



# The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Sept/Oct 2014

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

## Plant Auction at October Meeting

The Plant Auction at the October 19 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.

In addition to plants that all of you are willing to bring and share, there is a collection of rooted cuttings that are from two desirable sources: a plentiful and diverse group of Lepidote cuttings donated in 2013 by Leon Pace and a group of Yakushmanum from the Haag Estate. Jackson will bring the above 80 to 100 rooted Lepidote and Yakushmanum cuttings in gallon pots. They will be sold for \$5 a piece.

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. Share what you love!!

FYI - Learn about Jackson McCarter's process of rooting cuttings later in this issue.

### An Opportunity

Sat. Oct. 11, there will be an excellent plant sale at the Oak Ridge Arboretum at Univ. of TN, near Knoxville.



### Leon's Lepidote Cuttings for Plant Auction

If you have been waiting for an opportunity to acquire lepidote Rhodies, you will not want to miss the Plant Auction. This group of plants offers a lot of variety. The mature size ranges from 2'x2' for

Ginny Gee, 7'x7' for Olga Mezzitt and 8'x8' for Lanny's Pride with the others at various heights in between. The colors range from white to cream with a prominent yellow blotch, pinks of varying shades, mauve, pale lavender, lavender pink and blue. This group of plants include both tetraploids and species. The hybrids are by Augie Kehr, Russ and Velma Haag, Orlando Pride, Ed Mezzitt, Guy Nearing, Warren Berg and others. The bloom season for this group starts mid-February for Sichertense, mid to late March for Ginny Gee, and the rest at different times during April. All of these have done well for me.

—Leon Pace

(See the full list of lepidotes on page 2.)

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# The Blue Ridge Review

## The World of Ginkgo



Tim and Matt Nichols of “Mr. Maple” and “Mr. Ginkgo” educated us with their excellent presentation on “The Ginkgo Biloba Story.” They gave us a look at the new and exciting trend of using ornamental ginkgo in the garden and landscape. *Ginkgo biloba* is a living fossil—fossils of *Ginkgo biloba* date back 270 million years, predating even the dinosaurs. They explained that their plants are grafted from male root stock, as the female is less desirable in the landscape due to the unpleasant odor of its fruit.



Tim and Matt showed pictures of several varieties having different habits and explained how they are used in display gardens. The Ginkgo has spectacular intense and clear yellow fall color; then it loses its leaves suddenly, creating a gorgeous golden carpet.

The Ginkgo Biloba is very malleable, making it good for bonsai and plant sculpturing. Ginkgo is very hardy and adaptable, growing in zones 4 thru 9. Its striking fan-like leaves add to its appeal.

After their presentation, Tim and Matt answered questions from the group. Then everyone went outside where Tim and Matt had a good selection of Ginkgos and Maples for sale.

## Below is the list of rooted cuttings available Oct. 19!

### Lepidote Cuttings from Leon Pace

- |                            |                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 Northern Starburst       | 6 Pink Elegans                       |
| 5 Epoch x Augustini        | 5 Aglo                               |
| 5 Lanny's Pride            | 6 Yellow Eye                         |
| 5 PJM                      | 5 Blue Ridge                         |
| 6 Pioneer Silvery Pink     | 6 Ginny Gee                          |
| 4 Sictotense Russian Rhody | 6 Carolianum x Bulliatum             |
| 5 Olga Mezzitt             | 7 Azalea, Kiusianum Komo<br>Khulshan |

### Haag Cuttings

- |                             |                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 3 Arborescens x Prunifolium | 6 Yakushimanum (Gable)               |
| 8 Pseudochrysanthum         | 9 Yakushimanum next to Haag<br>house |
| 2 Yakushimanum (Gilkey)     | 6 Maximum x Yakushimanum             |



Haag Cuttings

## Jackson's Tips for Rhododendron Propagation

I've been propagating rhododendrons for over forty years, with varying success. I started while we were living in town (Greenville, SC) where I started with mainly seedlings in my garage, then expanded to the lot next door. I quickly realized that this lot did not have enough room for we bought our pre-ral property north of Since I had some ex-boxes, I offered in some of the plants, will be available at tion, and also have cuttings in process to the chapter next share some informa-ting rhododendrons



my plants, so in 1973 sent hilly, wooded ru-Travelers Rest, SC. tra space in my cutting 2013 to propagate mainly lepidotes, that the October Plant Auc-some 2014 lepidote which will be available tion about propagat-from cuttings, espe-cially for newer members. The methods I use are fairly standard, but with emphasis on low maintenance, and are not as intensive, ef-ficient or effective as those of a commercial operation.

Taking cuttings – The purpose of propagating from cuttings is to obtain new plants with the same genes as the original plants (cloning or vegetative propagation), . This may be because you have pruned branches which were growing over walks or drives (and you can't bear to waste the plant material), desire to obtain more individuals of a good plant or promising seedling, “insurance” against loss of a rare plant, obtaining new plants from others, or producing extra plants to give away. Cuttings may be taken at nearly any month in the year, but best times are in the midsummer or fall. The parent plant should be well hydrated, a day or two after watering or rain. Choose a cutting from the end of a small branch that is mature enough so the selected branch will bend with resistance up to about a 45 degree angle, but supple enough that it will not break. When you take your cutting with sharp clippers (“secateurs”), leave about a half-inch of stub on the original plant to encourage multiple branches of new growth. The stem on your cutting should be long enough so that you can stick it two or three inches into the growing medium. Place the cuttings in a plastic bag containing a small wad of moistened paper towel to maintain some temporary humidity. The cuttings may be processed immediately, or left in the refrigerator for several days. There is some evidence that refrigeration may benefit rooting, but I usually process them the same day as I am not likely to have later time available.

### Keys Steps in Propagation



Selecting Cutting



Trimming leaves



Wounding cutting



Rooting Hormone

# The Blue Ridge Review

## Jackson's Tips for Propagation (cont.)

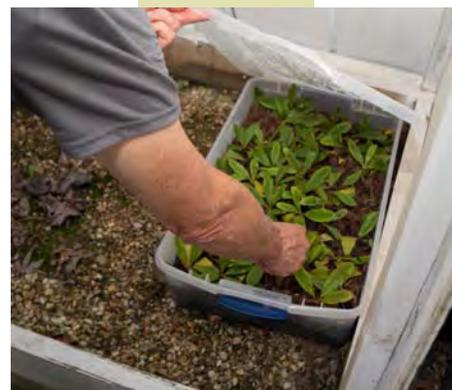
Preparing the cuttings – Trim the outer 2/3 of the leaves off with your clippers (to avoid overlapping of adjacent leaves in the cutting boxes). Next, wound the cutting so that it will later form a callus from which roots will arise. With a razor-sharp box cutter-type knife, make an angular cut about 1/3 of the way into the stem; then strip the cut down to the bottom of the stem, cutting a length-wise piece 1/3 of the width of the stem. Put this wound into the rooting hormone and shake it off. I use Hormodin #3 rooting hormone; one can will last for years.

Rooting the cuttings - I root them in clear plastic containers with drilled drainage holes: the 58-quart size (23-1/2"L x 16-7/8"W x 12-1/4"H) obtained from Walmart works best because it gives plenty of room for upward growth if potting is delayed. My growing medium is 1 to 2 inches of Nature's Helper soil conditioner (composted pine bark/ compost) with 4-6 inches of "pine bark mulch" (composed of 1/2-3/4 inch pine bark flakes) on top, both obtained from Home Depot. I no longer use the standard rooting formula of 50% peat and 50% perlite because the peat either gets too dry or too soggy. The pine bark has sharp drainage and aeration; the Nature's Helper at the bottom stays wet longer and releases water vapor that keeps the pine bark a little moist. Make holes in the pine bark with a ballpoint pen about 2-3 inches apart to receive the cuttings, depending on the size of the cuttings. Label. Water the cuttings initially, and whenever there is decreased condensation on the top of the closed plastic container. It takes about a year for these cuttings to become well rooted and suitable for potting. Some, such as yaks, may take two years. Rooting is indicated by resistance to pulling upward on the cuttings. I usually fertilize the cutting box with a half-strength soluble high phosphorus ("bloom booster") type fertilizer in the spring. In the few days prior to potting, it is a good idea to partially open the cutting box to allow the rooted cuttings to acclimate to open air.

I store the cutting-filled plastic containers in a Nearing Frame, which you can read about in David Leach's book, *Rhododendrons of the World*. The south-facing slanted part of the frame is made of aluminum. Its job is two-fold: to shelter the plants in the frame from direct sunlight and to reflect the diffused sunlight onto the plants in the next frame. (The rooting plants are stored in the open north-facing part of the frame so they get open shade, but not direct sun.) I've found that painting the aluminum with flat white paint diffuses the reflection of the light; using bare aluminum was too bright in this climate. If you don't want to build a Nearing Frame, alternatives



Cutting boxes in Nearing Frame



Rotted Cuttings



### **Jackson's Tips for Propagation (cont. from page 4)**

are indoors under lights, north side of the house, or evergreen forest with high shade.

Potting the rooted cuttings: I potted the 2013 cuttings for the October plant auction in late August 2014. The root balls were too big for quart pots and too small for the gallons. Potting mix for these plants was 2 parts pine bark mulch and 1 part Nature's Helper, although for my plants I usually use bulk partially composted pine bark. I put them in the gallons so that the new owners could keep them outdoors about a year before they need to be planted. After potting it's good to keep them in the shade so they don't dry out.

#### **Materials:**

Secateurs	Plastic bags
Razor knife	Cutting board
Rooting hormone	Ballpoint pen
Nature's Helper	Pine Bark Mulch
Labels	Nearing Frame
Large clear plastic storage boxes	

— *Jackson McCarter*

### **Welcome New Members**

Nigel & Mary Strickland  
Mills River, NC

### **Renew SE-ARS Membership**

Treasurer Jackson McCarter urged members to please renew their membership for 2015 early, as it saves processing. Members who renew by the October meeting will be in a drawing for a free membership for 2016. The names must be in to ARS by Dec. 1st in order to receive the winter JARS

**Southeastern Chapter of  
American Rhododendron  
Society**

ENCOURAGEMENT OF RHODODENDRONS

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**Mark your Calendar**

**Oct. 19, Sunday at 2 pm**  
**Garden Plant Auction**  
St. John in the Wilderness Parish Hall

**Dec 6, Saturday 10 a.m.**  
**Christmas Field Trip**  
Appeldoorn Nursery

**Feb. 15, Sunday at 2 pm**  
**Jackson McCarter's**  
**Yakusimanum Program**  
St. John in the Wilderness Parish Hall

**Deadline**

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

**Christmas Field Trip**

**Appeldoorn Nursery in Morgantown**

Most members seem to want a field trip featuring conifers for the December meeting. Sieglinde has set up the field trip to Appeldoorn Nursery in Morgantown for Saturday, December 6th. They have full grown dwarf conifers and have 4 or 5 greenhouses. Bruce, the owner, wants to know how many are planning to attend. Ray suggested we eat at Countryside Barbecue in Marion. Sieglinde will ask at the October meeting for a show of hands. Since people will be coming from different locations, here is a link to the website so everyone can find suitable directions:

<http://www.appeldoornlandscapenursery.com/>

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