



The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



April 2024



President's Message

Hi Everyone,

The mild spring weather continues, but frequently too wet to get anything done in the garden. I know that many of us have plants blooming right now. I received my first mosquito bite of the year, no doubt one of many to come. I saw my first Rufous Hummingbird of the season on March 25, and bird song now fills the air.

We had a good turnout of 35 people at our last meeting to listen to a talk by Susan Zaric, a gardener for the city of Nanaimo. She told us about the projects her and her crew work on and the challenges they deal with.

Those at the meeting saw a potted display of *Rhododendron grande* in flower. For more information about this plant, see the Plant of the Month feature in this newsletter on page 11.

The District One meeting on March 26 was attended by three NRS executive members and delegates from other rhododendron clubs, including the president of the ARS. We discussed solutions to some of the challenges each club faces. As some of you may know, work is being done for the next "Fall into Gardening" conference which will be presented this fall. It will have some good speakers, including Steve Hootman. If you didn't see the Ken Cox Zoom presentation, it is now posted on YouTube. It is quite good if you have an interest species rhododendrons and the early plant explorers that found them. (Details on p.12 below)

At our next meeting, we will have Garth Wedemire, who is well known and a fellow NRS member, give a talk.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Ron

OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373
Vice President	Dorothee Kieser	390-4136
Past President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Secretary	Deborah Francis	
Treasurer	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373

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Wanda Brenton	754-1039
Margaret Cadwaladr	585-6046
Arthur Lightburn	468-7516
Gayle McRae	758-7589
Krystyna Sosulski	729-0948
Chris Southwick	616-2742

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Advertising	Margaret Cadwaladr
Library	Ann Beamish / Gayle McRae
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	by Committee
Raffle	Val Harvey
Sunshine/Coffee	Wanda Brenton
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	
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 11th, at 7:30 pm

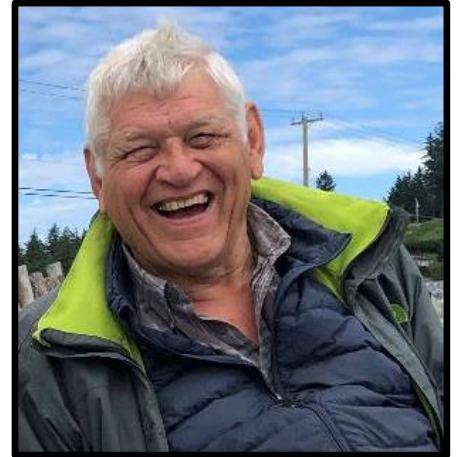
"Finnerty Gardens"

With Garth Wedemire

At Beban Park Social Centre

Our Program for April - "Finnerty Gardens" - with Garth Wedemire

Join Garth Wedemire as he highlights some of his favourite rhododendrons in this photographic tour of Finnerty Gardens in Victoria. Finnerty boasts more than 200 rhododendron species – some exceeding 6 metres in height – making it one of the best collections of rhododendrons in Canada. For the past 50 years, the original rhododendron collection of Lake Cowichan’s George and Suzanne Simpson has been augmented and curated to include companion plants, a woodland pond, a stream and over 19 delightful garden beds. On April 11th, come along for an armchair view of Finnerty through the eyes of Garth Wedemire. You just might be inspired to take your own – in-person – springtime tour of Finnerty.



For almost 50 years, Garth Wedemire has been a member of the American Rhododendron Society and a great admirer of the genus Rhododendron. He is on the board of directors of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden and has travelled in Nepal and China on RSBG sponsored trips.

Garth received his first of 3 bronze medals from the Vancouver chapter in 1989, followed by medals from the Fraser Valley (2001) and North Island (2019) chapters. When he received the ARS Silver Medal in 2013, the following words were used to describe his many contributions:

“You have faithfully served the Chapters of District 1 and represented the interests of the American Rhododendron Society to a standard of excellence for more than 35 years. By using your many talents, you have been a soothing teacher, an aesthetic photographer, a masterful propagator, and a rational philosopher. You have been able to convey your ideas with a quiet and peaceful humility. Your webmaster abilities, photographic expertise, and your grace of lecturing have been invaluable to the Chapters in District 1. Our members feel both grateful and fortunate to have been the benefactors of your multifaceted talent. For your many contributions and your outstanding service, the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to award the Silver Medal to Garth Wedemire.”

Garth currently lives in Langley with his wife, Sue. He remains a curious and ardent follower of all things botanical!



**Thank you to Susan Lightburn
and April Johnston for bringing
goodies to our upcoming April
meeting.**



Looking Back at Our Last Meeting...

At our last meeting, Susan Zaric gave an excellent presentation on the work that the Nanaimo Parks Department do in our community. We were impressed with the enthusiasm with which she and her co-workers tackle the tasks at hand, often under challenging circumstances.



Susan shared her thoughts with Dorothee after the meeting:

"I enjoyed meeting you all and talking about our work in Parks. It was a great exercise for me to work on my public speaking skills and just take the time to think about all we do each growing season. It certainly gave me some perspective. Thank you again, Susan"

Seedy Sunday 2024



The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society was well represented at the latest Seedy Sunday in Nanaimo on March 3rd. The attractive and informative display drew a lot of attention. Thank you to all the volunteers who made it happen!

Gayle and Allen McRae with Deborah Francis – photo by Rosina Schmidt.

Did you know??? We are now 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!)



NRS Upcoming Program for the rest of the Year:

- **May:** “Plans for Milner Rhododendron Expansion” with Geoff Ball, Jim Cadwaladr and John Deniseger
- **June:** End of Year Party on Saturday, June 22nd at Rea and Ron Sutton’s place in Fanny Bay! Further details in upcoming newsletters! 😊

Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:

Milner Gardens and Woodland: Open Thursday through Sunday, from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. For details, check the [Milner Website](#)

North Island Rhododendron Society: “Paths to a Garden” with Margaret Cadwaladr, Comox United Church Hall, Tuesday, April 9th at 7:30.

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: “Success with Summer and Late Season Bulbs” with Jo Canning, Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday, April 10th, 7:30pm

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society: “Paths to a Garden” with Margaret Cadwaladr, Wednesday, April 3rd, at The Hub in Duncan.

Victoria Rhododendron Society: “Preparing Trusses for Display” - Couvelier Pavilion, Glendale Gardens, 505 Quayle Rd, Saanich, Thursday, April 4th, 7:30pm

Gift Basket for the ARS Conference:

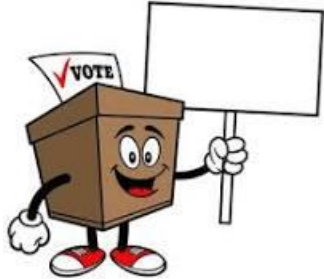
The organizers of the upcoming ARS Convention in Bellingham are planning a silent auction featuring baskets of goodies. The theme of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society basket is “Vancouver Island”. Please consider donating an item to help fill the basket – keeping in mind “no alcohol per hotel policy”. Thanks in advance for your contributions. **(Contact Chris Southwick or bring items to the April meeting.)**



Wanted!!!

Photos of beautiful rhododendron trusses, foliage, or other Rhodo features

by Dorothee Kieser



NRS wants to have its own cards, rack cards, and other advertising material to show off the plants we enjoy so much. At the April meeting, we will have a contest to choose the photos we like the best.

So PLEASE bring photos (1, 2 or many) to the April meeting. Photos should be 4x6, glossy prints. They should have the species (or cultivar) name and your name written on the back of the photo.

We will put them on a poster board and number them. Then the voting begins: Choose the photo(s) you like best and which you think will get the most attention when used for promotional material.

Then put your vote into the tin provided.

The most popular 3 photos will be chosen and the #1 photo will receive the prize donated by Dick Beamish: a 3-gallon Lee's Scarlet Rhodo.

It will be fun to look at all the beautiful plants displayed in your photos.

For the winners: you will be asked to submit an electronic copy, so the club can use it for promotional material.

Thanks for participating.



Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee ~ Bowen Park

By Deborah Francis, coordinator

You know that Spring is just around the corner when the rhododendron buds are forming and the daffodils are sprouting.

Our April work bee will take place on Tuesday, April 9th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The garden will be in bloom and everyone is welcome – parking at the tennis courts. Bring good cheer, your gardening gloves, and a snack. The City will provide gardening tools.



Hope to see you there! Come and be part of the fun! 😊

First rhododendron blooms at Hailey Grove! Photos taken on March 16th by Rosina.





Our annual plant sale is coming up on Saturday, May 11th. With spring weather finally here, you are quite likely in the process of subdividing perennials – please reserve/pot some up for our Plant Sale table at the May 11th Show and Sale. 😊

Mark your calendar – Saturday May 11th is our Annual Plant Sale and Truss Show – held at Beban Park Centennial Building!

There are many ways in which you can join the excitement! You can start now by saving plants as you divide up your perennials. You can also sign up to help on that day – volunteers will be needed for a variety of jobs for both the Truss Show and the sale including: cashiers, set-up, clean-up, helping vendors, working with the public, helping customers load plants, smiling, etc... 😊

From Rosina: As our 2023 cuttings still need 2-3 years to grow, we purchased from Allan and Liz Murray most of their 4-year-old, 2-gallon rhododendrons for our May sale. Quite a few of them are Jim Barlup varieties and all are looking good. The list of the species and hybrids (see next page) will also be available at the plant sale.

Thank you to Chris Southwick for graciously offering to pick up the plants – and to the Murrays for their ongoing support.



Something to Look Forward To! from Ron Sutton

As you all are aware, our annual plant sale is coming soon on May 11. The NRS needed more plants for the club's sale table as we don't have enough salable propagated ones yet. The club has remedied this shortage by purchasing some from Liz and Allan Murray. Here is the list of the recently acquired plants that will be available at the sale.

2024 Rhodo Plants purchased by club for May 11 Sale

R. April Rose	<i>R. rigidum</i>	R. Cunningham's White
<i>R. bathyphyllum</i>	R. Souselito	<i>R. decorum</i>
R. Blutoxia	R. Sun Melody	R. Double Winner
R. Butter Brickle	R. Tara Too	R. Fire Bird
R. Honeymoon	R. Unique marmalade	R. Helene Schiffner
R. Ink Spots	R. Vincent Van Gogh	R. ingianum
R. Judy's Choice (Barlup)	R. Virgo	R. Kingston
R. Langley Tranquility	R. Your Move	R. Lena Patricia
R. Lois Blackmore (Barlup)	<i>R. yuefengense</i>	R. Meela
R. Marie Starks X Flinkii	R. barrio lavender	<i>R. morii</i>
<i>R. morii</i> (Dr. Rhodes farm) select species	R. Blue and Gold	<i>R. oredoxa forgesii</i>
R. Mrs. Jamie Fraser	<i>R. bureavii</i>	R. Peeping Tom
R. Murple's Purple	<i>R. bureavii "Lem's Form"</i>	R. Percy Wisemann
R. Night Wind (Barlup)	<i>R. campylogynum myrtioides</i>	R. Rio Carnival
R. Peach Charm	<i>R. charitopes</i>	R. Seaview Sunset
R. Purple Twilight	<i>R. ciliatum</i>	R. Tinkerbird
R. Qualicum Pride	R. Cody	
	R. Command Performance	

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

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

An Update on our Activities at Milner

Greig Rhododendron Species Garden

Phase 1 of the GRSG (Greig Rhododendron Species Garden) continues to flourish. There's so much bursting into bloom as the days lengthen and warm up. **We're also planning our first weeding work bee of the spring on April 2nd at 9 am.** It's a great opportunity to spend time with other gardeners in a beautiful setting. You just never know what you'll learn or who you'll meet from other clubs.

Planning and preparation for phase 2 of the GRSG continues to move forward. At the Advisory Group meeting on March 19th, a number of items were discussed including: the initial arborist's work on the upper section; plant selection and approach; plant acquisition; slope stability and experimentation of "wattling" on the slope below the viewing platform. We may be able to begin planting the upper section as soon as this fall!

Longmeadow Shadehouse at Milner

In early April, the shadehouse will be prepared for the spring thru fall seasons. Over the winter, we were trying to keep the warmth in, now we shift to keeping the heat out. We'll put the shade cloth over the structure, roll up the lower 5 feet or so of the sides, open the doors and turn the irrigation on.

We've set up a weekly maintenance schedule in cooperation with MARS members – we alternate weeks. **When we put out the call for the summer, the roster filled in a few days. Thank you to everyone who signed up to help out. You guys are awesome!** 😊 If you'd like to join the team, please see John or Chris.

Longmeadow Shadehouse Checking Crew for the upcoming months...

WEEK of:	Volunteer 1	Volunteer 2
April 8th	Rosina Schmidt	Wanda Brenton
April 22nd	Dorothee Kieser	Chris Southwick
May 6	Jim Cadwaladr	Margaret Cadwaladr
May 21	Rosina Schmidt	Deborah Francis
June 3	Ione Brown	Elaine Hutchinson
June 17	Dorothee Kieser	Joyce and David Mitchell
July 1	Chris Southwick	Elaine Hutchinson
July 15	June Bouchard	John Deniseger
July 29	Ione Brown	Joyce and David Mitchell
August 12	Chris Southwick	Dorothee Kieser
August 26	Jim Cadwaladr	Margaret Cadwaladr
September 9	June Bouchard	John Deniseger



Propagation News By Rosina Schmidt

Our 2023 cuttings at the Paine Centre received a second liquid fertilization. The photo shows Christine Quist and Dorothee Kieser preparing the sprinkler head.

The Patient Gardener...

Gardening can often be a journey of passion, patience and perseverance (of course, non-gardeners might call it obsession and stubbornness 😊). Rhododendrons (particularly some of the species) can sometimes test our patience. Here's a photo from Rosina's garden. Her *R. pachysanthum* is about to bloom for the first time. She planted it 20 years ago!!

"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust." ~ Gertrude Jekyll



Sad News...



We were sorry to hear of Les Clay's passing on March 5th, 2024. Les was a very knowledgeable rhododendron enthusiast and a regular vendor at our annual plant sale for many years – no

one could jam as many plants in the back of a pickup truck as Les did. Les was also a speaker at our club many times over the years. Our sympathies to the Clay family.

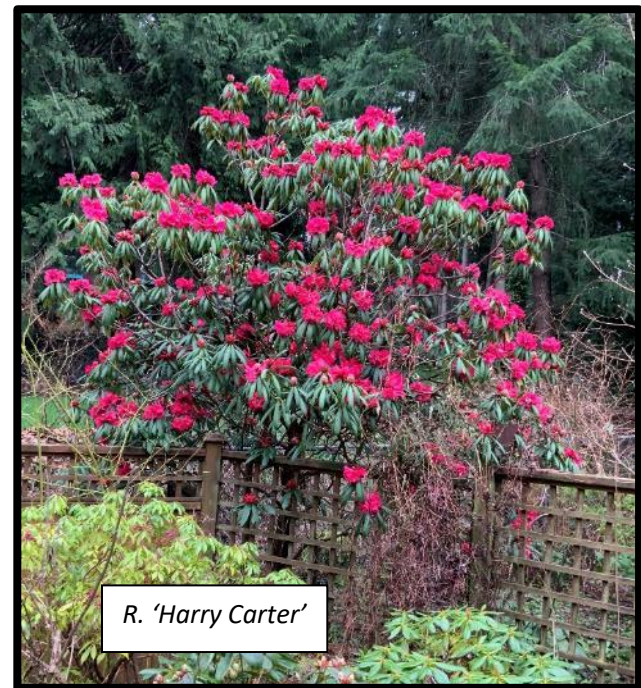
For more on Les Clay's career and contribution to the horticulture world, please [click here](#)

Photo: Les Clay (with daughter Barb Nelson) planted the first rose bush in the Beverly Anne Clay Memorial Rose Garden at the Derek Doubleday Arboretum named after his late wife. (Langley Advance Times files)



The Anticipation of Spring...

Is there anything that brings more joy than the disappearance of the cold, damp, grey days of winter and the arrival of the sunnier, brighter days of spring and the colour of spring flowers! As much as we love the flowers and trusses of May, it is the anticipation of spring and what's to come that makes us so enjoy the early flowering rhododendrons. They somehow seem just a little brighter, and they last much longer. Here are a few examples from Chris Southwick's garden...



Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!' - Robin Williams

Plant of the Month by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron grande

I chose this **potted** plant because it is blooming right now for me, and it's the first time I'm seeing it do that. I had protected it in an unheated garage during freezing temperatures this winter.

It is a 2-foot-high plant that has been very slow to open its bloom buds - the cool temperatures having something to do with that.

Classified as a big-leaf species rhododendron, the leaves on my plant are not as big as they will be, given that my plant is young and small right now.

Rhododendron grande, belongs to section Ponticum, subsection Grandia, and is a tender species, hardy to only -12°C. It is native to regions of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan at elevations of 2500 to 3000 metres. The large leaves are medium green with a textured surface, and elliptic in shape with off-white indumentum. The creamy white campanulate flowers with dark purple nectar pouches form dense trusses of 15 to 25 flowers. It will grow to eventual tree size of 30 feet, in part shade and optimal conditions.

The following photos are of my plant taken March 19, 2024. It was acquired from Fearing Farm Rhododendron Nursery.



"It was such a pleasure to sink one's hands into the warm earth, to feel at one's fingertips the possibilities of the new season."

~ Kate Morton

March 2024 ARS District #1 talk: Ludlow and Sherriff plant expeditions 1930-40 Presented by Ken Cox

(Editors note: If you missed his presentation in early March, it was recorded and is available for your viewing pleasure – see below. And BIG thanks to our friends from the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society for the following information.)

Ken Cox from Glendoick, Scotland, speaks about the expeditions and plant introductions of Ludlow and Sherriff, two great plant hunters, in Bhutan, Tibet and India in the 1930s and 1940s. He displays their photographs and film footage as well as his own photos of virtually all the areas they visited.



Click here to view the presentation: [Ken Cox District 1](#)

Ken Cox is:

- A world recognised expert in rhododendrons, azaleas and woodland gardening.
- Managing Director of Glendoick Gardens and Garden Centre.
- Author of *“Woodland Gardening”*. Winner of the European Gardening Book of the Year 2019
- Author and co-author of 6 books on rhododendrons.
- Plant Hunter and Explorer, discovered new rhododendron species.
- Breeder of many rhododendron and azalea cultivars.
- Advisor and consultant on all aspects of woodland and rhododendron gardening.
- Advisor to National Trust (England, Northern Ireland) on woodland garden restoration and planning.
- Experienced lecturer on Scottish gardens & gardening, woodland gardening, plant hunting, rhododendrons and azaleas.
- Songwriter and Musician.

Coming up in our gardening community:

Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

present

Sharing our Collective Wisdom

Monday, April 29, 2024

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

1:00 pm

(Doors open 12:30)

**Three highly respected and knowledgeable
Vancouver Island gardeners will lead a discussion,
sharing their unique knowledge
and answering questions from the audience.**



Dan Schwarz



Sue Klapwijk



Al Murray

Dan, Sue and Al propagate and grow a wide range of horticultural treasures – including alpins and rhododendrons - in their extensive gardens in the Alberni Valley, Black Creek and the Cowichan Valley.

**There will be plants to purchase.
Coffee/tea and door prizes.
Everyone welcome. Guests: \$3.00**



SAVE THE DATE !

ARS 2024 Spring Convention

Bellingham, Washington

May 2-5, 2024

Four Points by Sheraton, Bellingham

Hotel and Conference Center

714 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham, WA, USA, 98229

Phone: +1 360-671-1011

Highlights:

Pre-Tour: May 1: Private Gardens around Seattle

Convention: Tours * Seminars * Workshops * Banquets

Post-Tour: May 5: Gardens around Vancouver, Canada

Time to check your Passport!

Plus:

Plant Sales * Auctions * Raffles * Photo Booth * Poster Session

Help get the message out!

Please forward to friends and gardeners in your community and around the globe.

Visit [ARS 2024](#) for more information and to register.

(Editor's Note: if you haven't been to an ARS Spring Convention for a while or if you've never gone, this may be the time to go! It's only a ferry ride and a short drive away. Check [ARS 2024](#) and the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society for details.)

Rhododendron Glossary...



We're building our very own collection of terms related to rhododendrons, one word at a time. Each month, we'll add a new word or term to the glossary. If you have suggestions that you'd like us to add, please let us know.

This month's words are: Calyx and sepal

Sepal: any of the outer parts of a flower that enclose and protect the unopened flower bud. The sepals on a flower are collectively referred to as the calyx. They are sterile floral parts and may be either green or leaflike or composed of petal-like tissue. (from Brittanica.com)

R. thomsonii ssp. thomsonii is known for its conspicuous calyx (photo from ARS website)



Refer to previous issues for ...

- March 2024: **Bud Blight**
- February 2024: **Clone and Grex**
- January 2024: **Hammerhead**
- December 2023: **Chlorosis**
- November 2023's word: **senescence**
- October 2023's words: **Elepidote and Lepidote**
- September 2023's word: **tomentum**
- June 2023's word: **indumentum**
- May 2023's word: **truss**



Looking forward to seeing you all on Thursday, April 11th!