



# The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

September/October 2017

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

## LEARN FROM PLANT EXPLORER, BARRY YINGER

Our SE-ARS program for Sunday, September 17, will feature well-known plant explorer Barry Yinger. He will enlighten us on the subject of “Rhododendrons Need Friends Too”, an enticing subject for gardeners interested in rare and unusual plants for the woodland garden. He will show us plants he has grown over the years that are suitable companions for rhododendrons in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern US. He will also include some of his plant exploration experiences.

Since he graduated from the University of Maryland in 1975, where he studied Asian languages, botany, and horticulture, Barry Yinger has managed and developed public gardens and arboretums from Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Missouri, and California to Korea. From 1983 to 1987, Mr. Yinger was Curator of Asian Collections at the US National Arboretum in Washington, DC.

Over the years Mr. Yinger has conducted plant exploration in England, Korea, Japan, PR China, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Tanzania, Burma, and Uganda. He organized and led four trips to Korea for plant introduction for the USDA, Agricultural Research Service (USNA); he also took more than 90 trips to Japan alone, which resulted in many plant introductions, including about 20 varieties that are patented. From these numerous and wide-ranging explorations Yinger has introduced more than 1000 new plants to American horticulture. Six of his introductions have been awarded the Gold Medal Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

Dwarf Lily from seashores of Northern Japan

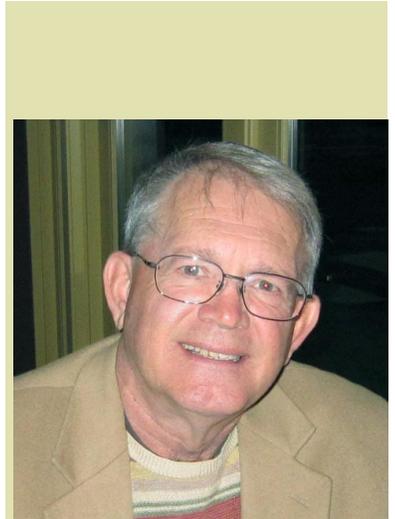


Among his many contributions are *Aralia cordata* ‘Sun King’, *Aspidistras*, *Caladiums*, *Asarums* and *Rohdeas*.

One of the new species found, *Hosta yingeri*, was named for him. Of particular interest to rhododendron gardeners is his collection of hardy *Camellia japonica* from Korean islands, which are contributing to camellia breeding for cold climates.

From 2000 to 2010, Mr. Yinger was the owner of Asiatica Nursery, Lewisberry, PA. Their specialty was new and rarely offered plants, mostly Asian, for collectors and sophisticated gardeners in all climates. They sold both hardy and tropical plants. Among the hardy plants, they mostly sold plants for the shade or woodland garden. Many of their plants were first

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Meet Barry Yinger

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## The Blue Ridge Review

### SHARE YOUR PLANTS WITH OTHERS AT THE PLANT AUCTION!! BRING HOME SOME NEW TREASURES!



We had a good crowd last year!

The Plant Auction at the October 15 meeting promises to be full of tempting choices for members' gardens. Join us at 2 P.M. at the St. John in the Wilderness Hall Parish Hall. Please bring prime plants from your personal collections to add to this year's auction selections. Everyone in this group is interested in trying new varieties and increasing their own collection. Members of Vaseyi will also be participating in this auction. Share what you love!! Start potting your plants for the October auction today!!

Ray Head has a special addition to the Plant Auction: He has been caring for 75 native azaleas that he obtained from Chris Wetmore's nursery. Chris dissolved his nursery, and Ray had the opportunity to obtain these plants for sharing with our members.



Auctioneer Doley Bell in Action

Doley Bell will again be our auctioneer. He does a great job of making the auction fun and profitable by encouraging people to keep bidding. We should give him the Auctioneer Extraordinaire Award.

### LEARN FROM PLANT EXPLORER, BARRY YINGER

*(continued from page one)*



One of Barry Yinger's discoveries: 'Starfish Strain' Chinese mayapple (*Podophyllum difforme*)

introductions into the US. He searched nurseries and hobbyists' collections throughout Asia for the new and different. He sought to offer garden adventure for gardeners who are bored with the obvious and commonplace. Many of these Asian treasures are currently available from Plant Delights Nursery in Raleigh and Far Reaches Nursery, Port Townsend, WA, as well as better garden centers.

Since 2003, he has had a partnership and is half owner of New Life Plants in Bangkok, Thailand. He is also managing the Tanzania Sansevieria Project, an ongoing project to encourage research and conservation and to document the many poorly known species of *Sansevieria* in that country. We are lucky to have the opportunity to spend an afternoon learning from Mr. Yinger's knowledge and experience.

**JULY PICNIC AND P4M — A GREAT SUCCESS**

On a partly cloudy Sunday afternoon, July 16th, Hazel and Byron Richards continued their gracious tradition of hosting our annual picnic.



VP Jerry Neff began the event with a round of applause as our 37 attendees thanked the Richards for

entertaining us in such a beautiful setting. He then announced that our September 16th meeting will feature Barry Yinger, who will educate us about Asiatic plants as companions for rhododendron.

Doley Bell began our meal with a blessing, and then we all enjoyed wonderful homemade food provided by our members (in addition to the treat of KFC chicken). The food was delicious; the conversations were lively and informative. Luckily someone moved the bountiful dessert table onto the porch as a short downfall of rain drove people to seek shelter. The rain lasted only a few minutes, so we were able to continue with our Plants for Members sharing of rooted cuttings from 22 different rhododendrons from Doley Bell's garden. To add to the collection of treasures, Danny Little brought a tantalizing group of Dexters from his garden in Charlotte to share with us. Thanks to Doley and Danny for providing their wonderful and unique plants for our gardens, and to Audrey and Leon for gathering the cuttings from Doley's plants.

Audrey did a great job running the distribution of plants, which were \$3-apiece. We all drew colored marbles which we picked out of a hat to determine the order of choices. When one's marble color came up, each participant could chose one of the cuttings. After three rounds of taking turns, the rest of the plants were available on a chose-what-you-want basis. Pam McCarter collected the money, which turned out to be \$550; that works out to be about 183 plants sold, an average of about 5 plants per member. Everyone went home with some prizes to nurture toward future beauty.



Shopping for treasures



Cuttings to share with other mem-



Wonderful plants, great food, good conversation

## The Blue Ridge Review



Ray encourages Dexter study.



Danny Little's Dexter Resources



Guests, Cathy and Chip Gilbert

### First Meeting of Revived Dexter Study Group—6/25

Ray Head and John Kendall talked two years ago about forming a group of SE-ARS members to study Dexter's. They are concerned that there are very few nurseries that carry Dexters, so we need to root our own. They decided to reignite the SE-ARS study group which they had participated in during the 1970's

Ray started the meeting at 2 on June 25th. A total of 26 members and guests were in attendance. He explained that he had convened the meeting for the purpose of studying, preserving and propagating Dexter rhododendrons, many of which thrive in our southeastern climate zone.

Ray presented a history of Dexter propagation beginning with Mr. Charles Owen Dexter, who began hybridizing in 1921 and amassed his collection at Heritage Plantation in Sandwich, Massachusetts. Since that time, Dexter Study Groups have been formed beginning in the 1940's, including the one begun by the Mashburns and others in our own chapter in the nineties. The goal of these study groups is to help identify and describe characteristics of 150-200 varieties of Dexter hybrids.

Ray proposed that this meeting be the first in a series to promote interest in Dexter hybrids and to encourage members to propagate cuttings of various plants. We are currently looking for a nursery to grow cuttings on a large scale, but members who would like to grow their own are directed to consult instructions posted on the SE-ARS website.

John Kendall has a book that he saved from the early local study group. The book has a list of registered Dexters and includes descriptive features of Dexters, like the number of lobes on the flowers and the number of trusses on the branch.

Danny Little, who has a wonderful garden full of Dexters in Charlotte, provided books, photos and slides from the Piedmont Chapter Dexter Group of Marshall Stillwell and Don Kellam which continued after the 1970's SE-ARS group dissolved. These give the numbers and the original names of the plants Dexter crossed. Jack McCarter will process these resources for inclusion in the SE-ARS website.

Ray introduced guests, Chip and Cathy Gilbert, who purchased Ed Collins' original Hendersonville property three years ago.

Bob Head displayed plants he had grafted onto R.hyperythrum root stock and gave a brief report on his method for producing healthy plants.

Members were asked to provide lists of Dexters in their gardens. Chuck Van Rens agreed to compile a composite list to be shared with the membership. The next step for the group is for each of us to get photographs of our Dexters when they bloom next spring to share. We should write-up when they bloom, how many petals, and how many flowers on each truss. Send this information to Chuck also (cvanrens@gmail.com).

*Adapted from meeting minutes of Pam McCarter*

## The Paces Share a Treasure 'Red Max'

Jean and Leon Pace have a great specimen and photos with information on a red maximum (from the plant on Mount Mitchell). Here's what Jean Pace said about their plant:

"The plant was given to us by Evelyn Bowman in 2007. She got the seeds from Ed Collins that he collected about 25 years ago. The plant was 4' tall in 2007 and is now 8'. This plant is co-mingled with two other Red Max Seedlings of the standard pale pink color. She had planted three seedlings together in one spot and let them grow up together. When we got the plant it was too entangled to separate it from the other two. The photos are of all three plants and the foliage."

The R. Maximum is a widespread version of the elepidote species; the range extends from the Southern Appalachians to Pennsylvania and New York. The specimen that the Paces have is from a distinctive variation of the species that is found near Mt. Mitchell. Here are some of Don Hyatt's remarks about the Mr. Mitchell variation of the species (known as 'Red Max'):

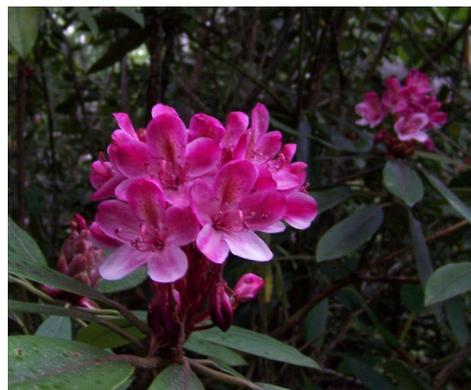
"During the 1930s when construction started on the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway, Mr. Clayton, who was involved with that project, discovered a rare population of about 20 plants of R. maximum that had crimson red flowers."

"On my first trip in the fall of 2003, I was grateful to have been escorted by Ed Collins and Bob Stelloh of the Southeastern Chapter of the ARS. I would never have found it on my own, and I still find it amazing that the plant was even found in the first place."

Hyatt continued to explain the distinctiveness of the plant that the Paces have:

"The original 'Red Max' is very distinctive, in or out of flower. It has red sap that looks like cranberry juice and the coloration is evident in both stems and leaves. The sap does not always reach the foliage edge so the center of a leaf is often red, but the margins can still be green. In a garden situation, clones of the 'Red Max' do not always behave like the original plant in the wild. Sometimes the red color does not show up in all parts of the plant, so some branches will have normal green leaves and white flowers. Individual trusses can also have a mixture of red and white blossoms, or flowers that are bi-colored or blotched."

If you look at the picture of the R. Maximum that belongs to Jean and Leon, you'll agree that Mr. Hyatt's description fits their plant which is grown in a "garden situation". If you want an adventure, look up Don Hyatt's original article and take your hiking equipment up to the parkway around milepost 330 between the end of June and mid-July. You might be able to find a cutting to start for your own garden.



R. Maximum



R. Maximum foliage — from the Paces garden



R. Maximum in bloom in Pace garden — three plants intertwined

For more information refer to Don Hyatt's article cited below:

"Rhododendron catawbiense and Rhododendron maximum: The Elepidote Species of Eastern North America" by Donald W. Hyatt

From — *Rhododendron Species*, Vol 6, 2011  
published by the Rhododendron Species Foundation

**Southeastern Chapter of  
American Rhododendron Society  
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ENCOURAGEMENT OF RHODODENDRONS

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(beginning July 1, 2017)

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**Editor:** Judy Van Rens

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**Mark your Calendar**

**Sunday, Sept. 17, 2 pm —  
Barry Yinger—  
Rhododendrons Need Friends  
Too**  
St. John in the Wilderness  
Parish Hall

**Sunday, October 15, 2 p.m.  
Annual Plant Auction**  
St. John in the Wilderness  
Parish Hall

*Please submit articles for next news-  
letter by November 15*

**NOTICE : Southern Highlands Reserve Plant Sale  
Friday, August 25 from 9 to 3**

The **Southern Highlands Reserve** is a native plant arboretum and education and research center in Lake Toxaway. It is dedicated to sustaining the natural ecosystems of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Come to the Annual Native Plant Sale. Bring home a few of the native plants featured in the gardens of the Southern Highlands Reserve. The sale will be at the Reserve, 558 Summit Ridge Rd, Lake Toxaway.

We will have many of the azaleas and other shrubs that are featured at the Reserve. These are available for sale in either 1-gallon or 4-inch containers. Each plant has been grown with care from hand-collected seed.