



# Willamette Chapter American Rhododendron Society Newsletter

Volume 5

January 2024

Issue 1



Willamette Chapter ARS  
Rhododendron Hillside Garden  
Bush Pasture Park

**CHAPTER MEETINGS:** Our current chapter meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from September through May at a local Salem restaurant. Gather for dinner at 5:00pm, meeting begins at 6:30pm, and the speaker and program at 7:00pm. Our meetings will be in person unless otherwise stated. Meeting information will be sent to members via email and available in this newsletter.

## CHAPTER MEETING January 10, 2024



**Speaker: *Ali Sarlak***  
**Title: *Northwest Woods Mushrooms***

### NEW VENUE:

Dinner at 5:00pm at La Margarita Restaurant and Grill, 545 Ferry St. SE, in downtown Salem. The program begins at 7:00pm. Complete details on Page 5

## NEW EATING AND MEETING VENUE

La Margarita Restaurant and Grill  
545 Ferry St. SE, Salem, Oregon

The meeting room is separate from the restaurant. Enter the restaurant through the main door (on Ferry Street) and tell them you are with the Willamette Chapter Rhododendron group. They will direct you to our meeting space.

There is a parking lot on the east side of the building - corner of Church Street and Ferry. You can enter the lot off either of those streets.





# President's Report January 2024

Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday celebration! Moving on to New Years – wow, how can it already be 2024!

Looking back on 2023, we had some really great tours in the Spring. We toured Kevin Vaughn's personal garden, Dearly Missed and Sebright Gardens. Our summer get together in June at Ali's house was lots of fun, with a tour around his amazing property. We had the Fall conference in Florence, which several members attended. There were some really great gardens there also. Our last fun event of the year was our December potluck at the Red Gate Winery. Great food, great company! And of course, our monthly meetings and programs are always a hit. Getting together at the RAM for dinner, socializing and listening to a speaker – how can it be better!

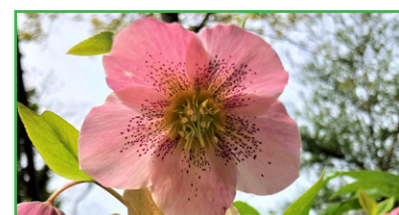
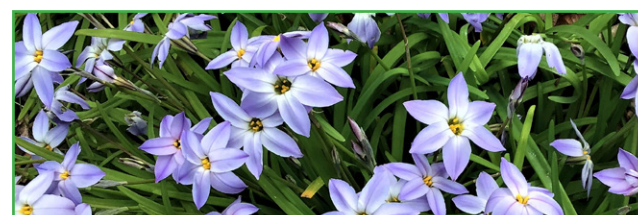
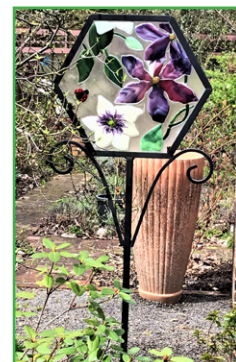
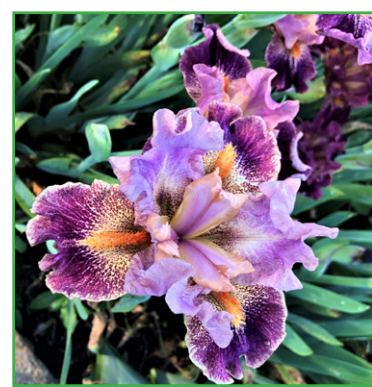
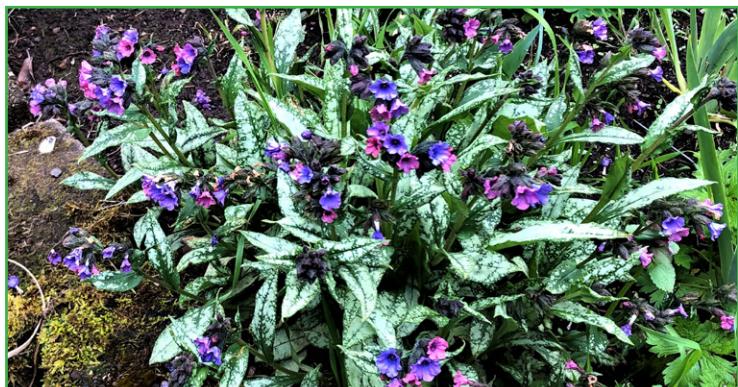
They weren't club events, but I enjoyed going to Salem's Home and Garden Show in March and the Far West Show in August.

Looking forward to 2024, get your garden catalogs out and start dreaming of that "perfect" garden. Hopefully, we have great weather – not too hot this summer. Looking forward to club events, more socializing and listening to fun and interesting speakers (thanks Keith!).

Happy New Year!

**Dana Malby** - WCARS President

The following pictures are from prior newsletters highlighting our Spring Road Trip that Dana mentioned





# December Potluck



The day was overcast and cold but the rain held off. Inside the Fieldhouse at Redgate Winery, the room was decorated and the Christmas music was playing. Steve Dunn, owner of Redgate Winery, offered a wide selection of Redgate wine, as well as beer, seltzer, cider, pop, etc. and as people arrived, they grabbed a glass of their favorite.

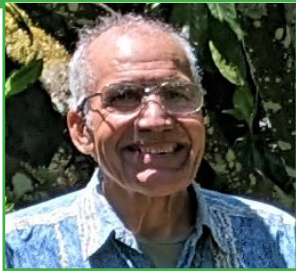
Those attending milled around and socialized, put finishing touches on what they brought to eat, and enjoyed "catching up". You can tell by the pictures, that the food was the main attraction. The main course food was delicious (Thank You Dana for the Prime Rib!) and the desserts were many and delectable!

I hope from the following pictures by Keith White and Mary Ellen Ramseyer, you can get a feel for the overall atmosphere and camaraderie of the group. Once again I must have been hungry as most of my pictures were of the food.





# January Program



**Speaker: Ali Sarlak**  
**Topic: Northwest Woods Mushrooms**

**January 10, 2024    Dinner: 5:00pm    Program: 7:00pm**  
**NEW VENUE: La Margarita Restaurant and Grill**

## Fungi:

One of my love's of being with nature in the fall is photographing all sorts of mushrooms and trying to separate one that you can eat from the one you only eat once.



Mushrooms are genetically closer to animals than plants . Mushrooms have classifications of their own family and kingdom.

I am pleased to show what I have been seeing and photographing in our areas.

## Ali Sarlak

**To eat, or not to eat.** Ali must know his mushrooms as he's still here to talk about it. Please plan to attend and hear more about this fascinating subject. The following photos by Ali Sarlak.



# February Program

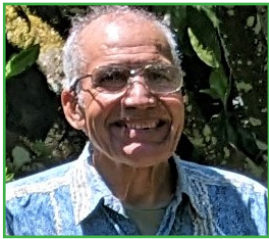


**Return to Sikkim**  
**with Keith White**



In the spring of 1992 Keith White went on a botanical expedition to Sikkim with Britt Smith as leader. Sikkim is a former Buddhist kingdom located in the Himalayas between Nepal and Bhutan. On this expedition the group saw over 30 rhododendron species, most of which were in bloom, as well as other wonderful flowers and cultural sites

In 2015, Keith returned to Sikkim on an expedition sponsored by the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden and led by their curator and director, Steve Hootman. Amazingly, 23 years after the last trip, much had changed, but the flowers were even better.



# The Connie Hansen Garden

by Ali Sarlak

I am a somewhat regular visitor to the garden, depending on the season. First of all, I love the beauty of nature. This garden gives me the same feeling. The garden is located on the Oregon Coast in the northern end of Lincoln City. If traveling south on 101, it comes up pretty fast as you enter Lincoln City. Turn R (west) on 33rd Avenue. The garden is well marked, on the right, a couple of blocks down the street.

This area has a much milder climate than the Willamette Valley. Thus, rhododendrons, such as *R. sinogrande* (planted in a wind sheltered area due to its big leaves) and similarly cold temperature sensitive rhododendrons thrive. The garden was begun by Connie Hansen in 1973. As a matter of fact, I met Connie long ago. Connie was a botany graduate of U of California, Berkley. When she retired, she found the perfect place for growing her favorite plant, species iris. However, Connie was very liberal with companion plants, including many (now stately) rhododendrons and ornamental trees and many other common and unusual plants. Connie died in 1993, but soon after the "Connie Hansen Garden Conservancy" was founded and thanks to very generous donors and the skilled labor of many loyal volunteers the garden has been preserved and maintained and several new features have been added.

Lately the garden has been going through some big changes due to infestation of several plants with *Phytophthora remorum*, also called "sudden oak death disease", a water mold that is highly infectious, and for which there is no cure. Infected plants fail to thrive and usually die. Several old rhododendrons had to be removed and destroyed. (Editor's note: There are many big, beautiful rhododendrons left.) This has opened up the garden, leading to good vistas of remaining plantations. It will take some years for the garden to make up for the change. But the volunteers are dedicated, plant knowledgeable people. With their help and that of donors, the garden will soon host thriving, exciting new plants. Indeed, I admire the volunteers who keep this special place for all of us, free of charge, every day from dawn to dusk, to view, smell and enjoy.

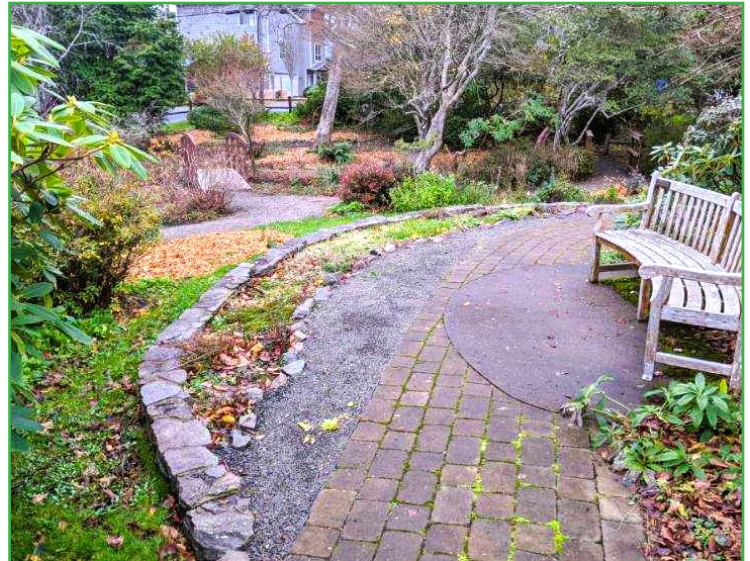
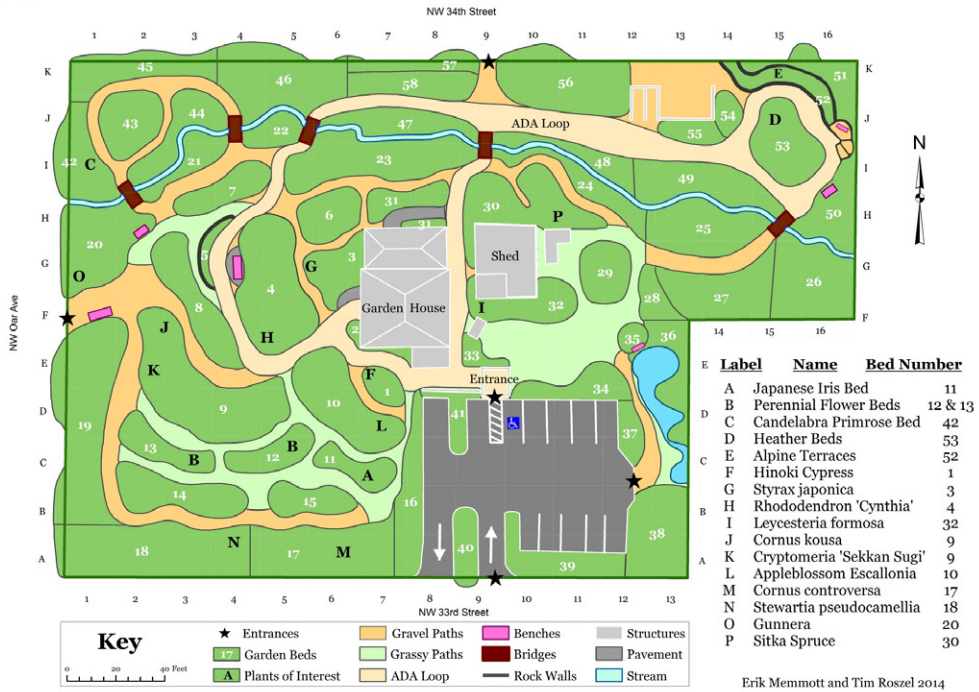
**Ali Sarlak**

Photo's by Ali Sarlak; Garden Map from the [Connie Hansen Garden](#) website.





# Connie Hansen Garden Conservancy

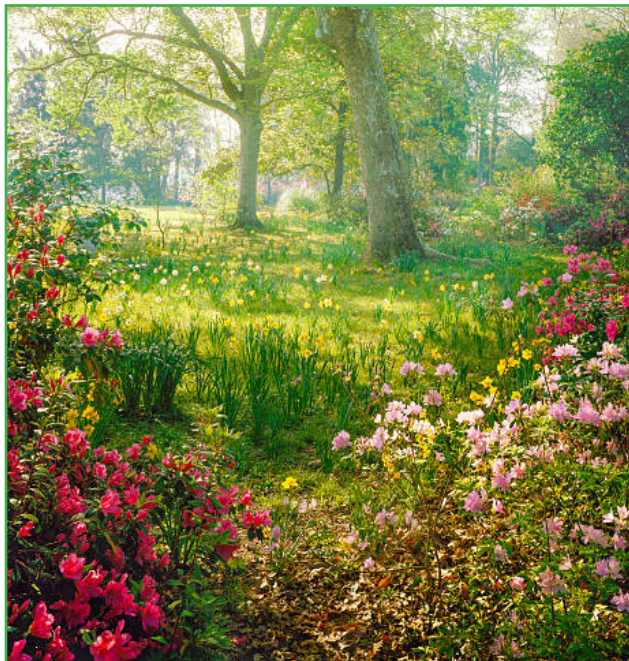




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# ***HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024!***

***May you  
discover every-  
thing you are  
looking for in the  
new year right in-  
side yourself.***



***Approach the New  
Year with resolve  
to find the  
opportunities hid-  
den in each new  
day***

***Michael  
Josephson***



# Save the Date

## RHODODENDRONS ON THE 49th PARALLEL

**ARS 2024 Spring Convention**  
**Bellingham, Washington**  
**May 2-5, 2024**



Hear interesting talks, tour private and public gardens, purchase beautiful and unusual plants, renew old acquaintances and make new friends.

Visit [ARS2024.org](https://ARS2024.org) for event information regarding hotel, tours, program, speakers, etc. and to REGISTER

### Highlights:

**Pre-Tour: May 1: Private Gardens around Seattle**

**Convention: Tours \* Seminars \* Workshops \* Banquets**

**Post-Tour: May 5: Gardens around Vancouver, Canada**

**Time to check your Passport!**

**Plus: Plant Sales \* Auctions \* Raffles \* Photo Booth \* Poster Session**

# R. dauricum is the Flower for January



In cold midwinter when little else is astir and most of the plants in the garden are in survival mode, one species of rhododendron is ready to burst into a cloud of pink. *Rhododendron dauricum* is a semi-evergreen thicket-forming shrub native to northeast Asia from Mongolia and northern China east into Siberia, Korea, and Japan. Its natural range covers areas that are among the most bitterly cold places on earth, and so it is unsurprising that *R. dauricum* is among the most winter hardy of all rhododendrons. Their hardiness, along with the unusually early blooming period, makes them a desirable and useful plant for gardeners who live in areas that are too cold in the winter to grow the full assortment of *Rhododendron* species. In fact, many gardeners are more familiar with this far-flung species than they might realize because the common rhododendron cultivar series 'P.J.M.' is derived from a cross of an evergreen form of *R. dauricum* and *R. minus* var. *minus* (syn. *R. carolinianum*).

*Rhododendron dauricum* isn't just a useful plant, it's also incredibly beautiful. The bright pink flowers would brighten up a garden in peak spring bloom, but they are made all the more vibrant thanks to an absence of almost any other color aside from green and brown. When the sun pierces through the clouds and light glances sideways across the garden at its lowest winter angle, the pink flowers glow. Here in Washington, Anna's hummingbirds clamor over these nectar factories for the invaluable energy that they supply. In its native habitat, *R. dauricum* grows in forest margins, often among birch with which it makes a beautiful combination. A wave of pink flowers hanging among scattered white trunks.

The leaves are probably my favorite thing about *R. dauricum*, though not really for the way they look but rather for their scent. These small scaly leaves are among the most fragrant in the genus. Crushing individual leaves through the spring and summer unlocks the fragrance, but it isn't necessary because simply brushing your hands through the shrub is enough to carry the spicy sweet smell of cloves into the air. The essential oils permeating the leaves of *R. dauricum* are comprised of a complex mixture of chemicals dominated by trans-Caryophyllene, a natural product also found in high concentrations in plants like cloves, cinnamon, basil, hops, and cannabis. The benefits of such a plant in the garden cannot be overstated. I make sure to brush my arms through *R. dauricum* as often as I can and doing so always lifts my spirits. Even though it plays second fiddle in my mind, the leaves do provide some pleasant visual qualities for the garden as well. Late in the fall, the deciduous leaves along the branches turn a rich shade of yellow which persists for a week or two before they fall to the ground. At the tips of the stems, a few leaves which tend to be persist through the winter cluster around the floral and vegetative buds. These leaves are a dark green color, but some deepen so much that they look nearly purple. The temporary two-tone fall color is really nice, and you shouldn't be surprised by one or two errant flowers starting to bloom a couple of months early and adding a little bit of pink to the yellow and purple.

**Will Clausen** - Horticulturist and Assistant Curator of the [Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden](#)



**Photo by Henk Borsje**

**Predominant Flower Color:** Purple

**Flower/Truss Description:** Widely funnel shaped, pale to deep purple, mauve-pink or white.

**Fragrant:** No

**Bloom Time:** Very Early

**Foliage Description:** Leaves elliptic, rounded, up to 1½" long, semi-evergreen, purplish in winter.

**Plant Habit:** Erect to straggly shrub

**Height:** 3 feet in 10 years.

**Cold Hardiness Temp:** -25°F ( -32°C)

**Elepidote (E) or Lepidote (L):** L

**Sub Genus:** Rhododendron

**Section:** Rhododendron

**Sub Section:** Rhodorastra

**Geographical Origin:** E Siberia, Mongolia, N China, Japan (Hokkaido)



## MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETINGS

### EUGENE CHAPTER

Third Wednesday from Oct to March at 7:30pm

### PORTLAND CHAPTER

Third Thursday from Sept to May at 7:00pm  
Reedwood Friends Church, 2901 SE Steele Street  
Portland 97202

### SALEM HARDY PLANT SOCIETY

First Tuesday from Sept to May at 7:00pm  
Dye House at Willamette Heritage Center, 1313  
Mill Street SE, Salem, OR

### SUISLAW CHAPTER

Third Tuesday at 7:00pm  
First Presbyterian Church, 3996 Highway 101,  
Florence, OR

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## DISTRICT 4 CHAPTER WEB SITES

Willamette Chapter	<a href="http://arswillamette.com">arswillamette.com</a>
Eugene Chapter	<a href="http://eugene-chapter-ars.org">eugene-chapter-ars.org</a>
Portland Chapter	<a href="http://rhodies.org">rhodies.org</a>
Siuslaw Chapter	<a href="http://siuslawars.org">siuslawars.org</a>

All other web sites can be found on  
[rhododendron.org](http://rhododendron.org)  
Under "chapters" under web sites

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**ARS BULLETINS** are available online at:  
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/>

## WILLAMETTE CHAPTER ARS AWARDS HISTORY - 1978 to 2019

### GOLD ---

Herb Spady	1991
Betty Spady	2001

### SILVER ---

Richard "Dick" Cavendar	2003
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### BRONZE ---

June Brennan	1987
Jason Ashford	1990
Constance Hansen	1991
Betty Spady	1991
Bob Grasing	1997
Sharon Leopold	2002
Wilbur Bluhm	2006
Chuck and Maxine Dehn	2006
Keith White	2007
Helen Malby	2008
Anne Gross	2009
Dick and Carol Lundin	2011
Wally and Kathy Reed	2012
Syd and Don Wermlinger	2013
Dick and Carol Lundin	2019
Mary B. Crofts	2019
Roger and Kathy Lintault	2019

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## WILLAMETTE CHAPTER OFFICERS

President: Dana Malby .....503-393-6463  
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Web Site Kathy Lintault.....503-434-5472