



The Blue Ridge Review



SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

September, 2019

Encouragement of the culture of Rhododendrons

STEVE PETTIS WILL TEACH ABOUT DISEASES IN RHODODENDRONS AND AZALEAS

Join us for the next SE-ARS meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, September 15, at Bullington Gardens when Steve Pettis will enlighten us about *Diseases in Rhododendrons and Azaleas*. Steve is a Commercial and Consumer Horticulture Agent at the NC State Cooperative Extension Service in Hendersonville, NC, where he consults on horticultural topics with homeowners, business owners and government officials; he also manages the **Henderson County Master Gardener Program**. He earned an undergraduate degree in horticulture from the University of Georgia and Masters Degree in Integrated Pest Management (MPPPM) from the University of Georgia. He specializes in plant health care, integrated pest management, natural resources education, nursery/greenhouse management, arboriculture, sustainable agriculture, and green industry education.



Steve has been in the green industry for the past 24 years, including 14 years working as a cooperative extension agent in 2 Georgia counties. Fortunately for us, he came to Henderson County to work at the NC State Cooperative Extension Service in January of 2017. With his vast experience teaching others about agriculture and natural resources as a County Extension Agent, he excels in making complex scientific ideas understandable for green industry professionals, government officials and homeowners.

If you look at the NC State extension website, you will see that Steve offers numerous classes for gardening folks: <https://henderson.ces.ncsu.edu/profile/steve-pettis/>. One of the classes is about the fundamentals of dealing with the prevalent hemlock wooly adelgid. He's also offering a series of four upcoming classes for those who are new to gardening in this area: Mushroom Basics, Native Plants of WNC, Planting and Protecting our Trees, and Plants for Birds, Bees, and Butterflies.

Jerry Neff reminded me that Steve talked to us in the spring of 2018 about controlling pests. This time he will focus on diseases that affect rhododendrons and azeleas.

In addition to his passion for horticulture, Steve is a former Marine and also is a musician who plays Americana music. We welcome his expertise!

Jerry says:

In my last conversation with Steve, he mentioned an increase in oak decline in western NC. The disease in oaks is caused by the same species fungus (Phytophthora) that attacks rhododendrons (root rot). Phytophthora was introduced from the west coast and is becoming established in western NC.

Steve Pettis will teach us how to deal with problems like this.

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The Blue Ridge Review

ANOTHER WONDERFUL PICNIC!! CHEERS AND APPLAUSE FOR HAZEL AND BYRON FOR SHARING THEIR WONDERFUL PLACE WITH US!!



A good crowd for the auction



Plants Galore



Sieglinde and Byron discussion



So many Choices



Page 2 Doley tempts us

Great weather, wonderful company, and delicious food marked our annual picnic outing on July 21st at the beautiful and comfortable Richards' home. Their spacious patio area offered a perfect place for approximately twenty-four of us to spread out in smaller groups to enjoy a comfortable and delicious meal, along with delightful companionship with old friends and new ones. Everyone brought something special; there were plenty of salads, hot dishes, meat dishes, and tasty desserts. It's almost like the food offerings were part of a 'grand plan' rather than a random sampling.

Thanks to Buffy Wells and Judy Van Rens for bringing food ware and drinks; and a special 'Thank You' to Byron for bringing out extra lemonade when we ran out.

After a leisurely picnic experience, we moved outside for the plant auction. The wall along the driveway was overflowing with the 132 plants that members had contributed. I know we all tried to bring treasures and variety that would be great additions to our gardens. Enough members had brought extra chairs for the 'Main Event'. As usual, our Expert Auctioneer, Doley Bell, delighted us, educated us, and tempted us to expand our gardens so that we could add more beauty and variety to our already-wonderful collections of flora. Leon Pace acted as his efficient and knowledgeable assistant.

We started our auction around 3:30, and the fun and excitement went on until 5. Eighteen of our members went home with wonderful treasures for their gardens. This brought us a profit of \$729, which made our organization rich in funds and our members rich in new treasures. Byron continued to be a gracious host by purchasing the most plants for his extraordinary garden; Sieglinde Anderson bought the next highest number, and April Sanborn and Bob Head tied for third.

Everyone ended the day feeling like a winner after an amazing three hours of food, companionship, and wonderful plants.



Our gracious hosts

September, 2019

HISTORY OF THE SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

In 1927, the Asheville Chamber of Commerce announced plans for a Rhododendron Festival to help attract tourists to the Land of the Sky. The five-day Rhododendron Festival started the second week of June, 1928, and was held annually until 1941. At the first festival, 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. This became The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival .

The Southeastern Chapter, American Rhododendron Society was organized on the **13th of March 1957**, at a meeting in the George Vanderbilt Hotel, in Asheville, NC. It was the eleventh ARS group to gain official status. There were twenty nine charter members, from several localities in the western mountains.

The first President of the newly formed chapter was Joe Brooks of Enka, NC. The Vice President was Dr. Ernest Yelton of Rutherfordton, NC, and the Secretary-Treasurer was W.H. (Buck) Thorne.

Chapter meetings were held in the Biltmore Forest Town Hall until about 1982, when the meetings were moved to St. John in the Wilderness Parish Hall in Flat Rock, due to a shift in membership more to the Hendersonville-Brevard-and piedmont of North and South Carolina areas.

Three years after its organization, the chapter held its first flower show on the 13th of May 1960 in the First Presbyterian Church in Asheville. Since then a flower show has been held every year. Beginning in 1961 and continuing until 1971/1972, most shows were held in the John Cecil room of the Biltmore Dairy Bar. The 1967 show was held at the Grove Park Inn in conjunction with the American Rhododendron Society National Convention held in Asheville. In 1969 the show was in the Tunnel Road Mall; in 1973, at the Valley Springs School Cafeteria, and in 1974 in the Biltmore Town Hall. From 1975 to 1979 the shows were held in the Holiday Inn West and in 1980 at the Asheville Mall, then at the NC Arboretum in Buncombe County through 2017. For the last two years the Flower Show has been at St. John in the Wilderness Parish Hall. The date for the Flower Show is late April/early May, hopefully depending on the peak bloom time.

While the Rhododendron Festival ended in 1941, the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and SE-ARS both continue as separate entities. This year's Mountain Dance and Folk Festival was held in early August at UNC Asheville. Our SE-ARS group continues to meet regularly, recently at Bullington Gardens.

By Our Historian, Jean Pace



**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, Sept. 15— 2 pm
**Steve Pettis— Diseases of
Rhododendrons and Azaleas**

at Bullington Gardens,
95 Upper Red Oak Trail

Sunday, Oct. 20—2 pm
**Boris Bauer Educates Us
About Magnolias**

at Bullington Gardens,
95 Upper Red Oak Trail

**MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT
THE SE-ARS WEBSITE!!**

www.se-ars.org

Articles for next newsletter due October 5

**COME TO A WONDERFUL SALE AT OUR MEMBER
WAYNE HUTCHINS' PLANTS-A-PLENTY FARM**

Our longtime member and former director will be holding a wonderful plant sale for a month, beginning September 13 at Plants-a-Plenty Farm, 290 Crowe Dairy Rd., Forest City, NC. You can visit Mondays through Saturdays from 8:30 until 5. All plants will be half price (or close to half price). Wayne says they have 40 or 50 varieties of hardy ferns to choose from. They also have a large selection of evergreen azaleas, native azaleas, and rhododendrons. If you are looking for hostas, large or small, this would be a great place to find them. All of the above plants come in one, two, or three gallon sizes, except for the rhodi's which come in three to five gallons. A wonderful selection of perennials and wild flowers rounds out the plants available. Wayne says they have ten varieties of Lenten Roses. Unfortunately, there are only a few camellias available because of last year's bad winter. A visit to Plants-a-Plenty sounds like it would be a great adventure on a beautiful autumn day!