

## Interesting Facts

- The word Rhododendron comes from the Ancient Greek word rhoden, which means "rose" and dendron, which means "tree."



- *R. hirsutum* was the first Rhododendron to be classified and named. It was discovered by the 16th century Flemish botanist, Charles l'Ecluse. When it was introduced in Great Britain in 1656 from the European Alps, it was the first species of Rhododendron in cultivation.

- There are over 28,000 cultivars of Rhododendron in the International Rhododendron Registry held by the Royal Horticultural Society.

- There are about 1,100 Rhododendron species. The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, located between Seattle and Tacoma, WA is a 22-acre woodland garden featuring the largest collection of Rhododendron species in the world.

- The world's tallest Rhododendron is located at Mount Japfu near Kohima, Nagaland, India, and reaches 108 feet in height. *R. 'Babylon'* located on Long Valley Road is the tallest Rhododendron in Laurelwood.

- The oldest known Rhododendron is thought to be over 130 years old.

- Rhododendron are divided into two categories: lepidote and elipidote. The lepidote rhododendrons have minute scales on the leaves and are generally small-leaved. Conversely, the elipidote rhododendrons do not have leaf scales and are generally large-leaved.

- Rhododendrons and azaleas belong to the genus Rhododendron of the Ericaceae Family. All azaleas are rhododendrons, but not all rhododendrons are azaleas.

- John and Dorothy Knippenberg became widely known on the east and west coasts for specializing in hybridizing rhododendrons. Over the years, they raised and/or hybridized approximately 50 new rhododendron hybrids including eight new cultivars of rhododendrons that were registered by the American Rhododendron Society and the Royal Horticultural Society.

- Nathaniel Hess, a former President of the New York Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, created a new hybrid at his estate in Sands Point, New York that he named 'Dorothy Knippenberg', which was registered in 1992 with the American Rhododendron Society. The new elipidote rhododendron was white with moderate reddish orange dorsal spotting.

## Rhododendron Bloom Times

There are seven blooming periods depending on climate and weather conditions.

### Very Early

December to 1st week of March

### Early

2nd week of March to 1st week of April

### Early Midseason

2nd week of April to 1st week of May

### Midseason

1st week of May to 2nd week of May

### Late Midseason

3rd week of May to 1st week of June

### Late

2nd week of June to 1st week of July

### Very Late

2nd week of July to September

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05/23

# Laurelwood Rhododendrons



*R. 'Babylon'*

Friends of  
**Laurelwood Arboretum**  
*Connecting People with Nature*

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Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum is a  
501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

## Overview

Today, through the generosity of Dorothy and John Knippenberg, Laurelwood Arboretum is a public park containing a collection of more than four hundred hybrid rhododendrons and species and nearly one hundred different varieties. This brochure highlights a few of the most historically significant and noteworthy rhododendrons in the arboretum.

## Self-Guided Walking Tour

Begin your walk at the bottom of Long Valley Road. Each specimen description is followed by its bloom time.

**1. R. 'Catawbiense Album'** – displaying 18 white flowers with yellowish green markings on conically shaped trusses, this tree-like hybrid is one of our large Ironclad rhododendrons, which refers to its ability to withstand severe winter conditions; an English hybrid, 'Catawbiense Album' was produced by Anthony Waterer, a prolific hybridizer with many hardy hybrids. The species *catawbiense* was discovered on the top of Roan Mountain (North Carolina-Tennessee) in 1799 by English plant explorer John Fraser. Late Midseason

**2. R. 'Powder Puff'** - located on the hillside on the right, this large, tree-like rhododendron displays flowers that start out lavender pink in bud, opening nearly white. Created by pioneer hybridizer Charles O. Dexter pre-1943, it was named by Dorothy Knippenberg in 1978 and introduced commercially at Laurelwood Gardens the same year. Midseason

**3. R. 'Babylon'** – with its large openly funnel-shaped flowers 4" to 5" across and a deep red blotch in its throat, there is probably no better example of a "Rhododendron Tree" in Laurelwood than 'Babylon'. Hybridized in 1955 by G. Reuthe, Ltd. in Kent, England, it was imported by the Knippenbergs as part of their efforts to assemble masses of the hardiest varieties of rhododendrons in the arboretum. Early Midseason

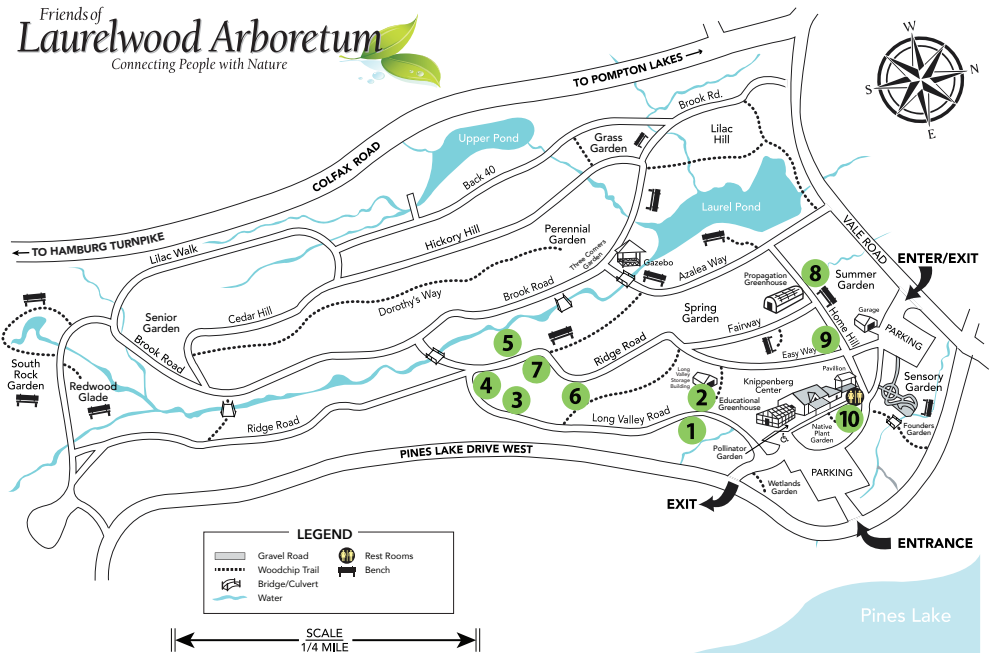
**4. R. 'Parker's Pink'** – located at the corner of Long Valley Road and Ridge Road in the Dexter Garden, this hybrid displays openly funnel-shaped purplish-red flowers with wavy lobes held in trusses of about 12 flowers. Hybridized by Charles O. Dexter at his estate in Sandwich, Massachusetts pre-1943, it is

known as one of his best pinks, characterized by dense foliage, large stature and flowers of superior size and color. Late Midseason

**5. R. 'Caroline'** – opposite the Dexter Garden on Ridge Road stands a large, tree-like hybrid with orchid lavender flowers hybridized pre-1927 by Joseph Gable in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania. Gable, who named some of his hybrids after family members, named this hybrid in honor of his daughter Caroline. Dorothy Knippenberg used 'Caroline' as a "parent" for her 'Caroline Gem' that she hybridized at Laurelwood Gardens in 1955 and named and registered in 1967. Late Midseason

**6. R. 'Dorothy Russell'** - continuing along Ridge Road on the right, there is a cluster of large-leaf rhododendrons with large deep purplish flowers containing dark red spots; although they appear red from a distance, a close inspection reveals more of a pink color. This specimen was hybridized by Charles O. Dexter at his estate in Sandwich, Massachusetts pre-1943. Early Midseason

**7. R. 'Paul Vossberg'** - one of the oldest rhododendrons in Laurelwood Arboretum. In 1965, Paul Vossberg, of Westbury, Long Island, who perfected a method of successfully rooting rhododendron stem cuttings, gave a small, 15-inch unnamed rhododendron to Dorothy Knippenberg to propagate at Laurelwood Gardens. She grew the young plant to its first flower and named it 'Paul Vossberg.' It was introduced commercially at Laurelwood Gardens in 1975. Dorothy registered the newly named hybrid with the American Rhododendron Society in 1994. Late Midseason



**8. R. 'English Roseum'** - lilac-rose flowers on dome-shaped trusses of 8-10 flowers, these specimens were imported from England in 1955 and grown at Laurelwood Gardens. Hybridized by Anthony Waterer at Knap Nursery in Woking, England in 1851, it was among hundreds of their hybrids exhibited at the Philadelphia World's Fair of 1876 Centennial. Many of these hybrids were introduced to the US as a result. Late Midseason

**9. R. 'Van Nes Sensation'** – at the corner of Easy Way and Home Hill, this hybrid displays pale lilac flowers with white centers and red spots in its throat. Hybridized by van Nes and Sons at their nursery in Boskoop, The Netherlands circa 1902. Midseason

**10. R. williamsianum** - one of several rhododendron species in the arboretum, it was introduced to horticulturists of the western world in 1908 by Ernest "Chinese" Wilson. It is a compact, spreading small evergreen shrub, with neat, rounded leaves, bronze when young, with bell-shaped, soft rose-pink flowers, held in small trusses. Endemic to Sichuan, China, being found only there, although very limited, it is now in constant and widespread production and cultivation all over the world. Early Midseason