

The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter
April 2018



President's Message

It is nice to get back to longer days, but as I write this, the temperature is forecast to drop to 1 degree C tonight. Where has Spring gone? At our next meeting, we are having two exciting speakers on hybridization of rhododendrons. At our business meeting, Chris will be talking about trusses re: the Truss Show, so bring some trusses if yours are out. Brenda Lewis is asking all members to volunteer and sign up to help in some way with the Plant Show – our big fundraiser for our Society. **Also, please note that our starting time has been moved up to 7 pm because of our full program.** Please remember that we are hoping that some members will step up for some of the vacancies for executive positions – President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer. Hope to see you all at the next meeting!

All the best,

Allen

EXECUTIVE

President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Vice President	vacant	
Past President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Gayle McRae	758-7589
Directors	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Don Noakes	
	Dick Beamish	758-2574

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Jan Moles / Gerry Moore
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	Doug Kitts
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	Susan Lightburn
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich
Website	Craig Clarke
Bus Tour	Joyce and David Mitchell

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
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Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: nanaimorhodos.ca

email: rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca

Next meeting, Thursday, April 12th, at 7:00 – **Please note change of time!**

Beban Park Social Centre

We will be having two speakers:

Lois Blackmore: "The Birds and the Bees": The Art, Research and Science of Hybridizing

Lloyd Gilmore: Propagating Rhododendrons

Both of our speakers will be bringing plants which will be available for purchase.

Twigs and Stems



**Goodies for April - with thanks:
Ann Davey; Jan Thorsen; Earl Daneluk**

Please note: The date of our annual Plant Sale and Truss show will be Saturday, May 12th, 2018!

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, Wednesday April 11th, 2018- Regular meeting - 7:30 pm:

- The April meeting will feature Carmen Varcoe – Abkhazi and/or Finnerty Gardens
- MARS plant sale and truss show: April 21st, 2018 - 10:00 to 2:00 at the Parksville Curling Club

North Island Rhododendron Society, Tuesday, April 10th, 2018 – Regular Meeting – 7:30 pm:

- The April meeting will feature Bernie Dinter – “Trends in the Nursery Business”
- NIRS plant sale and truss show: Sunday April 29th, 2018 - 10:00 to 1:00, K’ómoks First Nation Hall on Comox Road

Nanaimo Horticultural Society, Wednesday, April 11th, 2018 - First Unitarian Fellowship Church of Nanaimo, 595 Townsite Rd

- Lessons for Growing Healthy Edibles - Beban Community Greenhouse and Learning Centre – Dorothee Keiser

April at VIU’s Milner Gardens and Woodland:

- Open Thursdays through Sundays.
- Garden open 10:00am to 5:00pm, last entry 4:30pm.
- Tea Room open 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm for tea, soup and scones.
- Admission: adults \$6, youth \$4, includes tax. Children 12 and under accompanied by an adult, Milner Gardens members and current VIU students with card - free admission.
- **Shred It:** April 14th, 10:00 to 1:30; recycle your sensitive paperwork for a donation; bring your paperwork in bags or boxes to the upper parking lot (staples are ok, remove other fasteners).
- **Greig Rhododendron Species Garden official opening April 22nd at 1:00 pm.**
- Milner plant sale April 28th and 29th.

<https://www2.viu.ca/milnergardens/>

Our April Program: (please note both speakers will be bringing plants which will be available for purchase.)

Lois Blackmore: "The Birds and the Bees" - The Art, Research, and Science of Hybridizing

Lois Blackmore and her husband Roy live on a large, mountainous and rocky property on Triangle Mountain in Langford. They have been fortunate to become friends with Jim Barlup, a world-renowned rhododendron hybridizer from Bellevue, Washington. This friendship has blossomed into an extensive collection of Barlup hybrids, both on their property and in many containers located on an expansive deck overlooking the western foothills.

The Blackmore's association with Barlup hybrids is well established. At her first American Rhododendron Society Conference in 2003, Lois bought five small plants. Unknowingly, the plants were all Barlup hybrid rhododendrons, and as they began to bloom, she realized that there was something special about them. Many Barlup hybrids can now be found in gardens in and around Victoria, but Blackmore's garden contains the largest number of them in existence today.

Lloyd Gilmore: Propagating Rhododendrons

Lloyd is a skilled rhodo propagator from the Victoria Rhodo Society and will share his extensive knowledge with members. "I have had a strong interest in plants my whole life. My first serious hybridization started about 40 years ago with orchids. After moving back to the island about 20 years ago, I read an article by John Lofthouse on his rhododendron hybrids and visited him four or five times over the next few years in the Oakridge area of Vancouver. I have always liked rhododendrons so a new passion evolved."

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Plant run to UBC *by Craig Clarke*

On March 20th, Ron Sutton & I took the ferry over to UBC Botanical Garden to pick up the club order from the Rhododendron Species Foundation Botanical Garden. Fortunately, Ron volunteered to help with the transport because I would not have been able to fit the load in my car. We picked up 79 plants in the club order, plus 8 plants that Doug Kitts ordered, plus another couple from the gift shop at UBC.

After loading up, we had time to walk through the Asian garden and appreciate the rhodos and magnolias.

(Editor's note: Thanks, on behalf of the club, to both Ron and Craig for picking up the plants and to all who ordered plants.)





Presidents Meeting (submitted by Chris Southwick)

This photo is of the March 20th meeting of District 1 in Horseshoe Bay, with District 1 Director Chris Hodgson (currently also president of the Vancouver Rhodo Society) presiding. Allen McRae was present at the meeting but off wandering somewhere when the photo was taken.

Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Chris at 250-390-3415 or send her an email at csouthwick@shaw.ca

Peppers, Tomatoes, Squashes, Cucumbers and many more by Dorothee Keiser



On May 12, the Beban Learning Gardens is having its **BIG Annual Sale** of vegetable seedlings. All plants are grown in our greenhouse using organic methods.

Grow some tromboncino – the easy-to-grow flavourful summer squash that grows up a pole (rather than taking up much space in your garden beds); or try an unusual tomato of the 23 different heritage varieties on sale, and lots of other interesting veggies that do well in our area.

If you are at the BIG Rhodo sale and show on May 12, the veggie sale is right across the parking lots from the Centennial building.

See you there!

My Top Five Rhododendrons – by Dick Beamish

“You should be able to select five of your favourite rhododendrons from the yard full that you have” said John Deniseger. I guess I must have agreed as the reminders started to pile up like the unraked leaves on our side of my neighbours unsightly maple tree. Like all yard work, it is best to just get it done, but when I started to think about selecting 1% of our rhododendrons as favourites, it was like trying to decide which of the dogs Ann and I had over the past 50 years was our favourite. Oh, I should mention that these are **my** favourites as John gave Ann another assignment which was to select her favourite three scented rhododendrons and you can check with him for the logic.

I like a reasonable size truss. We have lots of excellent smaller plants that cover themselves with smaller trusses, but they are not in my top five. I am patient with species and it is most rewarding to see some of the 20+ year old species in our garden blooming for the first time this year, but again it is hard for me to place one of the fifty or so species in the top five. So, here is my list, starting with my favourite. And, before I forget, anyone is welcome to come and take some cuttings.

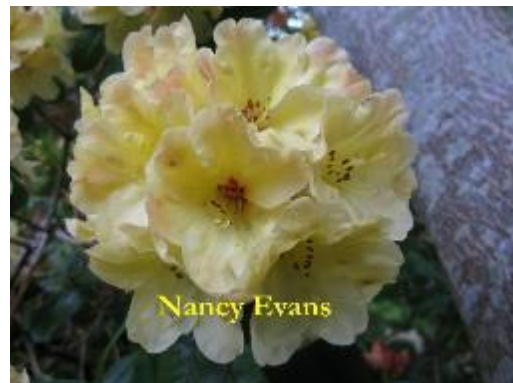
People tell me that the proper name for my first choice is not Lem’s Best Orange; but Richard White called it this when he sold it to me for a hefty sum. It is not in Greer’s book, but I know there are a number of cuttings that have rooted from my plant which is supposed to be the original cross. I grafted



three plants about six years ago that are blooming. The truss is a fluorescent orange that is so brilliant in the filtered sunlight that visitors immediately step toward the plant looking for a label. Gary Korpan takes about half a dozen pictures every year. The leaves need a little work to keep them a respectable green, and this may be why Mr. Lem did not propagate this remarkable hybrid.

I recommend my second choice, Nancy Evans, to everyone and usually

have a few smaller plants to give to perspective new rhododendron enthusiasts. It is easy to grow, full of eye catching multi-colour orange yellow flowers that retain a strong yellow amber colour for a bloom time that is much longer than most hybrids. I grow Nancy Evans in the sun and in almost full shade, all over the yard, with little difference in the number of trusses. A few plants are over 20 years old and about 5 feet high. I noticed that this year there is a nice selection of \$16.00, well-budded Nancy Evans in nurseries that would be nicer gifts for friends than cut flowers.



Lem's Monarch is my third choice, although it is a coin flip winner over Point Defiance. The huge pink trusses are perfectly shaped and large even on younger plants. I like to cut trusses from the top of one of our 15 ft plants for the house or to take to friends. I used to take a truss to the Black Bear Pub where the patrons were as awed by the flower as we are by a *sinogrande* leaf. Our plants grow along the perimeter of the yard, with the impressive structure and foliage providing a friendly barrier with the neighbours.



I really do not have to say much about my fourth choice, Black Widow, as anyone who reads this wants one. We

have three and I grow them in different locations. Readers all know the colour is a dark purple-black that does not fit into any category in Greer's or Hirsutum. Even the American Rhododendron Society labels the colour as "red" which we all know is not quite right. As an aside, gardeners around the world are attracted to black flowers as are hybridizers, so it is to be expected that Black Widow would be a collector's choice. What is surprising is that Thompson hybrid that has been around since 1992 yet, is unheard of in nurseries. Only the occasional truss is perfectly shaped and the leaves can be a little wrinkled. The plant benefits from careful fertilizing and some shade. We keep one in a tub by the front door so it provides a year-round expectation of a bloom that lasts about three weeks in May.



Number five is Rubicon. It is hard to describe the intense red colour of Rubicon, except that it is so distinctive that I use it to compare other reds. Greer considers it to be cardinal red but, in my mind, it is deeper and more intense. The truss is perfectly centered and full of florets that have contrasting white anthers. I think Rubicon has the best leaves of any of our rhododendrons. They are certainly the glossiest, with a perfect shape and prominent veins. This may be hard to believe, but the flowers bloom for well over a month beginning as one of the earlier blooming plants and finishing along with our

late blooming rhododendrons - perhaps, a little like double winner. This is a New Zealand hybrid that I am told may be a little sensitive. We keep ours in the shade and I have one that is in deep shade in black mucky soil. I do not remember how I was first introduced to the plant, but it may have come from Ward Porter's collection. If you see one for sale, buy it and if you are not satisfied with it after a few years, I will buy it back from you.

So, this is my top five. I thought I would add a list of a few more in no particular order. I have photos of most of our rhododendrons on my web page at www.richardbeamish.com if you want to see what the trusses look like.

Cotton Candy
Grace Seabrook
Cathy Jo
Jan Dekens
Horizon Monarch
Angelo
Hallelujah

Van Ness Sensation
The Honourable Jean Marie
de Montague
Taurus
Seaview Sunset
Pretty baby
Pink Pearl

Naselle
Mrs Furnivall's Daughter
Rosalie Hall
Malahat
Karen Triplet

The N.R.S. is celebrating its 25th anniversary!

We've come a long way since September 1992! We have lots to celebrate and be proud of! Through the years, we've all learned so much about rhododendrons and horticulture, participated in plant sales and shows, toured countless gardens but most of all, we've met so many special people. Over the past few months, we've been highlighting some of the club's past activities and events. Please send us your photos or stories – we'd love to hear from you!

This month, we're featuring field trips the NRS has taken over the years, in addition to our annual bus tour:

Trip to Rhododendron Lake - spring 2014 – thanks to Marv Jane Derksen for sending us the photos:



Cowichan River Fall
Colour hike – October
2011

Photos by Susan
Lightburn



Comox Valley Nursery Crawl – Fall 2013 – thanks to
Susan Lightburn for photos



Bandon plant fancier has nearly 900 rhododendrons

(Submitted by Doug Kitts – thank you Doug for bringing this to our attention – the original article written by Amy Moss Strong can be found at http://theworldlink.com/bandon/news/bandon-plant-fancier-has-a-flowering-paradise/article_509c8b92-5428-522c-b8e8-197a7b0e8f93.html)

Jillian and I went for a trip to Oregon in February 2018 after experiencing 28 days of rain in January. We decided to go to Gold Beach, Oregon because the temperature was +17 C. While we were there, I looked up rhododendron clubs and articles as we travelled. I found this article and made some inquiries. I contacted Jack and he graciously invited us over. He had about 2 dozen rhododendrons in bloom. We had a wonderful tour and much work lies ahead. Thank you, Jack Hackett.

BANDON -- Jack Hackett has almost 900 rhododendrons, 100 hydrangeas, many azaleas and dozens of other flowering trees and bushes, berries and even lemon, avocado and orange trees on his property north of Bandon. It all makes him happy, but he'd be even happier if others would come out and tour his gardens.

"Shore Acres has nothing on me," Hackett said from his almost 5 acres just north of Bandon on Hull Loop.

Not only does Hackett have more rhodies than Shore Acres, but his garden also has more than twice the flowering trees of the [O.H. Hinsdale rhododendron garden](#) on Spruce Reach Island near Reedsport.

Eight years ago, if you'd asked the 75-year-old Hackett if he thought he'd be growing flowers, he would have laughed. But he's always loved rhododendrons and some grew wild on his property, so he went to a local rhododendron society meeting and was hooked.

"I got excited," he said.

He went home and began clearing his property, which was covered with timber, and began collecting and planting rhodies. He continued to go to shows and got involved with the Southwestern Oregon Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society as well as the Coos Bay Garden Club. He ordered rhododendrons from all over the world and also picked them up at local nurseries. He can name most of the varieties and tell you when they bloom. Hackett also began planting hydrangeas and other flowering

plants, as well as fruit trees along the property, clearing as he went. The west end of his property is still thick with cedar, fir and pine, which provides a windbreak from the strong coastal winds and creates a micro-climate.

"I took over 200 trees out of here this year," he said. "It was all bad cedar, then I got a chipper and chipped the wood."

Hackett bought a used bucket truck to cut down some of the trees and trim the taller rhododendrons and navigates the property on a golf cart -- fitting, given his proximity to Bandon Dunes Golf Resort. He waters the bushes and plants through a drip irrigation system and fertilizes to keep them healthy.

Hackett has lived in Coos County much of his life, growing up in the Millington area of Coos Bay, where his parents owned several properties and a roofing company. He's worked mostly as a local business owner, but also as a cranberry grower in Bandon, among other endeavors. He owned Bay Burger in Empire as well as Davey Jones Locker in Charleston for 16 years. He met his wife Wanda during that time and moved to Bandon. He and Wanda ran Jack's Pizza (formerly Ragtime Pizza, now Brewed Awakenings) and also owned the Bandon Bay Company, located in Old Town.

A jack of many trades, Hackett also is a builder. He built all the buildings on his property, including their home, shop and many outbuildings. He has a passion for making birdhouses, which he now gives away. He tried selling them once, but people wanted to special order and then he had to make them, which took the fun away.

Wanda supports what he's doing but doesn't have the passion for it that her husband does.

"Seventy-five percent of the people in the Rhododendron Society are men," Hackett said. "We all work together and support each other. I think it's just the challenge. I just love it."

Tom and Liz Hultin and Bob and Marjene MacIntyre are two other local couples, among others, who also are rhododendron enthusiasts. MacIntyre, who is the most knowledgeable of the group, was former president of the local chapter and is now president of the national chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. He recently attended the annual meeting in Williamsburg, VA.

While there is no overall plan, Hackett just wants to cover most of his property with flowering bushes and trees. It all keeps him busy most days, between taking care of the gardens and attending meetings and functions. He also hosts the annual picnic for the local rhododendron society chapter and other events at his property.



Something is in bloom in his garden all year long - rhodies bloom through July; then the hydrangeas kick in. Hackett wants to encourage people to come out to tour the property and hopes to publicize his gardens through local businesses.

"I think it could be an attraction for this area someday, if I keep going -- and I will keep going," he said. "I'd like to have something here that everyone can enjoy."

Remember at the April meeting, David Mitchell will have Milner memberships available at a significant discount – a great opportunity!

Seen in Passing...

- Our garden in a state of suspense as we wait for spring.
- The development of a very special species garden at Milner.
- More and more garden events as spring approaches.
- Rhodos in bloom.
- Sea lions by the hundreds off of Denman Island.

Official Opening of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden

1:00 pm Sunday, April 22nd

from Geoff Ball; Executive Director, Milner Gardens and Woodland

Vancouver Island University's Milner Gardens & Woodland, along with the five District 1 Island Chapters of the American Rhododendron Society, will be officially opening the new Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens & Woodland on Sunday, April 22nd at 1:00 pm.

This new addition to Milner Gardens & Woodland has been many years in the making and we are looking forward to welcoming our members and guests into this new space. The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden is a long-term project that will take years to fully complete. However, it is already a place of beauty and interest that deserves to be thoroughly enjoyed, starting this spring.



Have you seen something "...in passing..."??? Please let us know - we can include it in our next newsletter!

Raffle Plants for April meeting:



Rhododendron 'Checkmate'

Bronze winter foliage sets off the brilliant lavender/pink flowers of this small-leafed, dwarf hybrid and PJM relative. *R. 'Checkmate'* blooms in March or April and brings much-needed colour to the landscape.



***R. kiusianum* Komo Kulshan**

Pink flowers have a picotee edge with a white throat. Plant is low-growing and compact. A favorite for bonsai, rock gardens and those who love dwarf foreground plants. Listed as a species. (Tsutsusi) azalea Kyushu, Japan 2' -24 deg.C M-ML; flowers are pink-purple-white; evergreen-semi evergreen. Sun or part shade

Please consider recommending / reviewing books – either from our library or other specific books that you feel might be of interest to other NRS members – any contributions would be much appreciated.

Rose Rogan's Rhododendron Planting Mix (from Doug Kitts)

Rose Rogan, owner of Perennial Ridge Farms, usually prepares an 8-yard mix, but has broken her recipe down into a 1-yard quantity to make it easier for all.

1-yard fine bark mulch

1 ½ bales of peat

8-pound nutricote (14-14-14)

1-pound superphosphate

1-pound trace elements

1-pound dolomite lime.

"When I make my big 8-yard mix, I spread the bark and peat out on a big cement slab. Next, I apply all the fertilizers on top. Then I rototill it 3 times over, until fully mixed; so, with the one yard mix, it could be done by hand on a driveway slab or such."

Rose Rogan



**We're planning a new
gardening event!!!**

The N.R.S. and M.A.R.S. are teaming up to create a 1-day gardening event. We are putting together a day full of interesting speakers for all gardeners including of course, rhododendron enthusiasts. Chris

Southwick and John Denisegeer are representing our club on the organizing committee. Stay tuned for further information.

When: Sunday, October 28th, 2018

Where: Parksville Conference Center



**The Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden
Society Annual Spring Flower Show**

Friday, April 20-1 pm to 8 pm

Saturday, April 21- 9 am to 3 pm

Club Members' Plant Sale -11 am on Saturday

Come to see rock and alpine, succulent, woodland and wetland plants. There will be plant and seed sales, door prizes, a silent auction, tea and more!

Cadboro Bay United Church

2625 Arbutus Road,

Victoria

Admission by donation

Mark your calendar!

The 18th Annual N.R.S. Bus Tour

Saturday, May 19th, 2018



Continuing our tradition of visiting a great mixture of gardens, nurseries and special places!!! More details at the April meeting and in the May newsletter.

But it's not too early to book your seat – contact David and Joyce Mitchell at 250-245-5601 or David's cell at 250-729-6498 or email at

drumsbythesea@shaw.ca

What does our Executive do?

As most of you already know, the NRS AGM (and election) will be conducted at our May meeting and there will be a number of vacancies on our club's executive. In our last newsletter, we highlighted the duties of the president and the treasurer. For this month, here are the job descriptions for the vice-president and the secretary. Watch this space for more information next month...

Here are the Vice-president's duties:

- Assist President where required
- Chair general and board meetings in the President's absence
- Attend ARS District One meetings with the President or in their absence

Here's what the Secretary does:

- Record minutes of general and executive meetings.
- Distribute minutes to president to edit and to distribute to the newsletter editor and other executive members.
- Report correspondence received to executive and general meetings when appropriate.
- Conduct any correspondence required by the Society.
- Provide notice of Annual General Meeting to members and to the public at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting.
- Notify ARS secretary of changes to the Executive.



Please consider joining "the team"!

Annual Truss Show - Part 1 by Jan Moles Saturday, May 12 (The day before Mother's Day)

Last year, the annual truss show was exciting with entries from seasoned rhododendron growers and new members alike.

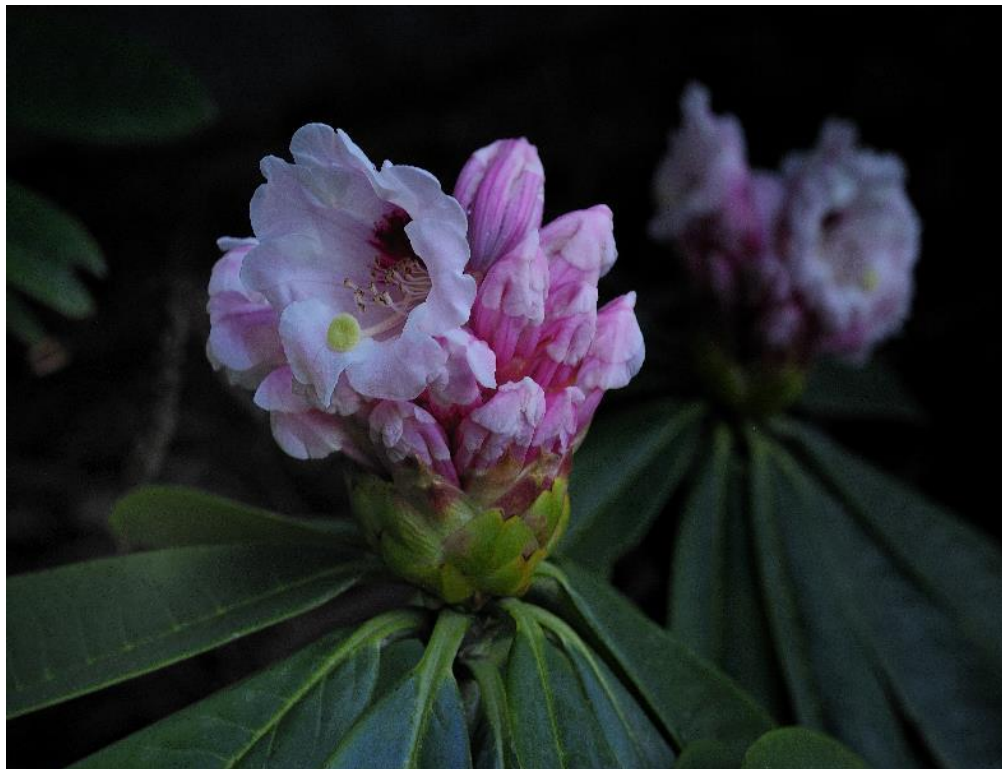
Increase your knowledge and appreciation of rhododendrons by participating in the show! If you have a beautiful rhododendron in your garden, blooming at the right time – think about entering it – just one truss, or many. Consider entering a truss into the foliage class; foliage can be stunning on its own!

To ensure uniformity in the show, don't guess which class your truss belongs to. There is an updated PDF file with a list of plants sorted into show classes available from the truss show page of the club website. If in doubt, leave the class blank and it will be filled in at the registration desk.

To avoid the Saturday morning rush (and make it easier on our volunteers), and if you possibly can, please bring trusses in between 6pm and 7:30pm on Friday evening (May 11). Alternatively, if Friday is difficult for you, trusses can be entered from 6:30 – 7:30am on Saturday morning.

Registration forms will be available at the NRS meetings prior to the show, attached to the May newsletter, or at the registration desk on the Friday or Saturday. Your name, the name of the truss and its entry class should be entered on the first page of the registration form. On the second page, provide a duplication of the truss names in the same / identical order to the list on the registration form. On arrival, give the registration form to people at the desk, thus enabling the withdrawal of the appropriate rhododendron name cards from the bank. Keep the separate list (page two) for assistance in organizing your entries on the show table. (Matching the identifying cards to the entries has been a major hold-up in the past). The desk will provide you with the numbered identifying cards; again, in identical order to that on the registration form. On the table adjacent to the registration desk, entrants can then place trusses in the water filled bottles provided and arrange them in the same order as on the registration form. Help will be available for this and in transporting the bottles and appropriate identification cards to the display tables. Members entering more than 15 trusses might consider having a friend or spouse to help. It is very important to get your entries to the registration desk before 7:30am on Saturday morning, any entries arriving after that time will be displayed on the 'for display only' table.

Please check the May Newsletter for more information on this exciting event: tips on exhibiting trusses or sprays, the two-page registration form, as well as a couple of botany lessons from the ARS that make interesting reading. Meanwhile, access valuable information and tips from the winter 2013 ARS journal, the NRS website and the NRS May, 2012 and 2013 newsletters.



R. calophytum – photo by Susan Lightbutn

*Looking
forward to
seeing you
all at the
April
meeting!
Remember
we're
starting
early at
7:00! ☺*