

# January 2015

## Eureka Chapter American Rhododendron Society

*The next meeting*  
**Thursday January 22, 7:00 p.m.**  
*Woman's Club*  
*1531 J Street*  
*Eureka, California*

*Pre-Meeting No Host Dinner 5:15*  
*Roy's Club, 2nd and D Streets*  
*Old Town, Eureka*  
*So there will be enough seating Call*  
*Nelda, 707-443-8049*



Eureka Chapter  
American Rhododendron Society

Rhododendrons  
in the Redwoods

## GARDENS AND NURSERIES OF GERMANY AND DENMARK

*The Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society will have its January meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2015. The meeting and program will be held at the Eureka Woman's Club 1531 J Street in Eureka beginning at 7:00 P.M.*

Eureka Chapter founding member, past president and Bronze medalist Dr. Paul Anderson will be our guest speaker. Paul has been an ARS member since 1962 when he joined the Seattle Chapter, he currently serves as Cal Chapter president and was awarded the bronze medal. He is Director at Large for the ARS. He was awarded the ARS Silver Medal in 2010 for his many years of service.

Paul was part of a group of 20 ARS members who had a tour of gardens in Germany and Denmark in May 2014. This included large public gardens such as the Bremen Rhododendron Park, to small private gardens of ARS members in Denmark. The group also visited castles and large nurseries, including the Hobbie and Hachmann nurseries in Germany. The group visited 23 gardens, 1 museum, and 4 castles and manor houses in 11 days.

Paul's group started the tour in Westerstede Germany to visit the exhibition **"Rhodie 2014"**. These exhibits are held only every 4 years. The group included Dennis Bottemiller who is the nursery manager and propagator of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, as well as 2 members of the Danish Chapter ARS who welcomed the group to gardens, nurseries and castles of Danish ARS members. One may be impressed with the wide variety of rhododendrons that are grown in Germany and Denmark, and the very large nurseries in Germany that are among the largest rhododendron nurseries in the world. The Danish ARS members have extensive collections of species and have members who have made numerous trips to Asia for collecting species seeds. It is hoped that one would enjoy the beauty, creativity, and good promotion for the genus rhododendron that is occurring in Germany and Denmark.

**Members who bring a guest get a plant. If you are not yet a member, join and get a plant, too.**

*Photos are those of the Newsletter editor, June Walsh, unless otherwise noted. Permission is granted to reprint any portion of this publication provided credit to the author and Chapter is given.*



**Plant of the Month:**  
***Rhododendron excellens***  
**By Don Wallace**

This unusual species of rhododendron has many excellent qualities, thus its name.

Native to SE Yunnan and Northern Vietnam, the species is in the *Rhododendron Maddenii* family and has similarities to *Rhododendron nuttallii* (*Rhododendron* 'Patricia Marie' and *Rhododendron* 'Mi Amor' are *Rhododendron nuttallii* hybrids). In the wild, there are populations of *Rhododendron nuttallii* and *Rhododendron Maddenii* in near proximity, and there is speculation that *Rhododendron excellens* is a natural hybrid between these two species. Regardless, it is a worthwhile plant to

grow here in Humboldt County since we can. Because it is frost tender, the plant would not survive in cooler climates like Oregon or even east of here a short distance. The large trumpet shaped flowers are fragrant and have many stamens, up to 15 that are thick with orange pollen. The foliage is shiny and the new growth is quite 'silver' adding to its uniqueness. The plant will grow as wide as tall, and would prefer a little shade. I believe that this species is a bit hardier than *Rhododendron nuttallii* as my plants came through the freeze of December 2013 just fine, and we were down to 25 degrees F on Dow's Prairie north of McKinleyville, California.

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 Recently two long time Eureka Chapter members moved out of the area to be closer to family. If you would like contact information for Betty Bottemiller or Carol Dunning call or Email June Walsh 707-443-0604 or [RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net](mailto:RhodyHostel@suddenlink.net) .  
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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**EUREKA CHAPTER RHODODENDRON SHOW AND PLANT SALE**

**FRIDAY APRIL 24TH, SATURDAY THE 25TH AND SUNDAY THE 26TH.**

**THE SHOW AND PLANT SALE WILL BE HELD AT MILES HALL, SAINT BERNARD'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.**

**FOR MORE INFO OR TO VOLUNTEER CALL SHOW CHAIRMAN MARY MARKING 707-839-2073**

**THANKS, MARY**

## WORD OF THE MONTH: HYBRID

*By; Bruce Palmer*

Don Wallace suggested the word **HYBRID** (Latin hybrida, offspring of mixed parentage) for this month's newsletter because he heard recently that there are about 20,000 rhodie hybrids, far more than the previous estimate of 12,000. That's probably accurate, given that rhododendrons seem to cross with each other more readily than most other plants. Rather than detail how hybridizing is done, I thought I would redo a handout I used a few years ago in a chapter workshop. If you are not experienced with rhodies or plant names here a few clues as to how to tell whether you have a species or a hybrid.

### WHAT IS A SPECIES?

(**Species** [Latin, species, a shape, kind or quality] is used to describe organisms and is both singular and plural. **Specie** means coins as distinct from paper money and does not refer to living organisms). Plants are placed in the same species if they are similar, interbreed freely in nature and usually do not interbreed in the wild with other similar groups. It's a pretty loose definition and leads to confusion and arguments among biologists but tends to work for identification purposes.

### WHAT IS A HYBRID?

Hybrids are plants that have been interbred (usually artificially) from parents of two different species or hybrids. Hybrids are found in nature but are uncommon. At chapter meetings Don has demonstrated several times how to create hybrid rhododendrons.

### HOW CAN YOU TELL IF A PLANT IS A SPECIES OR A HYBRID?

1. If you know its name:

#### -It's a species if:

- The single (species) name after *Rhododendron* is lower case and is italicized, as in *Rhododendron augustinii*.
- The name is Latinized, ending in -ii, -anum, -ense, etc.
- Somebody who should know told you.

#### - It's a hybrid if:

- The name(s) (one to three names) after *Rhododendron* are not italicized and are capitalized. As *Rhododendron* 'Patricia Marie'
- The names after *Rhododendron* have single quotes
- The names after *Rhododendron* are not Latinized, except for very old hybrids such as *Rhododendron* 'McNabii'. (Don's picture at left)
- Somebody who should know tells you.

2. If you don't know its name:

- Experience
- Instinct
- Wait until it blooms and identify it or ask someone who might be able to do so



## Heads Up Rhodo-Geeks

By June Walsh

At Humboldt Botanical Garden many people visit the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden and comment on how beautiful a 'rhododendron' garden can be even when not in bloom. Much of that beauty is thanks to a few dedicated Wild Weeders and Grateful Deadheaders!

Rain or shine the Wild Weeders/Grateful Deadheaders meet at 10 AM every Tuesday at the Moss Family Temperate Woodland Garden at Humboldt Botanical Garden. Right now there are early Rhodies blooming that need deadheading. Camellias are blooming and need to have their spent blooms picked up. Some herbaceous plants are in serious need of clean-up and there are blackberries that need to be 'rogued out' (a term we learned in Scotland). If you enjoy weeding, the garden can fulfill your passion. If you enjoy meditation, there are pathways that need to be raked after all the foot-traffic from Wednesday through Sunday open hours.



Wildweeders Suzanne Burke  
and Jerry Reynolds

Bring your hand tools, gloves, hat, sun-screen and a sense of humor. We will sit down and look at the glory of our accomplishments at noon for a sack-lunch.

You can earn your Humboldt Botanical Gardens membership by volunteering 100 hours per year.

If you have any questions please give me a call 707-443-0604.

### Linguistic Gymnastics and Rhododendrons

What do those funny species names mean? Why should I know them when I want a white rhodo? To me the answers are growing in my garden, some were the correct plant, but most likely because I did not know the correct binomial (two-name) of the plant I wanted, I got a Hawthorne (*Crataegus*) instead of a Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus*).

*Rhododendron...rhodo* (red) + *dendron* (a tree)

*Rhododendron arborescens...* (becoming tree like)

*Rhododendron decorum...* (beautiful)

*Rhododendron arboreum...* (tree like)

*Rhododendron ferrugineum...* (rusty shoots and underside of leaves)

*Rhododendron maddenii...* Named for Major Madden of the Bengal Civil Service, Himalaya.

*Rhododendron crassum...* (thick)

*Rhododendron polycladum...* (with many branches)

*Rhododendron oreodoxa...* glory of the mountain

And one of my favorites because so many people blink, then say "please repeat that"

*Rhododendron campylogynum...* with a curved ovary

## Eureka Chapter 2014 in RE-View





Eureka Chapter/American Rhododendron Society  
2050 Irving Drive  
Eureka, CA 95503-7022

## Future Programs

**January 22, 2015;** Paul Anderson (ARS Silver Medal Honoree, ARS Director At-Large) will talk about his recent rhodo trip to Northern Germany and Denmark, lots of pretty pictures of the gardens he visited.

**February 26, 2015;** Harold Greer, the King of Rhodos (ARS Gold Medalist and Past President of ARS) will talk about, well... Rhododendrons!

**March 26, 2015;** Tim Walsh (ARS Silver Medalist, ARS District 5 Director) will talk about the 'WEEDs' of Humboldt Rhodos, the *Maddenii* Rhodos.

**April 23, 2015;** Mike Stewart (ARS Gold Medalist and Past President of ARS) will talk about Plant Explorers and the plants they introduced into our gardens. Mike's programs are always a hot ticket!

**May 21, 2015;** will be our ever-popular and fun, in-house Mini-Show...you be the judge, Enter your best Bloomers and win cash prizes.

**June 7, 2015;** Member garden tour and picnic.

***Put these dates on your calendar now so you won't miss any of these great programs. Watch for the Eureka Chapter Newsletter for more information.***

## Eureka Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

Eureka Chapter is published monthly except during July and August. Submissions from members are encouraged and should be mailed to June Walsh, Newsletter Editor, 2050 Irving Drive, Eureka, CA 95503-7022. [Rhodyhostel@suddenlink.net](mailto:Rhodyhostel@suddenlink.net)

Membership information and applications are available from Ellen Gill [Htg1anderg@suddenlink.net](mailto:Htg1anderg@suddenlink.net).

The Eureka Chapter is a member of the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation, Eureka, Calif. <http://hbgf.org/>, and The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, Federal Way, WA <http://rhodygarden.org/>

Eureka Chapter is a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society <http://www.rhododendron.org/>

## Eureka Chapter Officers and Board Members

For board member contact information or if you are interested in attending a board meeting, call or email June Walsh 707-443-0604