



# The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

November, 2022

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS — DECEMBER 4TH CHRISTMAS PARTY!!

Come to celebrate fellowship, plants, and good food at our Christmas party on Sunday, December 4, at 2 pm at Bullington Gardens. Our Chapters will provide meat or poultry entrées, as well as drinks. You will be asked to provide a side dish or a dessert to share with all. Look for an email so that you can let us know if you will be joining us.

We also have about 10 plants left from the sale of native azaleas grown by the Beasleys. Most of these are smaller versions of the plants that were sold and distributed in mid-October. Even a small version will

## MORE BEASLEY AZALEAS WERE AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER

This October, we were again offered the opportunity to purchase more of the wonderful native azaleas from Lisa and Jeff Beasley. This year we were able to purchase 115 plants; there were eleven varieties to choose from; some varieties had 5 plants available; others had 22. Ray Head says, "These were a selection of natives that George and Mary Beasley propagated years ago. They grow great in the South."

This year the plants were delivered to Ray Head's place near Rutherfordton. A big 'Thank You' to Ray and Mary Ann Head, Mike O'Hara, and Chuck Van Rens for helping to unload and sort the plants.

On Saturday, October 15, ten members drove over to Ray's to pick up the plants they had ordered for \$20 apiece. Some bought 4 plants; others bought thirty. (FYI, 27 of these plants will grow and thrive at the Biltmore Estate.) We told a neighbor about this offer, and we picked up five for them; they were very impressed by the size and health of the plants we brought them.



After sharing the costs of shipping and the plants, both SE-ARS and Vaseyi will gain \$244 profit from the sale of these wonderful plants.

A more important benefit than the profit is the beauty these plants will add to the gardens of those who purchased them. Thanks to all who made this possible!!

**ENJOY JACKSON  
McCARTER'S TALK  
ABOUT THEIR TRIP TO  
THE NORTHWEST FOR  
THE 75TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE AMERICAN  
RHODODENDRON  
SOCIETY!!!**



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE-

**A TRIBUTE TO  
DR. LARRY  
MELlichAMP— 2  
(1948-2022)**

**PORTLAND ARS 3  
MEETING — &  
PRE and POST 4  
TOURS**

### FAREWELL TO DR. LARRY MELLICHAMP



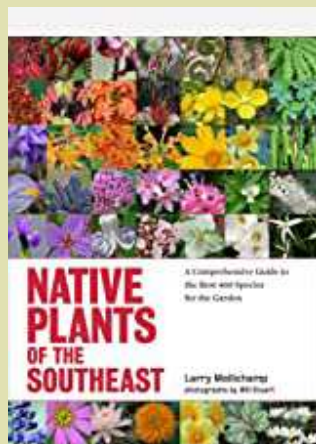
Dr. Mellichamp — speaker



At the UNC Greenhouse



Tour Guide at UNC



It was a privilege to read the many tributes to Dr. Larry Mellichamp, who left this world at the age of 73 in early October, 2022 (after battling very serious cancer for over 3 years). Anyone who had had contact with him appreciated his sharing persona and veritable knowledge of horticulture. A quote from his obituary speaks volumes:

“Our community has lost its ultimate ‘Plant Whisperer’, Dr. Larry Mellichamp. Botanist, teacher, mentor, author, and creator, Larry had a phenomenal knowledge of the lives and growth of plants. He broke ground at the highest levels of botanical knowledge, and yet, was also among the humblest of home gardens. He could convey to anyone which plant should go to which site and what that plant needed to flourish.”

Dr. Jeff Gillman, current Director of the UNC Botanical Gardens, expressed the appreciation of all who knew him with these words:

“Between the beginning of his Freshman year at UNC Charlotte in 1966 and the day he passed, Dr. M spent a total of six years away from the Gardens, only separating himself from this campus to earn his Master’s and Ph.D. in Botany from the University of Michigan. He was unfailingly loyal to the Gardens where, as an undergraduate, he was involved in some of the Garden’s first plantings under the direction of his mentor and our first Director, Herbert Hohenbleikner. After over 39 years leading these Gardens, he retired in 2015. After retirement he continued to be involved in the Gardens and regularly taught classes, mentored staff, students, and the community and continued to install numerous plants in the Gardens.

To me, Dr. M was the perfect predecessor. He knew when to give advice, when to allow me to make my own mistakes, and when to encourage. He pushed all of us here at the Gardens to make it a better place for everyone. He was a true botanist’s botanist and teacher’s teacher. Even after 40 years of teaching, he would still spend hours preparing for a class, collecting samples, and even experimenting with jokes. He cared about his subject and his students and it showed. “

Some of us SE-ARS member will recall Dr. Larry leading us on a tour of the UNC Botanical Gardens in the spring of 2015. I remember him telling us that this garden contains “every plant native to the Carolinas that is worth growing”. Dr. M’s sharing of special details about each plant was amazing. As our tour came to an end, we all knew that our brains had been enlightened by our excursion through this “living classroom” with one of the most knowledge plant experts. You can still learn from him by finding one of the books that Dr. Mellichamp wrote, like Native Plants of the Southeast, The Southeast Native Plant Primer, Bizarre Botanicals.



### PORTLAND ARS MEETING — PRE AND POST-TOURS

The October joint ARS-ASA meeting featured a slide presentation by Jackson McCarter, Southeastern Chapter ARS treasurer, of highlights of the May 2022 American Rhododendron Society International Meeting held by the Portland Chapter in the Washington-Oregon areas. The meeting, postponed from the previous year due to the Covid pandemic, celebrated the Society's seventy-fifth anniversary and featured tours of 28 gardens and four nurseries and lecture presentations by prominent gardeners and rhododendron specialists.

Gardens toured, many in the rain, include the Olympic Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls; the Whitney Garden and Nursery (source of "good-doer" Anna Rose Whitney); Mike Stewart's (Dover Nursery) garden; Heronswood Gardens, founded by plant explorer Dan Hinkley and architect Robert Jones in 1987, and owned by the S'Klallam Tribe since 2012; Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island; the private estate of timber magnate, Prentice Bloedel, now a public garden and forest preserve, featuring a rhododendron dell and a Japanese garden; the Rhododendron Species Foundation Botanical Garden; Woodburn Nursery, source of the majority of azaleas sold by florists in the United States; Iseli Nursery, featuring conifers; Crystal Springs, founded as a display and test garden by the Portland Chapter; the Lan Su Chinese Garden in the heart of Portland; and the Portland Japanese Garden, deemed the most authentic Japanese garden outside of Japan. Also visited were Hendricks Park in Eugene and The Springs at Greer Garden, arguably the most luxurious retirement village ever, established by the late nurseryman, Harold Greer, and his wife, Nancy, who hosted a sumptuous dinner for the attending members. The group also visited Chris Trautman's Mowbrey Garden, a display garden where he shows off the myriad orange, peach, yellow, and bicolor hybrids he has developed over his many years as a hybridizer.

After a visit to the coastal sea lion cave, the group visited the Connie Hansen Garden, now managed by a foundation with volunteers, and the Monrovia Nursery headquarters, the highly successful grower of plants for commercial distribution. We were privileged to tour their wonderful display garden, usually open only to high volume buyers.

*(continued on Page 4)*



Tumwater Falls



Whitney Garden & Nursery



Rhododendron Species Foundation



Woodburn Nursery



**Southeastern Chapter of  
American Rhododendron Society  
280 Trammell Rd.  
Travelers Rest, SC 29690**

WEBSITE - WWW.SE-ARS.ORG

**Officers and Directors**

(beginning July 1, 2021)

**President:** Aaron Cook

**Treasurer:** Jackson McCarter

**Vice President:** Chuck Van Rens

**Directors until 2023—**

Ray Head, Leon Pace, April  
Sanborn

**Directors until 2022—**

John Kendall, Mike O'Hara,  
Buffy Wells

**Secretary:** Pamela McCarter

**Editor:** Judy Van Rens

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**Mark your Calendar**

**Sunday, Dec. 4, 2 pm  
Bullington Gardens  
Christmas Party**

**ARS Renewal—Bring \$40 to  
meeting; give to Jackson  
McCarter**

**PORTLAND ARS MEETING — (cont.)**

In addition to the many tours, walking distances between four and eight miles each day, the group was treated to talks by such illustrious presenters as Lionel de Rothschild of Exbury and his gardener and the extremely witty French rhododendron enthusiast, Marc Colombel.



Portland Chapter member and nursery owner, Mike Bones, gave members a bonsai workshop, using azaleas he had pre-selected for that purpose, and participants were able to create their own instant bonsais to nurture and cherish for many years.

Members were immersed in the glory of the rhododendron unsurpassed in any other part of the country and were able to enjoy the fellowship of friends and to

create memories to last a lifetime.

The slide show may be accessed on the SE-ARS website by clicking "Upcoming and Past Events."