The purpose of this presentation is to share ‘what works’ from many ARS chapters who have great solutions for growing membership and keeping them. There are so many other possibilities. If you will take a moment to review the presentation below and look at the Chapters’ input, you will most likely find some viable ideas for your chapter.

Sharing information between chapters can be done in so many ways, i.e. chapter newsletters, work of mouth, the Internet, conferences and conventions, attending other chapter meeting, and the list goes on.

I hope this information will be of value to you! I’m always interested in learning what works for you. Please share!

Keep blooming!

Shirley Rock,
ARS Membership Chair
What Works

Growing and Maintaining Membership

By Shirley Rock

ARS Membership
Introduction

• There are two considerations for membership, i.e. getting new members and keeping them. We usually work at gaining new members and sometimes drop the ball on the current members.

• The following presentation holds no silver bullets.

• What you will see are obvious programs.
Why visit, join and or belong to a rhododendron chapter?

- Learn
- Social
- New gardener
- More time now, maybe new retiree
- Curiosity
- Continue Learning
- Where to find those rare plants
- ARS quarterly journal – Tips for Beginners
ARS Invitation to join

• How to use this brochure
• Where to display it
• Have available at projects where the public participates
• Where to obtain the brochures
Where to get the brochures

• Contact Harold Greer via phone or e-mail
• Phone 541-656-8266 or
• E-mail hgreer@greergardens.com
• Pay for postage
• Receive the brochures
The following are samples of various chapter activities

- Gains exposure for the chapter
- Attracts new members
- Fun for existing members
Invite the public...Tacoma Chapter
Cascade Chapter Show and Plant Sale at the Bellevue Botanical Gardens, Bellevue, WA
Mason Dixon Chapter Truss Show
New York Chapter – truss competition
Plant sale by Valley Forge Chapter – find that special plant that you can’t find anywhere else.
Eureka Chapter – Tufa pots
Mason Dixon Chapter learning to take cuttings

Lou Reichart, right, shows Betsy Herrmann, left, and L.B. Boyce how to seal an azalea hardwood cutting with duct tape and a plastic bag at Saturday's Mason-Dixon Chapter of American Rhododendron Society meeting in Glen Arm.
Scottish Chapter - propagation
Grow new plants from cuttings
Involve the youth! Massachusetts Chapter
District 9 potting cuttings for convention.
Learn about rhody pests
Get as involved as you want - ARS
Gold Medal – Kenneth Cox
Scottish Chapter
Scottish Chapter visiting Heaselands, England.
Learn to differentiate:
Castle Kennedy, Scotland – identification of R. hookeri - Scottish Chapter
See how your peers display rhododendrons - Private Garden tours – Tualatin Valley, Portland, Willamette, Siuslaw, and Eugene Chapters at Jack Olson’s – District 4.
See how rhododendrons work with companion plants - Charles Reed Garden  Richmond, VA – Mid-Atlantic Chapters
Eureka Chapter members working at Humboldt Botanical Garden's Temperate Woodland Garden planting plants acquired with ARS Endowment funds.
Potomac Valley Chapter field trip to Roan Mountain (Smokey Mts), bordering Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.
Expeditions to find new species in India, Burma, China - Nagaland
Books on the subject
Photography – Learn how to take fantastic photos
More possibilities – expand your perspective
Other Program Possibilities

- Four seasons plant program
- Winter protection and repair
- Bonsai
- Container Growing – not everyone has a large yard
- Companion plants
Chapter samples of hard copy

- Business cards with where, when, contact information
- Roster including chapter history, officers, committee chairs and bylaws
- Membership packets
- Interesting newsletters and websites
- So many possibilities...see the rest of the story
Finally

• Keep new members involved
• Remove ‘can’t’, ‘won’t work’, ‘we’ve done that before’ from your vocabulary!
• Some new members just naturally get involved – keep them busy!
• Others need to be asked – ask them!
• Notice the difference!
Summary

• A collection by chapter of what has worked to gain and retain members.

• We hope that your chapter can gain success by applying ‘what works’.