

THE BLUE RIDGE REVIEW

Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society



Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

June 2008

Ninth Annual Summer Picnic at the Bell's Botanical Garden!

Sunday June 22, 2008 at 2:00 PM

Doley and Melody Bell will again open up their beautiful home and garden to our members for our annual picnic and plant auction. They always have such an interesting selection of plants blooming in June. They also have a lovely collection of hostas and Japanese maples.

Bill Klippel will be our auctioneer for the plants supplied from our members' own gardens. There are always many plants that thrive in our area and will enhance our gardens. Bring plenty of plants to help make this a sure money making project for the year.



Auctioneer extraordinaire, Bill Klippel.

Before the auction we will have a buffet of favorite recipes created by our talented chefs. Goodies from the local grocery store or bakeries are also welcomed. We don't count calories that day! Drinks and eating utensils will be provided by the chapter.



Glenn O'Sheal's famous cheesecake has been promised.

Start potting up plants to bring. Remember that some plants you have too many of, another member may have none. If you have a favorite plant, why not share your joy with others. The more plants we have the more lively the auction. Don't forget to bring some extra \$\$\$\$ with you and a **folding chair**. An umbrella has come in handy at past picnics!

Plan now on being there, with all your extra plants!

Directions to the Bell's

The Bell's place is in Hendersonville, NC. Since parking is limited, please park along the road, leaving room for residents to get through.



For a **color** copy of the Blue Ridge Review and help save us on postage

Garden Jubilee - Huge Success!

The SE-ARS booth at the Hendersonville Garden Jubilee on Memorial Day weekend was a tremendously successful project. We met many people who were just hungry for information about the care of rhododendrons and where to buy them.



We gained two new members and many others left our booth seriously considering joining our group. We also took in over \$200

from the hourly plant drawings. Each hour, a name was drawn for a healthy rhododendron plant. All tickets were also entered in the end of day drawings. Bob Williams on Saturday and Jennifer Glasse on Sunday each took home beautiful large blooming rhododendrons, donated by Gene Stano, of Haywood Community College.

Many thanks to the volunteers whose efforts made this so successful! Bill Klippell whose canopy and tables we used, Ray Head who brought extra copies of the ARS Journals and the plants which Don Johnson had purchased for this event in Georgia.

Bill and Ray also shared their expertise with folks for many hours. Others who helped meet and talk with people were April Sanborn, Don Haynes, Claudine and Jeffrey Miller, Doley Bell, Leon



And some held things together when the wind came up.

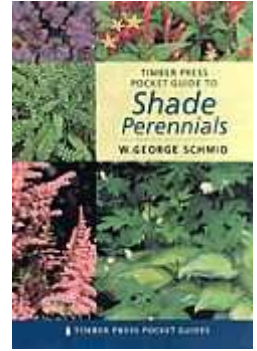
Pace, and Linda and Frank Hendricks who also helped us take things down at the end of each day. Several also brought cut flowers to show some of the varieties currently blooming. Marilyn Haynes coordinated the project for SE-ARS. Thanks also to the other SE-ARS members who stopped by.



April's Book Review

Timber Press Pocket Guide to Shade Perennials

by H. George Schmid



Timber Press has published a series of pocket guides on various gardening topics. I believe this is one of the better ones. The author, George Schmid, has written extensively about shade perennials and also draws upon his years of gardening experience in north Georgia. In the introduction, he defines the different levels of shade intensity. This comes in handy later in the book where he describes individual species and their growing requirements. He also touches on the problems a shade gardener may encounter, from insects and diseases to dealing with invasive tree roots. The majority of the book is devoted to shade plant entries, listed in alphabetical order by scientific name. In this section he describes over 1000 species and cultivars which grow well in the shade. Each species is given a brief description, with growing range by zones listed, as well as the type of shade, soil, and moisture requirements needed for optimum growth. Over 300 color photos are included. Most are close up shots of individual plants, while a few others show shade garden settings. This book also lists shade perennials for specific purposes and locations, such as ground covers, soil conditions, plant shape, leaf color, etc. European and US hardiness zone maps, a glossary, and a list of nursery sources round out this guide. If we have another hot summer, you would do well to stay out of the sun, work in your shade garden, and

by all means, take this book with you. This book retails for \$20.00 but is available through this Chapter for \$15.00.



Many thanks to April Sanborn for her great book reviews and her handling of the book sales!

Rhododendron eastmanii

Rhododendron eastmanii, also known as the May White Azalea, is named for Charles Eastman of Columbia, South Carolina, who had noticed a peculiar white azalea since his childhood in the Eau Claire community near the northeastern city limits. As a highway engineer Eastman observed the plants and their habitat being destroyed during the construction of Interstate 20 along the Crane Creek



This is of a larger, more colorful form (I call Santee Sinks) seen at Santee State Park Limestone trail near a cave formed in the limesink area of Santee State Park.

bluffs near Monticello Road. He rescued some small plants and put them in his garden.

He also observed a similar May-flowering fragrant white azalea at Santee State Park near the Limestone Nature Trail. In

the early 1980s Eastman and Mike Creel became friends, regularly taking field trips to watch birds and wild azaleas. Creel took special notice of the odd white azaleas in Eastman's yard, and they began exploring to find the plants growing wild. Being



Botanist Bert Pittman, botanist Kathy Kron and Charles Eastman at the Crane Creek bluffs off Monticello Road and I-20 during a 1991? field trip. The stream and cave are a lime sink hole near Santee State Park in eastmanii habitat.

quite familiar with all the native azalea species of South Carolina and growing all the southeastern azaleas already in his garden, Creel knew the white azalea that bloomed in mid-May was something different from all the rest.

Creel in the early 1990s invited botanist Kathy Kron, who had published a major revision of the then 15 native US azaleas in the Edinburgh journal of botany in 1993, to SC to visit the two sites where possibly a new species of native azalea could be growing. Kron and Creel collaborated on writing an article to propose the new azalea species as Rhododendron eastmanii, published in the Missouri Botanical Garden's Novon in September 1999.

White flowers with a central yellow blotch, extreme fragrance, and a preference for shaded steep slopes in circumneutral soil are a few of the characteristics that set Rhododendron eastmanii apart from the rest. Recently DNA studies have shown R.

eastmanii to be a distinct species with no close allies among the other 16 native azaleas of America.

As of last week the May White Azalea had been confirmed to

grow natively in 14 different South Carolina counties in 40 different populations. Newberry College botanist Charles Horn found the 40th population last week in Laurens County, SC. (cont. on next page)



An eastmanii plant in natural habitat on a steep bluff in Calhoun County, SC above Big Beaver Creek across the Congaree River from Congaree Swamp National Park



The eastmanii plant I call North Wall at the north end of my house.

The westernmost county is Greenwood and the northernmost counties are Cherokee and York. This puts the species very close to the Georgia and North Carolina borders. The Cherokee County site is within 4 miles of the NC border.



Mike Creel looking at an eastmanii plant in Lynch's woods in Newberry County

So far the eastmanii species seems to be a South Carolina endemic, but plant enthusiasts and botanists in other states, including Georgia and North Carolina are searching for it as I write.

With its bloom time filling a gap in native azalea flowering schedules, the May White azalea also seems much more tolerant of higher pH soils and able to set bloom buds with greater shade than most native azalea species.

I have recently discovered some color and habit variants of eastmanii, including one that forms a ball truss from as many as 5 clustered flower buds. Flowers do seem sensitive to too much sun exposure and will brown prematurely.

Mike Creel, Lexington, SC

Reprinted with permission from an e-mail written May 22, 2008, in an e-mail to Allison Arnold at the NC Arboretum and the ASAVS Group.

Many thanks, from your newsletter editor

This is the last issue of my first year doing the newsletter, and I want you all to know why it's been such a pleasure to do.

Don and I joined SE-ARS in 2005, when we realized that our new house was surrounded with magnificent rhododendrons and azaleas. We had no clue how to take care of this masterpiece of God's creation. SE-ARS to the rescue!

In 2007, we were invited to be on the Board, and I was asked to be Secretary. I said OK, then learned in a public announcement that this "job" also included doing the newsletter! Hmm... The

newsletter was so well done....that's a tough act to follow! SE-ARS again to the rescue!



First, Tami Wagner gave me the templates and many ideas and suggestions. I resolved that it would only be 4 pages; no way could I find enough material for 6....well maybe in one or two issues.

Even before my first issue (4 pages), fascinating articles started to stream in, thanks to e-mail, from Patricia Phillips, Betty Montgomery, Tami Wagner, April Sanborn's book reviews, Jean and Leon Pace's history, Don Johnson, Glenn O'Sheal, Ray Head, Linda Hendricks, Boris Bauer and others. It's been 6 pages ever since.

And pictures! I started with a few of my own, then found out who the real photographers are; Tami, Jean, Linda, Boris. They are the ones you see at



meetings with a camera. I often find the best ones in my Inbox that very night! I love color pictures, and can't do a page without several. If you're not getting the newsletter in a PDF file by e-mail, you are missing out on half the pleasure.

Then there's my loyal and particular proofreaders; Billy Joyner, Tammy, Patricia. They are the ones that cover for me, so YOU get a quality product.

In the process I have learned so much about rhododendrons, azaleas, teamwork and true friendship. These are the most valuable benefits of doing this project.

And finally came the compliments and thanks (plus a few constructive comments here and there.) You guys are actually **reading** this stuff! But the credit all goes to YOU. There's no way I could do it without each and every one of you! **Many thanks!** By the way, keep the stuff coming, as I'm gearing up for another year of the *Blue Ridge Review*! - *NCH* -





Southeastern Chapter
**AMERICAN
 RHODODENDRON
 SOCIETY**

Application for Membership

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

MEMBERSHIPS ARE ON A CALENDAR YEAR BASIS. 18 months for new members joining after April 1st.

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

Send this form with your check payable to 'SE-ARS' to:

Billy Joyner, Treasurer

Welcome and Thank you for joining the...
Southeastern Chapter
AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Wow! What a Bargain! 18 months membership for the price of 12! GIVE THIS FORM TO A FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, OR RELATIVE WHO HAS AN INTEREST IN RHODODENDRONS AND AZALEAS, OR WHY NOT GIVE THEM A GIFT MEMBERSHIP!

-- In Memorium --

Audrey Esther Harris Dwyer, 81, passed away peacefully on May 8, 2008, at the Elizabeth House in Hendersonville. Born and raised in Miami, she was married to the late Joseph M. Dwyer. She moved to Hendersonville in 1991 and was an enthusiastic volunteer at Opportunity House, Travel and Tourism, was a hostess for the Rhododendron Society and enjoyed an active social life. We are honoring a member of our chapter who not only came under the heading of a dedicated volunteer, but was classified as dependable, pleasant, cheerful, enthusiastic and came to meetings in rain or shine - even snow. She slipped in each month with her supplies, set out all the goodies brought in by the hostesses of the month, cleaned up and slipped away quietly until the next month. This is the way she worked; mostly unseen and unnoticed, and she had been doing so for six or seven years, expecting nothing in return.

"In grateful appreciation and recognition for your contributions, the Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is honored to present to you, Audrey Dwyer, our highest award, **The Bronze Medal** on this the Twentieth day of March, 1999."



2003 Audrey standing at the entrance to a Cold War era bomb shelter at her home near Laurel Park.

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



Welcome New Members:

Georgia B. Burson

Isle of Palms, SC 29451

Susanne Woosley
Hendersonville, NC



R. eastmanii plant with some
multibud trusses on it in
Lynch's Woods in Newberry
County, SC.

Read the story of
how one of our
own members was
involved in
discovering and
naming a new
native deciduous
azalea species.

Page 3, inside.

**Deadline for copy for the September
Blue Ridge Review is August 15.**

Upcoming events!

June ?, Mt. Mitchell trip, Red Max, contact
Bill Klippel,

June ?, Wayah Bald trek, Flame Azalea,
contact Doley Bell, or Leon Pace,

**June 22, 2:00 PM - Annual Meeting and
Picnic,** Doley and Melody Bell's,
Hendersonville, NC, bring plants to auction,
dish to share, and chair(s).

**September 21, 2:00 PM, Bill Klippel's
Rhododendrons of Australia photos and
talk.** St. John in the Wilderness Church, Flat
Rock, NC.