

# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



December 2006  
December 2006



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I look forward to seeing you at our Christmas potluck and auction on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Remember to bring some finger foods for the potluck, items for the auction (rhododendrons, companion plants, crafts, etc.), and a non-perishable food item for the Salvation Army hamper.

You can open space in your garden by selecting large plants that you might wish to move or to dig up and donate to our Christmas auction. Remember to wrap them or pot them up for transporting safely.

The recent heavy snowfall pulled down some of our trees and has broken branches on the shrubs and rhododendrons, helping to open up our older garden beds. Now is a good time to look for overhanging branches that can be trimmed to keep them from dropping on the rhodos under heavy snow loads.

Craig

## EXECUTIVE

President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Vice President	Paul Lawry	390-2370
Secretary	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Treasurer	Linda Lawry	390-2370
Directors	Valerie Harvey	754-6659
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Mike Miller	758-2879
	Chris Southwick	758-0993
	John Deniseger	390-3605

## COMMITTEES

Advertising	Mike Miller	758-2879
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Helene Sullivan	758-7023
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Program	Chris Southwick	758-0993
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Pat Schulson	245-3369
Dollar Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society  
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email: [nanaimo@rhodos.ca](mailto:nanaimo@rhodos.ca)

## NEXT MEETING

DECEMBER 14, 2006

BEBAN PARK

6:30 PM

## CHRISTMAS PARTY AND AUCTION



# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

## **TWIGS AND STEMS**



**Goodies for December meeting:**

Everyone!



**Malaspina Choir and  
Vancouver Island Symphony**

Present

### **Handel's Messiah**

Friday, December 8, 7:30 pm  
Saturday, December 9, 7:30 pm

Port Theatre

Tickets available at the Port Theatre box office

(you will know someone in the Alto section)



### **2007 ARS Annual Convention**

The Northern California Chapters invite you to attend the 2007 annual convention, "Rhododendrons at the Golden Gate," April 12 - 15, 2007, with an optional post-conference tour April 16 through 18. The convention features outstanding tours of private and public gardens, featured speakers, and workshops for both beginner and experienced rhododendron enthusiasts

Watch the ARS Journal for information



Please let Craig know if you have any larger rhododendrons in your garden you would like to donate to the project in Ucluelet

## **CHRISTMAS PARTY AND AUCTION**

The NRS annual Christmas Party and Auction will be held at our next meeting. Start time is one hour earlier, at **6:30 pm**, to allow time for socializing, eating and auctioning. Members are asked to bring one item for the auction. It could be a plant from your garden, something you have made, or some other item you think would be of interest to other members. Please no used items! In order that we can recognize everyone's donations, put your name on the item you bring to auction. Please bring a plate of finger food to share. Beverages, plates and napkins will be provided by the club. Paul Lawry will be our able auctioneer. There will also be many items for raffle, and smaller contributions are welcome. 10% of the proceeds of the auction will be given to the Salvation Army. There will also be a box for your donations of non-perishable food, which will also be given to the Salvation Army for their food hamper program. Those who bring a donation for the food bank will be entered into a draw for a prize! This event is one of two major fund-raising events we have for the club's operating costs. We appreciate your contributions. **Bring a friend**, and enjoy a fun social evening!



# **NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

## **Coming and Going – by Glenda Barr**

### ***New Members***

#### **Mary Jane and Rob Derksen**

Rob and Mary Jane moved to Gabriola from Ontario about 4 years ago. They lived in the Long Point Beach area, gardening in climate zone 6b, and were growing 6 hardy rhododendrons. Mary Jane was quite attached to these plants, and when she came ahead of Rob with a half ton truck, she loaded it with her good dishes and her rhododendrons! Growing rhodos is quite a challenge in Ontario, but Mary Jane had been inspired by a sheltered rhododendron garden under some pines at the University of Guelph to find some hardy specimens and plant them. Wind damage was more of a concern than the cold and snow. She was thrilled to have the opportunity to indulge her passion for rhodos on balmy Gabriola! Joining the Gabriola Garden Club, she met Bob Rhodes and toured his garden with the group. Bob was a tremendous help and inspiration, and together they identified the one rhodo that was on the Derksen's 5 acre property when they purchased it. They determined that this was 'Dido' (*dicroanthum x decorum*). The plant is perhaps 25 years old, blooms in April starting with an orange/red bud, transitioning in colour during its long bloom to finish as yellowish. Some scent has been detected and the plant does well with little attention. All of these factors have made it a favourite of the Derksens.

The Derksens have 5 acres on the waterfront, and about 250 rhododendrons! They generally buy small plants which start out in a garden shed facing the ocean. Mary Jane came to our spring show and purchased about half a dozen plants. At the same time she picked up a membership form and heard about the ARS conference at Harrison. They attended the Harrison conference and thoroughly enjoyed it, buying about 20 more plants, including some vireyas and species. Mary Jane was looking

forward to joining our group and meeting others just as crazy as she is! Rob isn't much on meetings, but plans to attend garden tours. Greer's Guide has proved invaluable in making plant choices, and is fast becoming quite worn! The biggest problem they have is a lack of water. Their water comes from a cistern, and drought tolerance is a key factor in landscaping. Whiskey barrels and other containers are often used, filled with a mix of decaying wood from the forest, some peat and bagged seedling mix.



At this point, R. 'Cheer' is full of buds, promising blooms early in the season. Favourite plants include the well-established 'Dido', 'President Roosevelt' and 'Goldflimmer' with their variegated leaves, and 'Jean Marie de Montague' and 'Anah Kruschke', which seem quite drought-tolerant and have done well for them in full sun. They particularly enjoy good foliage plants, which can be very attractive year round. One of the most special of these is *Macrosepalum* 'Linearifolium'.

Mary Jane is interested in all aspects of rhododendron growing. She has done some propagation of cuttings, and has layered her 'Dido' so that she can share it with Bob Rhodes. She enjoys the physical aspects of caring for her garden, and doesn't see it as work. It is a pleasure to welcome Mary Jane as a new member with such keen interest, and we look forward to welcoming Rob when he joins us for garden tours and perhaps other activities!

#### **Sandy Carpenter and Ben Nixon**

Sandy and Ben moved to Nanaimo from Qualicum Beach last January and heard about our club from their neighbour, Donna Porter. Aside from a weeping birch, there hadn't been much landscaping done on the property, and they set to work on the front yard. They have a few projects to finish in the front and then the back yard to start on. About 20

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rhododendrons have been planted, along with groundcovers, heathers and other plants. The deer found their primroses to be a treat, chowing down on them one colour at a time. Ben is the head gardener and he likes to try new things. In years gone by, he was a champion dahlia grower, traveling around the Pacific Northwest to show his flowers. At present, he is working on the mainland which prevents him from attending meetings on a regular basis.

Sandy enjoyed Harry Wright's presentation at the last meeting and found his slides of 'Cupcake' and 'Blue Peter' to be especially appealing. She looks forward to getting tips, increasing her knowledge and learning from the experience of others, as well

as meeting new people. We welcome Sandy and Ben to our club and look forward to sharing the growing experience with them.

## **Judy Daneluk**

We would also like to wish a warm welcome to Judy Daneluk, whose husband, Earl, was profiled in the last issue. We haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting Judy, but hope we will be able to do so at a future meeting or event.

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## **Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Meeting Nov 9, 2006**

Meeting called to order at 7:35 p.m.

**Secretary's Report:** M/S/C to adopt the minutes of the last meeting as printed in the October newsletter.

**Treasurer's Report:** Balance: General Account - \$2654.40

### **Committee Reports:**

Program: December Auction/Potluck. Speaker for January – Ingeborg Woodsworth

**Membership:** A good many of our members have been renewing their membership but we still have a few to contact. Anyone who knows someone who hasn't paid as yet, please urge them as the monies must be forwarded to ARS by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Dollar Table:** A few plants were brought in, but thanks to Harry Wright, there were plenty of rhodos to purchase.

**Old Business:** Volunteers requested to collect donations for the auction.

**Executive meeting:** Next meeting to be held at Mike Miller's on Nov 16 @ 7 p.m.

**Door prize/Name Tag/Raffle draws winners** – A group of 'very nice' 😊 members were awarded so many prizes and so quickly that the sub-secretary was lax in getting the names. Congratulations to all those lucky winners.

Chris introduced Harry Wright who presented a very interesting slide show on Life in a Rhodo Garden.

Meeting adjourned: 9:05 p.m.



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## *Rhododendron macrophyllum* on Mt Elphinstone. by Craig Clarke

The Pacific coast rhododendron (*R. macrophyllum*) is a rare plant in British Columbia. The western boundary of Manning Provincial Park has a projection along the highway above the Skagit River to include Rhododendron Flats with a grove of these magnificent plants. Until recently, the only other documented locations in British Columbia were at Rhododendron Lake in the Englishman River watershed west of Nanaimo and Weeks Lake near Shawnigan Lake. These locations have fewer plants than the Skagit River drainage.



Last May, Ron Knight visited a small grove of rhododendrons on Mt Elphinstone near Roberts Creek, two kilometres above the Sunshine Coast highway. Fortunately, the plants were saved from logging. Ron has written an article about the trip and the plants in the October 2006 issue of *Indumentum*, the newsletter of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society ([www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/vrs/october2006.pdf](http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/vrs/october2006.pdf)).

The location can be seen on Google Earth as a grove of trees within a logging clear-cut. The grove on Mt Elphinstone is 55 kilometres northeast of Rhododendron Lake across the Strait of Georgia and is likely the northernmost location for the species.

The truss colour of the Pacific coast rhododendron is usually pink but it ranges from white to red. The picture was taken at the Club Truss Show last May. 'Seven Devils' is a selected form of the Pacific Coast Rhododendron collected in Oregon.

Dr Ben Hall and his students at the University of Washington have studied DNA variation within the Pacific Coast Rhododendron (see the article in the winter 2006 issue of the ARS Journal Volume 60, number 1, page 37). They found that DNA samples collected from plants in BC, Washington, Oregon and California could be grouped into four categories. These categories are thought to share a common ancestor and are called *clades*.

Clade 1 is generally found near the ocean. Clades 2 and 4 are the principal forms at mountainous sites in British Columbia and southern Oregon. Clade 3 is the main type found in the Cascade Mountains in Oregon. The Mt Elphinstone and Weeks Lake (Shawnigan) populations contain clade 1, as do the plants around Puget Sound. However, the plants at Rhododendron Lake have clades 2 and 4, indicating that they are closely related to those in Manning Provincial Park.

Merry  
Christmas