

American Rhododendron Society

R. 'Warm Glow'
Photo credit: Harold Greer



Eugene Chapter Newsletter

October 2022

~ October Meeting Information ~ We Return to The Springs!!

We are so happy to announce that we are now able to resume our monthly meetings at The Springs at Greer Gardens! Our October meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 19th. Our speaker for October will be Dave Eckerdt of Salem, Oregon. Please look for a brief description of his presentation on page 5 of this newsletter.

As in the past, at each meeting there is an opportunity to share a meal and visit with friends by coming early. However, there have been a few important changes in the procedures that we need to follow. The price for dinner is \$25/person, and you must RSVP in advance. Those who wish to eat dinner must RSVP by texting or calling Terry Henderson at 541-953-9316, no later than **Tuesday, October 11th** (if you text, be sure to include your name in the text!) The headcount for the dinner is due a week in advance, so we're on a rather short timeline this month - our apologies!! Also, the chapter will be financially responsible for the entire cost, rather than having members pay The Springs individually. Therefore, please come prepared to pay the chapter for your meal by check or cash.* Doors will open at 5:30 pm, dinner will begin at 6:00 pm, followed by the meeting at 7:00 pm.

See page 5 for this month's menu!

* Residents of The Springs who are eating with the group will also need to RSVP to Terry, but will not have to make payment to the chapter, since your meal will be charged to your Springs account.

Chapter Meetings

Our Chapter Meetings are typically held at 7 PM on the third Wednesday of the month, October through March, unless otherwise specified.

Upcoming Chapter Meeting

Wednesday, October 19
Wednesday, November 16
December - TBD
Wednesday, January 18
Wednesday, February 15
Wednesday, March 15

Meeting Location

The Springs at Greer Gardens
1282 Goodpasture Island Rd
Eugene, Oregon

In This Newsletter

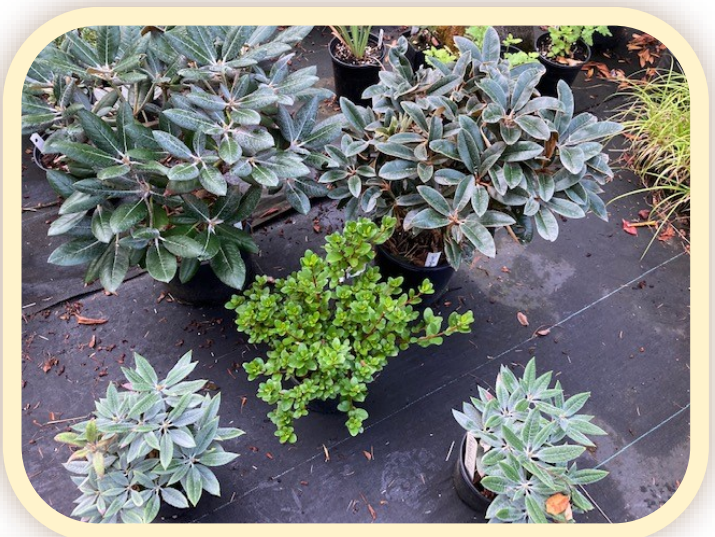
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~ ~ *News from Hendricks Park* ~ ~

“A Busy Season”

by Emily Aune

Welcome back from your summer break! We’ve been busy at Hendricks with the late summer watering, mulching, weeding and pruning. So much has happened since our last newsletter went out in April! I was a judge for the Florence Early Flower Show, and afterwards made a stop at Mobray Gardens to pick up a couple of rhododendrons for Hendricks Park. I returned with ‘True Blood’ for the Greer Garden, and picked out ‘Strawberry Sorbet’, ‘Jaded’, ‘Johanna’ and a couple of *R. pseudochrysanthum* (Exbury form) as seen in the photo below.



Shortly after that, the ARS convention made a stop on their post garden tour and I showed them around the garden including the new Harold Greer planting. I also led a Spring Garden Tour for the Friends of Hendricks Park. Eugene Chapter members Mark and Dana Manion attended and had glowing reviews.





My next adventure was attending the Willamette Chapter auction held at Anne Gross' home in May. I came home with a lovely bundle of plants for the park. The plants are still growing happily in the propagation house and we will be working them into the landscape this fall! Plants included two 'Blue Lagoon', which are Harold Greer hybrids. I bid on one plant, and Anne Gross donated the other, a very large field-dug specimen from Thompson's Nursery, which was planted immediately. I also won the bidding on 'Helen Shiffner', *R. morii*, *R. balfourianum*, *R. edgeworthii*, and *R. pingianum*. The last five will increase my collection of species at Hendricks Park, and most were selected because they show promise of not being eaten by lacebugs.

This summer we also welcomed a new Volunteer Coordinator at Hendricks Park. Her name is Cait Wisbeski and she comes to us from another program coordinator position within the City of Eugene. Cait grew up here in Eugene, but moved to Portland after high school. She has a variety of work experience, including working at a retail nursery, opening and running an adaptive cycling business, and working for the Portland Audubon Society. Cait is currently working on a degree in Natural Resource Policy and Management from Oregon State University. She loves working outside and supports outdoor recreation of all types, including gardening together! Which gives me a good opportunity to remind our ARS chapter members that they can always join us on Tuesdays at 9 am for our Rhododendron Garden work parties at Hendricks Park. Fall planting time is coming up and we provide snacks, tools, and plenty of weeds for everyone. If you have questions, you can contact Cait by email at CWisbeski@eugene-or.gov.



Cait, with one of our volunteers

~ ~ *Thoughts from Jack Olson* ~ ~
“Ploidy”

In my freshman year in college, I remember studying genetics, including chromosomes, genes, and the cell. It was difficult but interesting. I never thought at the time I would develop such an interest 60 years later. I’m going to explain, to the best of my ability, how this has applied to rhododendrons.

Humans have 48 chromosomes and rhododendrons have 26. In both cases, half the number of chromosomes come from the male, and half come from the female. We all know that in plants, the male part is the anthers, which holds the pollen, and the female part is the pistil, which contains the ovules, which after fertilization turn into seeds. For some reason, in rhododendrons a mutation sometimes occurs. Normally you have two haploids coming together to make a diploid rhododendron. However, in certain crosses there is an extra haploid set coming together making a triploid rhododendron with an extra set of chromosomes. Typically, rhododendrons have 26 chromosomes, but in a triploid rhododendron there are 39 chromosomes. Other mutations can be tetraploids with 52 chromosomes, and even pentaploids with 65 chromosomes.

Wow, think of this! Each chromosome can have up to a thousand genes. Each gene can change the structure of a rhododendron. This means there can be thousands of variations in a rhododendron cross. It makes me look like I am some sort of hybridization genius. However, the key is to use these polyploids in your cross. This knowledge has made hybridization much more exciting and fun for me.

This article was made possible after a discussion with John and Sally Perkins. They are longtime members of the Massachusetts ARS Chapter and have direct connections with the Eugene Chapter, Harold Greer, and Merle Sanders. They have written an article you can find online, “The Ploidy of Rhododendrons”. The article includes a list of the ploidy of all the rhododendrons they have researched. If you want to grow rhododendrons from seed, reading this article is a must!

(Editor’s Note: I searched for the article that Jack mentions, and thanks to help from Ted Hewitt, I believe that this is the link to said article: https://www.azaleas.org/wp-content/uploads/azalean/37/12/articles/Exploring_the_Ploidy.pdf)



*Blooming now at
Jack’s place
R. faithiae*

~ ~ Our Speaker for October, Dave Eckerdt ~ ~



Dave has provided us this preview of his presentation,
“A Pangram Garden”

I was reacquainted with the word “pangram” while working on a crossword puzzle. A pangram is a sentence that uses all twenty-six letters of the alphabet. The most common example of a pangram is “The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog”. I wondered if Pat and I might have a pangram garden, a garden containing a specimen of genera beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Not nearly as easy as it sounds.

I look forward to sharing the results of my quest. I will talk about some of our favorite garden plants and their personal stories as we progress from ‘C’, the largest genera grouping, to ‘Y’, the smallest.

For more than thirty years, Pat and Dave Eckerdt have been creating a collector’s garden in Salem, Oregon, which they have named ‘Deerly Missed’. The garden has been a destination of tour groups including the American Conifer Society, the International Clematis Society, the North American Rock Garden Society, and the American Maple Society. The garden was included in the post-conference

tour of the International Rhododendron Conference this year where Dave presented two photographic workshops and was awarded Best of Show for his photography. You can see images of their garden at www.deerlymissed.smugmug.com.

October Meeting ~ ~ Dinner Menu

Farm Fresh Salad

Rosemary Chicken Breast w/Mushroom White Wine Cream Sauce

Roasted Red Fingerling Potatoes ~ ~ Asparagus

Dinner Rolls

Strawberry Lemonade ~ ~ Coffee

Strawberry Cheesecake

Don't forget to RSVP by Tuesday, October 11th!!

Call or text Terry Henderson at 541-953-9316 (please include your name in your text!) Cost is \$25/person, payable to the Eugene ARS Chapter by check or cash (unless you are a resident of The Springs, in which case you still need to RSVP, but your meal will be charged to your Springs account).

~ ~ September Picnic ~ ~ *Fun for Everyone!*

As a kickoff for the 2022-2023 program year, the Eugene ARS

chapter gathered for a picnic potluck at Terry Henderson's Log Cabin Nursery ... thank you, Terry! We had about 27 folks in attendance, including some out-of-town visitors! Mike Bones and Sandi and Larry Jenson from the Siuslaw Chapter in Florence joined us, as well as Anne Gross and Steve Krasik from the Salem Chapter. Jack Olson's son-in-law, Jeff Temple, attended from the Portland Chapter. We also had several potential new members in our midst! Cait Wisbeski, who is the new Volunteer Coordinator at Hendricks Park, attended with her spouse, Julie. Terry's neighbors, Christen & Stephanie DeWolfe, are avid gardeners and expressed interest in joining our group. We all circled up our chairs and had a good time going around the circle, introducing and telling a bit about ourselves. An amazing and tasty assortment of food was contributed and the dessert table was off the charts, including the banana pudding with 'Nila wafers! There was ample time for visiting and catching up and everyone is very excited about re-starting our meetings in October. If you have a friend or neighbor who is interested in gardening and/or rhododendrons ... invite them to join us at our next meeting!



Plenty of food for one and all!

Mike Bones admires all those amazing desserts!



~ ~ Photos from our Gardens ~ ~

(Editor's Note: Last May, I requested that you send me photos from your gardens, for publication in a potential summer newsletter. Unfortunately, unexpected family obligations prevented me from publishing the many gorgeous photos I received, but I hope to include a few here and there throughout the coming year. Many thanks for the wonderful response to my request, and my apologies for not being able to publish a June newsletter!)



From Dave Eckerdt ...
R. 'White Gold' (above) and
R. 'Blue Angel' (right)



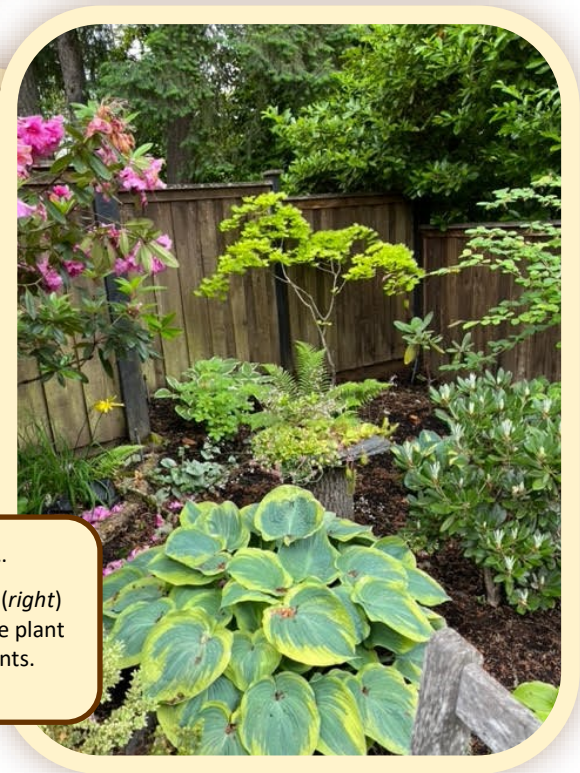
From Ted Hewitt ... R. 'Daphnoides'



From Terry Henderson ...
R. 'Great Scott' (right) and
R. 'Humboldt Picotee' (below)



And also from Ted Hewitt ...
R. 'Creole Belle' (left), R. 'Golfer' (right)
with a small *R. hanceanum* on the plant
table amongst many small plants.
Unknown hosta (front)



American Rhododendron Society
Eugene Chapter
P.O. Box 50004
Eugene, OR 97405

In Memory

Ted Hewitt notified us that Dr. Herb Spady, who was well-known by several of our chapter members, recently passed away. Keith White, of the Willamette Chapter, writes:

Herb Spady was a giant in his contributions and leadership in the American Rhododendron Society, having served as the president in 1996 and being awarded the Gold Medal.

Herb's Memorial Service will be held on October 29th at 11:00 am, at the Howell Edwards Doerksen Funeral Home in Salem, OR. Herb's son, Kevin, has asked me <Keith White> to collect RSVPs from the ARS and RSBG members to help in planning for the service. Please contact me at rhodoc@msn.com if you plan to attend.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Willamette Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

ARS Eugene Chapter Officers

Terry Henderson, President
Jack Olson, Vice President
Emily Aune, Secretary
Nancy Burns, Treasurer

Directors

Helen Baxter Dana Manion
Tom Beatty Gordon Wylie
Grace Fowler-Gore

Board Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am, and are open to the public.

To receive location information for the Board Meeting, please send an email to:
ARS.EugeneChapter@gmail.com