



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



December 2021



### President's Message

Hello NRS Gardeners,

As I write this report, the sky is cerulean blue and the sun is shining brightly. It is hard to imagine that another atmospheric river storm is just ahead of us. Hopefully, this will not be as devastating, ruinous, catastrophic, injurious and destructive as the last one of a few days ago. What a calamity we've experienced this year weather-wise! First, we had the summer heat dome and drought; now the atmospheric river storms are upon us. May you stay safe wherever you might be.

Recently, we received the news that "our" Susan and Art Lightburn (a wonderful team!) decided to step down from the executive team, but fortunately they will continue as regular members. Art claims he needs to retire – not a good excuse, as he is only 80 years young! The NRS is truly grateful for all their guidance, assistance, help and advice, especially this writer. We will miss their hands-on contributions very much. Thank you, Susan and Art!

Jan Moles graciously offered to take over Susan's responsibility of forwarding the emails to the members. Thank you, Jan!

Our Christmas party and auction is upon us and your executives are working hard to prepare for it. Paul Lawry will be our "Santa/auctioneer" this year. As previously reported, the NRS is generously subsidizing prepackaged charcuterie boxes so that you pay only \$10.00 each. Make sure to place your order with June and John at [juneandjohn@shaw.ca](mailto:juneandjohn@shaw.ca). (See full details p.2)

Our hardworking program team has assembled the most interesting speakers for the meetings of the first half of 2022, and you will find the list [here](#). The April meeting date has changed, so please mark your calendar.

Looking forward to see you all on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December. Remember, the meeting starts at 6:30 pm, but please bring your donations to the auction by 6 pm. Masks are mandatory and your vaccination passport will be checked at the door. Please stay safe and see you soon!

Rosina

Next meeting: Thursday, December 9th, 6:30 pm, Beban Park Social Centre

### *Christmas Auction and Social*

**\*\*Please note: Public Health Guidelines require that all participants wear masks and show proof of double vaccination at the door.**

### OUR EXECUTIVE

|                |                  |              |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| President      | Rosina Schmidt   | 751-3386     |
| Vice President | Chris Southwick  | 390-3415     |
| Past President | Allen McRae      | 758-7589     |
| Secretary      | Deborah Francis  |              |
| Treasurer      | Ron Sutton       | 416 951-1373 |
| Directors      | Ann Beamish      | 758-2574     |
|                | Bryan Jubinville | 668-2965     |
|                | Dorothee Kieser  | 390-4136     |
|                | Gayle McRae      | 758-7589     |

### COMMITTEES:

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Advertising   | Allen McRae                    |
| Library   | Ann Beamish / Gayle McRae      |
| Newsletter  | June Bouchard / John Deniseger |
| Membership  | Jan Moles                      |
| Program   | by Committee                   |
| Raffle  | Ann Davey & 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  | Bryan Jubinville               |
| Show and Sale   | Jan Moles and Brenda Lewis     |
| Nanaimo Rhododendron Society                                    |                                |
| Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road                                 |                                |
| Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4   |                                |
| Website: <a href="http://nanaimorhodos.ca">nanaimorhodos.ca</a> |                                |

## *Christmas is coming....and so is our Auction!!!!*

Our December 9th meeting is coming up in a hurry. Our executive has been busy looking at options to continue our annual Christmas traditions while addressing public health guidelines and the continuing presence of the pandemic.



- The auction portion of the evening will follow the same format as in the past. Donations of plants and garden related items are welcome. Please contact a member of the executive if you need help transporting larger items. As always, we will donate 10% of the proceeds to a local food bank.
- Please bring non-perishable items to be donated to the Loaves and Fishes.
- While we've all enjoyed our annual potluck dinner in the past, the pandemic has changed things, at least for now. As a result, the club is offering the following option:
  - Arrangements have been made with a caterer, "Spice of Life" in Lantzville, to provide us with delicious "Charcuterie Boxes" which include (not limited to): Artisan Baguette/Bagel/ Croissant, Selection of Cured Meat/Sausage, Olives, Pickles, Assorted Cheese & Crackers, Fresh Vegetables & Chef's Dip/Spread, Seasonal Fruit & Berries, and Dessert Bites. Vegetarian options are available upon request.
  - **In the spirit of Christmas, the NRS is subsidizing the costs - boxes are being offered for only \$10 each!**
  - Given that we need to pre-order, **please send your order by December 3rd** by emailing [juneandjohn@shaw.ca](mailto:juneandjohn@shaw.ca) and specify number of boxes - including vegetarian option if needed.
  - Please send your payment to our treasurer by e-transfer or by cheque: e-transfer to [rondsutton@shaw.ca](mailto:rondsutton@shaw.ca) , or mail cheque to: Ron Sutton, 7310 Cougar Smith Rd., Fanny Bay, B.C. V0R 1W0. You can also pay in person at the meeting.
- Alternately, if you prefer, you can of course bring your own food.
- We hope to see you on December 9th, **please note that we will be starting at 6:30**
- **You don't have to be an NRS member to come to this event, or any other NRS event for that matter. Feel free to bring a friend or a neighbour – the more the merrier!!! 😊**



### *A look back at last year's on-line auction*

From Gayle McRae:

"Here is our newly framed print. Joyce Clarke donated two prints to last year's online auction. Allen and I bought both of them: R. 'Crest' and R. *yakushmanum*. We recently took them to our framer in Ladysmith who did such a great job with both prints. We are very pleased to hang these both in our home where they will always remind us of our dear friend Craig and how he loved rhododendrons. Thanks to Joyce for this donation."

## WELCOME!!!

Despite the pandemic, we have been fortunate to have a number of new members joining the NRS! A great big welcome to all of you – apologies if we've forgotten anyone:

Wanda Brenton, Jen Calder, Ian Knipe, Chase McDonald, Mike and Mary O'Neill, Robert and Sabina Reey, Rae Trajan.

We hope to be able to meet you in person at one of our meetings soon! ☺



*A great BIG thank you to Susan and Art Lightburn for all their work on the NRS Executive. They have contributed so much and have been such an important part of our club for many years, most of those years as members of our executive in a number of positions. We can't thank them enough for everything they've done!!!*

**The Shade House Project:** In partnership with Milner Gardens and Woodland and the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, we are going to be building a shade house for “growing on” all of those rooted cuttings that our propagation group has been developing. The project is being funded by an anonymous private donor and is expected to be completed by next summer. Through the winter and spring, we'll be looking for volunteers to help out when we enter the construction phase. Details to follow in future newsletters and at our monthly meetings...



*Stay connected - check our web page - new things added regularly! <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>*

## Monthly Meeting Minutes, November 4, 2021 - minutes taken by Dorothee Kieser

Number of people present: 30

- 1) Presentation: Linda Derkach: *"New Zealand, Land of the Long White Cloud"*
- 2) President Report: Rosina Schmidt
  - Thank you to organizers of the "Fall into Gardening" Conference.
  - Contact established with Nanaimo's Newcomers Gardening Group for potential new members.
  - NRS to have a table if Seedy Sunday goes ahead in 2022.
  - Christmas/December NRS meeting: Potluck if possible. If food (potluck dishes prepared by members) is served, it may be possible. This item still needs to be checked with BC's Health guidance.
  - ARS has sent a booklet for the NRS library.
- 3) Treasurer's report: Current outstanding balance as of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 is \$10,015.86.
- 4) Membership Report: Jan Moles
  - About 50 members have paid. Jan will track down the stragglers.
- 5) Program news: John Denisegeer & Art Lightburn:
  - Lionel De Rothchild may be available as speaker for the April meeting.
  - Members are encouraged/requested to make suggestions as to what programs they would be interested in.
- 6) Hailey Grove:
  - Next work party: Tuesday Nov 9. Your help is needed!
- 7) Propagation group:
  - A thank you to Allan Murray who is looking after 64 cuttings.
- 8) Advertising: No news
- 9) Milner Gardens: Nothing new
- 10) Sunshine
  - A get-well card has been sent to David Mitchell.
- 11) Library Report
  - Ann, Gayle and Allen have sorted & rejuvenated our collection.
- 12) May Plant Sale:
  - To be organized by Brenda Lewis with Dorothee Kieser as well as everyone's help.
- 13) New Christmas Santa and plant donation:
  - Paul Lawry agreed to be Santa for the Christmas auction.
  - He and Linda also offered some bigger rhodos from their place for the auction.
  - Art to provide a trailer and Chris S. to arrange for the removal from Paul's place. One of the rhodos is 'Grandma's Hat'.

*"How did it get so late so soon?  
It's night before it's afternoon.  
December is here before it's June.  
My goodness how the time has flown.  
How did it get so late so soon?" — Dr. Seuss*





## Upcoming Programs

Now that we have returned to having monthly in-person meetings, our program committee has been working hard putting together a variety of presentations for the new year:

|   | Speaker               | Topic                                   |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| January 13 <sup>th</sup>                            | Roundtable discussion | Last summer's heat dome and drought     |
| February 10 <sup>th</sup>                           | Jo Canning            | Spring bulbs for a Rhododendron Garden  |
| March 10 <sup>th</sup>                              | Rose Pruffer          | Pruning Rhododendrons                   |
| Friday, April 22nd<br><b>**Note the date change</b> | Lionel de Rothschild  | Exbury – specific topic to be confirmed |



## Twigs and Stems Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Last year, so many holiday season events were cancelled. This year, many of our favourites are back!

Remember, Public Health Guidelines must be followed. Please check the host organization's website for details **before** you go.

**Milner Gardens and Woodland:** Looking for something to get into the Christmas spirit? Milner Christmas Magic is back! December 3-5, 10-12 and 17-19, 5:00pm - 8:00pm with viewing until 8:30 pm. Check the Milner website at: <https://milnergardens.viu.ca/special-events>

**Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:** December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 - Christmas party at Qualicum Beach Civic Center. Please RSVP to Linda Derkach, if you plan to attend.

**North Island Rhododendron Society:** December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2pm at the Comox United Church Hall - <sup>h</sup> Christmas gathering will be a 'social' beginning at 2 PM. Please **RSVP to Dave Godfrey by December 5<sup>th</sup>**, if you plan to attend.

**Kingfisher Resort and Spa:** something else you might want to check out during the holiday season. Hundreds of thousands of lights will adorn the gardens, igniting a magical setting. Bundle up and stroll the gardens, on the way to your spa appointment, dining reservation or while enjoying a staycation. Check their website for further details <https://www.kingfisherspa.com/winter-serenity-gardens/>

**Butchart Gardens:** The Gardens' Christmas hours begin November 26, 2021 and continue through January 6, 2022, with admission from 3:30pm – 9:00pm and viewing until 10:00pm. Check their website for further details <https://www.butchartgardens.com/christmas/>

## *Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park* by Bryan Jubinville



Not much to report in terms of an update. Last month, our scheduled Hailey Garden work bee was rained out. We are planning another work bee for December 14<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting. If we are going to be cancelled, we'll send out a message the day before – Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Hope to see lots of helping hands on Tuesday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of December from 10 am to 2 pm. Whatever time you can contribute would be greatly appreciated!

Cheers

Bryan Jubinville

\*\*\*\*\*

## *From the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners*

The Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association, together with Vancouver Island University, will be offering the Advanced Gardening course again starting in January 2022. This course, which will be a combination of virtual and in-person classes, will provide enthusiastic gardeners a wealth of information on everything gardening related from basic botany, soils, pruning, to plant pest and disease management. More information on the course and how to register can be found at <https://pdt.viu.ca/master-gardener-program> or by contacting the president of the Master Gardeners Association ([president@vimga.org](mailto:president@vimga.org)). An additional program will follow the course and can lead to certification as a "Master Gardener".

By contacting the VIU Registration, you can take part in a free information session to be held in early November and learn more about the course.

.....

### **WORK BEES:**

**An opportunity to spend time outdoors in a beautiful rhododendron garden, while socializing with friends (at a distance, of course...) Sounds pretty attractive doesn't it....**

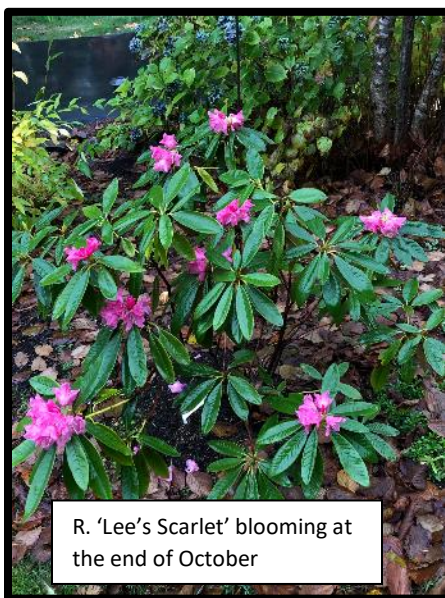
- Hailey Grove at Bowen Park – The next monthly work bee will be on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 2 pm, as we return to our regular monthly schedule. Bring your lunch and sunny disposition. 😊
- The Shade House project at Milner: when the construction phase starts, we'll be looking for volunteers in the new year. Stay tuned...



## Garden Photos of the Month - from Ron and Rea Sutton's garden



*Acer palmatum* 'Mikazuki'  
with autumn colouring



R. 'Lee's Scarlet' blooming at  
the end of October



*Rhododendron sinogrande*  
budded up for spring



*Alocasia mycorrhiza* going strong on November  
19, even after some frosty nights and a little snow



*Lilium longiflorum* (Easter lily) – foliage  
died back after spring blooming - here  
it is budded up again in late November!

*"Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than all the  
other seasons." ~Jim Bishop*



## *Garden Photos of the Month - from Gaylle and Allen McRae's garden*



Skimmia in berry mode – ready to be used in Gaylle's beautiful wreaths.



Skimmia in seed – also ready for use in wreaths.



Beautiful Japanese Maple



As Gaylle says, "R. 'Noyo Brave' not looking very brave at all 😊"



Christmas cactus looking great in their indoor garden!



R. 'Lee's Scarlet' in bloom despite the rain 😊



# Why you should leave the leaves

(Thank you to Susan and Art Lightburn for this article from the David Suzuki Foundation. For full article, go to: [Leave your leaves](#) )

Queen of Green readers love to help pollinators — whether it's [planting a butterfly garden](#) or [getting a yard off grass](#). Well, there's another thing pollinator-lovers can do to help and it's really simple...

## DO NOT rake your leaves!

Butterflies begin in leaves, as larvae.

Those brown, dead leaves are the planet's butterfly nursery. They're home to butterfly larvae, microbes and worms. And leaf litter is where many species

of butterflies and moths overwinter as pupae. Animals like toads, shrews and salamanders benefit from leaf litter to hide and hunt, too.

This fall, let your rake collect only dust. Here's more information on how you can [provide winter cover for pollinators and other important creatures](#) where you live.

Can't leave all of your leaves where they fall? Here are a few other ideas:



## Mulch leaves in your planter beds

Rake leaves off the lawn and into your planter beds.

## Mulch leaves on your lawn

Use your mower to mulch leaves on the lawn and improve your lawn health by suppressing weeds and fertilizing the soil.

## Collect browns to compost

[Backyard Composting Dos and Don'ts](#) tells us to balance "greens" with "browns." Store leaves in a bin and add them to your backyard composter throughout the winter months.

## Craft with leaves

Have children collect their favourite leaves in your yard and throughout the neighbourhood and try your hand at nature weaving.

## Remember

DO rake leaves out of sewers and drainage pathways.



## Sunburn, the Heat Dome, and Summer Drought – by Dorothee Kieser

(Editors Note: we had intended to include this in an earlier newsletter but it somehow slipped through...)

The wet fall weather has made the summer heat dome and drought seem like a long time ago. However, the realities of climate change and the impacts on our gardens and how we garden in the future will continue...

Rosina suggested that I have a look at my rhododendrons to see which had suffered the most from sunburn during this summer. While the damage is very easy to see, to make some sensible recommendations as to which plants are more susceptible to sunburn than others is not so easy to establish. At the September NRS meeting, Chris Southwick suggested that rhodos which have indumentum and tomentum may be somewhat protected by the fine hairy covering to the leaves.

Luckily most of my rhodos are in dappled shade and hence have not suffered too much since I could not give them any extra water, being on a well.

Here is a summary of rhodos that experience the same /similar environment as far as sun, water and soil is concerned and the level of damage they suffered:

Sunniest (harshest) location:

| Severe Sunburn | Slightly affected | Not Sun burned |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Shamrock       | Rosamundi         | Pink Pearl     |
| Unique         | Ken Janeck        | Daphnoides     |
| Halfdan Lem    |                   | Hotei          |
| Red Walloper   |                   |                |

Lesser sun exposure:

| Severe Sunburn | Slightly affected | Not Sun burned           |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Sappho         |                   | Gomer Waterer            |
|                |                   | Senator Jackson          |
|                |                   | President Roosevelt      |
|                |                   | Nobleanum Venestum       |
|                |                   | Jo-Harvey unnamed hybrid |

This is a list that we can collectively build on to create a list of sun/heat tolerant and sun/heat sensitive plants. If you'd like to contribute, begin by making a list of rhododendrons in your garden that have significant sun exposure. From there, create 3 categories: severe sunburn, slight sunburn and no damage. Please send your list to [dorotheekieser@shaw.ca](mailto:dorotheekieser@shaw.ca). While conditions will vary from garden to garden depending on site specific conditions such as irrigation, soil structure, and mulching, the information should still be of interest as we move forward.



Ed. note: See the latest issue of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society for more information on sunburned leaves...





## Plant of the month - *Rhododendron* 'True Blue' by Ron Sutton



Here is a beautiful plant with dark green shiny foliage, and gorgeous purple flowers with a bluish hue. This Dan Bones hybrid is a cross of (*R. degroenianum* ssp *yakushimanum* x *R. campanulatum*) x *R. 'Black Eye'*. It is considered a dwarf, as it's not expected to grow higher than 5 feet in 10 years. It is a spreader with dense growth habit. My plant seen in the photograph, was in bloom May 6th when the photo was taken. Hardiness is listed as zone 7, but I know from growing this plant in Ontario, that it's hardier than that. Anybody on the island should be able to grow it. The one I had in Ontario came from Greer Gardens. The one in the photo came from Singing Tree Gardens.

### Propagation of NRS cuttings

This photo, taken at Liz and Allan Murray's place on November 26<sup>th</sup>, shows us that their cuttings, including those taken by the NRS this fall, are alive and well under their care.

Thank you, Allan and Liz! 😊





## Welcome to the 2022 ARS Spring International Convention

Hosted by the chapters of ARS District 4  
Portland – Tualatin Valley – Eugene – Willamette – Siuslaw



After a two-year delay of our scheduled 75th Anniversary celebration, we're excited to announce a reunion of the ARS in its founding city, Portland, Oregon. Here you will find all elements of the planned 2020 convention, including the Pre-Tour (new dates: May 2-3) and Post-Tour (new dates: May 8-10), while including even more enhancements to the original features. [Click here](#) for a preview video of the event.

**\*\*ARS 2022 Registration opening Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

### Covid Considerations

In an effort to assure the health and safety of all participants, the decision has been made to require proof of full vaccination for all registrants. You will need to confirm your vaccine status on registering, and proof will be required at the registration desk on check-in. Masks will be required in the hotel, on buses, and at all meetings and events. Please be aware that conditions may change as the convention comes closer and a revised policy may be issued. We recommend that you sign up for convention updates, below, to be apprised of changes in policy as they occur. Thank you for your cooperation.

## *“Fall into Gardening” - the 2021 ARS Fall Conference continues to be available on line*

The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society and the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society in partnership with the Vancouver Island Master Gardener's Association recently hosted the 2021 ARS Fall Conference known as “Fall into Gardening”. Deemed a success by all, the conference featured 8 well known international speakers, drawing over 700 registrants from across North America, Europe, New Zealand and beyond. The presentations had us travelling through the Appalachians and the Yunnan, while we also learned about soil biology and soil health. We also covered alpiners, hardy rhododendrons that survive Quebec's harsh climate, hybridizing fragrant rhododendrons and conservation issues. We can't thank our speakers enough for so generously sharing their time and knowledge with us.

If you missed the conference or would like to see some of the presentations again, you can access all the sessions from both days [here](#). The password is fall2021. We encourage you to share the link with friends and fellow gardeners. They may wish to watch each presentation or you could recommend your favourites! We expect the sessions to be available until February.



*Looking  
forward to  
seeing you all  
on Thursday,  
December 9<sup>th</sup>!!!  
Ho! Ho! Ho!*



*And a Very Merry Christmas to everyone! ☺*