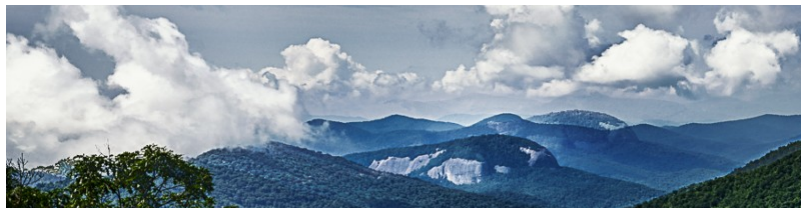




# The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

April/May 2018

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

## ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW ON SATURDAY, APRIL 28

I am April Sanborn, Chairperson of the Flower Show, and I want you to note the following changes to the annual SE-ARS flower show to be held on April 28. In addition to this being a one day show, we also have a change of venue. The show will be at St. John In the Wilderness in our regular/old meeting room. This show always provides a great opportunity to show and share rhododendron and azalea blooms with fellow members and the public. I am hopeful that in spite of the unusual weather we have been experiencing, we will have a good show representing our local rhododendrons and azaleas. I urge everyone who has nice things in bloom to please bring entries to the show that day. It is easy to enter and someone will help you if you have not entered a show before. Show entries may be brought on Saturday morning when the building opens at 8:00am. Show entries need to be in by 9:00 am on Saturday, with judging to take place beginning at 10:00 am.



Complete rules will be available on the SE-ARS web page, but here are some basic tips for entering the show.

- Bring clean entries. Wipe dirt and pollen from large leaved rhododendrons as needed and remove debris like bits of oak pollen from all entries. It always improves their appearances.
- Pay attention to size: Elepidote rhododendrons must be a single truss with flowers coming from one bud. Other entries, such as lepidote rhododendrons, deciduous and evergreen azaleas, must be a single stem spray or a single or multiple truss typical of the variety. Sprays must be 16" or less outside of the containers. In Section H (Miniature Truss or Spray), entries must be 1"x4" or less outside of the container.
- Color should be typical of the variety.
- Consider Form -- A single truss should be full, with a full set of leaves, typical of the variety. Sprays should be well shaped, attractive and typical of the variety.

*By April Sanborn*

**(Please turn to page 4 to continue reading about the Flower Show)**

### COME AND SHOW OFF THE BEAUTY FROM YOUR GARDEN ON APRIL 28

Some of last year's winners are shown here:  
Best Evergreen Azalea: 'Yubai' exhibited by Audrey Stelloh; Best Elepidote: 'Vivacious' shared by Doley Bell; Best Deciduous Azalea: 'Clear Creek' submitted by Audrey Stelloh; Best Lepidote: R. minus 'Bowie' from Ray Head's garden.

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## The Blue Ridge Review



Sieglinde greets Steve Pettis



New room at St. John



### STEVE PETTIS GIVES ADVICE ON PEST CONTROL

As we met on Sunday, March 18, in the large new meeting room at St. John in the Wilderness, our expert speaker, Steve Pettis, engaged us from his first words, which were about one of the biggest threats to trees, TOPPING TREES. He went on to explain that any time a person removes a limb that is more than  $1/3$  the diameter of the trunk, he or she is removing part of the trunk. He added that what makes a tree work is that all the limbs are competing for light and heat in a balanced way. Heating in a tree is better at the ends of the branches; when part of a tree is cut, it doesn't have a strong healing and sealing ability. He encouraged us to plan our tree pruning in advance and emphasized that it is important to remove up to 25% of the crown if we want to preserve a healthy tree.

Steve's second instructive point about keeping trees healthy was to use proper planting procedures. He said many people plant their trees too deep, which makes the roots grow upward, instead of outward, because they are looking for oxygen. Roots that are growing upward eventually turn toward the trunk, which can rot the trunk. He reminded us that most azaleas have shallow roots, so be careful to plant them high. Volcano mulching is also a 'no-no'. Instead spread the mulch out widely surrounding the tree with the thinnest layer of mulch close to the trunk.

The next threat to trees in Henderson County is what Steve Pettis calls "EVIL IVY". He says English Ivy is a "slow-moving disaster" because it competes for nutrients, water, and sunlight with the trees it is growing on.

The potential pests to azaleas and rhododendrons are numerous. Steve said that one important point to remember when dealing with your garden plans is that "a happy plant produces chemicals that repel insects; insects are more likely to attack a plant that is stressed."

Steve then enlightened us with his knowledge of azalea and rhododendron pests. He talked about lace bugs, spider mites, and borers. His advice on treatment was to treat them early and treat them often because we're dealing with the parent bugs and their offspring. He also cautioned about treatment during flowering because of the risk of harming pollinators. He emphasized the importance of pruning and destroying the infested portions of the plants infested with borers during the months of dormancy. He also suggested using pheromone traps to determine if you have an infestation of stem borers. With these traps you will be able to time an insecticide application 7 to 10 days after you trap the first male. As far as dealing with scales, he said horticultural oils work, as long as coverage is complete and is repeated.

It's important when dealing with pests to respect the role that beneficial insects play in controlling them. (97% of insects are beneficial or neutral.) So Steve's advice is to educate yourself about the individual pests; be specific, thorough, and cautious. Getting information from your county extension agent is a good place to start.



April/May 2018

## TOM RANNEY, IMPROVER OF PLANTS



Eleven SE-ARS members gathered on Saturday morning for an enlightening and instructive visit to the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Center. Dr. Tom Ranney, head of the Mountain Crop Improvement Lab, and Research Specialist Irene Palmer shared their enthusiasm and their knowledge of the possibilities and goals of

improving plant species. They started out showing us some examples of upcoming releases of azaleas that have attractive double-flowering forms. Their goals when breeding azaleas are in the areas of flower size, good form, lace bug resistance, re-blooming strength, and cold-hardiness. Azalea lovers should be excited about soon being able to add newly created beautiful plants to their gardens because of the work of Dr. Ranney and his staff.

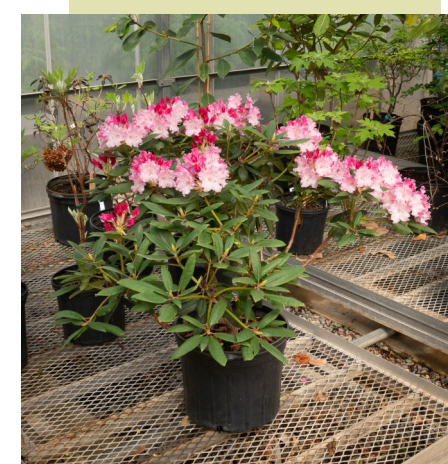
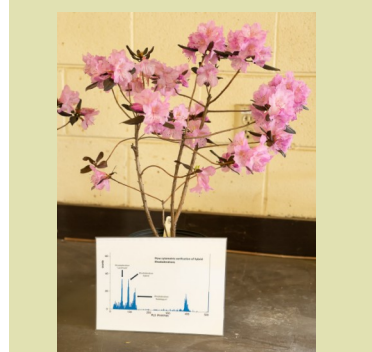
Developing plants which are not invasive is one direction of their research. An example Tom showed us is the beautiful Double Play Doozie Spirea, which does not produce seeds; instead it re-flowers, and its flowers are a lovely dark red. The Research Center also tries to develop color variations; it's had great success with the new species Invincibelle Mountain Hydrangea, which are break-through hydrangeas with compact habits and a range of flower colors. One of this new species, the pink-colored Spirit II, has an extra benefit because \$1 from the sale of each of these plants is donated to breast cancer research. Other goals of research are climate adaptability, reliable flowering, and disease-resistance.

We spent some time in the greenhouses, which have intricate systems to control heating and cooling to ensure proper breeding conditions. Tom showed us some examples of pawpaw breeding where they are having some success blending a variety from Ohio with a variety from Florida. They've also been crossing magnolias to make shrubs (3 to 4 feet), which have lovely delicate flowers that bloom for 3 or 4 weeks. He showed us examples of their work with barberry, quince, crape myrtle, rudbeckia, verbena and hyperethrum. He said it often take 15-ish years to develop a successful new species.

On our hour and a half emersion into the world of plant research, we were able to glimpse, through the dedication of our expert presenters, the excitement of creative discovery and the satisfaction that comes from improving a life-form. Thanks to Irene and Tom for sharing their enthusiasm and their amazing knowledge with us.



Irene Palmer shows us tissue culture



Newly developed rhododendron Page 3

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

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**Officers and Directors**

(beginning July 1, 2017)

**President:** Sieglinde Anderson

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**Mark your Calendar**

**Saturday, April 28 - 8 to 4  
Annual Flower Show  
St. John in the Wilderness Old  
Parish Hall**

**Sunday, July 15, 2 p.m.  
Annual SE-ARS Picnic and  
P4M at Richards Garden,**

**Sunday, Sept. 15, 2 pm  
Speaker—Bill Jones of  
Carolina Native Plant  
Nursery  
Growing Native Rhododendron  
from Seed  
Place—TBD**

Articles for next newsletter due May 15

**FLOWER SHOW — (continued from page 1)**

- Foliage should be full and well-shaped and of good color and size for the variety, with minimum blemishes, free of any artificial shine.
- Condition -- Ideally, all blooms should be at or near their peak, not faded or wilted, with no more than three unopened florets on an Elepidote rhododendron, or 20% unopened buds on a lepidote or azalea spray.

The SE-ARS chapter provides the containers for the show entries. Also, there will be couple of experts available who check to see that everything has been placed in the correct category before judging begins. The show will open for public viewing at 11:00am to its conclusion at 4:00pm.

I would like to thank, in advance, everyone who volunteers to put on this show, as well as those who bring the entries. You are the ones who make the show possible every year. If you have questions about the show please contact me at: asanborna@aol.com or call (828) 586-8648. Also, if you want to volunteer to work at the show, call me at the number above.

*by April Sanborn*