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R & A News: March – April 2021

Spring is arriving in the Northern Hemisphere, and gardeners have great hopes for a successful year. We have three major articles in this issue as well as some news and links that we hope you enjoy. Best Regards from the R & A News committee: Don Hyatt (co-chair), Maria Stewart (co-chair), Steve Henning, Dave Banks, and Linda Derkach.

Above Photo: Frank Fujioka's Garden, Washington.

History of Rhododendrons

This is Steve Henning's fascinating article about where Rhododendrons grow and how they got there. It discusses the Geological

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ago. It explains how species evolved and spread around the world. Some of the factors that led to the diverse plant materials we see today include plate tectonics, the formation of mountains, plant populations getting isolated, and weather changes such as the recurrence of ice ages and the arrival of the Asian monsoons.

[History](#)

Rhododendron arboreum



This is a photo essay by Don Hyatt that features *R. arboreum*, one of the most wide ranging species in the genus. It is the national flower of Nepal and very common across Southeast Asia, especially in the foothills of the Himalayas. The author is grateful to several photographers who kindly provided some stunning pictures of plants in the wild for the piece. He has never been there but has admired the species in many gardens. Below is a link to a video which has stunning footage of this species in wild against the backdrop of the Himalayas. There are links to additional videos in the essay. Enjoy!

R. arboreum

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Video: *Rhododendron arboreum* in Nepal (2 minutes)

Lepidote Rhododendrons

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This article by Don Hyatt discusses a number of the small leaf and dwarf Rhododendrons known as Lepidotes. It has several focal areas including the magnificent Rock Garden at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, a stunning blue species from Central China known as *R. augustinii*, and some images from the lovely garden of Frank Fujioka, a hybridizer in Washington State. His purple hybrid 'Vibrant Violet' is pictured above.

Lepidote Rhododendrons

News Items!

Rhododendron smokianum



We are very excited to report that a new species called *Rhododendron smokianum*, a compact to dwarf species native to the Great Smoky Mountains, was just described by Dr. Ralf Bauer and Dr. Dirk Albach from Oldenberg, Germany. Their scientific research supporting its unique status was just published on March 29, 2021. This dwarf purple rhododendron has intrigued some of us in the ARS for many years. It seemed to grow on vertical rock cliffs and was very different from the other Lepidote species we see in the Southern Appalachians. The link below has more information on this rhododendron and its habitat.

[Smokianum](#)

Next-Gen Photo Contest



The Next Generation Program of the ARS, a project that hopes to attract and train the next generation of rhododendron experts, has launched a photo contest. They have three categories including flower closeups, people in action, and plants in nature. Entries must be submitted by May 25 via a Google account and awards will be announced at the 2021 Virtual Convention from June 3-6, 2021. Anyone can submit photographs but since they want to encourage young people to participate, they are offering cash prizes only to students. For full details, check out the link to the Next-Gen Photo Contest on the ARS website. *Note:* There is still time to register for the

has now passed. A link to the Convention is below, too.

[Next-Gen Photo Contest](#)

[2021 Convention Information](#)

Video Links and Virtual Tours



Steve Hootman and Britt Board discuss features at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden (4.5 min)



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A tour of Benmore Botanic Garden (6 min)

Support Our Organizations

A banner for the American Rhododendron Society website. The background is a close-up of large, light pink and white rhododendron flowers with prominent red stamens. The text "The American Rhododendron Society" is written in a green, serif font, with "Members worldwide" in a smaller green font below it. A green search bar is in the top right corner. At the bottom, a green navigation bar contains the following menu items: Society, Chapters, Plant Data, Resources, Activities, Membership, and Make A Gift.

The American Rhododendron Society

The American Rhododendron Society website has much useful information. There are details about the organization, its activities, membership, articles on many topics including selected pieces from past journals and rhododendron culture, an

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only area where people can see full color digital versions of ARS Journals dating back to 2011.

[ARS](#)

The American Rhododendron Society Members Worldwide

ARSStore.org Where every purchase benefits the American Rhododendron Society

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The ARS Store

The ARS store has access to many interesting items people can purchase as well as programs to download. When you purchase items online from certain vendors, the ARS also gets a small commission. This will only happen if you link to them from the ARS Store so think of us when buying online and begin your searches at the ARS Store.

[ARS Store](#)

The RSBG is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

Before you visit, please read our

[UPDATED GARDEN POLICIES](#)

&

[STEVE'S BLOG IS BACK!](#)



Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden is a wonderful partner to the ARS. It is a nonprofit organization that maintains a beautiful garden in Federal Way, WA, and houses one of the largest collections of rhododendron species in the world. They also offer rare varieties propagated from their collection that members may purchase by mail order. Consider becoming a member so you can help support this organization and their very competent staff.

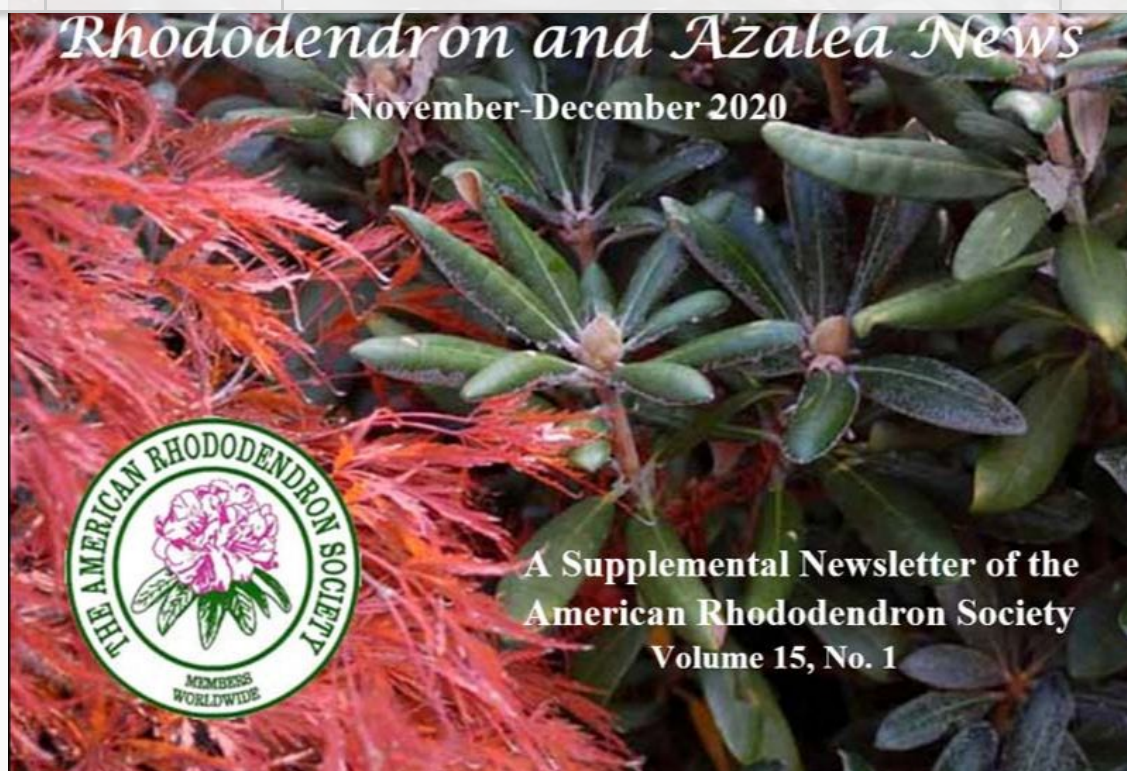
[RSBG](#)

Back Issues of the R & A News

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R & A News: Archived Issues

If you missed any back issues of the R & A News, we have started posting them online.

[Archives](#)



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