

The Rootball News

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWEST CHAPTER – THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



NEW PLANT VARIETIES AT 2010 CHAPTER PLANT SALE AND TRUSS SHOW

We have some exciting news this year with regard to our annual plant sale at The Chicago Botanic Garden on Mother's Day weekend, May 8 and 9. Hours are from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM each day.

In addition to the fine plants we get from Rosebay Nursery and John Migas' evergreen azaleas, our chapter has placed an order with RareFind Nursery in Jackson, New Jersey for some different and unusual varieties. Some of these are recent introductions.

The plants on order from RareFind will be one-gallon sizes and are H-1 and H-2 hardiness. Only 4 plants are on order for each variety and the list may change based on availability. If interested, come to the sale early for the best selection.

From Rosebay, we've ordered approximately 4-8 plants of each variety. These will be in 8"-10" to 15"-18" sizes.

The list of varieties we have ordered is below. To see photos of some of these, visit our website <www.midwestars.org>. When on our site you can also link to the ARS site for additional photos. Some of

the RareFind varieties are on their website <www.rarefindnursery.com> and Rosebay's site is <www.rosebaynursery.com>.

Pricing has not yet been determined but should be comparable to last year.

Our truss show will take place along with our sale and we urge all of our members to take part. With our early spring, we hope to have a spectacular exhibit. The truss show enables many of our visitors to see first hand the varieties we grow in the upper Midwest.

Bring your trusses before our 10:00 AM opening to allow enough time to set up the display.

We're always looking for volunteers on Friday to set up the plant sale and on Saturday and Sunday as well. If available, contact John Golab e.j.golab@gmail.com.

The annual plant sale is our chapter's sole fundraising event so we look forward to seeing a big turnout. Come early for the best selection and bring your friends!

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Lepidotes

Angel Powder
Bubble Gum
Faisa
Hindsight
Mary Flemming
Milestone
Shorty

RAREFIND LIST

Elepidotes

Arctic Gold
Consolini's Windmill
Dexter's Champagne
Dexter's Giant Red
Dexter's Pink
Eye Pleaser
Francesca
Raisa
Kullervo
Axel Tigersted
Dr. Witon or Excelsor
Mountain Marriage
Princess Elizabeth
R.O. Delp
Sagamore Bayside
Sandwich Appleblossom
Silver Sovereign

ROSEBAY LIST

Azaleas

Magic
Gibraltar
Fawley
Simkin (Yellow)
Jane Abbott
Bixby (evergreen)

Elepidotes & Lepidotes

Pearce's	Landmark	Minnetonka
American Beauty	Spring Dawn	Pana
Janet Blair	Haaga	Karen Seleger
Skookum	Helsinki Univ	Scintillation
Calsap	Mekkeli	Capistrano
Olga	Edith Bosely	Dorothy Swift

Letter

from the president

FRED STANTON



The best time of the year has arrived and we will soon be enjoying the blooming season of our rhododendrons and azaleas. We have experienced a snowier winter than most, but fortunately not a severely cold winter. In west central Illinois, our coldest temperature was between minus 13 to minus 15 degrees. My garden in town will probably not experience bud damage or bud kill. All of my rhododendrons are bud hardy to minus 15 degrees, except for a Greer Hybrid, 'Hallelujah' that is planted in a very protected corner of my house.

May, 2010 will bring our Mother's Day weekend plant sale. This is always a great time to see and share growing experiences with our Rhododendron friends and chapter members. It is a great opportunity to purchase several new rhododendrons for our gardens and to share our 'growing knowledge' of rhododendrons with the general public. Please volunteer some time during our plant sale and to help make it a success!

Several rhododendron gardens will be available to tour the Saturday after Mother's Day weekend, May 15, 2010. Jim Blender has a four acre garden with many different rhododendron and azalea varieties, plus Japanese maples, hosta and dozens of shrubs and perennials. It promises to be a one of the best private gardens in Illinois. Fred Stanton has a smaller garden, but several of his rhododendrons and deciduous azaleas are over 30 years old and have become quite large. Both of these gardens are in West Central Illinois, about a 3 to 4 hour drive from the Chicago area, depending on where our Chicago members live. Refer to the accompanying article for details.

A number of members have discussed taking one or two day tours this summer and/or fall. We would be able to view some rhododendrons along with many other plant varieties and interesting landscape creations. Several garden options would be in southern Wisconsin and southern Michigan. From the members who have suggested these venues, we would appreciate hearing about these options during our Mother's Day Plant Sale. This information will be forwarded to our members so that we can make decisions on where and when to go.

With a gradually aging membership and increased competition from a plethora of diversions available for individuals, it is difficult to maintain a viable membership. As president of our club for 2010, I encourage and request our members to be as active as possible. A half dozen members cannot do everything. Please consider giving some of your time to help keep our club alive.

thank you!

Midwest Chapter ARS 2009 Survey Highlights

In the last several years, many plant societies, including The Midwest Chapter, are experiencing reduced membership and participation by their members. Is it the economy? Are people too busy to be more active? It's hard to say so John Golab, past president of our chapter, put together a survey that was sent to all of our members. The following results were compiled by John from our members' responses.

Thirty-five out of 65 current members (50+ percent) completed and returned the survey. Not all respondents answered all questions. Some respondents gave multiple answers to some questions.

The vast majority (27 out of 35) believe the chapter should continue. Their reasons vary:

- Members outside the Chicago area frequently cite distance as the reason for not attending the truss show/plant sale or chapter meetings.
- Respondents overwhelmingly said they would pay their own costs for field trips if the annual plant sale is eliminated, thus making chapter funding non-existent.

Suggestions that would increase members' participation in chapter events were many and varied. For example:

- Offer tours of public/private gardens, research facilities and rhody nurseries.
- Hold some meetings in places other than the Chicago area, so out-of-staters can participate.
- Provide more "connection" with frequent e-mail updates.
- Develop a long-term calendar for meetings/events so members can plan ahead.
- Allow plant price discounts to volunteers who work the truss show/plant sale.
- Don't hold truss show on Mother's Day weekend.

Respondents offer varied reasons for lack of participation:

- Distance; too far to travel; members spread out.
- People too busy; it boils down to commitment, interest and availability.
- Some members think someone else will pick up the slack; not aware so few are shouldering the load.
- People are innately lazy; they want to reap benefits but seldom want to work.
- CBG admission price/travel cost may be a perceived barrier.
- The core group only likes to chat with each other; I feel like an outsider; older members do not welcome new members.

Opinions about the value of the truss show/plant sale fall into three nearly evenly divided camps:

- Very important/important (11)
- Not important/moderately important (14)
- No response/no opinion (11)

Members abound with ideas for increasing membership and the officer pool, among them:

- Mentor new members.
- Meet on college campuses, where young people are.
- Contact garden clubs/botanic gardens to check interest among directors/members.
- Lecture at college horticultural classes.
- Advertise garden visits; open them to the public.
- Ask members what attracted them to the society.
- Better chance at recruiting if members knew officer responsibilities.
- Put flyers at plant nurseries.
- Speak at local homeowner associations, landscaper groups, country/social clubs.

Members offered more than 3 dozen comments, including hopes the chapter will continue:

- Give it time. In the next 10 years I expect small plant societies to rebound.
- When gardeners see fine examples, plants inspire.
- Having members willing to share "what works" should lead newcomers from inspiration to personal involvement.
- Nothing is more uplifting for the soul than a beautiful garden; members have many of them.
- Even though we have been able to attend only a few times, the Midwest chapter folks are some of the nicest, interesting and enjoyable of any organization we are a part of.

GET THE Scoop

Midwest Chapter Spring Garden Visit in Monmouth, IL By Fred Stanton

Our chapter has planned its annual Garden Visit this year in Monmouth and Raritan, IL on Saturday May, 15. Tours will be conducted at Jim Blender's and Fred Stanton's gardens from mid-morning to 5:00 PM. If we have a minimum of 5 people, a light lunch will be served.

Monmouth, IL is reached via I-88 or I-80 to East of the Quad Cities, then drop down to Galesburg on I-74 (South on I-74). Before one reaches Galesburg, there is a large sign that indicates that Knox College, Monmouth College and Western Illinois University are to be reached by exiting from I-74 and go West on U.S. 34, which is interstate quality to Monmouth and a 4 lane highway to Macomb, IL.

As nearing Monmouth, turn left on North Eleventh Street. There are stop lights at this intersection and there is a left turn arrow from U.W. 34 onto North Eleventh Street. Go approximately 3/4 of a mile to Detroit Ave, turn right and drive about a block to the stop sign. Fred's house is on your right at the stop sign, 1100 East Detroit Ave.

After visiting Fred's garden, we can caravan down to Jim Blender's garden, approximately 28 miles from Fred's house to Jim's country cabin and gardens.

It is a bit of a trip from Chicago down to the hinterland of Monmouth and Raritan, IL. In case one wants to make a weekend vacation, there is a nice new motel in Monmouth, "AmericInn", 309-734-9958, and many motels in Galesburg. The Quad Cities (Davenport, Rock Island and Moline) are just 40 miles or 45 minutes north of Monmouth and Peoria is 65 miles or 60 minutes. Both areas have municipal gardens, abundant motels and restaurants.

Please make reservations with Jim Blender and/or Fred Stanton if you are planning on attending. It is greatly appreciated. We look forward to seeing everyone.

Fred Stanton 309-255-3577
email: fhstan4@monmouthnet.net

Jim Blender 309-221-5161
email: jimsam@winco.net



Congratulations, Mike!

In case you missed it, Michael Heim, one of our chapter members from Hayward, WI, had an article published in the Winter 2010 issue of the *ARS Journal*. The title of the article, *Return of the Ercads*, is about Mike and his science students efforts to reestablish box huckleberry, *Gaylussacia brachycera* in northern Wisconsin.

This is the second article Mike has had published in *The ARS Journal*.

THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY MIDWEST CHAPTER



Purpose

A non-profit organization whose aim is to promote in the Midwest region the objectives of The American Rhododendron Society, which are to encourage interest in and to disseminate knowledge about rhododendrons and azaleas. To provide a medium through which all persons interested in rhododendrons and azaleas may communicate and cooperate with others through education, meetings, publications, scientific studies, research and other similar activities.

Meetings

Meetings are held 4 times a year, generally in March, May, August and October. Members are encouraged to attend and participate in the transaction of business at these meetings and to profit by the knowledge gained from our knowledgeable members and Guest Speakers. Visitors are always welcome!

Membership

Membership is open to all persons interested in the growth and culture of rhododendrons and azaleas as provided by the Chapter By-Laws. Membership includes one year (4 quarterly issues) of the *ARS Journal* and affiliation with the chapter of your choice. Annual membership dues for an individual is \$35.00. Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact the Membership Chairperson whose name and address appears here.

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