

President's Report to the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society (ARHS) AGM

November 7, 2023

Jim Sharpe, President

This past year (Sept 22 to August 23) was another successful year for our society. We had eight presentations, both in person and by Zoom, from Sept 22 to April 23. We had successful seed exchange and plant sales in the winter and May 23. On May 20-21, 2023 we had a well attended visit to the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens (over forty for the garden tour) and three private gardens in the Annapolis area. The year ended with a summer garden party and book sale at France Howard's garden and house in Dartmouth.

The Dick Steele lecture was given by Kristin Theqvist from Finland last October on his rhododendron breeding program. Kristian spent ten days in Nova Scotia visiting ARHS members and rhodo breeders from Annapolis Royal to Cape Breton. He also gave a lecture at the Annapolis Royal Historic Gardens. Other fall programs included a September panel discussion on breeding Rhodos, a November presentation by Melanie Priesnetz from Irving Gardens on Native Plants and our popular December members slide show and seasonal party. In the winter we had a presentation on the work of the American Rhododendron Society including its April Convention in Atlanta, "New Trends in English Gardens" by our longstanding member Jenny Sandison, "Plant Trials of Native Hydrangea" by Sam Hoadley from Mt. Cuba Center, and "Monet's Two Gardens" by landscape photographer and ARHS member Freeman Patterson.

The ARHS board met five times during the year and made significant progress on membership, plant sales and communications. For our membership, we welcomed Lynn Brooks as our new membership coordinator and worked with our website programmer to implement on-line membership payments. For the plant sale we welcomed new members on the plant sale committee and we added native perennials from North Creek Nursery to our May pre-ordered plant sale. Thank you to Dennis Crouse for all his work organizing this successful event. For Communications Dennis Stuebing edited four issues "Atlantic Rhodo," our newsletters which was distributed by e-mail, posted on the website and printed and mailed to those who paid an extra fee. I thank both Dennis Crouse and Dennis Stuebing, along with all the members of the ARHS board, for their important contributions to the work of ARHS.

Last year was very busy for me as I worked with fellow members of the ARHS: Roslyn Duffus, Darwin Carr, Rebecca Lancaster, Jamie Ellison and Justin Morash, to plan and present the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) Conference from June 8-11 at Agricultural Campus, Dalhousie University in Truro. With over 100 participants from across the US and Canada we had great talks, field trips and plant sale. I'm always amazed by the glowing comments received from visitors about our landscapes, plants and gardens in Eastern Canada.

The success for the NARGS conference helped the ARHS Board decide to accept a request from the American Rhododendron Society to host the Spring Convention in 2025 in Wolfville Nova Scotia. We were scheduled to offer the 2021 Spring meeting but the closure of the boarder due to the COVID epidemic required us to switch to a virtual meeting. I am quite excited about welcoming rhodo and

gardening enthusiasts for June 4-8, 2025. Please keep this planning in mind as we will need volunteers to help with the tours, plant sale and hospitality.

I was pleased to attend the joint meeting of the American Rhododendron Society and the Azalea Society of America in Atlanta, GA in April 2023. With the slow return to travel after the pandemic there were only four Canadians who attended. Hopefully more from Canada will attend the 2024 ARS Convention in Bellingham, Washington from May 2-5, 2024 (see ars2024.org). I hope we can interest some from our society to attend to promote ARS 2025!

I look forward to working with the ARHS Board for another year. I'm pleased to announce that Judy Estey has accepted the position of Treasurer, one that I have filled in for the last two years. I've worked with Judy at the NARGS Conference, as a Master Gardener and as a fellow member of many gardening associations. She is active in the Lunenburg Garden Club and is the former Treasurer of the Lunenburg Yacht Club. Welcome Judy to the ARHS Board. Now, if I could find someone to edit the Atlantic Rhodo newsletter. If interested, please contact me at atlanticrhodo@gmail.com.

Thanks to all for belonging to such an interesting association of plant lovers. Through both the ARS and the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs (NSAGC) I hear of many gardening clubs which are struggling for membership, leadership and activities. I think ARHS presents a model for the promotion of rhododendrons and horticulture in Atlantic Canada.

Nominations for 23-24 ARHS Board

Jim Sharpe

Rebecca Lancaster

Nancy Lewis

Carol Morrison

Lynn Brooks

Jane Rostek

Judy Estey