, 2015

UNC-CHARLOTTE BOTANICAL GARDENS WITH DR. MELLICHAMP --
Sunday April 26, meet Dr. Mellichamp at the McMillan greenhouse at 1:00 PM. The Garden's GPS address is **9090 Craver Road Charlotte 28269.** Here are written out directions : take I-85 north to exit 46A. Exit right and Turn right. Go 1.5 mi, to 3rd stoplight, turn right onto Mary Alexander Rd. Go ½ mi, turn right onto Craver Rd. Immediately turn right to park in Garden's spaces, or continue a little bit and turn right into parking Lot 16 to park. Do share rides as best you can to limit number of cars as parking will be busy. There will be spaces somewhere in the immediate vicinity. Dr. Mellichamp will be there to meet folks at the appointed time. We will gather at the McMillan Greenhouse right at the parking area.

UTN BLOOMS DAYS SALE—Saturday, May 9, at 10 A.M.

The address is **2518 Jacob Drive, KNOXVILLE TN .** The trip takes a little over two hours. There is a large parking lot adjoining the gardens. We will meet at the entrance. Riding with friends would work well.

To quote SE-ARS member Vivian Abney, owner of East Fork Nursery in Sevierville: "The Blooms Days UT sale and UT gardens are "one of the best I know of", including seminars by experts and lots of vendors with garden related products.

To quote member April Sanborn "I highly recommend visiting the UT Gardens during their Blooms Days." She provides a link to the garden home page (<http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/>) where you can then read all about that weekend's information and download the brochure they will post. As of this writing, there is no information on the website. Please follow up yourself.

VASEYI ASA CHAPTER MEETING - -Vaseyi chapter garden tour at the Stelloh garden on April 19th at 2pm. Azaleas should be blooming. Then we will visit a neighbor with a very artistic conifer garden; after that we can caravan to the Collins Garden, which has a wonderful diversity of rhodies and azaleas and other plants.

INVITATION TO MR. MAPLE FESTIVAL-- Monday, May 25 --

11 AM: Presentation on New and Exciting Japanese Maples (limited space available; contact Sieglinde for one of the 9 spots reserved for us.)
2PM - tour of the nursery and gardens.

Remember to submit your entries for the Photo Contest — www.se-ars.org

Show Off Your Rhodies and Azaleas!

Enter trusses and sprays in the May 2-3 Flower Show.

Contact April Sanborn for entry times.

Contact Marilyn Haynes for exhibiting tips.

(See Directory for their contact information.)

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Jackson Educated Us About Yaks

Reported by Leon Pace

On Sunday afternoon, February 15th with temperatures in the 28 to 30 degree range, 28 Rhodophiles braved the elements to attend our meeting. We were able to forget about the miserable cold as Dr. Jackson McCarter led us on an armchair tour of the Japanese Island of Yakushima which is the natural habitat of the beautiful and much sought after Yak Rhododendron.

With an annual rainfall of 350 inches and low temperature of around 20 degrees, this is a lush green garden of native plants and trees. On our tour we traveled through a forest of Cryptomeria trees. These trees are more than 2000 years old and 90 to 100 feet tall. The trees were harvested during the 1600's and only the straight trees were taken leaving the crooked, twisted and gnarled ones. The trees with their unusual shape and surrounding granite boulders and ledges are all covered with five or six species of moss. This wonderland of unusual tree forms and shapes attracts more than 400,000 visitors a year. At the lower elevation Yaks grow to a height of 15 to 20 feet. These are very old plants as the annual growth rate is only an inch or two. We saw beautiful white water falls dropping over ledges and out-croppings of granite and down rocky caverns and hollows.

At the higher elevations on the mountain it becomes a Bald covered by Dwarf Bamboo, Dwarf Crytomeria, colorful Pieris, smaller Yaks and unusual out-croppings of granite covered by low clouds, creating a beautiful natural scene. There is a population of about 7000 Dwarf Sika Deer on the island. These were observed chowing down on the Yaks. It was a real treat to see Yak Rhododendron growing in a natural setting along with their natural companion plants.

Nurseryman Koichiro Wada of Japan collected and propagated Yaks early on. Lionel de Rothchild of the Exbury Estate in England was the first in the Western world to acquire Yak Rhododendrons. The FCC form was the first Yak to win in a show. Somehow a plant from Exbury found its way to the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley, England. Some say that it was a layer of the Exbury plant. Still others say that there were two plants and that one mysteriously found its way to the Wisley Garden. In 1947 the Wisley Yak was shown at the Chelsea Flower Show and was awarded a First Class Certificate becoming known as the F.C.C. Plant. The F.C.C. plant was later named "Koichiro Wada". This plant has been used extensively in breeding many of the named Yak Hybrids. The Yak was first introduced in the U.S.A. during the 1950's becoming a much in demand plant.





Thirty-six SE-ARS enthusiasts gathered on March 21st at The Chariot for the annual banquet featuring an expansive silent auction (43 plants), a competitive live auction where Doley Bell guided bidders to open their wallets for 4 prize plants, and a profitable raffle where two books and a lovely azalea yielded satisfied winners.

After a tasty meal accompanied by relaxing conversation, it was time for our speaker, Ed Davis, Horticultural Director of the UNC-Charlotte Botanical Gardens. Ed's enthusiasm for his unique role as a landscape architect who 'knows about plants' drew the audience's focus toward the newly created Mellichamp Native Terrace Garden. He started by sharing wisdom from a recent gathering of Botanical Garden Professionals who have an interest in native plants. His conclusion is that "the trend of use of native plants is here to stay," and the Mellichamp Garden, which Ed developed the plans for, "is in the middle of the trend."

This garden is on one-fifth of an acre of the 10-acre Botanical Gardens which are surrounded by the vibrant atmosphere of the university. The mission for this Mellichamp Garden is threefold: to be a showcase of native plants, to demonstrate sustainable landscape practices, and to use native plants in smart home landscape design.



"In other words," Ed exclaimed, "let's find a substitute for boxwood, please." The garden's plan creates a display of alternatives for home landscaping; it is, in Ed's words, "Pretty first", in order to inspire and inform visitors about the beauty, horticultural utility, and sustainability of natural southern flora.

Ed's contribution as a landscape architect has added a new dimension to the UNC-Charlotte's Botanical Gardens because no other part of the garden has used a plan. This tool is especially useful for getting donors who can have sections of the garden named after them. Having an organized purpose also helped gather volunteers to help with the planting, especially in the meadow, which has a great variety of native grasses.

Other parts of the UNC-Charlotte Botanical Gardens worth noting are the hydrangeas in the Susie Harwood Gardens, the Van Landingham Glen, which has an expansive Dexter rhododendron collection as well as one of the best wildflower collections in the area, and the McMillan Greenhouse orchid collection.



Ray's suggestion —:
"It could be important to do a database, especially of the Dexters, to make sure that the records of the plants are preserved."

**Southeastern Chapter of
American Rhododendron
Society**

BUSINESS NAME

Officers and Directors

President: Ray Head
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Stelloh

Secretary: Marilyn Haynes
Hendersonville, NC

Editor: Judy Van Rens
Hendersonville, NC

Mark Your Calendar

April 19, Saturday, 2 p.m.—

Stelloh Garden Tour

April 26, Sunday, 1 p.m. —

**UNC Botanical Garden,
Charlotte**

**May 2 & 3 — Sears Flower
Show — NC Arboretum**

**May 9 , Saturday, 10 A.M. —
Blooms Day, UTN-Knoxville**

**May 23-24 - Hendersonville
Garden Jubilee Festival**

**June 14, Sunday, 2 p.m. —
Annual Meeting, Voting for
Officers, Roundtable Discussion
St; John in the Wilderness**

**July 19, Sunday — Picnic at
Richards Garden, P4M**

(cont) Jackson Educated Us About Yaks

Frank Doleshy made numerous trips to Japan to study and describe plants and named many of the Yaks. Maurice Sumner in 1958 said that if he could have only one Rhododendron it would be a Yak.

Our own Dr. Russ Gilkey a long time member of the SE-ARS Chapter and a plant enthusiast,, spent many years growing Yaks from various seed lots. He distributed these freely throughout the Chapter and was known as the "Yak Man". Jackson McCarter has also grown Yak from seed for many years. He has many specimen plants in his garden as evidence.

We are fortunate in the Hendersonville area to have the Ed and Mary Collins Garden. The Collins Garden was formerly the garden of Charlie Larus. Charlie admired these slow-growing plants with outstanding foliage. As a result he put together a collection that contains a great many of the named species as well as many named hybrids and some numbered crosses.

Deadline

Submit articles for the next newsletter by May 15. Share your expertise!