



# The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

June, 2022

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

## HALE BOOTH WILL ENLIGHTEN US ON JUNE 19TH

On Sunday, **June 19, at 2 o'clock** at Bullington Gardens, Hale Booth will educate us. Hale and his wife Susan garden on Signal Mountain near Chattanooga, TN, where they maintain an ever-expanding eclectic collection of hollies, rhododendrons, azaleas, bamboos, camellias, magnolias and other interesting forms of Chlorophyll. He is the District 10 Director for the American Rhododendron Society, a member of the American Conifer Society and, as a member of the Azalea Society of America, he is the Director of the Azalea Research Fund.

Here is Hale's proposal for his talk:

"I plan to talk about a wide range of 'companion' plants that perform well in



the same conditions as Rhododendrons and Azaleas. These will mostly be woody plants but will include some perennials. I will illustrate these with a power point presentation and plan to include a lot of selections that many people may not be as familiar with. I will also put together a handout with mail-order sources for some of these. Most, if not all, of these plants will be ones I have personal experience with, so there will be some opinionated commentary. Maybe we should call the

program 'Companion plants from beyond the big box store'!

## JULY 17TH– ANNUAL PICNIC AT THE RICHARDS

Our annual **Potluck Picnic Meeting** will be generously hosted by Hazel and Byron Richards at their beautiful home and garden at **2 p.m. on Sunday, July 17**. The Richards live at 31 South Ridge Dr., Hendersonville, NC. We hope you will join us to enjoy delicious food and spend a pleasant afternoon conversing with fellow plant lovers.

Please bring some picnic food to share. Try to think of a dish that is easy for you to prepare and will be part of a tasty meal. You might want to bring a great salad, an appetizing main dish, a healthy and delicious veggie dish, or a wonderful dessert. If you remember, bring a chair for the picnic and the plant auction, along with some cash to spend on plants for your garden. Beverages and tableware will be provided.

**\*\***Look over your garden collection and find some plants to contribute to the auction. If you are into rooting cuttings, bring some of those. It's a great chance to get something new and wonderful.

### Hale Booth's Promise:

**"Just to make sure you come"**  
Hale says,  
**"we will also dig through our hoop house and bring a few small odd, but interesting, plants to give away ."**

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## BEING EDUCATED AT THE CROPS RESEARCH CENTER



Irene & Tom Sharing

On May 27, thirteen members arrived at the tour of the NC State Mountain Crops Horticultural Research Center. We were enlightened about their work by Professor Tom Ranney, his assistant, Irene Palmer, and an intern named Jerry. There are 10 faculty-led programs, all with a major focus on non-invasive species. Nursery crops remain the most popular research area because of the size of the industry. A primary focus is developing new species from non-invasive, disease-resistant varieties.

Intern Jerry talked to us about testing rooting compounds, gels versus liquids. It seems liquids, like potassium mixed with salt, are used more.



Group Learning

Irene and Tom talked about hand-pollinating, which is often used in the greenhouse, but not in the fields. This technique helps control both parents; the picture shows blue tags labelling the different parent pollinators. The picture also shows net bags used for seed collection.

Another project is looking for ways to speed up flowering. Quince takes 5 or 6 years after planting; Irene found a way to make them flower sooner. They're also looking for ways to make camellias flower for the first time in less than 3 years, as well as trying to develop a summer-flowering camellia by connecting it to a knock-out rose.



Great Give-away Prizes

After an hour of learning, we were rewarded with some plants to take home; we could take several, choosing from double play doozie spirea (one of my favorites), Rhododendron hybrid-DandyMan Color Wheel, Rhododendron hybrid "NCRX2 Black Hat, and Perfecto Mundo Evergreen Azaleas. Thanks to our wonderful educators, it turned out to be a perfect morning.



Enjoying Ray's Garden

## EXPLORING RAY HEAD'S GARDEN

Ray Head's garden is a delightful place for about 10 visitors to explore, especially when so many azaleas and rhododendrons are in bloom. Ray's favorite is the lovely yellow Austrinum, called Admiral Semmes, which was in full bloom. We were treated to an amazing collection of azalea 'eye candy': yellow, light yellow, orange, white with pink stamens (with a great fragrance), lavender, red, and pinkish purple.

Ray has a unique and easy-to-read system for labeling plants: He uses relatively small concrete landscape stones that he paints with craft paint. Great idea, Ray.

Ray's large, versatile garden also features many holly plants, both deciduous and evergreen holly (like his treasured Wando Holly that J.C. Ralston gave him), flowers like columbine, several magnolia (like the rare Magnolia Ashei and the Sunsatation Magnolis, developed by Augie Kerr). He also has a shade house and many irrigation pipes.



Ray's Clever Labels

After our tour, Mary Ann treated us to a lovely lunch.



June, 2022

## THE IMPRESSIVE McCARTER GARDEN

On a gorgeous day in late April, thirteen of us discovered the natural beauty of the McCarter garden, hidden in an outlying area near Travellers Rest. The McCarters have owned their property since 1980, when they needed more space for growing so many rhododendrons from seed.

Strolling through part of the original 110 acres, we discovered near the house common Yak Rhododendrons from Japan. One of these yaks turns pink first, and then pure white. We strolled toward the large lake and discovered several rarities: Catesbael Trillium and rare deep red Kaempferi azaleas. The expansive groves of deciduous azaleas were amazing. Behind a lovely gazebo by the lake, we found a grove of rhododendrons grown from Yelton seedlings, which self-seed.

Jackson gave us a tour of his expansive propagation area, which features numerous Nearing frames which Jackson built. Then we were delightfully surprised by a delicious lunch which Pamela had prepared for us. This was the embodiment of a Perfect Day!!

## AUDREY STELLOH'S IMPRESSIVE GARDEN

Audrey Stelloh graciously made her garden available to us for many days in April and early May. I call her garden, 'lost in the woods in the center of town!' When we walked around the house, we were treated to a display of Audrey's stepping stones: hummingbirds, other birds, a fox.

As we meandered on the many paths exploring her garden, we were impressed by the variety of her plants: a silberlocke by the house, a grand oriental spruce, maidenhair ferns, a huge humpback whale hosta, a rare quadrillium; the list goes on.

Of course, Audrey's collection of native azaleas is impressive; a standout was one called tipsy tangerine. Thanks to Audrey for sharing your wonderful, impressive collection of plants.

## VAN RENS' GARDEN

We were delighted to share our garden with nine members. For a small garden, we have many varieties, including 15-plus Dexters. Most of our rhododendrons and azaleas were in full bloom. It was fun to walk with our 'rhodi' friends and find that there were surprises for them on our 1-acre lot.

Another high point of the week was a visit arranged by Marilyn Haynes brought a busload of visitors from Lake Point Landing. Chuck loves to talk about all of the varieties we inherited from the former owner, Fred Kalmbach. We also made some wonderful additions to enhance our garden.



Enjoying the McCarter Garden



Jackson's Nearing Frames



Audrey's Quadrillium



Humpback Whale Hosta



Van Rens Garden

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American Rhododendron Society  
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**Mark your Calendar**

**Sunday, June 19 at 2 pm-  
Bullington Gardens.  
Hale Booth's Talk-  
Companion Plants to  
Rhododendrons and  
Azaleas**

**Sunday, July 17, 2 pm.-  
Annual Potluck Picnic  
And Plant Auction.  
Hosts- The Richards,  
31 South Ridge Drive  
Hendersonville, NC**

**Make Sure to Check Out the  
SE-ARS Website —  
[www.se-ars.org](http://www.se-ars.org)**

**BETTY MONTGOMERY'S GORGEOUS GARDEN**

On our second year visiting Forty Oaks Farm, we wanted to share the grandeur of this garden with our neighbor, who volunteers and the WNC Arboretum. We arrived at the same time as Audrey and April.

As we approached the pond, we heard a noise, and spotted a group of large fish leaping out of the water. Their feeding station had been timed to spew goodies for them!!

Our neighbors appreciated the botanical variations that have been artistically arranged along the many paths and hillsides that comprise Betty's five-acre park-like garden. Every azalea seemed to be in bloom. The garden is like a painting with strategically arranged color areas of pink azaleas, orange azaleas, yellow azaleas, white azaleas. Betty obviously enjoyed arranging this art-form.

The statues and benches are a delight. As we strolled along, we discovered an area of Japanese Maples, along with various magnolias. Betty's garden is a treasured place!

