



The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

June 2021

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

JULY 18TH—ANNUAL PICNIC, ELECTION OF BOARD, AND PLANT SALE

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 18th**. The Richards live at 31 South Ridge Dr., Hendersonville, NC. We hope you will join us; please bring a delicious dish to share, along with some of your favorite plants for the auction, which will follow our meal and short business meeting. We'll be electing new officers. 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.

Thanks to Ray's hard work, we have an amazing slate of officers for next year: Aaron Cook for President, Chuck Van Rens for Vice-President, Pamela McCarter will stay on as Secretary, as will Jackson McCarter as Treasurer. Our Directors until 2022/23 will be April Sanborn, Leon Pace, and Ray Head. It seems fitting that we find out some background information from our new Board:

Aaron Cook says, "I have grown and hybridized Azaleas, Rhododendrons and Daylilies for the past 20 years. I was a member of the Piedmont Chapter of the ARS until I moved my membership to Southeastern in 1999. I chaired the joint ASA/ARS Convention in 2012. I have taught Plant Identification and Plant Propagation for Caldwell Community College. I currently serve as the Dean of Arts and Science at Blue Ridge Community College. The Horticulture department is in that Division of the College. I served as the President of the Azalea Society of America from 2008 to 2010."

Chuck Van Rens says, "I am not a hybridizer, though I have been impressed by that skill; I am more attracted to the aesthetics of gardening and the efforts of their stewards. Twelve years ago Judy and I moved into our retirement home in Flat Rock to discover that an estimated 300 plants in the yard were labeled in Latin. It transpired that the previous owner, Fred Kalmbach, was a SE-ARS member and did a marvelous job with the garden selection and variety. We joined SE-ARS as a defensive move to figure out what we had and how to care for it. It turned out that the Rhododendron and Azalea groups were loaded with knowledgeable and interesting plant people. How cool is that?"

Jackson McCarter: Member ARS since 1970's. Member SE-ARS since 1980's. SE-ARS board member prior to 2010. President, 2011–2013. Treasurer, 2016 to present. Webmaster <http://www.se-ars.org>. 2016 to present.

A WELCOME RETURN TO NORMALCY!

Ray says,

"It'll be a meal like we've had in the past."

"Meet your new officers!"

"Bring plants for an auction."

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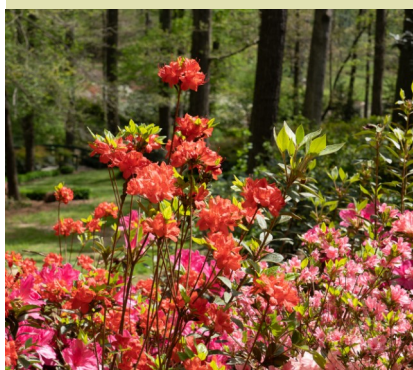
Betty's Formal Garden



A Glimpse of the Pond



A Fawn in the Woods

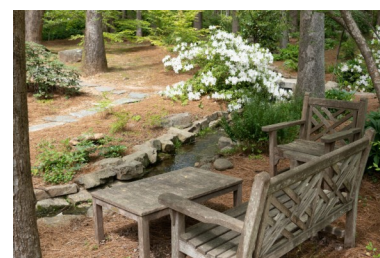


Glorious Colors

A STROLL THROUGH BETTY'S MAGNIFICENT GARDEN

Betty Montgomery shared her wonderful Forty Oakes Garden on two weekends in April. When we arrived on Saturday, the 17th (the second weekend), we realized that Betty was sharing her garden with many groups (we didn't know most of the people who were exploring the garden). We arrived fairly early, and by the time we left, the parking area was quite full. We commented that this is such a lovely garden, it has the makings of a park that the public would enjoy.

Betty greeted us as we started our stroll. She had markers on the path to show us the way. It has the feel of an English garden with a geometric design containing different areas surrounding a large pond with a statue in the middle. It looks like Betty had fun choosing the many pots and other accents that enhance the garden. The azaleas, along with many other plants, were in full bloom on the day of our visit. As we strolled along the intertwining paths, we found different areas of pink tones, blended colors, and yellow tones. One area had peonies mixed in with the azaleas accented by nymph statues. There were plenty of benches for pausing and absorbing the beauty of every part of this garden.



In one area of the pond, we noticed duck decoys and a deer statue. A closer look at the deer showed us that it is a buck made of metal sheeted pieces. There were two more smaller deer statues up the hill to enhance the scene. Another view from near the pond revealed what seemed like an entire hillside of yellow deciduous azaleas. As we looked around from the pond area, we spotted flowering magnolia, a prominent St. Francis statue, stone walls, and tall trees.

Continuing further along our marked route, we found surprises everywhere. There was a hammock in the trees that was tempting. Next we walked on a bridge across a stream which flowed into the pond, which Betty had mentioned is a 2-acre pond. Then we came upon an area of Japanese Maples (it was pleasing to see that they had not been damaged by frost like those in our area). This lovely group of many Japanese Maple varieties was situated below a small forest of tulip poplars.

As we completed our journey, we came upon another fawn in the woods near a grassy area that led us to the stone wall that marked our exit. There was Betty still greeting visitors. Leaving the 'eye candy' that consumes one's focus while in the garden, we noticed it's in a setting with a great view of the mountains. We salute Betty for creating such a satisfying formal garden that one could spend hours embracing and enjoying. We're grateful that she took the time to share it with us.

EXPLORING NATURE'S BOUNTY—THE BELL GARDEN

We arrived at Melody Bell's garden on a pleasant Saturday in late April to join around fifteen of our fellow gardeners in a stroll through this wonderful place called Rugby Knolls Gardens; Melody (and also Doley) gave it another name which reflects the atmosphere of the place, 'Heaven's Beginning'. Many of us were relieved (and somewhat surprised) that the recent frost had been very gentle at this place, unlike its effect on many of our gardens. (At our house the heavy frost caused any azaleas that were blooming -or almost blooming- to turn brown, and the Japanese maples were devastated.) There was very little evidence of the frost at the Bell garden.

Melody made us feel very welcome, both by joining us in much of our exploration and by handing out a description of the many varieties that can be found as we meander along the many paths of this extensive collection. Melody told us that she has gotten rid of two truckloads of pots and given away lots of seedlings. We're glad she's adapting the garden to her preferences.

Late April was a perfect time to walk through the breath-taking beauty of so many plants in bloom. The azaleas were at their peak, creating a seemingly never-ending display as we walked. If we looked at all the tags, we would find close to 150 named hybrid Azaleas featuring Exbury, Glenn Dale, Back Acres, and Girard. We would also find native azalea from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, and Kentucky.

The rhododendrons were just starting to show their wondrous beauty. This fantastic garden has close to a hundred named hybrid rhododendron groups encompassing Dexter, Haag, Leach, Kehr, Gilkey, Delp, Van Veen, Richardson, Lee, and Parker. Ray and Leon found a prize called 'My Jane', a beautiful yellow rhododendron. Ray's ultimate compliment is, "it's a beautiful plant". Leon told us that he and Doley got it in 2001 from a guy who was rather drunk.

The group strolled along having discussions like how long rhododendrons last. Some say 30 years; others say longer. Since this garden has been in existence for over 40 years (the Bells became stewards of it in 2001), that gives some credence to the group that says "longer". The experts in the group pointed out special rhodos to the group. Some of us walked down a blocked path to see a Hong Kong white. It was such a treat to stroll, and talk, and explore nature's bounty after the past year's restrictions.

In addition to featuring over 3500 rhododendrons and azaleas, this treasured place also is a showplace for over 240 named hybrid Hostas, over 65 Japanese maples, and over 20 cold-hardy camelias; AND that doesn't even cover the many perennials of interest. We're so thankful to Melody for sharing 'Heaven's Beginning' with us.



Happily Together Again



Azaleas in Their Glory



'My Jane'



Never-ending Display

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

WEBSITE - WWW.SE-ARS.ORG

Officers and Directors

(beginning July 1, 2019)

President: Ray Head

Treasurer: Jackson McCarter

Vice President: Jerry Neff

Directors until 2020—Leon Pace,
April Sanborn, Chuck Van Rens

Directors until 2021—
John Kendall, Alan Mizeras,
Buffy Wells

Secretary: Pamela McCarter

Editor: Judy Van Rens

Mark your Calendar

Sunday, July 18, 2 pm —

Picnic, Plant Sale,

Election of Board.

**Hazel and Byron Richards’
Home —**

31 S. Ridge Dr.

Hendersonville, NC

**Make Sure to Check Out the
SE-ARS Website —
www.se-ars.org**

PICNIC AND BOARD ELECTION (cont. from page 1)

Pamela McCarter: Secretary over 2 years

April Sanborn says, "I grew up in a family that liked growing things and learned a lot from them. I have had gardens in Florida, Georgia, and for the last 37 years North Carolina. After learning of the SE-ARS chapter in 1988, I joined shortly after my first meeting and have been a member ever since. I have served on the board several times over the past 31 years."

Leon Pace says, "I'm a Henderson Co. native retired from the Research Dept at Ecusta in 1999. We attend Little River Baptist Church where I'm is a Deacon, Church Trustee and Chairman of Cemetery Trustees. I volunteer at the Henderson Co. Genealogical and Historical Society and Henderson Co. Cemetery Board. We joined the chapter in 1992. I first served on the BOD in 2002 and have continued since then. We have lived here since 1972 and in that time collected a lot of plants, always saying we have enough but still collecting more and more!!"

Ray Head says, "Our July meeting will mark 44 years since my first Chapter meeting. I bought 2 rooted plants of Dexters that Cliff Mashburn brought. Over the years the Southeastern Chapter has been a big part of my life, and I hope to continue to help in any way that I can."

Thanks to all of you for serving our wonderful group!!