



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



December 2022



### President's Message

Dear NRS members,  
If you attended the last club meeting, you got to enjoy a wonderful, albeit lengthy, presentation by Sean Rafferty on some gardens in Scotland.

At the same meeting, it was a delight to award David and Joyce Mitchell an ARS Bronze medal for all the work they have done for the club.

Our December meeting will be the one you shouldn't miss, as it will be a great time to socialize, enjoy a variety of good food, and get a chance to bring home something new and wonderful for your garden from our annual Christmas auction. The room will be arranged with 7 large round tables to sit around.

Our next regular meeting on January 12 will feature Linda Derkach who will talk about "**Garden Sense for a Changing Climate**".

A Very Merry Christmas to you all!

Ron Sutton  
President & Treasurer

### OUR EXECUTIVE

|                       |                 |              |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>President</b>      | Ron Sutton      | 416-951-1373 |
| <b>Vice President</b> | Chris Southwick | 390-3415     |
| <b>Past President</b> | Rosina Schmidt  | 758-7589     |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | Deborah Francis |              |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | Ron Sutton      | 416-951-1373 |

### Directors:

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Margaret Cadwaladr | 585-6046 |
| Dorothee Kieser    | 390-4136 |
| Paul Lawry         | 816-2370 |
| Arthur Lightburn   | 468-7516 |
| Gayle McRae        | 758-7589 |

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

|               |                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Advertising   | Margaret Cadwaladr             |
| Library       | Ann Beamish / Gayle 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](http://nanaimorhodos.ca)

**Our next meeting - Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm**

***Christmas Potluck and Auction***

**Beban Park Social Center**

## *Christmas Social and Auction ~December 8th, 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 8<sup>th</sup> – **dinner starting at 6:30**. This is your opportunity to sample a wide variety of great food, socialize with other club members and have a chance to bid on some special plants and other items. **You**

**don't want to miss this!** 😊



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.

After dinner, *Santa and Mrs. Claus* will conduct an auction on donated items, as well as some special items brought in by our executive team as a fundraiser for our club, with 10% of proceeds donated to a local charity. We are also hoping to raise additional funds for Loaves and Fishes – monetary donations only so that they can allocate the funds where it is needed most.

### *We are looking for items for the auction!*

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.

*Everyone Welcome - bring friends, guests, neighbours...!* 😊



- For our auction, please - cash and cheques only!
- This year, there will not be a box provided for dry good donations for Loaves and Fishes. We are welcoming cash donations only – they can then allocate the funds to where it is needed most.

### *Need a ride???*

Please, let us know by emailing Jan Moles at [jan.moles@btinternet.com](mailto:jan.moles@btinternet.com) We'll try to get something organized to get you there!

## Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:

**Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:** MARS Christmas Party"; Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 to 9:00 pm. Please let them know if you plan on attending.

**North Island Rhododendron Society:** NIRS Christmas Party *Legacy*", Comox United Church Hall, Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 pm. Please let them know if you plan on attending.

**Victoria Rhododendron Society:** Glendale Gardens, Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, 7:30 pm.

**Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society:** St. John's Anglican Church Hall 486 Jubilee Street, Duncan. Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm

**Milner Gardens and Woodland:** Closed through November in preparation for Milner Christmas Magic, which will be on | December 2 - 4, 9 - 11 & 16 - 21 - evenings 5:00pm - 8:00pm with viewing until 8:30pm. Check the Milner website for details: [Milner Garden Events](#) or see page 7 of this newsletter.



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## Trees of the Sikkim Himalaya by Seamus O'Brien



Seamus O'Brien, one of Ireland's best-known horticulturists, is giving a talk to the International Dendrology Society on **Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 6pm GMT (10 AM Pacific)** and we are invited to enjoy it as well! **PLEASE NOTE 10am Pacific Time.**

The talk is entitled 'Trees of the Sikkim Himalaya' and as well as talking about this Himalayan state's flora and Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker's connection with it, Seamus will be highlighting a personal selection of the state's finest trees.

Follow the link [here](#).

A recording will be made of the talk, so that those of you who can't watch it live may see it later at your leisure.

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## Live the Garden Life - check this out to see what's going on in our area:

In recognition of the "Year of the Garden", Milner has created "Live the Garden Life" on the Milner website. It is a guide to local resources to support the mid-Island community in getting out into the garden.

Whether you visit our Milner's beautiful gardens for inspiration, join a garden club to meet other gardeners and share knowledge, are planning your first garden and want to gain knowledge, or take courses to learn more about gardening, celebrate everything gardens do for us at a local garden event, or check out our trusted web resources, ... see the listings in each category. For more information, click here to ["Live the Garden Life"](#)



## NRS UPCOMING PROGRAM

Our club's program committee (Chris Southwick, Dorothee Kieser, and John Deniseger) have been busy. Working together (isn't it always easier when we work together?), they have continued to fill in our calendar with great speakers on interesting topics. Make sure to mark those dates on your calendar!

### Check out the new program entries for March and April!

| Date             | Speaker                                      | Topic   |
|------------------|--|---|
| January 12, 2023 | Linda Derkach                                | Garden Sense for a Changing Climate   |
| February 9, 2023 | Allison McCabe                               | Invasive Species in the Vancouver Island Garden – Identification, Management, and Removal |
| March 9, 2023    | Scott Wiskerke                               | Pruning Rhododendrons   |
| March 18, 2023   | Scott Wiskerke – at Chris Southwick's garden | Pruning Demonstration   |
| April 13, 2023   | John Deniseger                               | Why I Grow Rhodos   |

#### Are you having trouble receiving the newsletter via e-mail?

It has come to our attention that NRS members with Shaw e-mail addresses (including ourselves) may be having trouble receiving NRS group e-mails. It is our understanding that a security filtering program for Shaw may be causing delays. We suggest checking your SPAM folder – or you may wish to reach out to Shaw to inquire about filter settings for your account. Remember that the newsletter and general club information is also found on the NRS website at:

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

*"From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens -  
the garden outdoors,  
the garden of pots and bowls in the house,  
and the garden of the mind's eye." (Katherine S. White)*



## A Garden in Time: Rhododendrons and the Expression of Legacy



At our last meeting, Chris Southwick shared a beautiful and very special new book with us which was authored by her nephew, Andrew Drown.

### From Andrew:

*"The culmination of a 2-year project focused on my family's love for Rhododendrons and the legacy left by my great grandmother, Mary Greig. The book features black and white and colour garden landscapes, studio plant portraits, as well as some original poetry and writing."*

**Wouldn't this make a very special Christmas gift for that gardener, rhododendron lover, photographer....** To purchase a copy, [click here](#).

**We are fortunate to now have this beautiful book which has been donated to the NRS library by Chris's mother, and Andrew's grand-mother, Jean Greig. Thank you, Jean!**

To see more of Andrew's beautiful photography and check his portfolio, [click here](#).

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## Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee ~ Bowen Park

By Deborah Francis, coordinator



Unfortunately, we had to cancel our November work party at Hailey Rhododendron Grove in Bowen Park due to weather conditions. We invite you to join the team on **Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am to 1:00pm** to help keep the gardens healthy and beautiful!

**Bring your lunch and a sunny disposition!** 😊

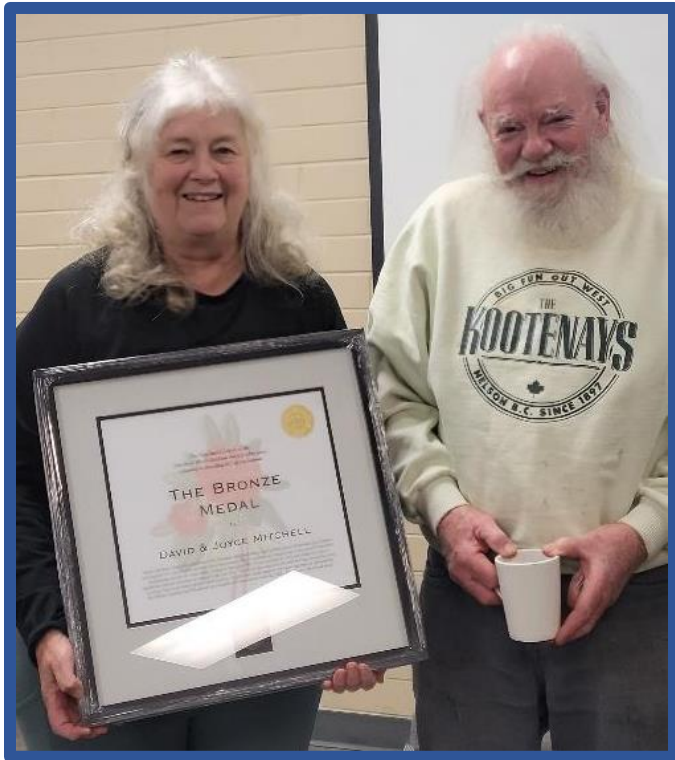
**As they say... "Many hands make light work!"**



From L to R: Kevin & Deborah Francis, Rosina Schmidt, Ian Knipe – working hard pulling

# *Bronze Medal Presentation to David and Joyce Mitchell*

**Congratulations, Joyce and David!**



The Nanaimo Chapter of the  
American Rhododendron Society  
takes great pleasure in awarding its highest  
honour

## **The Bronze Medal**

To

**David and Joyce Mitchell**

David and Joyce, long time members of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society, have been enthusiastic participants and organizers in our chapter activities since they joined. They have been an integral part of our annual Christmas fundraising auction for many years. Acting as Santa and Mrs. Claus auctioneers, they have helped to raise a significant amount of money to support club activities. They have also organized fun and exciting annual bus tours to many Vancouver Island gardens and nurseries. In addition, their support and encouragement as ambassadors for Milner Gardens and Woodland has strengthened its link to the NRS. Thank you, David and Joyce!

# Milner Christmas Magic 2022

*December 2-4, 9-11, 16-21*

Make memories with family and friends this holiday season by experiencing Milner Christmas Magic's outdoor stroll through thousands of twinkling lights and festive window displays.

Find something for everyone on your holiday shopping list in our Gingerbread House Gift Shop, drop off your letters to Santa in our North Pole Mailbox, with a wave to Santa and Mrs. Claus themselves! Warm up with a selection of fresh, hot food and refreshments for sale in front of Milner House, and remember to bring cash to get your own pair of Holiday Specs, holographic lenses that miraculously transform Christmas lights into magical figures!

Admission runs from 5pm – 8pm with viewing until 8:30pm. Entry is by suggested donation of \$5 per adult, \$2 per child or \$12 per household. Dress warm and grab your camera – you won't want to miss it!





## *Rhododendron Revival Research Project - a partnership with VIU Horticulture, Milner Gardens, and the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society*

Hello, Rhododendron club members from Nanaimo, Cowichan, and Mount Arrowsmith Region and Members of Milner Gardens and Woodland!

Kurstin Rispin, student research assistant, here from Vancouver Island University's (VIU) Rhododendron Revival Research (RRR) project to update the community on the research progress to date. Many things have happened since our last update, and I am excited to share them with you here. First, I will begin with a brief recap of what has been done thus far. After our wonderful tour of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens with John Deniseger and Chris Southwick in late October, we collected and stuck 96 cuttings from 3 hybrid rhododendrons; 'Beauty of Littleworth', 'Dr. Stocker', and 'Blue Peter'. Afterward, the research cuttings were placed in a mist tent at the VIU G.R. Paine Horticulture Center. The environmental conditions for the mist tent were set using the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) guidelines for propagation. The bottom heat in the mist tent temperature is kept set to 21C and the misting system is set to mist at regular intervals during daylight hours to prevent desiccation. During the first two weeks in the mist tent, one challenge that arose was the uneven distribution of water across the newly propagated cuttings. Eugene Touchette, Landscape Horticulture Professor, and students worked together to design and rebuild a new misting system in the irrigation course! Now, the sprayers disperse water evenly across the tent, and we can all rest assured that the cuttings are getting the water needed during this propagation stage. We want to give a special thanks to the NRS and MARS for their contribution towards the installation of the new misting system. And now the monitoring begins!



*Research Rhododendrons in Mist Tent*



*Students Repairing Mist System*

Monitoring and care of the research cuttings are carried out using the (ARS) propagation and care guidelines that can be found here <https://www.rhododendron.org/propagation.htm>. Each week, I use the record-keeping sheet that I created to collect data on the research cuttings. Additionally, I collect environmental data such as temperature and humidity and track cultural requirements, such as watering or pest and disease pressures. The data I collect on the mist tent environment and the cultural activities will be useful when making decisions for this year's cutting growth and in future years. In addition to the weekly record-keeping, I stop in and check on the cuttings between classes during the week to see if the mist system is operating correctly or if there are any changes in crop growth. Another tool I use for monitoring the health and growth of the research cuttings is using a sample collection of Rhododendron cuttings outside of the research scope for reference. I use the reference Rhododendron cuttings to look at signs of early callousing, overwatering, and other root zone issues. In using this sample collection of cuttings, I can infer what may be happening



with the RRR cuttings without disturbing them and suggest cultural and environmental changes to encourage rooting success. Additionally, I am monitoring for any signs of diseased and dropped leaves on the RRR cuttings and will remove any debris to maintain a clean growing environment.



It's nearly been five weeks since the beginning of the RRR. As expected, the foliage on the research cuttings remains largely unchanged since sticking the cuttings two weeks ago. However, I have observed some early signs of leaf curl, yellowing, and mosaic patterns on some of the foliage. An exciting observation in the reference Rhododendrons is early signs of callousing, which is a wound response that indicates new root growth is forming. Moving forward, I will continue to monitor changes in the research cuttings over time and record my observations. This will help build on our understanding of which Rhododendron varieties root

successfully using the stem-cutting propagation method.

Thank you for following along with our research and I look forward to updating you at the NRS meeting in the new year!

Kurstin Rispin

p.s – VIU Horticulture student-grown poinsettias are nearly ready for sale! You can pre-order your poinsettias using this link:

<https://tradesappliedtech.viu.ca/horticulture/form/poinsettias>



### **NRS Propagation Committee report – by Rosina Schmidt**

The NRS's 300 plants are doing well. The NRS contributed to repairing the misting system at VIU's Paine Centre. Updated watering list for December available with Rosina.

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

## *Plant of the Month* by Ron Sutton

### *Rhododendron insigne*

If you have been following my plant of the month postings, you will have noticed, that I favour plants with outstanding foliage.

*Rhododendron insigne* is a plant that has such attributes. This is the kind of rhododendron where the flowers are a bonus. My plant however, has yet to flower. It is native to the mountains of Sichuan China. It belongs to section Ponticum, subsection Argyrophylla. It is a slow growing compact shrub that will reach approximately 3 feet in 10 years. The 6-inch leaves are dark green and shiny. There is light coloured indumentum on the underside of the leaves. The plant blooms in late May with light pink trusses of 14-16 flowers. It is said to be hardy to 0°F/-18° C

I have mine planted in bright shade, but I read that it can take a fair amount of sun. My plant came from Fearing Farm Nursery. The first two photos are my plant, the last with the flowers is taken from the internet.



*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*



## December in the Garden by Rosina T. Schmidt

### Rhododendrons:

- Apply Dolomite Lime around the rhododendrons.
- Dust any heavy snow off of the rhododendrons.
- There will be exclusive rhododendrons offered at the NRS Christmas Auction on the 8th of December, starting at 6:30 pm - you do not want to miss this!
- For a short video of how to plant a rhodo, please see <https://rhodygarden.org//planting-rhodys/>.

### Mason Bees:

Check that all the nests are moved to a sheltered inside spot, like a shed or unheated garage.

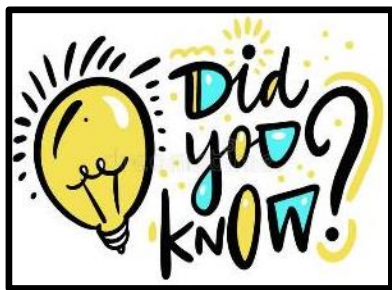
### General gardening:

- Join us at our next Hailey Grove work party on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December between 9:00am and 1:00pm for some fresh boughs of holly or some ivy to make wreaths with.
- Re-pot houseplants using a sterilized indoors mix.
- It is still a good time to plant trees, fruit trees especially. Three trees come to mind, the seedless Japanese Persimmon tree <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/fuyu-japanese-persimmon-tree-diospuros-kakai-fuji/>, the fig tree, of which we had recently an excellent presentation: <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/growing-fig-trees-in-south-coastal-bc/> and the loquat: <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/loquat-tree/>



**Enjoy this festive month with good cheer!**

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## Membership pays!!!

Jan Moles, our membership chair, has been doing some digging (she is a gardener after all 😊!). Did you know that with your valid NRS membership card, you can get various discounts at local businesses such as: Buckerfields, Arrowsmith Greenhouses, Russell Farm Market & Garden Centre. Your NRS membership will also get you a discount on a membership at Milner which in turn gives you a discount at the Milner nursery. Watch this space in future newsletters as Jan will be updating it monthly.





*Looking forward to seeing you  
all at our December meeting!*

