

THE BLUE RIDGE REVIEW

Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society



Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

November/December 2007



It's A Christmas Party!

Sunday December 2 at 2:00 PM

Saint John in the Wilderness, Flat Rock, NC



Our Annual Christmas Party is coming soon, so be sure to be ready for Sunday, December 2nd. Collette Ballard will give a demonstration on making a holiday wreath from our natural bounty. She is a talented floral designer and everyone will enjoy her presentation.

The chapter will furnish baked ham, and beverages. Members should bring their favorite appetizer, salad, side dish or dessert.

Ray and Mary Ann Head will be bringing holly sprigs for table decorations, and we will have some great door prizes!

So bring your friends and appetite for great food, good door prizes and tons of friendship!



Everyone had a great time at last year's party.

Saint John in the Wilderness is at 1895 Greenville Highway (US 225 South [old 25 south] at Rutledge Dr.) Flat Rock, NC.

For a color copy of the Blue Ridge Review, please send an e-mail to mphaynes@juno.com.

Plants for Members a sellout!

135 rhododendron plants were offered to the membership for sale at a real bargain price. Nearly



President, Don Johnson checks with Linda Hendricks and Glenn O'Sheal on the readiness of the plants for the big "Plants for Members" sale, Oct. 21st.

30 people scrambled (in an orderly fashion) to select their most desired garden treasures. Glenn O'Sheal conducted the sale by having each member draw a colored bead, then calling the colors each in turn. He and Patricia Phillips had worked all year coordinating this event with VanVeen Nursery in Oregon. The more mature plants were lovingly cared for by Don Johnson.

Prior to the sale, Don Johnson presented another solution in his ongoing series of "Rhododendron Problems and what to do about them." He showed
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Sellout (Continued from Page 1)

a plant affected by the fungus, phytophthora, or root rot, which showed symptoms of 'die back' and needed to be cut back to below the brownish area inside the stems. Then he demonstrated how to snip the roots of a plant that had become root bound in a container before planting in the garden. He explained that the most common cause of death of rhododendron plants is poor drainage.

Hostesses Linda Hendricks, Rose Johnson, Tami Wagner, and others provided a luscious spread of fall decorated refreshments for all to enjoy.

April's Holiday Gift Suggestions



Book prices listed reflect a reduction of 20% (or better) off retail.

American Azaleas- Clarence Towe \$24.00

Armitage's Garden Perennials- Allan Armitage \$40.00

Armitage's Native Plants For North American Gardens- Allan Armitage \$40.00

Azaleas- Fred Galle \$64. This book is out of print and just a few remain.

Color Encyclopedia of Daylilies- Ted Petit \$40.00

Color Encyclopedia of Hostas- Diana Grenfell \$40.00

Encyclopedia of Garden Ferns- Sue Olsen \$48.00

The Explorer's Garden- Daniel Hinkley \$32.00

Gardener's Guide to Growing Daylilies- Diana Grenfell \$24.00

Gardener's Guide to Growing Hostas- Diana Grenfell \$24.00

Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons- Harold Greer \$16.00

Hollies for Gardeners- Christopher Bailes \$28.00

The Larger Rhododendron Species- Peter Cox \$18.00

The Louisiana Iris- Society for Louisiana Iris \$24.00

Native Perennials for the Southeast- Peter Loewer \$18.00

Ornamental Grasses for the Southeast- Peter Loewer \$18.00

Palms Won't Grow Here and Other Myths- David Francko \$22.00

Rhododendrons In the Landscape- Sonja Nelson \$24.00

Rock Garden Design and Construction- Editors of the NARGS \$24.00

Wild Orchids of South Carolina- James Fowler \$32.00

April will bring the books you want to our December 2nd meeting, if you **contact her** by e-mail, at ASanbornA@aol.com, or phone, 828-586-8648, by November 30, or for special orders, November 21.

“Prickly” Situation



Ray Head chaired the committee, including numerous members of SE-ARS, who hosted the 2007 **National Holly Convention** at the N.C. Arboretum, November 1-4. Admirers of the genus *ilex*, attending tours on Thursday, could be spotted petting dairy goats at Connemare (the home of Carl Sandburg), admiring the landscaping at Twin Tops Farm (home of Jim and Tami Wagner), and wolfing down mountains of authentic Carolina BBQ at a “Holly Hoe Down”.

The stunning *ilex* **sprig show** contrasted sharply with the familiar SE-ARS truss show, in that all exhibits are horizontal, yep, lying right there on their backs, which shows the berries better. At a sprig show, sex is the up front topic. More polite botanists may reference the “gender” of the shrub, but confusion reigns... what with ‘Dr. Kassab’ being a girl and bedecking herself with berries, and ‘Betty Kassab’ being a boy, playing the role of the pollinator. More about the convention and the cultivars which stole our hearts can be found by contacting Patricia Phillips, busyshovel@hotmail.com.

Sam Knob Revisited

(Musings and Personal Recollections)

By Patricia J. Phillips

A protected wilderness area of North Carolina, Shining Rock, glistens like a jewel in our Appalachian Mountain System. Adjacent to Shining Rock, and of similar terrain, are various natural balds, blue berry thickets, Rhododendron catawbiense expanses that stretch off in the distance, rising and falling in gentle soft forms. I like to study these rounded horizons, one after the other, in folds of smoky blue, muted greens, and purplish grays much as you might affectionately study the face of one dearly beloved.

About 25 years ago I started hiking this area with one of my favorite hiking buds, Mom. A spunky dame, who weaned me on a trowel handle (and teathed me on a hiking staff), taught me well to experience the wilds first hand and with no fear.

How did I come to love Sam Knob? It was the spring of 1978, I believe, and providence had us, that's Mom and me, at the illusive junction of the right place at the right time. That day we climbed Black Balsam Knob (elevation 6,214 feet). The mountains around us were a symphony of soft pink from the profusion of R. catawbiense blooms. Our hungry eyes tried to etch the scene, the feeling, in our memories to last us the rest of our lives. This retelling of the glory of a peak bloom year is no mere yarn spinner's contrivance. This summer's extreme heat and drought have triggered another exceptionally heavy bud set, portending a repeat performance. One not to be missed. See me for tickets... or a map.

Euphoric at the vista, Mom and I spread our topographic map on the giant stone face, ignoring our sore knees pressed to the hard granite, and aligned the map with my compass. We took delight in naming the mountain peaks that surrounded us. Unforgettable names like Dog Loser Knob, Nobreeches Ridge, Graveyard Ridge, Old Butt Knob, Flower Knob, greeted us on our map and on the immediate horizons. That day on top of Black Balsam, we memorized the shape of Sam Knob, its silhouette not unlike a two-humped camel. Sam Knob stands at 6,040 feet, and the slightly lower hump, Little Sam Knob stands nearby at 5,862 feet.

We promised ourselves another adventure, an outing to explore Sam Knob, and the next winter we did return.

On that day, Nature gave us a brusque morning welcome to Pisgah National Forest. Cold temperatures and gusty winds propelled us along the trail to Sam Knob. The path begins tame and mildly rolling through Balsam Groves, protected from the full force of the wind. Then the trail traverses a high, open meadow, where the wind whistles up from the valleys thousands of feet below. At the base of the knob, the trail turns up sharply. Uneven rocks and the steep grade weed out all but the most determined hikers. At the top,

heavy weather and a cold rain driving in our faces obstructed the view. Weather like this inspired Mom and me to sew leather patches inside our wool stocking caps to protect our ears from the fierce winds. It never occurred to us to stay home to keep our ears warm. That day we extracted advantage from the near-horizontal rain by finding shelter on the lee side of a friendly boulder. Our lunch break was hospitable, aided by the addition of a space blanket wrapped snugly around our shoulders. The weather and Sam Knob were the show. (Cont..)



View from Sam Knob

(Continued from Page 3)

Twenty-five years passed, and Mom and I returned to Sam Knob on October 17, 1998. This time it was a group of six sojourners, a tightly knit entourage of rugged outdoors folks. My towheaded sons,



Left - Patricia's husband, Randy Woods, son Alex, lying down, Center - son Allen, Patricia Phillips, Right - "Mom," Jeanne Davies

following in the family tradition, my husband and my father rounded out the spirited crew. Mom laced on the same Norwegian welt heavy boots she had 25 years before, set her red hiking bonnet at a jaunty angle, and started through the evergreen forest to the meadow. About a quarter of a mile out, she sent me scurrying back to the mini-van for her cane. The trail was badly washed, rocky, and was challenging her already. The years have been great to Mom, but this day, the summit of Sam Knob was not to be hers. Within spittin' distance of the top, she gracefully conceded the victory to gravity. After a rest, she and my dad started scrambling back down to the meadow in full view below us. This crystal clear day was in stark contrast to the weather when we visited here 25 years before.

Canary yellow beech trees shook their musical leaves in a light breeze. The rich red color tones were contributed by hillsides of blueberries interspersed with stunted fire cherries. Balsams on the North Slope provided accent, along with a very occasional fine needled red spruce. The rhodos were utilizing their best drought resistant strategies --leaves curled into cigar-shaped cylinders to conserve moisture. If one display were more ostentatious than the others,

it would not have been the cloudless cobalt blue sky. The hands-down winner was the brilliant masses of scarlet berries hanging thickly from the gray branches of the mountain ash. These autumn bird-feeding stations bore no resemblance to their demure spring appearance when adorned in creamy white blooms.

By the time my husband and I found our way back down to the meadow, Mom was darn perky again. Concealing herself and the rest of our merry band under some low trees, she called out, "SURPRISE!" when we finally sniffed out her lair. Oh, that I might age with half that grace! Mom, my hat's off to you.

* * *

(From William Bartram Newsletter, December 1998. Permission granted from author and newsletter editor, Patricia Phillips)

Patricia J. Phillips is a freelance author who derives pleasure from the pursuit of wildflowers, wild edibles and wild vistas.



Mountain Ash at top of Sam Knob

Editor's note: Patricia lost her mother, Jeanne Davies, on September 30, 2007 after she had submitted this article to BRR. We publish this now in her memory. Patricia says, "she was just a sun hat away from an adventure."

Annual Banquet, celebrating 50 years, to be at the NC Arboretum, March 22, 2008

Lonnie Player to present program

Please note change of date. We will also have our silent auction of rare and unusual plants.

Details coming soon.



**Southeastern Chapter
AMERICAN
RHODODENDRON
SOCIETY**

Application for Membership

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State _____
 Zip _____
 Telephone _____
 Fax _____ E-mail _____

MEMBERSHIPS ARE ON A CALENDAR YEAR
Membership dues include chapter and national membership, and the ARS Journal.

- Individual.....\$35.00
- Family.....40.00
- Commercial/Corporate.....90.00
- Sustaining.....50.00
- Sponsoring.....100.00
- Life.....1,000.00

Confidentiality:

Above member information appears in a published roster. You may select "no" to having your phone, fax, and email address published. Yes _____ No _____

Send this form with your check payable to SE-ARS

Billy Joyner, Treasurer,

Welcome and Thank you for joining the...

**Southeastern Chapter
AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

GIVE THIS MEMBERSHIP FORM TO A FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, OR RELATIVE WHO MIGHT LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF ARS, SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER, OR WHY NOT GIVE THEM A GIFT MEMBERSHIP!

**THE SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE
AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
CELEBRATED OUR 50TH YEAR
ON MARCH 13, 2007**

(Continued from October newsletter)

**How the Rhododendron and Mountain
Dance and Folk Festival Began**

The Rhododendron Festival in Asheville, NC, was started in June 1928. This was a five-day festival held the second week of June from the years of 1928 to 1941.

In 1927, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce announced plans for a Rhododendron Festival to help attract tourists to the Land of the Sky. Along with parades, balls and the crowning of a Rhododendron King and Queen, festival organizers invited Bascom Lamar Lunsford to prepare a program of folk songs and dances.

The first Mountain Dance and Folk Festival took place June 6, 1928, on Pack Square in downtown Asheville. The festival has become a strong tradition in Asheville. While the Rhododendron Festival ended in 1940, the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival continues.



The SE-ARS Chapter began seventeen years later in 1957.

Note from your Historians: We have collected several items but still would love to have more. If you have anything such as newspaper articles, obits of former members, or photos that you can share with us please let us know.
Leon and Jean Pace

*Happy
Holidays!*



Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

Officers and Directors

President: Don Johnson

Treasurer: Billy Joyner

Vice President: Tami Wagner **Past President:** Bill Klippel

Secretary/Editor: Marilyn Haynes **Directors 'til 2008:** Ray Head
Patricia Phillips, April Sanborn

Directors 'til 2009: Leon Pace
Don Haynes, Jim Wagner



2008 DIRECTORY

The SE-ARS 2008 Fifty-year Commemorative Directory will be published this winter. If you have a change of address, phone number or e-mail, please notify Marilyn Haynes, number and e-mail above.

Welcome

New Member:

Stan Rogan
Hendersonville, NC
28791



**Deadline for copy for the December
Blue Ridge Review is January 10.**

Mark Your Calendar Now!

November - Give Thanks and mulch; no meeting.

December 2, 2:00 PM Saint John in the Wilderness, Annual Christmas Party. Program: Making A Christmas Wreath from Our Natural Bounty, by Collette Ballard.

2008

January - Pruning time, No meeting

February 17, 2:00 PM Saint John in the Wilderness, Program: Grafting by Fritz McCall

March 22 1:00 PM Annual Spring Banquet and Silent Auction. NC Arboretum, Asheville, NC. Speaker: Lonnie Player.

April 26 & 27, Annual Truss Show North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville, NC.

May - Garden Tours to be announced.

June - Picnic, date and location TBD.