

# THE BLUE RIDGE REVIEW

*Southeastern Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society*



*Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons*

**November-December 2011**

## It's a Family Christmas Party!

**Sunday, December 4, 2:00 PM**

There will be holly decorations from Mary Ann and Ray Head, a honey baked spiral cut ham from Jean Pace and a home baked turkey from Audrey Stelloh. Audrey will also bring the necessary plastic and paper, and John

Brown will bring the beverages. There will be a very special door prize from

Jackson McCarter. All we need is you, your family and some real yummy side dishes and deserts.



This gala celebration is an annual tradition with SE-ARS, so come on along, bring the family and a delicious dish to share. (Jean has promised to do the 'Little Greens Things' for April.)



After dinner we'll listen to our own member, Aaron Cook, who will do a "Grafting Demonstration" of side veneer grafting. He will begin with a discussion of "before" care, review tools and knife sharpening techniques, and finish with a demonstration and discussion of "after" care for new grafts. Aaron is Coordinator at the Science Department at CCC&TI.

## "Appalachian Spring"

**2012 ARS-ASA  
International Convention**

**May 4-7, 2012  
Asheville, NC**

*Hosted by the Southeastern Chapter, ARS  
and Vaseyi Chapter, ASA*

Reserve your room at the Crowne Plaza Resort at  
<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/ARS2012>

**You Can Register Now!**

<http://www.rhododendron.org/>



You and Your Family are Invited to the 20th Annual Community Appreciation Day, Saturday, November 12, 2011, 10 AM – 3 PM, at Van Wingerden International greenhouses, Mills River, NC. Conveniently located 6 miles from US I-26, between Hendersonville and Asheville, it's an inside look at their greenhouse production facilities and gorgeous poinsettia crop, and how they grow plants with technology and environmental responsibility. There will be live music, educational displays, and refreshments. Don't miss this!

## Panel of Experts Well Received

We had a good group, 30 people at our October 16 meeting, including 5 guests! Kristina Provines from Columbus, Eva Nelson, Sandy Angle, Charlotte Wolf, and Tamsin Allpress, all of Hendersonville, were

warmly welcomed. Hazel and Byron Richards were welcomed as new members,



who joined after the September meeting. They were members a few years ago. Their garden is on the Monday convention tour.

Sieglinde Anderson reviewed the results of the Program Interest Questionnaire. There were 18 responses. Companion plants ranked first, followed by garden visits then easy hikes.

John Brown announced that all dues renewals that he has by today will be in the drawing for a free membership for 2013. The drawing will be at the December meeting, on Sunday the 4th, which will be the Christmas party, with Aaron Cook doing a program on grafting.



Our panel of experts changed somewhat from the original plan, due to a series of

unforeseen circumstances. Doley Bell and John Brown stepped in to very capably fill the gaps, along with Jackson McCarter and Leon Pace. We are extremely fortunate to have so many real rhododendron experts among our membership!

Sieglinde was our moderator and brought two rhododendron plants with problems. One had unidentified insects; the other had yellow leaves at the bottom, which is natural. Where and how to plant, soil pH, medium to use, fertilizing and

pruning of rhododendrons and azaleas were all included in the lively discussion.

## New Board has First Meeting

Following the regular meeting, the new board of directors met. Six Board members were present, 5 were absent. The dates and events for the year were established as listed on the back page of this newsletter.

John Brown announced that he is now a member of the ARS Board of Directors. Ken Goering has resigned as District 10 Director, due to family concerns, and John as Assistant District 10 Director, has moved up to the Director position.

President Jackson McCarter proposed several ideas for our focus after the convention is over. He would like to see us restart the Species Study Group. There was much discussion around SE-ARS possibly having a rhododendron display garden at the NC Arboretum, doing an expanded Membership Directory with information about members gardens to expand into more garden visits.

Jackson suggested that we could buy a 3,000 lumen LCD projector for around \$1,000. John proposed that we consider the purchase of a projector before the convention, to be used then and thereafter, since we may have to spend \$1,000 or more on renting projectors for the convention. Since two are needed for the convention, John will suggest to Vaseyi that they also purchase one. This will be revisited at the next Board meeting to follow the December 4 Christmas party.



*Editor's Note: Don and I had the pleasure of sitting in on the ARS Fall Board Meeting in Richmond, VA, on October 21, 2011. It was great to meet these wonderful people and learn more about the dynamics of ARS. We were very proud to have our very own John Brown (far left, 2nd row) representing District 10. --MH*

## 2012 Convention Information Finalized for Journals and Web

There were 13 committee members present at the 2012 Convention planning committee meeting on October 16, at St. John in the Wilderness Parish Hall. Here's a summary of that meeting plus where we are now.

Final decisions were made on the Registration Form concerning the menu choices for the two banquets and separating the banquet prices from the breakfast, lunch and tour price, to allow greater flexibility for our guests. The breakfast, lunch and tour price will be \$65.00 and each banquet will be \$35.00 on Saturday and Sunday. The Monday tour, including breakfast and lunch, will also be \$65.00. The registration form is now available on the ARS web site.

We have two speakers giving one presentation on both Saturday and Sunday. We will pay the honorarium for each presentation, not each speaker. On Saturday, it will be Nicholas Yarmoshuk and Christina Woodward, and on Sunday, it will be Thomas Ranney and one or two of his students, speaking on the genetics of deciduous azaleas.

There is still a need for a person to coordinate the audio visual requirements. Two 3,000 lumen projectors are needed in the triple ballrooms. \$1,000 is budgeted for the A/V, but it may not be enough to include paying an A/V technician. A meeting with the hotel personnel is being planned to determine the needs and the cost.

For Saturday's tour, we will pay \$5.00 per person for the Arboretum, and have boxed 'Picnic' lunches on the Parkway. Sunday's lunch will be at Green Cove, maybe barbeque, but we don't have a caterer yet. The Bell garden is a backup garden for the Sunday tour, in case anything happens to one of the garden owners. Otherwise, it will be on the Monday "Bonus tour" that the Haynes' have arranged. Audrey Stelloh has arranged for an "Early bird tour" of the Biltmore Estate on Friday. Young Transportation wanted a \$2,000 deposit for the busses two weeks ago. Doley Bell will try to negotiate with them to delay payment until registration money starts coming in.

The plant sale will be open on Thursday afternoon so the Board members can purchase plants. Since we need more information about phyto certification, we will have no statements about having it in the Journal inserts or web site. John has found that it is far more complicated than originally hoped.

April Sanborn, SE-ARS book chairman, would appreciate any new or used garden related books that our chapter folks might want to donate to the convention book sale. Timber Press is donating some books and Harold Greer has donated an autographed hard cover copy of *Greer's Guidebook To Available Rhododendrons*.

Anne Guelker, our associate member from Ozarks Chapter in Missouri, has done an outstanding job coordinating sponsorships. Espoma is sending product samples for every registrant; Whitney Gardens is sponsoring the Flower Show; Gardens of the Blue Ridge sent two \$50.00 Gift Certificates; Harold Greer sent five \$75.00 Gift Certificates and Worm's Way is sending a Gift Basket. Marilyn Haynes worked with Mast General Stores to receive partial sponsorship for the Welcome Reception, coupons for the registrants and plastic bags for the plant sale. Audrey and Bob Stelloh have worked with BB Barnes and Jesse Israel to have donated and loaned plants to decorate the hotel areas and to auction or raffle. John Brown is wheeling and dealing to get donated plants for give aways and the auction. Aaron Cook has an anonymous donor who will sponsor the lunches for the workers in the hospitality suite. We still have companies considering sponsorship.

Bob Stelloh has sent the final text and photos for *The Azalean* and Marilyn Haynes has sent the text and photos for the *ARS Journal*. Bob has done a super job with the web site, which is almost ready to go live!

Our illustrious chairman, Aaron Cook, is encouraging all our members and workers to send in their reservations **now**, so we can pay the bus deposits. The Crowne Plaza has run out of king rooms, but a lot of doubles are still available. Many thanks to all who have been working so hard!





## Christmas Holly

By Norma Senn

Holly has been used to decorate European homes since Druid times (a pre-Christian religious order of priests among the ancient Celts of Gaul, Britain, and Ireland). Over the centuries and with the advent of Christianity, many associations have developed concerning holly decorations at Christmas time.

The evergreen leaves have come to represent everlasting life, and some traditions say that holly made up Christ's crown of thorns. The legend holds that all holly berries were originally yellow...but turned red from Christ's wounds. Perhaps the symbolism associated with holly is less important now, but the bright red berries and lustrous green leaves still make welcome additions to winter flower arrangements and our Christmas decorations.

In addition to their decorative use at Christmas time, hollies are prized by carpenters for their fine, dense wood. Leaves from some holly species have been used to make



tea, and their flowers are very attractive to bees, yielding fine honey. Where they are hardy, they also make lovely large specimen trees to the landscape.

We are most familiar with the red-berried varieties, but there are also very attractive orange-and yellow-fruited hollies.

### Where does the holly grow?

Commercial holly sold by florists at Christmas time is harvested from *Ilex aquifolium*, the English holly. In Canada, commercial holly orchards are located in the mildest areas of British Columbia, most are on Vancouver Island, but there are a few orchards in the lower Fraser Valley. English holly is best grown in fertile, deep, slightly acid soils that have good drainage. They like moderate growing temperatures, neither very hot nor very cold, and even moisture is required throughout the growing season.

It takes eight to ten years after planting before the trees are large enough to start harvesting, and often plants are 15 years old before major harvesting begins. Commercial growers want to know the exact characteristics of the holly they grow, so typically they plant grafted plants or plants that were started from cuttings.

### Colors change from season to season...

Growers play a guessing game in selecting varieties for future harvesting. They have to predict what will be fashionable in the florist trade in a decade's time.

I remember talking to a commercial grower who was trying to decide whether or not he should top-graft his green-leaved holly trees to change them over to variegated types because of the rising trend towards the use of more variegated plants. He had planted mostly solid green forms...which at the time of planting were what the florist trade preferred. As well, growers have to decide on the number of prickly-leaved or smooth-leaved varieties to plant.



Another decision to make at planting is to balance the number of male to female plants in an orchard. Most English holly is dioecious...that is...some plants are male and have only staminate flowers that provide pollen, and other plants are female and have pistillate flowers. In order for berries to form on the female trees, pollen has to be transferred from the staminate to the pistillate flowers. A ratio of about one male tree to every fifty or sixty female trees is commonly planted in large commercial orchards, but this ratio can vary tremendously depending on the size of the planting.

For home growers, if berries are wanted on English hollies, care must be taken to plant both a female and a male tree. Watch for the identifying tags on plants in the garden centers that tell you which plants are male and which are female. Happily, there are now some holly varieties that have perfect flowers, so berries will be borne on a single tree.

### How do growers make the most money?

Growers are paid based on the weight and quality of a crop. Good berry set adds to the weight...so growers want a balance of berried branches to leafy branches in order to make the most money. Of course, the overall quality of the leaves and the ratio of variegated and dark green branches also determine the crops' value.

Holly is cut by hand in late November. The branches have to be handled carefully to avoid having the prickly leaves physically damage other leaves, and to prevent knocking off the berries. After cutting, holly is washed to rid the leaves of algae or dirt. The leaves are also inspected for obvious damaged areas and any individual

(Cont on pg. 5)

**Southeastern Chapter  
AMERICAN  
RHODODENDRON  
SOCIETY  
Membership Sign-up Form**



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIPS ARE ON A CALENDAR YEAR BASIS. 18 months for new members joining after April 1st. New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_**

Membership dues include chapter and national membership, plus the quarterly *ARS Journal*.

Regular.....	\$40.00
Commercial.....	90.00
Sustaining.....	75.00
Sponsoring.....	150.00
Commit for Life (Individual).....	1,000.00
Commit for Life (Family).....	1,500.00

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

John Brown, SE-ARS Treasurer

*Welcome! ...and Thank you for joining the...*

**Southeastern Chapter  
AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

*Commit for Life, Individual, is payable over a 3 year period in one increment of \$400 & two of \$300. Commit for Life, Family, is payable over a 3 year period in increments of \$500. ♥ Encourage a friend to join!*

(Cont. from pg 4)  
 leaves with leaf miner spots or other blemishes are removed..

**Prolonging life of holly...**

For floral arrangements we want the berries to stay on the branches as long as possible...but once holly is cut, the berries start falling off. To prevent both premature berry drop and leaf discoloration, many growers dip cut holly



branches in a weak solution of naphthalene acetic acid. This material is related to the naturally occurring auxin compound bound in plants, and it can prolong the useful life of cut holly by several weeks. After dipping, the branches are allowed to partially air dry, and then are boxed for shipping. Garden centers sometimes sell a holly dip product for homeowners.

**Tips for home use...**

A few suggestions:  
 \* to use cut holly in floral arrangements, re-cut the stem ends using sharp shears.

- \* try to make the cuts on the diagonal to expose as much wood as possible to the water.
- \* make sure the arrangements have ample fresh water, or if oasis is used, it should be kept well-moistened at all times.
- \* arrangements will last longer if they are kept in a cool location.
- \* well-conditioned holly should last for at least three weeks...if kept cool.
- \* for holly wreaths or other outdoor decorations, the cool weather helps to preserve their appearance. If exposed to very cold weather, the berries will freeze and as they thaw, they turn black.
- \* to prolong the life of your wreath...if possible...keep in a protected location...for example between a main door and the storm door.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Enjoy...Enjoy...Enjoy.

--Norma Senn, Victoria Chapter, ARS in Canada



*(Reprinted with permission from Rhododendron and Azalea News, Winter 2010, Vol. 13 No. 3, photos added)*

Southeastern Chapter of the  
**American Rhododendron Society**

**Officers and Directors**

**President:** Jackson McCarter  
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**Treasurer:** John Brown 10  
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**Vice President:** Sieglinde Anderson  
Fairview, NC 28730

**Secretary/Editor:** Marilyn Haynes  
Hendersonville, NC 28791

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**Past President:** Doley Bell  
Hendersonville, NC 28791

**Directors 'til 2012:** Aaron Cook,  
Jean Pace, April Sanborn

**Directors 'til 2013:** Ray Head,  
Glenn O'Sheal, Audrey Stelloh



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**Last Call! 2012 Dues Must be Paid by  
December 1 to Receive the ARS Winter  
Journal & besides, we'd miss you!**

*(This is the one that tells all about our convention!)*

**Send dues to our treasurer, JOHN BROWN**

**A drawing for one full year free membership will  
be held at the December 4th Christmas Party.  
Everyone who renewed by the October meeting  
is eligible for the drawing.**



*Happy  
Thanksgiving!*



**Mark Your Calendar, Now!**

**December 4, Sunday - 2:00 PM - Christmas  
Party Pot Luck**, St. John in the Wilderness  
Parish Hall. Aaron Cook will do a grafting  
demonstration.

**- 2012 -**

**February 19, Sunday - 2:00 PM - Program,**  
Speaker TBD, St. John in the Wilderness Parish  
Hall.

**March 17, Saturday - 12:00 N - Annual  
Banquet & Silent Auction**, Speaker TBD,  
Chariot.

**April 14, Saturday - SC Garden Visits.**

**April 15, Sunday - 2:00 PM - Convention  
Work Session**, St. John in the Wilderness Parish  
Hall.

**May 3, Thursday - 6:00 AM - Convention  
Setup**, Crowne Plaza Resort, Asheville.

**May 4-7, 2012 - ARS-ASA Joint Convention,**  
Crowne Plaza Resort, Asheville.

