

GREATER PHILADELPHIA RHODO GRAVURE

Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, American Rhododendron Society ::::::::::: Spring 2013

Friends who put down roots The eponymous among us

The constellation of rhododendron and azalea cultivars is ever growing, a phenomenon for which we owe thanks to the genus itself and to continuing generations of folks who like to play around with nature.

With so many species, this genus provides limitless hybridization opportunities. And hybridizers, from the energetic 500-seedlings-a-year showoffs to the modest backyard pollen transferer, forge ahead. Some are in quest of a personal grail (truly hardy, truly yellow, on a good plant!) and others wonder what sort of showstopper might result if 'Trude Webster' dallied in 'Babylon'.

Seeds are sown, tiny seedlings separated, midget plants put out to grow. Give them time, and those plants will probably produce. Weed out the lousy and boring, and there it is: A fine addition to the world of horticulture. Propagate, test under varying conditions, then bestow a name.

There is the descriptive route – say, Vermilion Ecstasy – or the cloying (Purrfect Kitty). And, of course, a name that's already claimed – by a person.

The RhodoGravure here offers the first installment of rhododendrons and azaleas named for people active in the Greater Philadelphia Chapter and the like. For the linguistically curious, an eponym is the person for which something else is named. (Readers are asked to submit additional cultivars for



R. 'Howard Roberts'

Bernady Photo

inclusion in the next installment, as well as any corrections to the information here.)

'Dan Layman'

In 1998 Joe Minahan registered his 1984 cross, 'Mars' x 'Polynesian Sunset', in honor of Dan Layman, longtime chapter leader. It is vivid red with a strong red blotch and is a late bloomer – mid-June.

'Fred Winter'

This is an unregistered Joe Becales hybrid ('Merley Cream' X 'Polynesian Sunset'). Dennis MacMullan used its pollen in crosses, but did not have the plant himself. It is not known whether the clone still exists. Might you have it?

'Howard Kline'

Dennis MacMullan hybridized, named and registered this, in honor of the longtime sage of the Valley Forge Chapter, Howard Kline. The overall effect, according to the International Rhododendron Register, is peach-colored, with moderate to strong pink flowers with a spotted flare of vivid to brilliant yellow. Blooms mid to late May on a 4 x 4-foot plant (in 10 years). The cross (1983) is ('Coral Velvet' x *R. wardii* KW4170) X 'Wizard'.

'Howard Roberts'

'Mary Belle' X 'Odee Wright', this Joe Minahan hybrid has

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Dinner and a show

It's almost like dinner at Downton Abbey – the annual banquet at the Whitmarsh Valley Country Club, Saturday, April 13, 6 p.m. (The reader may decide who fills the Maggie Smith role.)

"Natures Elements Sources of Inspiration" is the title of the presentation by Bucks County resident Stephen J. Ripper, in which he will focus on the natural elements of form, texture, color and structure that provide and stimulate creativity in garden design. He will feature the work of several artisans from this area, showing how nature has influenced their work.

The evening concludes with the ever-popular "Rhododendron Roulette." For each reservation, please bring a plant (need not be a rhododendron) to exchange.

All members should have received a separate invitation with reservation form. If you've lost it, *hurry* and contact Linda Hartnett for a last-minute reservation 610-940-9478; 215-287-0731; lindahartnett@gmail.com.

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Plants and Propagation: Karel Bernady & Linda Hartnett
Truss Show: Michael Martin Mills; Philadelphia. Flower Show: Linda Hartnett

The American Rhododendron Society is a horticultural organization devoted to the genus Rhododendron – which includes azaleas. At the national level, the society holds annual conferences, publishes the quarterly Journal of the ARS, and fosters plant research and conservation. Its website, www.rhododendron.org, is a trove.

The Greater Philadelphia Chapter gathers eight times a year. Sunday afternoon meetings are held September, October, November and January at Morris Arboretum. February through August we are more mobile, with a banquet, plant sale and picnic at various sites. The latest meeting information may be found at www.GPChapterARS.org.

Not already a member? Dues are \$40 per year, which includes chapter and national membership and a subscription to the Journal. Contact the president or treasurer (see above) for a member form or go to www.GPChapterARS.org; click on “Join us.”

Were we brilliant or what?

Our installation at the Philadelphia Flower Show may not have taken the top prize in the Plant Societies Category (the fern folks nabbed that one; again), but we did receive a Special Achievement Award for creating an appealing garden setting.

Fact is, we created four garden settings, all within a 15-by-15-foot square divided into quadrants with an X-shape boxwood hedge. Two segments concentrated on elepidotes, one had evergreen azaleas, another deciduous azaleas. An easel with a rhododendron painting in progress set the tone – the exhibit was titled “Artist’s Rhododendron Retreat.” In another quadrant, a picnic basket was placed on the mini-patch of lawn.

One of the most distinctive features, the brainchild of Linda Hartnett and Karel Bernady, was a planting of 30 baby Japanese umbrella pines, which came off as a cool groundcover. The docents were prepared to tell visitors, No, you’d never plant these trees this way in the real world.

Kudos to designers Linda Hartnett, Kim Kopple, Mimi Favre, Randy Dalton, Debby Evans, and Karel Bernady.

Eponyms

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apricot yellow buds that open to light greenish yellow with a strong red basal blotch. Joe made the cross in 1983 and registered it in 2006, honoring a Greater Philadelphia Chapter member who himself was a home hybridizer dreaming and scheming for yellow hybrids. Howard, an ultimate gentleman, was president of the chapter and for a number of years operated a local seed-exchange. He often gave out seedlings at the June picnic.

‘Joe Becales’

It’s not known whether this self-named cultivar is around – or at least with a tag so that it’s identifiable. The cross is ‘Janet Blair’ X ‘Goldsworth Orange’, and it was registered in 2009. The Greater Philadelphia Chapter would love to propagate this, so let Karel Bernady know if you have it.

‘Judith Boyd’

This is the curious case of a rhododendron named for a living person who does not exist. A Gable hybrid (‘Cadis’ X ‘Kluis’ Sensation’), it was named by Carol Gable after her niece, Judy Allison, when she married Malcolm Boyd. Carol assumed Judy would take Malcolm’s surname. Wrong. Deep rosy pink flowers



R. ‘Judith Boyd’

Malcolm Boyd photo

with red spots on upper lobes and almost white streak in center of lower lobes. In 2011 two dozen cuttings from the original plant, in the front of Judy’s childhood home in Arendtsville, Pa., were propagated by the chapter, with the first sold in 2012. Given how very few other existing plants are known, this was a major step toward getting the cultivar into circulation.

‘Max Tietjens’

‘Dexter’s Champagne’ x ‘Dexter’s Honeydew’, it was hybridized by E. E. Walbrecht of Maine (1972), and registered by Marie Tietjens in 1997. Huge trusses and a plant that is wider than tall. Individual flowers 3.5 inches across, yellowish white with pink margins. Not overly floriferous, but the tall trusses are quite

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The candy store will soon be open

P.S., the plant sale needs you

The chapter's annual plant sale will take place again this year in partnership with Morris Arboretum, as part of the arboretum's sale of perennials, annuals, woodies and more.

One of the great advantages of being a member of the ARS is that we get the same perk as Morris members – the opportunity to shop a day before the sale opens to the public *and* to receive the 10 percent members-only discount.

Members-only day is Friday May 10, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. The sale continues on Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Set up of our sales area will be on Wednesday, May 8, starting at 9 a.m. Volunteers are needed for set-up and, during the sale, to share expertise with customers. Please contact Linda Hartnett to sign up. You will be rewarded for your efforts with an *additional* worker's discount for anything offered in the Morris Arboretum sale.

The computer gods willing, the chapter website will carry a list of rhododendrons expected for the sale, starting the weekend before.

Be a hands-on part of Plants for Members

Two work days have been scheduled for the Greater Philadelphia propagation program this spring. Both will be at Steven Kristoph Nursery in Central New Jersey, a short hop from Exit 8 of the New Jersey Turnpike.

On Thursday, April 4, the project at hand will be potting rooted cuttings stuck in cells last August. The work commences at 9 a.m., though arriving later is not a problem. Bring along lunch and a stool for your comfort and the seasoned hands will entertain you with stories (and birdsong identification) while transplanting newly rooted plants for growing on. Beverages will be provided. The camaraderie is great, and it's always intriguing to see which cultivars were champs at setting roots. The gardening tidbits one can pick up from fellow workers can be invaluable. An additional task will be up-potting a few plants to larger pots. Work will take place under cover from rain.

On Saturday, June 1, again at the same location and start time, potting grafted plants will be on the schedule. These were grafted and rooted in December.

Call Karel Bernady at 484-888-8244 for questions and to confirm your participation in these work days.

Erratum

In the last issue of the RhodoGravure, the list of volunteers for events in 2012 omitted Hope Punnett, who not only worked on our plant sale but earned a Purple Heart in the process (those pesky tables!).

Calendar

Important: If you do not receive this newsletter electronically, you will not receive email reminders a week before meetings and other events. Please use this calendar to mark your own.

April 4, Thursday, 9 a.m. through early afternoon

Work day at Kristoph Nursery, potting rooted cuttings. See article on this page.

April 9, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Board of Directors meeting, home of Maris Ogg

April 13, Saturday, 6:00 p.m. Annual banquet, Whitemarsh Valley Country Club. See article on Page 1.

April 18, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Valley Forge Chapter meeting, Jenkins Arboretum

April 18-21 Azalea Society convention, Athens, Ga. For more info: <http://www.azaleas.org/convention13.html>

May 1-5 ARS Annual convention, Seattle area. The theme is "Rhododendrons, Then, Now, and in Your Future." Tours of renowned gardens in this ideal rhododendron climate are a particular attraction. For more info: <http://www.olympiachapterars.org/2013-ars-international-convention.html>

May 3-5 Valley Forge Chapter plant sale, Jenkins Arboretum

May 9-11 Greater Philadelphia Chapter plant sale, Morris Arboretum. See article on this page.

May 12, Sunday Valley Forge truss show, Jenkins Arboretum. See article one Page 4.

June 1, Saturday, 9 a.m. through early afternoon

Work day at Kristoph Nursery. See article on this page.

June 9, Sunday Chapter Picnic, home of Myo and Thein Their Myint, 933 Morris Ave., Bryn Mawr, Pa.

June 30, Sunday Valley Forge picnic

Aug. 18, Sunday District 8 Cutting exchange and auction

The member as instructor

Two members of the chapter will be leading short classes at Morris Arboretum this spring.

Karel Bernady's "Rhododendrons for Your Landscape" is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 10-11:30 a.m., and covers the basics of selection, planting and ongoing culture.

Michael Martin Mills' presentation is titled "Planting for the Long-Term." It will be Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., and includes a visit to Michael's garden for on-site examination of do's and don'ts for growing woodies over the long haul.

Both courses are ideal for newer gardeners, and readers of the RhodoGravure are encouraged to alert appropriate friends and acquaintances of the availability of the sessions.

The full catalogue of Morris' classes is at www.business-services.upenn.edu/arboretum/ed_classes.shtml, with online registration via the site. Call the arboretum at 215-247-5777 to request a brochure. Members of Morris Arboretum receive a discount.

Eponyms

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stunning. Hardy to -10F. The Greater Philadelphia Chapter has propagated it several times.

'Ray Jefferis'

This yak cross (pollen parent unknown) differs from so many yak hybrids by having a lovely almost-salmon tone that holds instead of quickly fading to white. Ray Jefferis, Greater Philadelphia president in the early 1960s, made the cross, Bob Wilkinson gets tentative credit for naming it, and Sybille Jefferis registered it in 2007. (Before registration, it was in circulation as 'Yaku Jefferis' – time to update your tags.)



R. 'Max Tietjens'

Mills photo

'Smarty Joan's'

This Allan and Shirley Anderson cross was sown and grown by Howard Roberts and registered in 2004. It is named for his wife, Joan Roberts – in a play on the name of a racehorse of that era, Smarty Jones. The flowers are ivory with a chartreuse throat. The cross is complex: (['Delp's Big Deal' x 'Donna Hardgrove'] x ['Golden Star' x 'Catalpa']) X *R. wardii*.

Prepare to cut

The alternating truss show pattern returns the duties to the Valley Forge Chapter this year, on Mothers Day, Sunday, May 12, at Jenkins Arboretum.

Entries will be accepted from 7:30 to 11:15 a.m. After judging, the show will be open to the public from 1 to 5 p.m. It being Mothers Day and Jenkins being in full flower, there is guaranteed to be a large audience.

The chair of this year's flower show is Debby Schmidt. Tags for advance completion will be available at the April 13 Greater Philadelphia banquet, or members may contact Debby at 610-388-8573 or debbyschmidt@comcast.net. The brochure with rules and the catalogue of previous entries (which makes tag completion so much easier) will be posted on the Valley Forge website, <http://valleyforgears.org>.

Tip for first-timers: Valley Forge displays entries in elegant test-tube stands; a rubber band is used to attach the entry tag. Be sure your entries, especially those with short stems, are well hydrated before taking them to the show. The address of Jenkins Arboretum is 631 Berwyn-Baptist Road, Devon, Pa. 19333; directions are at <http://Jenkins-arboretum.org/visit.html>.