

The Rhodomentum



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

December 2019



Hi everyone!

Christmas is around the corner and so is our Potluck & Auction on the 12th of December at 6:30 p.m. It is our FUNDRAISER, and it is always great fun to participate in it, not to mention all that great food that our eager cooks graciously offer. As reported at the meeting, June Bouchard and Chris Southwick will introduce us to different auctions this year, so it truly promises to be much fun!



In other news, I am happy to report that Don Noakes has joined the propagation team. Our great propagators are delighted, and hope that others will join them too. Thank you, Don!

R. "Elizabeth", with its large red trumpet flowers usually celebrates spring. This year, though, R. "Elizabeth" with its Christmas-red trumpet flowers is floriferously blooming in my Departure Bay garden. Is it because our fall temperatures are higher than usual? Or is this hybrid known for such capricious behavior this year?

Be it as it may, warm winter or no winter, I truly am wishing you and your family, blessings of abundance and grace this Christmas!

Rosina

EXECUTIVE		
President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Past President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Secretary	Jan Moles	758-2574
Treasurer	Liz Higgins	390-9340
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	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Gaylle McRae	758 7589
	Don Noakes	778 441-4783
	Ron Sutton	905 331 5527
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Advertising	Allen McRae	
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman	
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger	
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski	
Program	Committee	
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Social	Deborah Francis	
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich/Don Noakes	
Website	Craig Clarke	
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell	
Sunshine	Ann Beamish	
Propagation Group	Ron Sutton	
<p>Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4 Website: nanaimorhododos.ca email: rhodomentum@nanaimorhododos.ca</p>		



**Annual Christmas Fun Auction
 and Finger Food Potluck! (details on p.3)**
Thursday, December 12th, 6:30 - please note earlier start!

Twigs and Stems

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Milner Gardens and Woodland: Milner Christmas Magic. December 6th to 8th, 13th to 15th and 18th to 22nd. It'll be here before you know it!

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

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: Members only Christmas social - Sunday, December 8th

North Island Rhododendron Society: Tuesday December 10th, Annual Christmas Dinner and party; RSVP to Antje Guertler or Noni Godfrey by Dec. 1st

Nanaimo Horticultural Society: Wednesday December 11th, Christmas party at MGM Restaurant

Nanoose Garden Club: Thursday, December 5th at 5pm Christmas Dinner and Social, Nanoose Place: Members -free; guests \$5.

Qualicum Beach Garden Club: next meeting on January 14th.



Bus Tour 2020:

Following up on last month's meeting, please note that Joyce and David will have a questionnaire ready for the January meeting and newsletter to get feedback from the membership on upcoming bus tours. The questionnaire will have to be returned by the February meeting. (See item #8 in minutes below.)

Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Chris at 250-390-3415 or 250-616-2742 (cell)
or send her an email at csouthwick@shaw.ca

December 12th, 2019 at 6:30

Once again, it is time for our annual *Christmas Party and Auction* to be held in our regular meeting room on Thursday, December 12th – **dinner starting at 6:30.**



In addition to your own plates, glasses, cups and cutlery, please bring your favorite **finger food** potluck dish, sweet or savoury, for all to share. The social committee will provide coffee, tea and a non-alcoholic punch, as well as turkey and ham.

After dinner, *Santa and Mrs. Claus* will conduct an auction on donated items as a fundraiser for our club, with 10% donated to a local charity.

However, we are adding a few new “fun auction” ideas this year:

- *Dutch Auction*
- *Silent Auction*
- *Loonie Auction – please bring rolls of loonies to join in the fun!*
- *“Mystery Item” Auction (pre-wrapped)*



We’re looking for items for the auction (plants and garden related things are a favorite), but all items, homemade or purchased, are welcomed. Smaller items are also welcome for the raffle prizes. Here are a few suggestions of items:

- Bulbs or small house plants.
- Consumables like vinegars, cheese, bottles of wine, soaps with a horticultural name or theme.
- Useful items like small vases, scissors, napkins, deck of cards with plants/flowers on them, garden-themed calendars, etc.

Everyone’s welcome – bring friends, guests, neighbours! 😊

Please note:

- **For our auction, please cash and cheques only!**
- As always, a box will be provided for dry good donations which will go to Loaves and Fishes. Money donations are also welcomed for the Loaves & Fishes – please give these to our treasurer, Liz Higgins.

November 14th, 2019 - General Meeting Minutes (by Jan Moles):

1. President's Report: Rosina Schmidt

The meeting was opened at 7:30 PM by President Rosina Schmidt who welcomed speakers Paul Wurz and Bill McMillan; and guests Chris Hodgson, director of district 1, and his wife Dorothy; and Liz & Al Murray.

- a. Action taken from previous meeting: A cake was donated to the MARS' 30th anniversary.
- b. The executive meeting suggested giving one free membership to the Paine Horticultural Centre for use of students or staff helping us with the propagation and that this should be put to the membership for agreement; members present were in agreement unanimously.
- c. Proposal for a table at Seedy Sunday is still ongoing.
- d. Thank you to:
 - i. June and John for the well-written and executed November Rhodomentum newsletter
 - ii. Chris Southwick for the generous offer of overnight hospitality to our guests.
- e. More members to assist with propagation are needed to ease the load on the current small group. It doesn't take much work (especially if you live nearby), probably 15 minutes weekly at the Paine Centre on East Wellington Rd. The task is to check the status of the cuttings: water and temperature. No volunteers were forthcoming.

2. Treasurer's Report: Liz Higgins

Report was made available on front desk for those who wanted to read it.

3. Secretary's Report: Jan Moles

No correspondence. Previous month's report available on front for those who would like to read it.

4. Membership Report: Krystyna Sosulski

No report.

5. Plant Sale Status Report: Art Lightburn and Ann Beamish

- a. Art reported that Rose Rogan from Perennial Ridge will sell plants wholesale; Joe Hudak who normally sells plants for Rose at Cowichan sale has kindly offered to come and sell for us. Some transport is still offered but more is needed – anyone who can help with this will get their gas paid; it really needs to be some kind of covered truck/trailer.
- b. Paul Wurz is going to have a table at the plant sale.
- c. Dave Godfrey from North Island club will sell us plants wholesale, we will have to collect & sell.
- d. Ann reported that she has sent contact letters to all of our previous vendors and is just waiting for their response.
- e. We still need more vendors.

6. Sunshine Report: Ann Beamish

Nothing to report.

7. Christmas Potluck & Auction, ideas & suggestions: June Bouchard/Chris Southwick

Date is December 12th - finger food potluck, as usual. PLEASE BRING items for the auction; plants from garden, other gardening items, and if you can – something for the silent auction. This year we are trying to change it up with different auctions: in addition to our regular Santa-led auction (thank you David and Joyce for agreeing to join us again this year!), there will be a Dutch auction - start bidding high, lower price; a Loonie Auction – you need to bring a roll of

loonies; there will also be mystery items in the auction - don't know what is inside. PLEASE bring something for the food bank (it has been suggested cash is better as it will buy more food than we can donate) - 10% of auction proceeds goes to "Loaves & Fishes". Check the newsletter for more on what is going on. Ann reminded everyone that it is a FUNDRAISER so expect to pay the value. Any suggestions, let Chris or June know.

8. Bus Tour: David Mitchell

There will be a questionnaire in January. David & Joyce wish to give us something to think about in the meantime: could we do a weekday instead of Sat./Sun.; need to find good gardens and nurseries to visit; price is a problem; think about how you would like to see the bus tour. If you have an idea, do not hesitate to give Joyce & David a call (number is in newsletter).

9. Milner Species Garden: John Deniseger

The garden continues to grow. We received a grant from the ARS. John and Paul Wurz went to the Species Garden in Washington to spend some of the money. They were met by Steve Hootman and with his able assistance found lots of great plants to purchase. John and Paul went with the intention of purchasing 30 rhodos, but with Steve's help, came back with 50 some of which are very unusual. One of the plants will be sold at the Christmas Auction, and it is special so watch out for it!

END of Business.

- **1st Guest Speaker: Paul Wurz: on "Taking Cuttings"**

15 minutes break

The Raffle - Anne Davey and Val Harvey - prizes were: R. "Bremen", *Bureavii x yakushmanum*, R. "Blueshine Girl".

- **2nd Guest Speaker: Bill McMillan on "Cultivation, Pruning, Pests and Diseases Specific to Rhododendrons"**

Thank you very much to our two guest speakers!

Next meeting: 12th of December at 6:30 p. m. at Beban Park Social Centre: Christmas potluck and auction.



Date	Speaker	Topic
December 2019	Christmas potluck and auction!!	Start thinking of possible contributions to the auction!
January 2020	John Deniseger and June Bouchard	Gardens of New Zealand's North Island
February 2020	Sean Rafferty	Favourite Himalayan Plants
March 2020	Linda Gilkeson	Life After Pesticides
April 2020	Shannon Berch	Soil Biology
May 2020	Dick Beamish	My Favourite Trusses

*"I heard a bird sing in the dark of December;
A magical thing and sweet to remember;
We are nearer to Spring than we were in September."*

~ Oliver Herford, "Hope", in *The Century Magazine*, January 1914

Useful Links

Victoria Rhododendron Society: victoriarhodo.ca/index.html

Cowichan Rhododendron Society: cowichanrhodos.ca/

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: marsrhodos.ca/

North Island Rhododendron Society: nirsrhodos.ca/ws/

The American Rhododendron Society: rhododendron.org/

Linda Gilkeson's website: lindagilkeson.ca/

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden: <https://rhodygarden.org/>

Why do some rhododendrons bloom in the fall? by John Deniseger

It seems that almost every year, a few of our rhododendrons bloom in the fall. Some seem to be immune to this, while others appear susceptible. Often, only one or two flowers open or sometimes the entire plant is in bloom. There are several reasons why some plants appear to be “confused”. Here’s what largely appears to trigger fall blooming:

1. The hours of daylight are similar to what they are in the spring when these plants normally bloom.
2. Even with irrigation, our plants tend to be a little dry through our typical east coast Vancouver Island summer droughts. If we have a soaking rain or two in September (as we did this year), we are mimicking the spring moisture conditions.
3. This year we had cool weather in the early fall, followed by milder, warmer conditions. Overall, the days are warm but the nights are cool, again creating very spring like conditions. In other words, light, moisture and temperatures are sending signals to the plants that say “Winter is over, IT’S SPRING!”.



Lee's Scarlet – November 27, 2019



Hansel – October 18, 2018

Will they bloom again the next spring? Well that depends....

The buds that opened and bloomed in the fall will not bloom again in the spring. If your plant only put out a few blooms in the fall, it'll look pretty normal next spring. If it bloomed profusely in the fall, you should have taken photos because you won't see many blooms the following spring...

Greig Rhododendron Species Garden

Update – by John Deniseger

The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner continues to thrive and move forward. In July, the project received a grant from the ARS to support the acquisition of more rhododendrons for the garden. A small committee fine-tuned the “wish list” of plants needed to help fill in the garden. In early November, Paul Wurz and I, (on behalf of Milner and the five Vancouver Island rhododendron clubs) went down to the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington. Working with Steve Hootman, the RSBG’s executive director, we returned with fifty



One of many hoop houses at the RSBG - so many plants to choose from and difficult decisions to make.

rhododendrons for the collection as well as a

number of companion trees, shrubs and smaller plants. Many of the new rhododendrons are rare and unusual or endangered in the wild. Some are found on only one or two hillsides in China or North Vietnam and are just becoming available for cultivation. Special thanks to Steve Hootman for all his help and support!

Volunteers from NRS and MARS have placed, planted and mulched the new additions. Further plans are being made to add more companion plants and rhododendrons next spring. Be sure to take some time to explore the garden next year – there should be lots in bloom. The garden has come a long way in only a few years!



Some of the new plants at the RSBG – (from left to right) John Deniseger, Steve Hootman, Paul Wurz.

The garden in December – a few things to do:

- Containers that stay outdoors all winter need to be raised up with pot feet so they don't get waterlogged.
- It's not too late to plant up a window box or [hanging basket](#) with winter bedding.
- Cut back [ornamental grasses](#) and bamboos if needed.
- Order your seed catalogues; these are all available online, but it can be more fun to pore over a paper version.
- Now that a lot of the growth has died away, there's an opportunity to take a good look at the [hard landscaping in the garden](#) – the fences, paths and seats – to make sure they're all in good condition for next year.
- [Patios and paths](#) can be scrubbed with a stiff broom or blasted with a pressure washer.
- Clear out the garden shed and make sure it's secure for winter.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING.....hang out a bird feeder – somewhere you can see it but that the cats can't get to. There are lots of different ways to help birds through winter but a feeder is easy and rewarding. It's also one of the simplest methods of attracting a good variety of species. <https://www.housebeautiful.com/uk/garden/seasons/a1103/gardening-december-jobs/>

MILNER CHRISTMAS MAGIC

PRESENTED BY

WINDSOR Plywood
the experts you need to know!

Walk through twinkling trees glowing with dazzling lights,
listen to live music and visit Santa.
Storytelling and refreshments onsite.

DEC 6-8, 13-15 & 18-22, 2019
5-8:30 PM (LAST ENTRY 8 PM)

For more info, visit milnergardens.org or call **250.752.6153**
2179 W. Island Highway, Qualicum Beach

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY
MILNER GARDENS & WOODLAND
EP
Parkville Heavy Equipment
The Lounge
McGORMAN MacLEAN
Vivien SEARS
Ian Lindsay
The Beach

Registration is open for next spring's 75th Anniversary Convention in Portland – sign up early!

The American Rhododendron Society 75th Anniversary Convention

American Rhododendron Society
75th Anniversary
20/20
VISION
Looking forward, reflecting back
Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020
ARS75.org



You're invited to the celebration!



World-renowned Keynote Speakers
Kenneth Cox • Jens Nielsen • Steve Hootman • Juliana Medeiros
Lionel de Rothschild • Steve Krebs • Valerio Seza • & more!

Tours to the Northwest's
Outstanding Gardens & Nurseries

**April 29-May 3, 2020, Hosted by ARS District 4
Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA**

20/20 Vision will include these international speakers and more:

- Kenneth Cox from Glendoick in Scotland
- Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury in England
- Jens Nielsen, plant explorer from Denmark
- Steve Krebs and Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum
- Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

Garden tours will include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crystal Springs Botanical Garden• Cecil & Molly Smith Garden• Portland Japanese Garden• Lan Su Chinese Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iseli Nursery• Woodburn Nursery• The Stewart Garden (formerly Dover Nursery)• Sebright Gardens
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- Around the Sound [pre-tour](#)
- Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast Excursion [post-tour](#) including members' gardens

Plus plant sale, photo contest, poster session, special clinics, plus:

ars75.org
Registration Now Open!



*See you on
December 12th at
6:30!*

*Wishing you all
the very best of
the season!*

*"At Christmas I no more desire
a rose
Than wish a snow in May's new-
fangled mirth;
But like of each thing that in
season grows."
- William Shakespeare*