

Portland Chapter, American Rhododendron Society

Calendar

April 20, 2017
Annual meeting
Social time 7:00 pm
Meeting 7:30 pm
Speaker: Ned
Brockenbrough
Program:
"Adventures in Hybridizing"
And
Rhododendron Hybrids Auction

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 40th and Woodstock, Portland, Oregon



April Program and Auction

By Caroline Enns & Steve Hall

The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will hold its April Meeting on Thursday, April 20, 2017 from 7:00 PM—9:00 PM.

Our speaker for the April program will be **Ned Brockenbrough**, whose program is entitled **"Adventures in Hybridizing"**

Ned Brockenbrough's success with rhododendrons makes it difficult to remember that these plants have been his avocation rather than his profession. He practiced as a thoracic and vascular surgeon in Seattle for over 50 years. He has worked with rhododendrons and the American Rhododendron Society for almost as long. He served as President of both the Seattle Chapter and the national ARS, which awarded him its silver medal. The list of his creations that many of us grow in our gardens includes 'Paprika Spiced', the 'Horizon' series and 'Bambino', among many others. Ironically, perhaps, his most famous hybrid, 'Nancy Evans', is now arguably better known than Washington's former first lady for whom it was named. His most recent efforts have emphasized the use of the ancient Greek gout-remedy and mitosis-inhibitor, colchicine, in the generation of polyploid hybrids. On the night of our annual hybrid auction, his title couldn't be more appropriate. We look forward to an entertaining and informative evening.

Prior to the program, the Portland Chapter will briefly hold its annual meeting and elections.

After the program, the Chapter will be conducting its **annual auction of hybrid rhododendrons**, which is a wonderful opportunity to acquire choice hybrid plants at good prices.

Open to members and nonmembers alike. Please invite your friends to join us.

Free. Sponsored by the Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

Meeting place: All Saints Episcopal Church, 4033 S.E. Woodstock Blvd, Portland, Oregon.

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 May, 2017:

April 20, 2017

Annual Meeting

Social time 7:00 PM

Meeting 7:30 PM

Speaker: Ned Brockenbrough

Program: "Adventures in Hybridizing" and,

Rhododendron Hybrids Auction!

May 13-14, 2017

Mother's Day Show and Sale

9:00 AM—5:00 PM

Flower Show Opens at Noon on Saturday, May 13, 2017

May 18, 2017

Awards Banquet and Gift Exchange

Set Up 6:30 PM

Dining 7:00 PM

Program: Members' Slides and Digital Images

This meeting offers the opportunity to carry out our winter holiday gift exchange and showing of members' photography, which was canceled due to bad weather.



Cecil and Molly Smith Garden

Looking Ahead:

April 27-30, 2017

**ARS International Convention
Eureka, California**

**For more information, call or email
June Walsh, 707-443-0604 or Rhody-
Hostel@suddenlink.net or on the web
at EurekaRhody.org**

It's Time to Register! The ARS Journal, Winter 2017, Vol. 71 No. 1, has a registration form (p.32) with more information, pages 28-32.

Thanks for Volunteers — more opportunities to volunteer

By Dennis O'Malley

I was gratified to see such a good turnout at the Cecil and Molly Smith Garden on Saturday, March 25, 2017. We had about 25 hard-working volunteers that Saturday. We put in a good morning's work and then enjoyed a fine lunch. (It's a good sign when people are asking for recipes after lunch.) Plants along the roadway and at the entrance were pruned back, brush and limbs were cleared, new groundcovers were planted, the booth was given a thorough cleaning, and the chipper was kept very busy. The paths were blown clear and things were looking good for the upcoming season when we departed. Thanks to everyone for their efforts. Special thanks to Tom and Jane for hosting us and organizing the to-do lists.

Unfortunately, the early reports are that the storm and high winds late last week did some damage at the Smith Garden. Dick Cavender reports that two large maples are down, along with numerous branches. The garden was closed last weekend and will now be open the weekend of April 15– 16. Since the garden is open again, we will need more volunteers to staff the open weekends. At last check, we need people for the following dates: April 29, April 30, May 6, May 7, May 13 and May 21. Please let Anne Gross know if you are able to cover any of those dates.

Yet more evidence of the fine volunteers with which the Chapter is blessed was provided at the Early Show and Plant Sale. Mike Domaschofsky and Bob MacArthur did a superb job organizing the Plant Sale. Many people came early and bought a lot of plants. Many were knowledgeable and looking for specific hybrids or species (potential members!) We even had a customer from Alaska loading up a truck with rhododendrons to take home. Linda Rungay pronounced herself quite pleased with the flower show and with her assistants Caroline Enns and Joanne Turner. It was a joy to everyone to have Kathy Van Veen stop by and tour the flower show. We even managed to take a tour group of about 22 visitors from the Lan Su Chinese Garden through Crystal Springs as all of this was going on. Again, thanks to all of you who volunteered and helped that weekend. Special thanks to Maria Stewart for helping with the tour and for classifying entries, assisted by Bill Zanze.

Of course a column like this can't just end with pats on the back, however well-deserved. We have the 'final lap' of volunteer activities coming up with the Mother's Day flower show and plant sale. We will need all of your help to pull everything off. In addition to the usual jobs and activities, we would like to try offering some short presentations during the plant sale. One thought is to do a short 10-minute program on planting rhododendrons, hourly on the hour, and perhaps a second short program, either on pruning or general questions and answers, on the half hour. If you are interested in participating in something like that, please let me know, especially if you are planning to be at the sale for extended hours anyway that weekend.

It is work, but it is also lots of fun. I look forward to seeing you there.

Looking for the Loquacious

This year's Mother's Day Sale will feature workshops held at regular intervals on both days to address the two questions that our customers ask most frequently:

How to Plant a Rhododendron

How to Prune a Rhododendron

We tentatively plan to hold these sessions hourly in alternating sequence. That schedule will require 14 authorities to hold forth on those two subjects.

We are looking for volunteers. Here is a chance to impress your friends and intimidate all others with your knowledge of these important topics. For those who would claim ignorance, opportunities abound to remedy that issue:

How to Plant: 1. flyer from Chapter's website <http://www.rhodies.org> 2. Dave Goheen's ABC's from the Chapter's website; 3. Hank Shannon's video that Dick Murcott showed at the March meeting (Contact our Vice President, Caroline Enns, for a copy.)

How to Prune: 1. Flyer from Chapter's website; 2. Dave Goheen's ABC's from the Chapter's website.

And when all else fails, attend one of the earlier sessions, speak with authority at your own workshop, and defer to more senior members if you feel uncomfortable in answering specific questions.

The sign-up sheet for the Mother's Day Sale that will circulate at the April Chapter Meeting will include the workshops. Don't be shy, or be shy, but sign up anyway. You will be impressed by how much more you know than the general public, and by how grateful they will be for your shared knowledge.

Smith Garden Notes

Jane and I would like to thank the wonderful crew that helped with the Smith Garden Work Party on March 25th. We were worried that we wouldn't have enough volunteers to clean up the large piles of debris left after the arborists were here.

In the weeks prior to the Work Party, Jane Mays and Tom Hoffman did yeoman's work helping me drag/carry many armloads of brush and limbs to the two chipping locations at the top and bottom of the garden. On that Saturday morning however, there were several brush piles remaining to clean up in the flowering beds, along with the annual tasks needed to wake up the garden for her Open Weekends.

Thankfully we had an enthusiastic team of about 23 energized people, and Smith Garden was once again refreshed and smiling when she opened last Saturday.

Looking forward to another enthusiastic crowd for the FALL Work Party!

Tom Gressler

Two Grand English Ladies From the Past Are Still Putting On a Show: R. 'Cynthia' and R. 'Pink Pearl'

By Maria Stewart

The mature age of 'Cynthia' and 'Pink Pearl' never diminishes their beauty despite the fact that they have been on this planet for more than a century. 'Cynthia' was hybridized in the 1850's by the Standish and Noble Nursery when the idea was to create very hardy rhododendrons. From the Appalachian mountains, *R. catawbiense* had made its way to England in 1809 and was being used to create stalwart hybrids. Not only hardiness, but also the attributes of tolerance of wind and sun, and of flowering with full and upright trusses were desirable. However, by 1900, the hardy rhododendrons had gone out of favor and such species as *R. thomsonii*, *R. arboreum* and *R. fortunei* had replaced or reduced the amount of *R. catawbiense* found in hybrids. Joseph Hooker's prominence as a plant hunter in Sikkim and as the Director of Kew Gardens led to the dissemination of these choicer species for trials in private gardens. Gardeners and owners hybridized with enthusiasm. As a result, in the 1890's, 'Pink Pearl' was created by the Waterer Nursery.

Let's take a look at the crosses of these two rhododendrons:

'Cynthia' (1856)

R. catawbiense X *R. griffithianum*

'Pink Pearl' (1892)

'George Hardy' X 'Broughtonii'
R. griffithianum x *R. catawbiense* *R. arboreum* x ?

Yes, 'Pink Pearl' still has *R. catawbiense* in it, but its genes are reduced to 25 percent instead of 50 percent. Did 'Cynthia' lose favor with rhododendron lovers when the more "exotic" hybrids came along? Not at all; the magenta color of 'Cynthia' and the name and color of 'Pink Pearl' made them both popular choices for Victorian front lawns. On large estates, the hybrids were grouped along the edges of lakes and in the center of driveways in front of great houses.

What other traits do these hybrids share?

They are both hardy. 'Cynthia' is rated at -15 degrees F and 'Pink Pearl' is rated at -5 degrees F.

They both have triploid trusses (more substance than usual)

Both are large growers

They both do well in the sun, warm climates and exposed areas.

They are both still considered to be good hybrids.

They have both won the Award of Garden Merit given by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Both, and especially 'Pink Pearl', are parents of other hybrids.



R. 'Cynthia' Photograph by Steve Henning from the 'hirsutum' website.

When Crystal Springs Lake Island became the American Rhododendron Society Test Garden in 1950, two forty-year-old 'Cynthia' rhododendrons were planted there. Already large plants at that time, they grew into amazing monuments to the glory and beauty of rhododendrons.



R. 'Pink Pearl' Photograph by Hank Helm from the 'hirsutum' website.

March Meeting Highlights

Our speaker, Richard Murcott, gave us an interesting and informative talk on hybridizing for the East Coast with its very different climate zones; hot, humid summers and cold, snowy winters being just two of the problems rhododendrons face there. In addition to rhododendron genetics, Richard gave us a walk-through on the best way to plant container-grown rhododendrons. He advocates cutting into the root ball and raking out the matted roots, with the result that the groomed root ball more closely resembles that of a field-grown plant; he does *not* prune the above-ground shrub, leaving it intact so it will stimulate new root growth. R. 'Pink Pearl' and R. 'Cynthia' were given as examples of polyploidy in hybrid rhododendrons; crossed, they produced R. 'Countess of Derby', which turned out to be a tetraploid, i.e. having one full set of genes from each parent; another interesting bit of information concerning hybrids is that R. 'Taurus', a beautiful early red, is hardy enough to survive on the East Coast. Science applied to horticulture; it certainly made for an engaging presentation.



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Deadline for Deposits is April 15th, 2017

**For detailed information, please go to:
www.SouthAfricaTour2017.com**

Early Show Results

By Ann Clack, Trophy Chair

Best Species: R. davidsonianum 'Ruth Lyons' Ray and Ann Clack

Best Hybrid: A spray of 'PJM' Paula Cash

(a side note: This is the very first trophy that Paula has won in the 48 years she has been an ARS member!)

Best Azalea: No entries

Novice Class: No entries

Best Protected: 'Laramie' Mike and Maria Stewart

Most Points: 83 points Van Veen Nursery

Even though we had sprinkles of rain throughout both days of our Early Show, there were lots of people walking around enjoying the garden, viewing the show and buying plants. We had approximately 115 entries for the truss competition. A special treat was a visit from Kathy Van Veen, who came to see the show. She was very pleased and we were happy to see her.

Early Show Trophy-Winner!

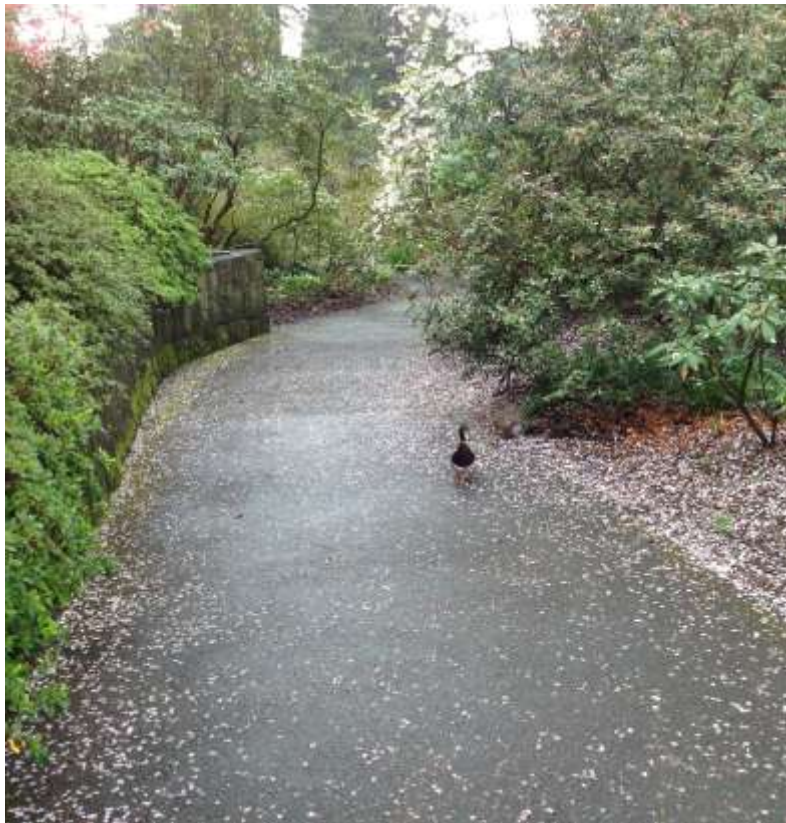
By Ann Clack

Paula Cash and her award-winning spray of R. 'PJM'



Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden

Photo courtesy of Ray Clack



2017 MOTHER'S DAY SHOW & SALE

SATURDAY, MAY 13th

SUNDAY, MAY 14th

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



SHOW OPENS

at Noon

SATURDAY

CRYSTAL SPRINGS RHODODENDRON GARDEN
will be at peak bloom time. Come and join us to view the garden.

There is a **JUDGED FLOWER SHOW** in the Exhibit Hall
and a big **PLANT SALE** in the front parking lot.

COMPETITION IS OPEN TO EVERYONE.
TO ENTER YOUR OWN RHODODENDRON TRUSSES IN THE SHOW,
bring them to the Exhibit Hall
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Friday night or 7:00 AM - 9:30 AM Saturday.

The garden is located at: **5801 SE 28th Avenue in Portland**
across from Reed College.

Questions about rhododendron care and culture?
Ask the **MASTER GARDENERS** who will have a table in the sale yard.

More information: www.rhodies.org or 503 771-8386

Presented by
The Portland Chapter of The American Rhododendron Society

Portland Chapter of
the American
Rhododendron
Society

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Portland, OR 97286-0424
ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

Phone: 503-777-1734 for
meeting cancellations due
to weather

Web: www.rhodies.org

Post Master: Time sensitive
mail; please deliver before
April 14, 2017

U.S. Postal Service statement of
Ownership, Management, and Cir-
culation (as per 39 U.S.C. 3685)

Publication Title: *Rhododendron News*
Total number of copies mailed per is-
sue: **225**
Owner: **Portland Chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society**,
PO Box 86424, Portland, OR 97286-
0424

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: *Dennis O'Malley*
Vice President: *Caroline Enns*
Past President: *Brenda Ziegler*
Secretary: *Carol McCarthy*
Treasurer: *Dick Cavender*

BOARD MEMBERS

(Through June 30, 2017) **Caroline
Enns, Steve Hall, Steve Hopkins, Bill
Zanze, Dave Collier, Maria Stewart**
(Through June 30, 2018), **Ann Clack,
Ray Clack, Mike Stewart, Kathy
Van Veen, Joanne Turner**

GARDEN INFO:

Crystal Springs Rhodo. Garden

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

Newsletter, membership, and
ownership: The Portland Chapter is
a local Chapter of the American Rho-
dodendron Society. Combined annual
dues to both the national society and
local chapter are \$40. Membership
benefits include nine or more newslet-
ters, discounts, and activities.

Rhododendron News is mailed by first
class postage (permit #1134, Port-
land). Photographs and images may
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Articles: Deadline is the chapter
meeting. Send materials to newsletter
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