

The Rhodomentum



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

April 2023

President's Message

Dear NRS members,

Well, we have finally reached the official beginning of Spring, with warmer temperatures and surprisingly little rain. Some of us probably have some early blooming rhododendrons in flower right now, I know we do.

It was good to learn that 38 members came out for the pruning demonstration at the March meeting, followed up by a good turn out at the Hailey Grove demonstration.

Our club projector is not working and I have taken it to a repair shop in Courtenay. Fortunately, we have access to a TV in the meeting room, and I have recently purchased a remote control and 15-foot HDMI cable for it.

Our planned bus tour is happening, with interesting north island destinations. (See details on page 6 of this newsletter.) The annual club plant show and sale on May 13 is pretty much all set.

There will be some local member gardens being opened for club only members to visit. (See web page for dates and locations or p.7 in the newsletter.)

Our next meeting is on April 13 and we will have our very own John Deniseger give a talk on "Why I Grow Rhodos" and as usual, some interesting plants being raffled.

Best regards, Ron Sutton, NRS President & Treasurer

OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373				
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415				
Past President	Rosina Schmidt	758-7589				
Secretary	Deborah Francis					

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COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Advertising Margaret Cadwaladr
Library Ann Beamish / Gaylle McRae
Newsletter June Bouchard / John Deniseger

Membership Jan Moles
Program by Committee
Raffle Val Harvey
Social Deborah Francis
Bargain Table Reinhold Gorgosilich

Website Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt

Bus Tour David & Joyce Mitchell

Sunshine Wanda Brenton
Propagation Rosina Schmidt
Hailey Grove Deborah Francis

Show and Sale Jan Moles and Rosina Schmidt

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: nanaimorhodos.ca

Our next meeting - Thursday, April 13th, at 7:30

"Why I Grow Rhodos"

with John Deniseger at Beban Park Social Center



Our Program for April:

John Deniseger is a retired aquatic biologist (BC Premiers Legacy Award, BC Hall of Excellence), outdoor enthusiast, and long- time member of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. He is past chair of the Milner Gardens and Woodland Society Board, and chair of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden Advisory Group. John and his wife June received the ARS Silver Medal in 2021.



June and I have been growing Rhododendrons for more than 35 years. Ten years ago, we were building our new home in Bowser as well as designing our new garden. Not surprisingly, we were featuring rhododendrons in much of the garden. One of the challenges was choosing which rhododendrons to include. A conversation with a friend led me to think further about what made this genus so appealing. My presentation will take a look at the world of rhododendrons from a somewhat different







PLEASE NOTE:

Many thanks to the following members for bringing goodies to our April meeting: Margaret Cadwaladr, Linda Moore, Krystyna Sosulski, Moira Timmons.

Stay connected - check our web page - new things added regularly!

http://nanaimorhodos.ca/

N.R.S. Calendar - Spring is coming! There are many events being planned – you will want to mark your calendars!! It's going to be busy!!!! Don't forget to tell your friends!



April 11th, 2023: Milner Gardens – Species Garden Open House (details on p.5)

April 13th, 2023 meeting: "Why I Grow Rhodos" with John Deniseger

April 18th, 2023: Hailey Grove Work Bee

April 21st to May 6th: Various open gardens – see p. 7 or http://nanaimorhodos.ca/ for further info.

May 9th, 2023: Hailey Grove Work Bee

May 11th, 2023 meeting: "Trusses! Trusses! Group discussion" Details in May newsletter.

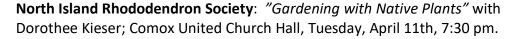
May 13th, 2023: NRS Plant Sale and Truss Show

May 20th, 2023: Bus Tour – going north! See page 6 for further details!

June 10th, 2023: NRS Year End Get Together

Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: "Cracks and Crevices, the Art of Rock and Crevice Gardening" with Paul Spriggs; Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday, April 12th, 7:30pm





Victoria Rhododendron Society: "Irish Gardens" with Norma Senn; Glendale Gardens, Thursday April 6th, 7:30pm

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society:; St. John's Anglican Church Hall 486 Jubilee Street, Duncan. Wednesday, April 4th, 7:30 pm

Milner Gardens and Woodland: open Thursday to Sunday 11:00 to 5:00. Check the Milner website for details: Milner Garden Events



We now are on Facebook as the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. Upcoming events will be posted there and members will be able to add photographs or items of interest to members.

(Thank you, Margaret, for setting that up!)

Congratulations to Bryan Jubinville on his Bronze Medal





The Nanaimo Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

takes great pleasure in awarding its highest honour,

THE BRONZE MEDAL

to

BRYAN JUBINVILLE

Bryan has been a member of our club's executive for many years, and has been involved in many of the club's activities. He worked with the City of Nanaimo to declare May as Rhododendron month and has lead the club's reconnection to the Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park. With his sunny disposition he has been an ambassador for our club at our plant sale and truss show and through his work on publicity and the creation of a video for our 2012 Western Regional Conference. Bryan has also been a key contributor to our club's propagation group, working to root many cuttings and nurturing them on for future plant sales. He and Eileen have generously opened their garden to club members a number of times through the years.

"A gush of bird song, a patter of dew
A cloud and a rainbow's warning;
Suddenly sunshine and perfect blue
An April day in the morning!"
- Harriet Prescott Spofford

A Special Invitation: Greig Rhododendron Species Garden



Rhododendron season is back and heating up. Milner Gardens and Woodlands is inviting members of all District One chapters to a celebration of the Greig Species Garden on Tuesday, April 11, 1 to 3 pm. Milner will be open only to ARS members at that time (free admission); it's a low-key affair with refreshments and

few speeches, giving everyone a chance to wander the paths while recognizing and appreciating how it has progressed.

This garden opened five years ago; since then, many more trees and rhododendrons have been planted, bulbs and drifts of companion plant added. A few more are still being planted, replacing any that have died and filling in unused areas. You will also be able to survey the hillside site where plans for the second phase have already begun.



PHOTOS: John Deniseger



What do you get if you cross a four-leaf clover with poison ivy? A rash of good luck.

What do you call it when worms take over the world? Global Worming

Mark your calendar! Our Annual N.R.S. Bus Tour is Back!!! Saturday, May 20th, 2023





Remember When We Used to...

- Get up EARLY and drive to a closed shopping centre...
- Drag our body onto a bus load of sleepy or coffee infused Rhodo junkies, dragging lunch bags, coffees and little bags of treats to share...
- Head off to unknown destinations, knowing only the general direction and the estimated time of return...
- Give ourselves over to talk and banter with our fellow travelers and hosts, while trying to figure out: a) when the washroom stop might be, b) what are the answers to the quizzes, c) what plant delicacies can be stuffed inside the bus luggage compartments...
- Tour various private gardens rounded up for viewing by the tour hosts' very talented scouts, both from within the club and from connections within other clubs...
- Grew increasingly envious of the abilities of these gardeners to create these divine spaces that would otherwise be acres of blackberry vines and broom displays strewn across the inhabited acres of Vancouver Island...
- Marveled at another wonderful public garden in our midst, carefully tended by a host (or a handful) of volunteers...
- Had an opportunity to shop at a nursery farther from home with an eye-catching array
 of plants, pots, or seeds that we are sure we can find a space for in our own setting...
- Could sample wines and learn more about Island delicacies and shop for local foods and condiments...
- Scooped game prizes, or envied those who did, on the way home, including some for doing well on those quizzes...
- And, did it all relaxed and able to enjoy the sightseeing, with club members, friends and family, while a professional took care of the driving...



Guess what! Those days are finally back and we're on the road again!

This year's trip will be centered largely in the Comox Valley. Specific gardens and destinations will be revealed at the start of the trip.

Meeting Place: North end of Woodgrove Mall, next to Chapters and Starbucks

Time: Departure at 7:30. Anticipated time of return between 6:00 and 6:30 pm.

Cost: Base rate \$55 plus gratuity for the driver. An additional charge of \$12 will apply to the optional wine tasting.

Further information may become available as the itinerary is finalized. Right now, we need to sell tickets and we are inviting you to have friends and family members join the tour. Tickets will be sold on a first come, first served basis to ensure that we achieve our target of 40 plus passengers. We will also be advertising the trip to other garden clubs' members. If you have questions or wish to reserve your space, and arrange payment, talk to David or Joyce Mitchell, email us at drumsbythesea@shaw.ca or call and leave a clear message at **250-245-5601**. Please ensure we have your name and phone number.

NRS MEMBERS OPEN GARDENS SCHEDULE – Spring 2023



As we slowly move into spring, a number of club members are generously opening their gardens to club members. It's always fun and inspiring to visit gardens in the spring!



Here is the schedule as it stands so far – check the NRS webpage regularly for updates:

21st of April – 3–5 pm, Margaret and Jim Caldwaladr – 3175 Bay Str., Nanaimo, NEW!

28th of April – 3–5 pm, Lilian and Stanley Peters – 6200 Sechelt Dr., Nanaimo, BC;

2nd of May – 3–5 pm, Chris Southwick – 6647 Green Acres Way, Nanaimo, BC;

5th of May – 3–5 pm, Mike and Mary O'Neil – 25 Ashlar Ave., Nanaimo, BC;

6th of May – 3–5 pm, Wanda Brenton – 3043 Jameson Road, Nanaimo, BC; NEW!

The NRS at Nanaimo's Seedy Sunday on March 5th

Here are a couple of photos from Rosina. As always, Nanaimo's Seedy Sunday was a success with great attendance. The NRS had a lovely display promoting our club and raising awareness. Thank you to everyone who helped set up and participate!





A look back at our March meeting:

An informative and entertaining presentation by Scott Wiskerke on pruning rhododendrons at our March meeting. It was followed by a hands-on demonstration on Saturday, March 18th at Hailey Rhododendron Grove in Bowen Park on a beautifully sunny Saturday morning! (See photos on p. 9).





Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee ~ Bowen Park

By Deborah Francis, coordinator

Holly and Ivy in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden, sounds idyllic but it is not. We need your help to assist in removing invasive species from Hailey Grove at Bowen Park. Come and be part of the fun!

The next monthly work bee will be held on **Tuesday, April 18**th **from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**. If you can spare a little (or a lot) of time, all are welcome to spend some time in the rhododendron garden – weather permitting. **Please note:** for April only, it will be on the third Tuesday of the month to allow NRS members to attend the special event at Milner Gardens on April 11th – see details of this event on p. 5.

"Everything is blooming most recklessly; if it were voices instead of colors, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night." - Rainer Maria Rilke, "Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke"

March 18th Rhododendron pruning workshop with Scott Wiskerke

A large group of NRS members came to the Hailey Rhododendron Grove on a beautiful spring day to learn more about rhododendron pruning. Scott lead us through the principles of how, when, and why to prune rhododendrons, using some of the groves established plants as teaching tools. There were lots of questions, enthusiasm, and a few "surprised looks" as Scott lead us through the process. The group also took the time to walk through the area, appreciating the beauty of the established plants as well as the collective work of the hard-working NRS members who have been cleaning up the Grove.





(Photo by Margaret Cadwaladr)

(Photo by John Deniseger)

APRIL GARDENING CALENDAR

"No rain, no flowers!" "No matter how long winter is, spring is sure to follow!"

...Remember, as long as there is snow on Mt. Benson; do not plant any tender vegetables...

Mason Bees: Plant early flowering plants that bloom when there are few other present. Add additional nests, according to blossom presence.

Rhododendrons: good time to fertilize your young plants using slow-release fertilizer. Apply beneficial nematodes to rhododendrons and the lawn. Prune shrubs after flowering: fertilize with all-purpose 6-3-6. Deadhead the blossoms as they finish blooming.

General Gardening: Clean out the ponds and start the pumps. Add fish and water plants in ponds. Divide summer-flowering perennials and **set some aside to bring to our plant sale on May 13**th!!! Plant new perennials. Rake out moss from the lawns. Place peony support rings before growth gets too tall. Apply slug bait around emerging hostas.

Happy Gardening,

Rosina T. Schmidt

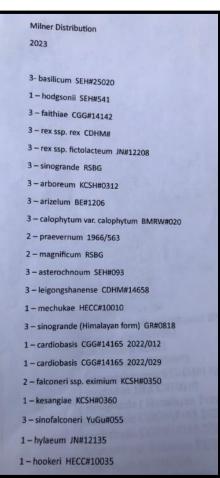
An update on the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner

As discussed at the last meeting, we've begun moving forward on phase 2 of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner. Phase 2 will be located in the vicinity of the viewing platform and massive old growth Douglas Firs overlooking the Salish Sea. The focus for this phase will be large leaf and "tree-like" rhododendrons. Significant onsite work needs to be done to prepare for eventual planting – slope stability assessment, landscape design, tree assessment etc. In the meantime, the Species Garden Advisory Group (includes members from each Island Chapter, VIU and Milner) has begun the process of plant selection and acquisition. See below for a report from Ron Sutton on their foray to the RSBG to collect the first group of plants for phase 2.

From Ron Sutton: As some of you know, Rea and I went to the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden on March 25th to get a selection of species rhododendrons for Milner Gardens. These rhododendrons will be part of phase two of the Greig species garden. Many wonderful specimens were brought back, with some of them being unfamiliar to all but the serious collector. The gardens had a few plants in bloom, but recent cold temperatures have delayed the blooming of others. It was a special treat to be personally shown around by Steve Hootman, who is the Executive Director and Curator at the RSBG and one of the few rhododendron experts in the world.

Here is a photo of Steve Hootman with Atsuko Gibson who is the nursery manager and assistant curator. They put the plant order together.





The plants coming to Milner



Some of the rhododendrons being brought to Ron and Rea's vehicle.



Plant of the Month by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron orbiculare

This species rhododendron grows wild in the Guangxi and Sichuan provinces of China. It is a relatively slow growing shrub, to only 3 feet in 10 years, but eventually 6-10 feet.



It produces distinctive, oval, lily pad shaped leaves, and medium to dark pink loose flower trusses of 8-12 flowers. It blooms in late April to early May, and is rated hardy to -5°F/-20°C This rhododendron prefers sun to light shade. My plant gets a bit of direct morning sun, and then is shaded the rest of the day. This plant has received the RHS award of garden merit, but it isn't easy to find. My plant seen here, photographed on May 2nd, was purchased from Fearing Farm, which is now closed. The RSBG and Chimacum Woods nursery in Washington list it in their offerings.

N.R.S. Plant Sale and Truss Show is coming soon!

Time to think about and prepare for our plant sale and truss show!

- We need volunteers for the day of the sale you'll have the opportunity to sign up at our upcoming meetings.
- Divide and pot up perennials to bring to the club's sale table.
- Bring trusses to the truss show you just might win a ribbon!
- Come to the May meeting to hear all about what makes a beautiful truss
- TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS ABOUT THE NRS TRUSS SHOW AND PLANT SALE!!!



NRS Annual Plant Sale and Flower Show

Beban Park, Centennial Building 2300 Bowen Road, Nanaimo

Saturday, May 13th - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm





The plant sale hosts vendors and growers from all over Vancouver Island, specializing in rhododendrons, unique and interesting perennials, alpine and woodland plants, bulbs and seeds....

Members enter rhododendron trusses to the flower show – illustrating the great variety of rhodo blooms and foliage, hybrids and species. Judges will choose the best in each category.

A great place to get a beautiful plant for your garden, for a friend, for Mother's Day....

Join us - admission is free

For details of the event, see: http://nanaimorhodos.ca/truss-show/

Annual NRS Truss Show 2023

Saturday, May 13th at Beban Park Centennial Building 10am to 2pm by Jan Moles

Our Truss Show and Plant Sale for 2023 is back to the Saturday before Mother's Day. If you have a beautiful rhododendron bloom in your garden, think about entering, just one truss, or many. We have quite a few new members this year so take the challenge, make one entry to the show. Every bloom helps to make our show spectacular and the process for entry is clearly explained on the web site. Instructions for preparing the truss by our very own expert Chris Southwick (a frequent winner) are also available on the web site. Click here for details. SO, come help us make it once more a showcase for rhododendrons!

There will be display tables available; if you do not want to enter the competition and you have a favourite in your garden that is in glorious form, bloom or foliage, consider bringing it for the display only table to help make the show more appealing to the eye and to share the joy! See below, a few photos from previous shows.



2022: The judges Sean Rafferty and Garth Wedemire take their time and look seriously at each class. Glenda and Deborah are explaining the layout, following the judges to record the results and re-arranging the entries for better visibility when necessary.

There will be notes recorded from the judges where they have comments to make about a specific entry.



The best in show winner for 2022: Peach charm.



Your hard working registration scribes in 2022

Consider entering a truss this year – it is not just for experts; it could be a flower truss, an azalea spray, or a truss into the foliage class. New members entering the show for the very first time can win a prize



Two long term members celebrating an outstanding entry in the foliage class



The foliage table, with judging & workers in the background

Hope to see you all on the weekend of the show, if you don't want to enter come and enjoy the spectacle!

To enter involves gathering your entries the night before, filling in your entry forms in advance, turning up between 6pm and 8pm on Friday May 12th to make your entry if at all possible, or around 7 am on the Saturday morning for those who

really can't make it on Friday because they live outside of Nanaimo. Club members will be available from 7am on Saturday to help set up your entries, answer any questions....

Detailed instructions on how to enter are available on our website under Truss Show. There is a poster available for download on the website if you have somewhere you can display it, or hand it out. All help with advertising is very welcome.

Last minute instructions for entering Rhodo Trusses to the show on 13th May 2023

- 1. Be sure to read the Hints and Tips section below on picking your entries for the show, on preparing them for entry, and on displaying your rhodo trusses to the best advantage.
- 2. Entries need to be received at the registration desk between 6pm and 8 pm on Friday, May 12th if possible please. If you come from afar and need to register on Saturday 13th, registration clerks will be available from 7:00 am and the last entries will be accepted at the registration desk at 8:00 am; all entries arriving after that time will not be entered and will be displayed on the 'display only' table. Judging starts at 9am.
- 3. Please complete the two-part registration form:
 - Page 1 is a list of your entries with the class if at all possible, please. (the clerk will retain this page) a.
 - b. Page 2 is a list of your entries in exactly the same order as is on page 1 (this list is for you to keep track of your entries and to help transfer them to the show table) (You can find the 2-page registration form on the NRS Web site and also in the newsletter below. A list of the entry classes can be found on the NRS web site 'Truss Show' section, and also a long list of rhodos by class. If in doubt, help will be available at the registration desk to find the correct class for the entry).
- At the registration desk, please put your entries in the water bottles provided and line them up on one of the tables 4. adjacent to the desk, in the order in which they appear on page 1 of the form. Corks are available to help display your entries to advantage in the bottles.
- 5. Take your registration form to the desk. The registration clerk should return page 2 to you.
- 6. You will receive a card for each entry from the registration clerk which will have the name and class of the rhodo truss and an entry number on a small sticker.
- 7. Put each card into a wooden card-holder next to the correct entry, and with the help of a registration clerk, the entries will be transferred to the show display tables to the correct sections.
- 8. There is lots of help available from the registration desk for those who need it. Good luck!





R. oreotrephes is an Elepidote Species.

Species are botanically identified plants originating from seed or cuttings.



'Black Widow', a 'red' hybrid was the PEOPLE'S CHOICE in 2019.

Hybrids are plants resulting from crossbreeding of more than one species, hybrid, or combination thereof.

If you have a particular rhodo truss or foliage, beautiful, a bit different that you think people might like to see - but not for entry to the show - please bring it for the 'display only' table.

Tips on Exhibiting Trusses and Sprays (also to be found on Web site)

A day or two before the show, go around and make a list of the blooms you will pick in the morning; the day before the show, organize whatever containers you will be using to transport your blooms to the show - they needn't be elaborate - empty bottles or cans work well. Be careful to avoid crushing the blooms. Fill the containers with water almost to the top. Bottles in six-pack cartons are great for transporting blooms.

Picking blooms always takes more time than you think it will! When choosing trusses, select ones that have straight stems with the bloom at the top. Don't choose ones with crooked stems that are growing at odd angles (e.g. pointing straight down). When choosing sprays, look for ones that will present themselves gracefully in a bottle. Pieces of cork can be used to stabilize the stem in the neck of the bottle (bottles and corks are available at registration).

Prune judiciously, if need be, to enhance the shape of a spray. You can remove a damaged leaf or two, as long as you leave a set of leaves in good condition encircling the bloom. Remove additional leaves further down the stem. Avoid choosing entries with bruises. Sometimes rain damage is inevitable but avoid it if you can. Look for freshness.

In a spray, it is better to have one or more unopened flower buds (for they frequently open after they have been picked) than to choose blooms that are already open and going past their best. Some judges like to see one or two unopened or partially opened buds, but a truss must not have flowers from more than one bud (except for the hammerhead class). Hammerhead definition (Seattle) is "inflorescence with multiple rachis emanating from a single leaf stem".



Thor won BEST IN SHOW in 2019, it has a 'Lax Truss' where the individual flowers are loose, not rigid



'Irene Koste'r featured in the 'Azalea (Truss or Spray)' class in 2019: Multi-stems emerging from a single stem



Foliage: R. macabeanum, winner of 2020 online show.



R. schippenbachii winner of 2020 online show.

Truss Show Registration Form – to be handed to registration clerk

Category/Class								
Truss Name								
Entrant's Name								
Number Please leave blank								

Truss Name	Truss Name









It's time for the annual ARS convention,

this year held jointly with the Azalea Society.

Come to Atlanta!

...for spectacular public and private blooming gardens, banquets, keynote speakers, and supporting sessions! This is a once-a-year chance to mingle with fellow rhododendron members while making new friends and lasting memories.

April 19-23

Information and registration **HERE**

(deadline for discount hotel rates: March 31!)













Looking forward to seeing you all at our April 13th meeting! 3

