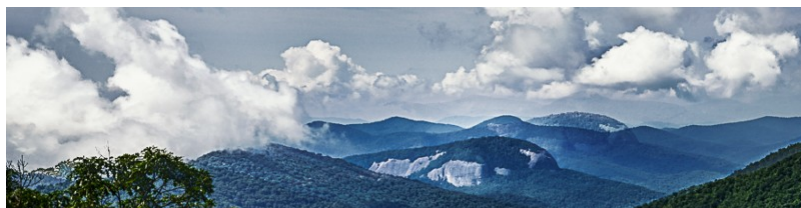




The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

November/December 2018

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

SCANDINAVIAN TOURS OF A LIFETIME

Four of our members visited Scandinavia in 2018 and will share their adventures with us on Dec. 9th at Bullington. Pamela and Jackson McCarter took full advantage of their visit to the International ARS convention in Bremen, Germany last May. They participated in pre-and post convention tours which immersed them in European gardens for the entire month of May. Also, Chuck and Judy Van Rens celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with an exploration of western Norway, including a visit to the Arboretum at Milde, which has the largest rhododendron collection. On December 9th, Jackson will share some of the highlights of their garden tours in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, followed by Chuck's presentation of a travelogue and some highlights of our tour of the Arboretum.

Before the week-long convention in Bremen, the McCarters spent a week touring gardens in Denmark and Sweden. Denmark has a surprisingly mild climate incorporating hardiness zones 7b to 9a. Jackson will share information about many private gardens they visited: one was an Asian garden with Chinese garden art; another was Zen Garden with many rhododendrons and koi ponds in a mountain landscape. Many of the private gardens specialized in rhododendrons and azaleas with several owners involved in growing species from seeds and cuttings. The major public garden on their visit to Denmark was the Bangsbo Botanic Garden; this public garden features the world's largest crevice garden, an herb garden growing ancient medicinal remedies, as well as many rhododendron species and hybrids.



Gothenburg Botanical Garden

A 4-hour ferry ride brought our adventurers to Sweden where they visited 2 public gardens containing the most interesting rhododendron collections in Sweden: The Gothenburg Botanical Garden of 100 acres exhibits 16,000 plant species including Rhododendron Valley and a Japanese Glade. Several hours down the coast the featured garden was Sofiero Castle Garden (known as Europe's most beautiful park), established by the King over 100 years ago. This outstanding garden

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NEXT MEETING DECEMBER 9TH

AT BULLINGTON GARDENS

IN HICKS ROOM

TIME: 2 O'CLOCK

The meeting will include a pot-luck covered dish luncheon.

PLEASE BRING A COVERED DISH TO SHARE!!!!

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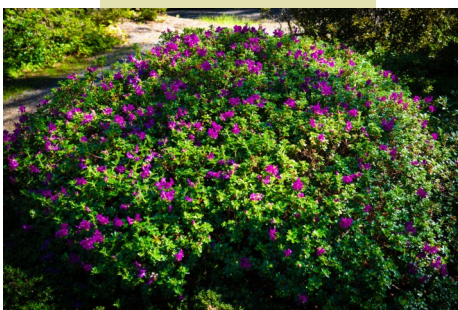
Sofiero Castle Garden



Zen Garden



Milde Arboretum cottage



U. of Bergen Arboretum

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SCANDINAVIAN TOURS OF A LIFETIME (cont.)

features 500 rhododendron species planted in 2 valleys facing the sea.

Visiting Finland after the Bremen Convention took them to a latitude that corresponds to Alaska, but with a much milder climate. Haaga Rhododendron Park in Helsinki is both a public park and a research garden focused on "Breeding Winter-Hardy Rhododendrons and Azaleas". Southeastern Finland features the Arboretum Mustila; at 300 acres, it is the oldest and largest true arboretum in Finland. While the main emphasis at Mustila is on conifers, including many Korean and Japanese varieties, hundreds of rhododendron flourish under a canopy of 150 to 200-year-old native Scots Pines. Talk about an extraordinary adventure! Thanks to Jackson for sharing highlights.

Chuck and Judy Van Rens spent 10 days exploring the fjords and cultural centers of Western Norway. Chuck will share photos and adventures from our trip. We found that Norway is more about nature than it is about population centers. The atmosphere of large swathes of breath-taking islands surrounding small coastal urban centers like Bergen set the tone of a unique adventure. The magnificence of the fjords dotted with charming small villages and farmsteads enthralled us. From a 5-hour boat-ride down the Sognefjord (the longest and deepest fjord) to a 6-hour drive to the popular Birksdahlsbreen Glacier (an arm of the largest glacier in Europe) to a 4-hour boat-ride down Geiranger Fjord to the historic art nouveau town of Alesund, we were stimulated and charmed by this wonderful place.



Alesund Rainbow

On our last day in Bergen, we had a free day. We had heard of the Arbortet at Milde, run by the University of Bergen, and decided it would be a fitting end to our adventure. Luckily we had a map of the arboretum, which occupies 125 acres in a fairly remote rural area. We wandered for 3 hours especially exploring the Rhododendron species garden and the Rhododendron cultivar garden, which also featured many azaleas. We also were drawn to the rose garden, which had many wild roses (rose hips), something we don't see much here: another perfect day in Norway!

November/December 2018

MESSAGE FROM SIEGLINDE ANDERSON

As another year comes to end, I am reminded of our outing to Botanical Treasures last December – a pleasant warm high 50's day – compared to this year. We had a real shock with temps in the low 20's, followed by ice rain just a few days ago, and it's not even mid November. What a reminder of how weird the weather is behaving and a reminder to us gardeners to put our garden to bed even though many say Fall is for planting even into December. As I write this I have a group of early snowdrops in bloom, and Azalea Hardy Gardenia has surprised me being in abundant bloom now for over a month. Will I have any flowers next Spring at its usual time?

For our chapter, this has been a year of learning. Starting with the Steve Pettis program on pests and diseases on Rhododendrons and Azaleas (which he never got to talk about but instead gave a presentation on how to plant and mulch trees, so we have to have him back!). Tom Ranney showed us what's involved in plant breeding, followed by Bill Jones's talk on growing Rhododendrons from seed; and Jackson gave us instructions for rooting cuttings. In addition, we had an exciting Flower Show in April. All of us loved the smaller more intimate one day event at St. John in the Wilderness. Later this was followed by our picnic at the wonderful house and garden at Richards, and then topped off by a great plant auction in October. Sadly, many of you missed out on that, but several members ended up with some really great buys –large and rare rhododendrons and azaleas for just a few dollars.

Several years ago we had December pot-luck gatherings but then stopped as few members came to meet socially, to get to know one another, to talk about their garden goings-on. It was a nice way to end the year. Our Program Chair thought it was time to renew the event as new people have joined our group, and we would like to get to know everyone. It's a bit of work to put this together, so I hope many of us will participate, bring a favorite dish to share, ring in the coming holidays with like minded friends.

2019 will be the 10th year for me as Vice President/Program Chair and President, and it is time for me to step aside so others can bring their expertise to share with us. As some of you know, I have a number of landscape design projects in West Virginia and will be up in Morgantown a good bit next year during planting installations. In addition, several of our Directors will be ending their commitment in 2019 as well. I would like to take this opportunity to ask for a volunteer to organize a nominating committee as our next meeting will not be until March. Voting is supposed to take place in June, but we have not had a meeting in June in recent years; if we have a slate of names, we could vote by email.

Please email me if you can volunteer to head the nominating committee.

I hope to see many of you on the December 9th!

Sieglinde



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GROWING NATIVE SPECIES FROM SEED

Our first meeting on Bullington on Sept. 16 featured sunny skies, 26 SE-ARS members, and a fascinating presentation by Carolina Native Nursery founder and president Bill Jones. This thriving nursery in Burnsville, which Bill founded in 2003, grows 200 species of eastern native shrubs, perennials, ferns, and grasses from seed. They specialize in rhododendrons, azaleas, and mountain laurels indigenous to the Southern Appalachians. Each year they grow 40 to 50 thousand native azaleas of 12 to 13 different species, selling to landscapers, garden centers, commercial developers, and gardeners. Bill's goal on this day was to show us how they grow native species from seed:



--In the fall find seedpods to be harvested around Halloween when they are brown and dry. (Be careful to gather seed pods with no holes(holes indicate weevils).

--Clean the seedpods by putting the pods in a pan and crushing them with a small piece of 2x4. Put them in a screen-bottomed pan to separate the seeds; then store the seeds in a plastic container in the refrigerator.

--Plant the seeds at the end of November. Use pine bark fines mixed with a hormodin product. Put them in flats with holes in the bottom, then sprinkle a thin layer of peat moss on top. The goal is to make the seeds germinate in the peat and root in the fines. Make sure to plant each flat with a single species. Put the flats on radiant-heated benches.

--The seeds should start sprouting in a month. When you see sprouts, give the trays an extra 6 to 8 hours of light beyond daylight. Fertilize the seeds often.

--At the end of the summer transplant the sprouts to flats of 1 or 2-inch pots.

--The following March you will have 1-year-old plants. Transplant them to 1-gallon containers to let them develop for a year. Trim them once in awhile to keep them uniform in size.

--In March of the next year, transplant them to 3 or 5-gallon pots. Be conscious of water; keep them somewhat dry so roots will grow. A top layer of rice hulls (1 1/2-inches) is a good way to keep the weeds out and the moisture in (though rice hulls may be difficult to find). Grow the plants in 30% shade houses with gravel at the bottom. Bill says, "We prune with hedge-trimmers to keep our large volume a uniform size."

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November/December 2018

GROWING NATIVE SPECIES FROM SEED (continued)

Bill told us that *R. Maximum* and *R. Catawbiense* take longer to grow from seed than other rhododendron species; instead of two years, they take 3 years to develop from seed to become ready to transplant to a 3-gallon container, and 5 years to be ready to sell. The nursery tries to sell these varieties responsibly, not to people who are not in the mountains.

We thank Bill Jones for educating us so clearly on the process of growing from seeds, and for his contribution to providing quality plants to enhance and promote the native species of our area.

OCTOBER PLANT AUCTION FULL OF SMILES AND PROFITS

As usual, we invited Vaseyi members to participate in and share the profits of our annual plant auction. The crowd was small, but enthusiastic, with 16 people attending. Our President Sieglinde started the meeting by telling us that the 2019 International Convention of the American Rhododendron Society will be in Philadelphia from May 15th to 19th, so mark your calendars.

Now for the auction of about 165 plants: We thank Jackson McCarter for purchasing plants for the auction from Big Frog Nursery and Plants-a-Plenty; we also thank Doley Bell and Leon Pace for travelling to East Fork Nursery to increase our choices. Doley Bell, our very talented auctioneer, explained that the plants obtained from nurseries would require minimum bids: East Fork Nursery plants - \$17 minimum; Big Frog - \$15 minimum; Plants-a-Plenty - \$14. We thank Doley, along with Leon Pace and John Kendall, who helped distribute the plants. Even though the crowd

was fairly small, the bidding was competitive and lively, and everyone went away smiling over the treasures that some of us could barely fit in our cars.

On the profit side - we took in \$1219; we had expenses of \$635, which left us a profit of \$584 divided between SE-ARS and Vaseyi. It was a good afternoon!



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER, AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Officers and Directors

(beginning July 1, 2017)

President: Sieglinde Anderson

Treasurer: Jackson McCarter

Vice President: Jerry Neff

Directors until 2018—Doley Bell,
John Kendall, and Leon Pace

Directors until 2019—
Wayne Hutchins, Jay Jackson,
Chuck Van Rens

Secretary: Pamela McCarter

Editor: Judy Van Rens

Mark your Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 9, 2 pm

**Potluck Dinner and
Scandinavian Tour**

**Jackson McCarter
Chuck Van Rens**

**Bullington Gardens, 95 Upper
Red Oak Trail,
Hendersonville, NC**

March 17, 2019—meeting

April , 2019—Garden Visits

May 15-19 -

**ARS INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION -Philadelphia**

**NOTE— visit www.se-ars.org
for schedules & updates**

Articles for next newsletter due Feb. 15th

2019 Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden Calendars

Sieglinde thinks you will be interested in the following
announcement

The calendar features rare plants, photos of plant hunting adventures, garden landscapes, and luscious macro shots of rhododendrons. All of the photos are courtesy of talented Rhododendron Species Garden volunteers and staff. Order yours over the phone or pick one up at the Visitor Center of the RSBG. 100% of the proceeds support conservation and education, the cornerstones of the RSBG's mission."

The calendars are \$15 each and would be a wonderful decorative calendar for rhody-lovers. If you're interested, you can initiate your order at: info@rhodygarden.org

