



The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

October/November 2015

Encouragement of the Culture of Rhododendrons

Learn About Growing Native Azaleas from Seed

Vaseyi/ASA has graciously invited the SE-ARS members to their meeting at 1 p.m. on Sunday, November 8th, at Bullington Gardens. In addition to having awesome speakers, Audrey says, "This meeting is our annual awards and potluck social. Bring a dish to share (vegetarian dishes are welcome) and Vaseyi will bring BBQ. This meeting is also our SEED EXCHANGE... I talked to George McLellan, and he said that native azalea seed pods can be collected while wet. Just put them in a paper bag, like a lunch bag, with a paper towel in the bottom. Then store the bag in a dry place for a couple weeks. Be sure to label the bag with plant name, your name and the date."

It looks like the speakers, **Lindy Johnson** and **J. Jackson**, will educate us all with their presentation about *Growing Deciduous Azaleas From Seed*. J. Jackson is the national ASA president, and his wife Lindy Johnson runs the ASA Seed Exchange. Together they operate a nursery called Appalachian Native Plants in Johnson County, Tennessee. A description of this nursery in the March 20, 2013, issue of *Garden Center Magazine* states that these Azalea experts "use GPS technology to find the best native plants to propagate. Appalachian Native Plants, a non-profit corporation working with Appalachian State University, the University of Tennessee and Johnson County, TN, grows native ornamentals such as azalea, rhododendron and hydrangea."

If you start searching online, you will find that these two experts have been featured speakers at quite a few ASA chapter meetings in the area, and as far away as Florida and Texas. A Northern Virginia Chapter ASA member, Carolyn Beck, visited their Appalachian Native Plants nursery and wrote in their chapter's newsletter, *The Clipper*, that Lindy and J. "have searched for plants, documented pertinent information, and mapped GPS coordinates for many notable specimens and populations. After collecting seed and growing these into sizeable plants, they proceeded to select superior forms to use as stock plants in their display garden." She goes on to say that "ANP has become a premiere source for 10 of our 15 native azaleas."

Lindy and J.'s "hands-on" presentation will be based on their paper by the same name that was published in the 2013 IPPS (International Plant Propagators Society) publication and was presented by Lindy and J. at the IPPS annual convention.

RSVP to Audrey!

Please contact Audrey by October 25 if you plan to attend the Nov. 8 meeting. Then she will have an idea of how much BBQ to bring.



Inside This Issue

BETTY'S GARDEN	2
RAY'S VOLE ELIMINATOR	2
PLANT AUCTION	3
VOLUNTEER NEEDS	3
VISIT RAY'S GARDEN	4
CALENDAR	4
PHOTO CONTEST	4

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Betty's Favorite Gardening Delights

Our September program featured Betty Montgomery, longtime SE-ARS member, author of books and newspaper columns on gardening, and caretaker of two gardens, one in Campobello and one in Saluda at Lake Summit. Betty treated us to an overview of her latest book, *A Four-Season Southern Garden*. She showed us about 150 photos of her favorite plants and settings; these are the plants you can grow in zone 7 and have blooms throughout the year. She describes herself as a 'collector of plants'.

First she talked about stand-outs for January through March, highlighting various camellias -- she mentioned Crimson Candle as being a particularly showy one. She also likes yellow Jasmine blooming on a wall in January and a flowering apricot called 'Peggy Clark,' which is loaded with pink blooms in January. She gave us a tip about growing daphne: it needs 100% drainage and works well with sandy or rocky soil. A late winter favorite is narcissus 'ice follies', which Betty calls the "first happiness of spring".

A special spring moment for Betty is the arrival of the cherry blossoms, especially those varieties like 'Fair Elanie,' that were sent from Japan for planting in Washington, DC. She shared a showy trillium habitat along the road between Saluda and Pearson Falls and then mentioned her large collection of peonies, saying they do much better at Lake Summit than in Campobello because of the early heat in the Upstate.

Hydrangea are a favorite summer plant of Betty's; at one point she had 150 varieties. She mentioned that Michael Dirr has come out with some that are re-bloomers like 'Bloomstruck' and 'Shout'. This is especially useful information after this year's disappointing hydrangea results following such a harsh winter. She thinks we'd have better luck with some of these new re-bloomers. Another summer treat is the 'bishop of Llandaff' dahlia; it's the only dahlia she grows because she doesn't have to stake it.

We benefited from some cautionary wisdom about Mahonia -- she says it's invasive-- and about Beauty Berry, which can be invasive if planted in a moist area.

She concluded by sharing her secret fertilizer formula with us: 8 parts cottonseed meal, 8 parts Black Cow manure, and 1 part Epsom salts. You can use it early in the season on just about everything. She said we can get the cottonseed meal at Nelson's Feed on Maple Street in Hendersonville.

We were all inspired by her knowledge and love of so many species.



Experts, Betty and Ray



Sieglinde greets Betty



Ray's Vole Eliminator

Take a Folgers coffee can and snip two cuts up the sides about an inch and about an inch apart. Then I fold this flap up or you could cut it off. Next put 10 pellets of rat poison in the can and put the lid back on it. I set the can in the duff close to an area where the voles are active. Secure the can so that it does not turn over. I wait two days and check to see if there are any pellets missing. Once the pellets are all gone I replace them with 10 more. After a few days, if nothing is happening, I would try another area.

By Ray Head

The Plant Auction Extraordinaire!!!

As members walked in the meeting room, we were greeted by the sight of about a third of the room being full of plants members had donated for the auction. A special 'thank you' to Lonnie Player for bringing a u-haul load of his personally hybridized plants all the way from Fayetteville to share with all of us. His collection included numerous samples of his notable rhododendron hybrids like Kay Player, Martha Player, Mrs. Sam (which Lonnie says is especially good for hybridizing), Cape Fear Gold, compact Mrs. Sam x Yak hybrids, and Mrs. Sam x hyperythrum. Additional thanks to all other members who donated so many of their prize specimens.!



Auctioneer Doley Bell began the lively auction after laying ground rules for multiples of a species: the winning bid would be the price for all of the same plants. Bob Head paid the highest price, \$65, for a yakushmanum with large leaves and an expansive growth habit. Buffy Wells bought the most plants, nineteen in all. In addition to Lonnie Player's wonderful contribution, several Haag Lepidotes and quite a few Augie Kerrs were available. Ray

commented that this auction offered members "a choice of exquisite material not available anyplace else. Even Jackson and Larry Mellichamp, who have everything, bought plants!"

Thanks to Audrey Stelloh, Doley Bell, Ray Head and Leon Pace who helped unload and arrange Lonnie's plants; they also helped with the distribution of plants during the auction, as did John Kendall. Pamela McCarter's performance keeping track of who won each bid and at what amount was nothing short of miraculous. Members bought over 150 plants at the auction, earning about \$2000 to be split between Vaseyi and SE-ARS. Ray thought "this was the best meeting of the year: great turn-out, wonderful content and prizes!"

Volunteer to Make SE-ARS Stronger

We are seeking a volunteer to greet non-members who attend our meetings, to introduce visitors to some of our members prior to the meeting, give them our brochure, have them sign the guest book and invite them to the next meeting by becoming a member.

In past years we also had a Hospitality Chair person and offered coffee, tea and water, sometimes cookies or other baked things brought by members. If you would like us to do that again, please volunteer to be Hospitality Chair.

Now is the time to step forward and show your support by volunteering. You will be participating in making our chapter of SE-ARS stronger and more viable for the future. Contact Frances Jones or Sieglinde Anderson to volunteer. *By Sieglinde Anderson*



Enthusiastic Bidding



Wonderful and Unique Plants for Us



Renew your SE-ARS
Membership

Log-in to the SE-ARS website
or use the form that was in the
August/September newsletter.
It's time to do it now!!

**Southeastern Chapter of
American Rhododendron Society
Hendersonville, NC**

ENCOURAGEMENT OF RHODODENDRONS

Officers and Directors

President: Ray Head

Treasurer: Jackson McCarter

Vice President: Sieglinde Anderson

Directors until 2016—April Sanborn,
Byron Richards and Chuck Van Rens

Secretary: Frances Jones

Directors until 2017—Wayne
Hutchins, Audrey Stelloh, and
Chris Wetmore

Editor: Judy Van Rens

Mark your Calendar

**Nov.8, Sunday 1 pm
Vaseyi invites SE-ARS to
Speaker, Meeting and Potluck
Bullington Gardens**

**Dec. 5, Saturday at 10 am
Visit Ray Head's Garden**

(See member directory for address)

**SE-ARS Photo Contest
Vote until December 31
SE-ARS Website**

**March 20, Sunday at 2pm
Speaker—Hale Booth on
Broadleaf Evergreens
St. John in the Wilderness**

Deadline

Submit articles for the next
newsletter by January 15.

December Garden Visit — Ray's Garden

Please join us for a visit to Ray Head's garden on **Saturday Dec. 5, 2015, 10 am** to view his holly collection. If it is raining on December 5th, the alternate rain date will be Sat., Dec. 12th.

After we visit the garden, we will travel as a group to Strawberry Hill on Highway 11 in South Carolina for lunch. It will take about 20 minutes in travel time. Strawberry Hill has good food selections and is moderately priced. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Ray by **December 3, 2015**

2015 SE-ARS PHOTO CONTEST, TIME TO VOTE!

Vote for favorite photos in each of the seven categories on the se-ars.org website: Trusses or Sprays, Rhododendron Shrubs, Garden Views, Natural Landscape, People and Plants, and Macrophotography. Vote by December 31st!