

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

## Calendar

- **November 19, 2015**  
**Regular meeting**  
**Social time 7:00 PM**  
**Meeting 7:30 PM**  
**Speaker: Karel Bernady**  
**Program: Grafting Rhododendrons for Problem Solving**
- **No Board Meeting this month**

## Meeting Info

Regular chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month (except in June, July, and August which have other events).

Meetings start at 7 pm with a social half-hour preceding the main meeting. We clean up and exit by 9:30 pm.

Location: All Saints Episcopal Church - At the corner of SE 40<sup>th</sup> and Woodstock, Portland, Oregon



## November Program: “Grafting Rhododendrons for Problem-Solving”

By Dennis O’Malley

Our speaker for the November meeting, on November 19, 2015, will be Karel Bernady. Karel is the Co-Chair of the Research Committee of the American Rhododendron Society and the Chairman of the Trustees of the Research Foundation. He also serves on the ARS Endowment Committee.

Karel has completed two terms as ARS Director for District Eight. He has also served as the President of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter, where he currently co-chairs the Plants and Propagation Committee, with responsibility for the Chapter’s Plants for Members Program.

The Plants for Members Program was started by the Greater Philadelphia Chapter in 1986, with a goal of encouraging members to try new varieties of rhododendrons. Many of these varieties were not commercially available. Chapter members participated in the program by preparing cuttings for rooting and growing them on for sale.

When Karel Bernady began to manage the program in 2003, he documented the rooting performance of the various cultivars attempted. This experience led to the consideration of grafting as a possible solution to propagation difficulties with some varieties.

Karel’s program will highlight the process of grafting rhododendrons on un-rooted understocks and the lessons learned.

Many of you had an opportunity to meet Karel last year at Don Hyatt’s program in September of 2014, or have heard him speak in the past. Please extend this invitation to members and nonmembers alike and join us in giving him a warm welcome to Portland.

## Purpose

To encourage interest in and disseminate information and knowledge about the genus *Rhododendron*.

To provide a medium through which all persons interested in the genus may communicate with others through education, scientific studies, meetings, publications, and other similar activities.

The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is registered in Oregon as a 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization. Dues and donations are qualified charitable tax deductions.

## Meeting Calendar through February, 2016:

**November 19th, 2015**

**Regular meeting**

**Social time 7:00 PM**

**Meeting 7:30 PM**

**Speaker: Karel Bernady**

**Program: "Grafting Rhododendron for Problem-Solving"**

**No Board Meeting This Month!**

**December 17th, 2015**

**Holiday Party and Potluck Dinner with Decorated Tables and Lots of Food!**

**Set-up 6:30 PM, Dining 7:00 PM**

**Program: Traditional Showing of Member's Slides & Digital Images**

**No December Board Meeting -- Happy Holidays!**

**January 21st, 2016**

**Regular Meeting**

**Social time 7:00 PM**

**Meeting 7:30 PM**

**Speaker: TBA**

**January 26th, 2016**

**Board Meeting**

**7:00 PM**

**Van Veen Nursery**

**February 18th, 2016**

**Regular Meeting**

**Social time 7:00 PM**

**Meeting 7:30 PM**

**Companion Plant Auction**

## Haiku

By Peter Kendall

Scarcely a drizzle  
yet enough to unhinge the  
tumbling maple leaves

The wind in disguise  
has transformed the maple to  
a chaos of leaves

On the other side  
of a night's rain, the stillness  
of an autumn's dawn

That kind of fall day  
inviting one and all to  
let the senses play

Lengthening shadows  
A lively east wind; darting  
leaves and dragonflies

Chill - despite the sun  
Skittering sparrow -- slipping  
into the shadows

An autumn sunset  
A shifting wedge of geese  
and its banterings

## President's Message for November

By Brenda Ziegler

Happy November! Happy Thanksgiving!

Our November meeting will be Thursday, November 19th at 7:30 PM with Social Time at 7:00 PM.

Your Vice President Dennis O'Malley will be in charge of the entire meeting, not just the speaker, so, please come out and support him. Steve and I will be out of town. We will be thinking of you!

This past month has been another fun and busy Rhododendron time for our volunteers. Their 'Dormancy Luncheon' was held on November 4th. Thanks to Dan, Bob, Mike, Betsy S. and Betsy R., I'm sure it was fabulous!

Several of us will meet ( will have met by the time you see this newsletter ) at Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden on November 2nd with PLi, the contractor who will be working on the retaining wall that "crashed in" in early 2015. Also in attendance will be Jorge, the City Engineer and Betsy R., our Leader from Portland Parks. We will be discussing and visualizing the construction and repair. Our key people handling this will be Dan, Kathy, and Bob. This will be a great reason to make a winter visit to Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden.

We cancelled the Smith Garden Work Party in October due to schedule conflicts and illnesses/accidents of key members. We hope everyone is on the mend. We will give you plenty of notice as to when the Spring Work Party will be so you can all make plans to attend. In fact, it will be a great time to bring a friend with you! One of the best things about volunteering at Smith Garden is that there are people from several chapters there - all working together for a common beautiful goal, Smith Garden.

Right now is our "Membership Drive" time. Please be sure to send your membership renewals in if you are a current member. If you are not yet a member, now is a great time to join. The cost for membership is \$40.00. As long as you join by the end of 2015, you will receive the National *ARS Journal* all 4 times next year. It is an excellent publication. You will also receive newsletters for our local Portland Chapter, notices of meetings, invitations to special events/parties, FREE admission to both Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden and Smith Garden as well as the opportunity to VOLUNTEER with a group of fascinating people. MEMBERSHIP is an excellent GIFT to purchase for your friends and family.

During this time of Thanksgiving I want to be sure to tell each of you how thankful I am that you are part of the Rhododendron Family. Thank you!

Please keep those who are having a difficult time with illnesses, accidents, etc. in your thoughts and prayers.

Happy Thanksgiving!

PS: There will NOT be a board meeting in November.

## Highlights of the October Meeting and Species Auction

By Tom Hoffman

Our October meeting, featuring Don Wallace speaking on “Hybridizing Rhododendrons for Beginners” *and* our traditional rhododendron species auction, placed a large number of rhododendrons before an eager audience and made for a busy evening.

One early highlight was the announcement that Ginny Mapes had received the President’s Award for all her work over the years on behalf of the ARS. Thank you, Ginny!

Don Wallace is the owner of Singing Tree Gardens, a retail nursery in McKinleyville, California, and has over 20 years’ experience in hybridizing rhododendrons. Don’s presentation on hybridizing rhododendrons emphasized the importance of setting goals, such as hardiness, disease resistance, attractive foliage, fragrance, flower color, type of truss, plant structure and compatibility of the potential parents. In selecting plants for hybridizing, Don recommended looking at the whole plant and not just the flowers. Don also pointed out that tracking down the plants you want to cross can take time. Clearly there is a lot of work ‘behind the scenes’ before we see a pedigree chart and a registered, blooming rhododendron hybrid. So, if you want to create a new rhododendron hybrid, the message from Don Wallace is, “Do your homework!” And document all of your hybridizing work, from setting goals, to research, making the cross, to blooming seedlings.

Don’s talk was beautifully illustrated with his photos of both the parent plants and the resultant offspring of some of his crosses, with his explanation of the goals he was trying to reach with those crosses. Even better, Don brought several flats of rooted cuttings of his crosses for us to purchase. Together with the substantial number of plants donated for the species auction, we were faced with so many wonderful rhododendrons, it was hard to choose!

Dick Cavender, our Treasurer, was our talented auctioneer. Dick reminds us of these upcoming events:

February 18, 2016: Companion Plant Auction

February 25-28, 2016: Spring Home and Garden Show

April 21, 2016: Hybrid Rhododendron Auction

All three events are opportunities for us to join together in support of our Chapter and, just possibly, have fun working together!

## R. 'Apricot Fantasy' x R. 'Hill's Low Red' = R. 'Wild Ginger'

By Maria Stewart

There are two reasons why I chose R. 'Wild Ginger' for this article. First, the process of choosing the parents of hybrid rhododendrons is often fascinating and as Don Wallace told us at our October meeting, choosing the parents that meet your goals is the most important part of creating a new hybrid. I hope to show the complexity of the crosses that made R. 'Wild Ginger'. We have Jim Barlup to thank for creating R. 'Wild Ginger'. Before Jim's work, however, two other Washington hybridizers created the parents of this striking rhododendron. Ned Brockenbrough hybridized R. 'Apricot Fantasy' and Walter Hill hybridized R. 'Hill's Low Red'.

Secondly, the orange trusses of R. 'Wild Ginger' seem to be appropriate for a Fall newsletter, although, of course, this rhododendron blooms in the Spring!

The crosses that created R. 'Wild Ginger':

<u>'Apricot Fantasy'</u>	x	<u>'Hill's Low Red'</u>
<u>'Hotei'</u>	x	<u>'Brandt's Tropicana'</u> (Unknown parentage)
<u>'Goldsworth Orange' x (souliei x wardii)</u>		<u>'Britannia' x 'Goldsworth Orange'</u>
(dichroanthum x discolor)		( <u>'Queen Wilhemina' x 'Stanley Davies'</u> ) (dichroanthum x discolor)
-		( <u>griffithianum x ?</u> ) (Unknown red)

Flowers: distinctive reddish-bronze buds open to become full trusses of orange corollas

Foliage: medium-green leaves

Structure: 4 to 5 feet in 10 years

Hardiness: untested; most of the parents are rated at -5 or 0 degrees F.

Placement in your garden: some light shade is fine.



R. 'Wild Ginger'. Photo courtesy Mike Stewart.

## “A Rose by Any Other Name”

By Kath Collier

**Lost the name tag? *What else is new?*** Between the squirrels, crows and the wind, a little name tag hardly has a chance. Figuring out the name of something may be nearly impossible; there are thousands of species and hybrids out there with new introductions coming every year. You might wonder how to start the research process...especially, if you don't know how to key a plant like a horticulturalist or master nursery grower.

There are some things you can do to help the process along, and sometimes you can get lucky. Examine the plant carefully and develop a succinct definition. These traits, such as plant type (azalea, vireya, big leaf, etc.), fragrance, bloom form or time, leaf coloration, etc. can help narrow the potential options. At the September Chapter meeting, one member described such a plant. They knew it was a hardy, white and fragrant evergreen azalea. This description was invaluable in figuring out the name of the plant. I wish there were a database into which we could put search criteria like that, to come up with the right answer or at least give one some options to research.

**There are places to look and ways to learn more.** One of the most valuable things that can help you is going on ARS garden tours, listening to growers and asking lots of questions. Another easy thing to do is to look at named show exhibits ( correctly named, we hope ) to see if there is a match. In this case, something more was needed.

Sometimes a random factoid will stick in your mind, like the lack of fragrant evergreen azaleas ( yes, there are a few, but very few ) Deciduous azaleas often boast a fabulous color and fragrance. Evergreen azaleas might have fragrant leaves, with only a few with fragrant blossoms. One of the best places to look for information on fragrant rhodos is on fellow member Steve Henning's website: [www.rhodyman/rhodynfr.php](http://www.rhodyman/rhodynfr.php) which provides a list and pictures of fragrant rhododendrons and azaleas.

Once you find the home page (address above), select **Fragrant evergreen azaleas** and voila', a relatively small list of plants pops up. Looking down through the pictures, you will notice that only three are white. Now, don't jump the gun right away. At this point the azalea in question could be an un-named or unknown cultivar, new species or hybrid, etc. Knowing that the member has owned the plant for some time can help and it is possible to compare dates on which a plant was introduced to help narrow the options.

In this case, it helps knowing a few more details, in particular about the flower, to compare it against the pictures. Does the flower sport a blotch, speckles, or other unique coloration? In this case, the members had indicated that there was a little bit of color in the throat of the flower that was light yellowish-green. Looking at Steve's 'fragrant' list, the only two contenders are 'Whitney's White' (with a single white bloom with a yellow throat) and 'Frostburg' ( with a fairly large hose-in-hose bloom with a yellowish-green throat).

Based on the amount of information we have and assuming that the image is a match, there is a good chance that the plant is 'Frostburg' or a hybrid from it. 'Frostburg' has been around since 1969 and is part of the *R. kaempferi* group of hybrids. Kaempferi hybrids are easy to propagate from cuttings, and have been used extensively in hybridizing. Several growers have developed fabulous kaempferi hybrids, including Joseph

(Continued on next page)

**“ A Rose...” continued:**

Gable, Aart Vuyk, Pride, Shammarello, Stanton and others, particularly in Holland during World War I. The interest in this group goes all the way back to 1892, when Prof. C.S. Sargent of the Arnold Arboretum collected seed in the mountains of Japan. Seeds were sent to Kew Gardens in 1894. Interest in and availability grew not only because of the larger, beautiful flowers and plant growth, but because it was hardier ( zones 5b-9a ) than the Kurume azalea and the flowers larger. Several cultivars in this group sport fabulous fall and winter leaf colors, making them real gems in the garden.

To learn more, check the Henning website noted above; the ARS website ([www.rhododendron.org/descriptionAH\\_new.asp?ID=9](http://www.rhododendron.org/descriptionAH_new.asp?ID=9)); Fred Galle's *Azaleas revised and enlarged edition* (pages 292-293) ISBN 0-88192-091-6, Timber Press © 1987; and the website for the Azalea Society of America ([azaleas.org](http://azaleas.org)),

**Cuttings, we need cuttings!**

‘**Frostburg**’ ( Desiree x Rose Greely; Yates 1969 ) White, spotted flare light yellowish green 45C. Hose in hose, 3 inches; fragrant, 3’x3’ in 10 years.



Photo courtesy Kath Collier

Portland Chapter of  
the American  
Rhododendron  
Society

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Past President: **Maria Stewart**  
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Treasurer: **Dick Cavender**

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(Through June 30, 2017) **Caroline  
Enns, Steve Hall, Steve Hopkins, Bill  
Zanze, Dave Collier**  
(Through June 30, 2016) **Bud Bowen,  
Ann Clack, Ray Clack, Mike Stew-  
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Crystal Springs Rhodo. Garden

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Cecil & Molly Smith Garden  
Chair: **Herb Spady**, 503-874-1445

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