

# Willamette Chapter American Rhododendron Society Newsletter

Volume 5

September 2023

Issue 6



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. Our meeting may be in person or via Zoom. Meeting information will be sent to members via email and available in this newsletter. In person meetings will be at the RAM Restaurant and Brewery Bearcat Room, 515 12th St SE, Salem, 97301, with dinner at 5:00pm and the meeting at 7:00pm.

## CHAPTER MEETING September 13, 2023

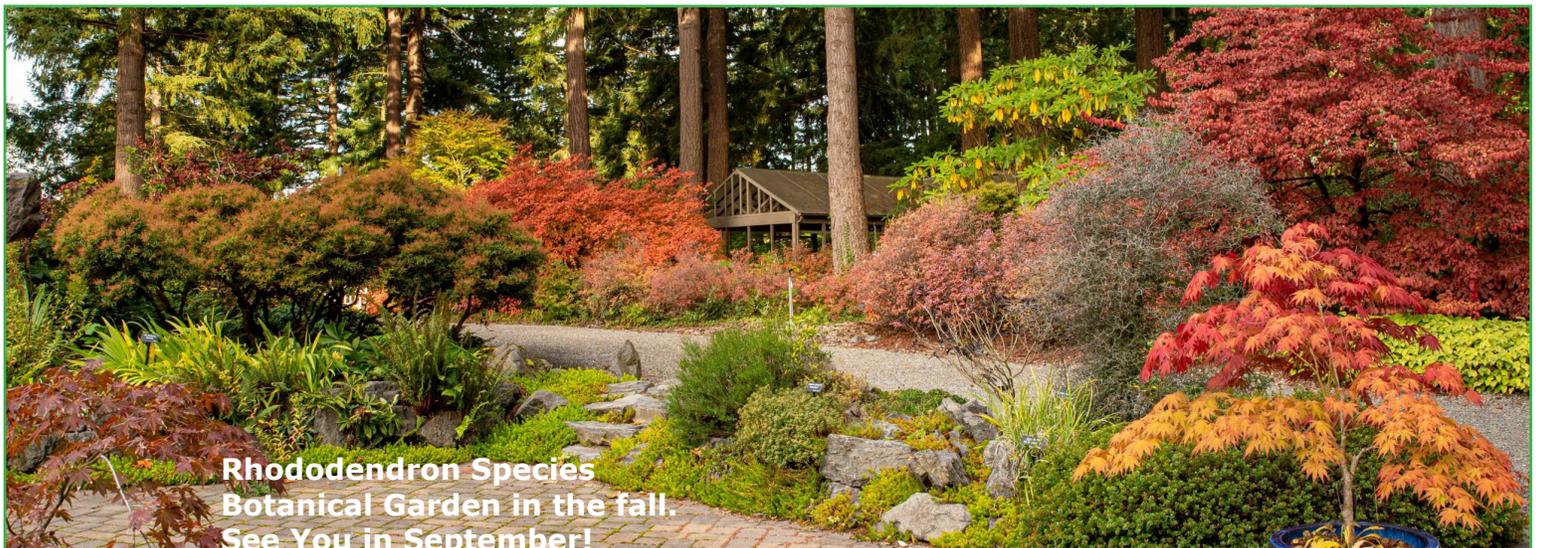


**Speaker:** *Ali Sarlak*  
**Title:** *Special Nurseries*



Come join us as Ali takes us on a pictorial journey of his favorite nurseries around the area and describes why they are so special.

Dinner at 5:00pm in the Bearcat Room at the RAM Restaurant and Brewery with the Program at 7:00pm. Complete details on Page 4



Rhododendron Species  
Botanical Garden in the fall.  
See You in September!

# June Minutes



**Mary Crofts**  
**Secretary**  
**June 24, 2023**

WCARS celebrated summer with a potluck and it was delicious! It was held at the garden of Ali and Gloria Sarlak in the North part of Corvallis just off Hwy 20. It was still June (the 24th) so the weather was finally warm but not yet hot.

About 20 bodies showed up and there was a good variety of food. People sort of meandered around the various garden rooms until lunch. We ate at 3 long tables, set out under the trees on the edge of the back lawn. And I'm pretty sure that some of those trees were rhodys that had just finished blooming. It was very peaceful and enjoyable... good food, good conversation, good friends having a good time in a great garden.

After most of the food was gone, and our tummies were feeling cozy, Ali took us on a tour of the various "rooms" he's constructed over the past 20 or so years. The Sarlaks have a large area to cover; about 1/2 block. You move from one to another of the rooms via little "hallways". Each room is different, but each had rhodys as a main attraction. Ali has planted many rare trees you rarely, if ever, see in someone's back yard. You can spot columbines (tall ones), various forms of geraniums, all sorts of late spring to early summer annuals and perennials. One room even has a palm tree and a banana tree. Flowers sparkle all over. High, low, left, right, up, down and overhead. It's easy to imagine fairies living within the various "cubbyholes" made by the plants.

Eventually we had to leave. It wasn't easy to do. I had to remind myself that it's still pretty cold at night as well as a long walk back to Albany in case my ride left without me.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Mary Crofts** - Secretary - WCARS

The following photos of the potluck were taken by Keith White. I think these pictures need no captions as they speak for themselves, depicting the delicious food, great company and the interesting things seen and described touring Ali's garden.





# President's Report Sept 2023

Hope everyone has been having a wonderful summer!

After a long, hot, dry summer, I am looking forward to getting back together at our first meeting in September, which will be on Wednesday, September 13 at the RAM Pub at 5:00 for dinner, and the program at 7:00. The program will be given by Ali Sarlak on "Special Nurseries."



Please mark your calendar for the Western Regional ARS Fall Conference, which will be held in Florence, Oregon, October 19-21. The theme is Florence Coastal Spice and there will be a lot of nationally known speakers. For more information about the conference and to get a registration form (must print it and send it in; there is no registration on-line) go to [www.Siuslawars.org](http://www.Siuslawars.org). Early registration (\$50) must be submitted by September 22, 2023. Any registrations submitted after that date, the registration is \$75.00. Registration includes two meals, on the 20th and 21st. I am looking forward to attending and hope to see everyone there!



Our chapter needs to supply a basket for the silent auction at the convention. Does anyone have ideas for a basket theme and contents?

I want to thank Ali and Gloria Sarlak again for hosting the potluck at their home in June. Everyone had a good time with great food, fun people and wonderful atmosphere (and it wasn't too hot!). The tour of his property was fun and interesting, with Ali explaining the history of a lot of the plants.

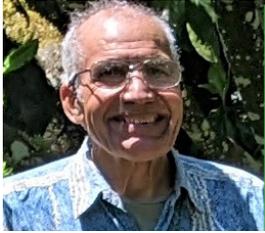
**Dues are due in September for 2023-2024 club membership.** More information will be sent out about it.

Looking forward to starting a new year and hearing what you did this summer!

**Dana Malby - WCARS President**



# September Program



## Special Nurseries

by Ali Sarlak

**Dinner and the program will take place in the Bearcat Room at the RAM Restaurant and Brewery at 515 12th St. SE, Salem, OR 97301.**

**Dinner at 5:00pm and the program at 7:00p**

The nature of Ali's talk will be on Special Nurseries that he and Gloria visited during Memorial weekend open days.

In Ali's words "places like Schreiner's Nursery and Aldelman Peony Gardens are very fascinating to photograph in the ways of public display of the areas: choices of design, serenity and unusual plants. These places are very special, lift human spirits and give some energy".

### Ali Sarlak Bio

Ali Emigrated to the US from Iran (Persia) in 1977. However, the story is more complex. Before coming to the U.S, Ali spent 2 1/2 years in the UK. The draw for Ali to Oregon was that his sister lived here. Once in Oregon, Ali pursued higher education at Linn-Benton Community College and transferred to OSU, where he earned his bachelor's degree in botany. In the interim, Ali had begun working with a landscaping firm. Here he got interested enough that he formed his own company. And the rest is history. Now Ali is slowing down, limiting his services to just a few special clients.

Regarding his association with the ARS, I, Keith White, remember seeing Ali at every regional and national ARS meeting since the 1980's. Ali has served in multiple positions in the Eugene and Willamette ARS chapters. He is a great and hard-working volunteer, always at Cecil and Molly Smith Garden work parties and readily hosting Smith Garden open days. Ali is currently on our Willamette Chapter board of directors.



# October Program



## Wildflower Adventures around Oregon

The following is a sneak preview of our speaker and program for October.

Mark Akimoff is the owner of Illahe Rare Plants, a specialty nursery grower of flower bulbs, geophytes, alpines and rock garden plants from around the world. Over his 25-year career as a professional horticulturalist, Mark has worked in many sectors of the industry, from Historical Garden management, large scale wetlands, riparian and environmental restoration projects for government, to teaching Horticulture at the Community College level. He holds a bachelor's degree in Horticultural science from Oregon State University and studied biotechnology at Montana State University. While his personal interest in plants runs wide, a particular fondness for rock gardens and alpine plants often has him exploring in the high country for wildflowers. At the nursery in Salem, Oregon Mark trials many different dryland and xeric plants to better help gardeners adapt to changing climate conditions we are seeing especially in the drought stricken Western US. Mark teaches Integrated Pest Management, Pesticides laws and Safety, Irrigation management and water management classes at the community college in Salem, Oregon. He is active in the North American Rock Garden Society and Pacific Bulb Society. Mark also lectures on a variety of plant topics to plant clubs and the gardening community. Check out the [website](#) to see the amazing array of plants that he grows at illahe rare plants.

Mark your calendar to join us on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at the RAM Restaurant and Brewery. Full program details will be provided in the October newsletter. **Photos by Illahe Rare Plants**





## Evening in the Garden

This annual event of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden was held this summer on July 19th. It is a "Fundraiser" and a "Fun-raiser". We hosted our good friends, Ron and Michelle from Seattle. We always have a good time with them. I felt that it would be interesting for them to meet new people and learn more about the inner workings of the RSBG from both a physical and fiscal perspective.

The evening began with us running into our many friends, having animated conversations that swung like Tarzan from person to person and group to group as new people joined in.

Our guests, Ron and Michelle, met us at the Gift Shop and Plant Sales Area at the head of the garden. We swiftly continued bumping into friends and introducing them. We all made our way to the refreshment area for a glass of wine then more chatting (and maybe another glass).

We could take one of two tours. Steve Hootman, our curator, took a group for a tour around the 22-acre garden, which is exceptionally beautiful any time of year. They visited the Gazebo, the Alpine Garden, the Pond Garden and roamed the many paths through the "Big Leafs", some of which grow over 100 ft in their native habitat. They traversed the many areas laid out for species of the same subsection of the genus and those laid out in areas corresponding to their native habitats. "The Stumpery" is an area of stumps and fallen trees that were carefully placed and planted with rhodies and companion plants that would naturally grow in this environment. The Stumpery is now well established and remarkably beautiful for its re-creation of rhododendron habitat in the wilds of China, Tibet and the Himalayas.

In the early 1970's, with many plants already mature, having grown in the gardens of Dr. Milton Walker (near Eugene) and Jock Brydon (West Salem) these plants were transferred to the newly prepared RSBG. Having been on the Board of Directors since the early 1980's, I have seen plants that were waist high to me then turn into imposing 20 ft giants. Some large plants have been re-

removed to make way for new species introductions and well-planned exhibit areas.

Dennis Bottemiller took another group on a tour through the conservatory. This is a very sophisticated glass and aluminum structure that houses the more tender plants in a warm, moist environment. The conservatory has automatic misting, heating, air circulation and roof vent control, and automatic shading for bright sun. Besides Vireya and Maddenia rhododendrons, there are orchids, agapetes and a plethora of other tropical plants and even a waterfall, rushing stream with bridge over it and a centerpiece of tall columns of Columbia hexagonal basalt, one with a fountain bubbling from the top, cascading down through the foliage. Many of these plants were blooming because the conditions in the conservatory recreate the near stable day/night 12 hour each cycle that occurs as one gets closer to the equator.

Dennis led a group of 20 through the paths, explaining the habitats, cultural characteristics (many tropical rhododendrons are epiphytes: They grow on trees or on rocks or cliffsides jutting out towards sunlight) He explained that of the 1000 or so species of rhododendrons in the wild, approximately 400 were tropical or subtropical, mainly maddenias and vireyas. Dennis answered many questions and explained the workings of the conservatory.

After the tours we launched into the Hawaiian dinner. We had pineapple pork as well as other delightful fare, including a choice of great desserts and a fine selection of drinkables.

Next was the auction of several rare rhododendrons and trees and shrubs. Almost all of these were grown from seed collected in the wild by Curator, Steve Hootman, on his many expeditions to far reaches in China, Northern Vietnam, Indonesia, Borneo, new Guinea, Tibet et.al.

Part one of the fundraiser was the price of the event ticket and part two was the auction. Both were very successful. The whole thing was such fun and so impressive to our friends that they made a significant donation to the RSBG.

After all the scheduled events there was a very slow breakup of the meeting. Friends and colleagues continued chatting, Those of us who won plants at the auction paid at the gift shop and we all had a merry time perusing the outdoor plant

sales area and the gift shop. I came away with a rapidly growing Gordonia tree. I am now considering the problem of where best to plant it.

**Keith White**

RSBG Board of Directors Member  
Chairman, RSBG Photography Committee

The following photographs were taken by Keith White during the Evening in the Garden.



**Mary Ellen, Ron and Michelle**



**Our friends, Beth Orling and Bob Zimmermann**



**The lady who holds the purse strings, Grace Pham**



**RSBG's "Vanna White" Chip Muller**



**Steve Hootman, RSBG Curator Extraordinaire**



**The lushness of the plants inside the Conservatory**



**Dennis Bottemiller, Rutherford Conservatory Curator (back to picture) addressing his tour group**

**(Below) Steve Hootman speaking to the attendees**



# WCARS Fall Plant Auction

At long last, the much awaited WCARS plant auction will take place sometime around the end of September. The auction will be online and the process, time to bid, pictures of the actual plant being auctioned, etc. will be discussed and finalized at the WCARS Board Meeting at the end of August.

This note is just a "heads up" that something fantastic is coming that you don't want to miss. Even if you live out of town, but will be attending the ARS Fall Conference in Florence, OR, you can bid, as the plant will be delivered to you there.

Even though I know very little about rhododendrons, I find the names of the plants and their genealogy fascinating - in fact, some of them sound very exotic.

The following is a mouth watering list of the plants in the auction, provided the heat doesn't kill them before then:

- Aladdin** (R. griersonianum x R. auriculatum)
- Aloha** (Vican x R/ yak Exbury form)
- Blue Boy** (Blue Ensign x Purple Spendour)
- Cherries & Merlot** (Pretty Baby x R. pachysanthum Whid Bee)
- Consolini's Windmill** (parentage unknown)
- Dr. Stocker** (R. caucasicum x R. griffithianum)
- Ibex** (R. griersonianum x R. pocophorum)
- John Coutts** (Grand Arab x R. griffithianum) x R. griersonianum)
- Maddie Mae** (Nancy Evans x Pink Petticoats)
- Mandalay** (R. haematodes x R. venator)
- Mario Pagliorni** ( R. fortune hybrid)
- Marakeeta's Flame** (Loderi Venus x Anna)
- Matador** (R. griersonianum x R. strigillosum)
- Mrs. E.C. Sterling** (R. griffithianum hybrid)
- Opal Luster** (Nancy Evans x Percy Wiseman)
- Paloma** (Ruby Bowman x R. floccigerum)
- Persuasion** (Royal Purple x Lem's Cameo)
- Repose** (R. lacteum x R. fortune ssp. Discolor)
- Showboat** (R. yak Exbury form x Tumalo)
- Sunspray** (Alice Franklin x Crest)
- White Gold** (Mrs. J.G. Millais x Cheyenne)
- White Pearl** (R. griffithianum hybrid) AKA Halopeanum
- Wild Ginger** (Apricot Fantasy x Hill's Low Red)

## Species Plants:

- R. Balrourianum** (Taliense s.s. Adenogynum)
- R. Calophytum** (Fortunei s.s. Calophytum)
- R. Insigne** (Arboreum s.s. Argyrophyllum)
- R. Tricanthum** (Triflorum s.s. Augustinii)

So, grab your paddle and get ready to bid!



The following pictures are of a few of these magnificent plants in bloom.



**Aloha**  
Photo by Don Wallace



**Blue Boy**  
Photo by Fredo Schroder Nsy



**Consolini's Windmill**  
Photo from Pinterest



**John Coutts**  
Photo by Bloomriver Garden



**Sunspray**  
Photo by Plant Hunters Station (Pukeiti)



**Wild Ginger**  
Photo by Don Wallace

# ARS Fall Conference Coastal Spice

## ARS Fall Regional Conference

Plan to attend the 2023 Fall Western Regional Conference, "Florence Coastal Spice", to be held October 19-21, 2023 at the Florence Events Center, 715 Quince Street, in Florence OR. Hear interesting talks, purchase beautiful and unusual plants, renew old acquaintances and make new friends. Both ARS members and non-members are welcome to attend the conference. View the [Event Schedule](#) and the [Registration Schedule](#).

There are 3 hotels offering group rate pricing so register soon before they "book out" of rooms. Early registration (\$50) must be submitted by September 22, 2023. Any registrations submitted after that date, the registration is \$75.00. Registration includes two lunch meals, on the 20th and 21st. Registration must be made via hard copy form and check as no online registration is accepted.

My first impression of the conference was a line up of speakers from the US. As I look at the list I realize we have many speakers within the US that are very well qualified, knowledgeable and interesting to speak to their topic. So now I am fired up to hear what they have to say!

I hope you are too and will look at the schedule and decide this is one conference you don't want to miss!



**Monday, September 4, 2023**

**Thank You to Workers for all your Contributions**

# Rhododendron

Soft petals of white,  
Such delicate embrace,  
Sweet Rhododendron  
You fill my garden space.  
A picture of beauty,  
In full bloom you stand,  
The bees just adore you,  
Your looking so grand,  
The sun shines upon you,

Nature devine,  
A true masterpiece,  
In this garden of mine.

Poem by Jayne Davies



**Rhododendron September Snow**  
Photo by Conifer Gardens Nursery

This is a lovely variety producing fragrant flowers in early spring.

These flowers are white with brown stamens.

The new growth is covered with tiny hairs, giving a furry appearance.

It forms a nice compact plant growing to approximately 1 metre.

Rhododendron 'September Snow' (Rhododendron leucaspis × Rhododendron edgeworthii), a slightly fragrant hybrid which is hardier than most Rhododendron edgeworthii hybrids.



# R. auriculatam is the Flower for September



Photo by Hank Helm

**Predominant Flower Color:** White

**Flower/Truss Description:** Funnel shaped, white or occasionally pink, with greenish blotch, fragrant. Loose truss holds 6-15 flowers.

**Fragrant:** Yes

**Bloom Time:** Very Late

**Foliage Description:** Leaves oblong to oblong lanceolate, up to 12" long, auriculate base.

**Plant Habit:** Tall shrub or small tree

**Height:** 6 feet in 10 years.

**Cold Hardiness Temp:** 0°F (-18°C)

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

**Sub Genus:** Hymenanthus

**Section:** Ponticum

**Sub Section:** Auriculata

**Geographical Origin:** China (E Sichuan, W Hubei, E Guizhou)

This information came from the American Rhododendron Society website.

The following information and pictures of R. auriculatam came from Oregon State University.

R. auriculatam is a broadleaf evergreen shrub or tree, 6-30 ft (~2-10 m) tall, Leaves oblong to oblong lanceolate, up to 30 cm long and 3-12 cm wide, apex broadly obtuse or rounded, base rounded or auriculate (auricle - an ear-like appendage), upper surface dull dark green, vein deeply impressed, underside pale green, hairy and glandular with isolated, long, thread-like white or brownish hairs. Flowers funnel-shaped to 10 cm long, white to occasionally rosy pink, greenish blotch at the base of tube, fragrant, 14- or 16 unequal stamens, calyx 5-6 lobed; 7-15 flowers in loose clusters.



Leaf Base



Leaf



Flower



Flower Trusses and Leaves

Plant Habit, Flowering, July



## 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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