

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



February 2006
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all enjoyed last month's presentation by Mike Miller of his trip to Bhutan, the source of many of the rhododendrons which we enjoy so much. The awarding of our Chapter's highest honour, the Bronze medal, to Richard White, was also a highlight of the evening. We will miss him. This is an exciting time of the year for most of us, as we look forward to warmer weather, so that we can work outside in our gardens. I cut some switches off our forsythia last week and brought them inside. They are in full bloom now! Our speaker on Feb. 9th is Jordon Ellis, the compost guy. His topic is timely, as he will be talking about the soil they produce at Duke Point. Many of us are thinking about what to put on our gardens at this time of year. Please check your library shelves, and return any books which you have had out for more than one month. For those of you who are interested in planting some rhododendron seeds for yourself, bring along a clear plastic container with lid. Looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting. Allen

EXECUTIVE

President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Vice President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Secretary	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Treasurer	Gayle McRae	758-7589
Directors	Valerie Harvey	754-6659
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Pat Schulson	245-3369
	Mike Miller	758-2879
	Chris Southwick	758-0993

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Mike Miller	758-2879
Library	Vacant	
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Program	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Pat Schulson	245-3369
Dollar Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #1 – 5765 Turner Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: nanaimo.rhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

NEXT MEETING

FEBRUARY 9, 2006

BEBAN PARK

7:30 PM

REV. JORDAN ELLIS

“INTERNATIONAL COMPOSTING CORPORATION COMPOSTING PROCESS”
plus a workshop on starting rhododendrons from seed

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

TWIGS AND STEMS



**Goodies for February meeting:
Liisa Rullo
Beryl Riches
Mary Hardy**

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GREER'S GUIDEBOOK TO AVAILABLE RHODODENDRONS

Available for purchase at all meetings
\$22 for members, \$25 for non-members

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RHODODENDRON SPECIES BOTANICAL GARDEN

Federal Way, Washington
(253) 661-9377
March – April – May
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
closed Thursday

NRS members are admitted free – just show
your membership card!

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B.C. COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, March 18
Hastings Room at the PNE Grounds
Hastings and Renfrew, Vancouver
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Registration \$20 in advance

If you would like to attend contact Kathryn for
the registration information

Our February Speaker

Rev. Ellis, a native British Columbian, has a most interesting and varied background, including a number of different careers. After achieving a degree in Psychology from Simon Fraser University he became a probation officer and family court counsellor with the Attorney-General's Dept. of B.C. for 13 years. Jordan has played professional football, has traveled internationally as a Rugby referee, and once played lacrosse for the Nanaimo Timbermen on his first brief stay in Nanaimo in the mid-60's! His second major career came when he answered the call to ministry. He was ordained in the Unity Church in 1989 before retiring from the pulpit in 2003. Upon recognizing a great opportunity to be of help to our environment and our community, Jordan became an investor in ICC (<http://www.internationalcomposting.com/>) as it was being created in 2003. In late 2004 he became the company's Director of Community Relations, the capacity in which he speaks to us today.



Hidden Acres Rhododendrons

Paul & Lynn Wurz
4367 Gordon Rd.
Campbell River, B.C.
1-250-287-4301
pwurz@oberon.ark.com

<http://hiddenacresbc.tripod.com>

Growers of Specialty Rhododendrons

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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GENERAL MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2006

The meeting was called to order by President Allen McRae at 7:40. Allen welcomed guests and thanked members for their participation and contributions to the Christmas party and auction in December.

Secretary's report: correspondence from the Botanical Garden Society regarding garden show in March.

Treasurer's report: bank balance \$2492.61 (includes former Legacy account of 156.36). Proceeds from the Christmas auction were \$941.25 and \$106.00 from the raffle for a total of \$1047.25. We donated \$95.00 to the Salvation Army along with the canned goods. Library total at present is \$16.32.

Library: Dick Beamish nominated Ann Beamish to look after the library. Helene Sullivan volunteered to work with Ann. Allen and Gaylle have sorted through the oibrary and ensured books have pockets and cards. There are 38 books missing; a list will be published in the newsletter.

Program: February – Jordan Ellis on composting
March – Erin Wing from Shibusa Water gardens
April – Paul Wurtz on the Lofthouse legacy
May – Ron Knight on propagation

It is proposed that next November we share a meeting with MARS and bring Peter Wharton, curator of the David C Lamb Asian Garden at UBC. Cost of bringing Peter over is prohibitive for one club. We would travel to Qualicum for the meeting on the Wednesday of the week, rather than our usual meeting day of Thursday. A show of hands indicated support for this idea.

Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park: Mike Miller and Richard White have asked the City of Nanaimo if they are continuing the maintenance of the Hailey Grove. They will be meeting with the City to discuss development of a native species garden.

Membership: there are still a few people who have not renewed their membership. Please see Debbie Gaboury.

Dollar Table: Mexican feather grass available. Please remember to bring divisions or seedlings for the dollar table. Proceeds from the dollar table support the library.

Rhododendron of the Year for 2009. Kathryn invited members to submit a list of their "proven performers" and to nominate favourites for the ROY 2009.

Botanical Garden Society Garden Show, March 10, 11, 12. About 9 members indicated a willingness to sit at a booth at the garden show. Michael Miller volunteered to organize a display and coordinate volunteers.

Nametags: Debbie is working at establishing contact with the company that makes our nametags.

Craig Clarke and Allen McRae presented Richard White with the ARS Bronze Medal. A cake was enjoyed by all. Richard and Linda are moving to Christina Lake. Richard is selling some of his rhodos and will be having a sale on Feb 18 at his home, 391 Quatna Rd. Qualicum Beach. Call him at 752-6519 or email at rgwhite@telus.net for directions.

Doorprizes were won by Pat Schulson, Paul Lawry, Bill Hardy.

Raffle prizes were won by Brenda Lewis, Paul Lawry, Debbie Gaboury, Allen McRae, Glenda Barr, Trish Boyden, Rosina Schmidt, Kathryn Grant, Reinhold Gorgosilich, Janet Atkinson, Joyce Clarke.

Michael Miller auctioned off 2 sets of Rhododendron stamps from Bhutan. Purchased by Paul Lawry and Glenda Barr.

Michael Miller gave a talk and slide show on his trip to Bhutan. Fantastic photos.

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BRONZE MEDAL AWARDED TO RICHARD WHITE AT JANUARY MEETING

Craig Clarke and Allen McRae surprised Richard White at the January meeting with a presentation of the ARS Bronze Medal. The Bronze Medal is awarded for outstanding contributions to a chapter.

The following citation appears on the award:

“The Nanaimo Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society takes great pleasure in awarding its highest honour, the bronze medal to Richard White. A founding member of the executive, Richard has served for many years as Director, Treasurer, President, and Past-President, cheerfully offering leadership and camaraderie. Richard has served as Chair of the Program committee and has contributed generously of his professional expertise and knowledge to the club. He has helped organize the annual truss show and was instrumental in developing the cooperation between the Society and the Hailey Rhododendron Grove in Bowen Park.”



Following the presentation an enormous cake was enjoyed by all

Richard cuts the cake



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JARS V48:No.1:p10:y1994

How to Grow Rhododendrons from Seed

Allan and Shirley Anderson
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey

Growing rhododendrons and azaleas from seed is not difficult if one remains conscious of their physical needs, e.g., light, warmth, fertilizer and moisture. As long as these are provided at the proper time and in the right amount, many methods have been successful. Rhododendron seedlings are adaptable and can succeed with less than ideal environmental factors, but it is important to remember that whatever method issued the planting medium must *never* be allowed to dry out. Germinating seeds or small seedlings cannot survive even one such episode.

We grow our seeds on damp, slightly firmed milled sphagnum moss in small plastic "deli" containers. Screened peat moss and perlite mixtures have been equally successful. We drop the seeds on the surface and enclose the container in a polyethylene sandwich bag with the top folded under the container. Such an enclosure will usually keep the medium moist until the seeds germinate at which time the bags are gradually opened and medium watered carefully to be sure it doesn't dry out. Each container is labeled and contains seed of a single variety.

While seeds do not require light to germinate they do need light to photosynthesize and grow immediately after. We therefore put the containers on a bed of peat moss over the heating cable and suspend a light source over the top. A fluorescent shop light about 8 inches over the containers works well. A time switch is used to provide about 16 hours of light each day. In the past years we handled fewer containers by placing them on a serving tray on top of the refrigerator for warmth. A desk lamp with a time switch provided light. We have also used old aquariums using an automatic heating cable in the bottom with a layer of damp peat moss under the deli containers.

While some seeds, especially *yakushimanum* hybrids, may germinate unpredictably, most other hybrids and species seed germinates in 10 days to 3 weeks time. In 4 to 8 weeks more the small seedlings will have two or four true leaves in addition to the original cotyledons. Now we transplant them into flats containing a screened peat-perlite mixture and fertilize every other watering with one-third strength soluble acid type fertilizer (Miracid[®] or equivalent). About 50 seedlings are planted in each flat. We still maintain the 16-hour days with overhead light.

We place the flats on the bench in a small greenhouse, but other hybridizers have used basement tables under suspended fluorescent lights, sun porches or various types of light stands. Just remember the basic requirements which are moisture, weak fertilizer, light for 16 hours a day and warmth, about 70°F if you can provide it.

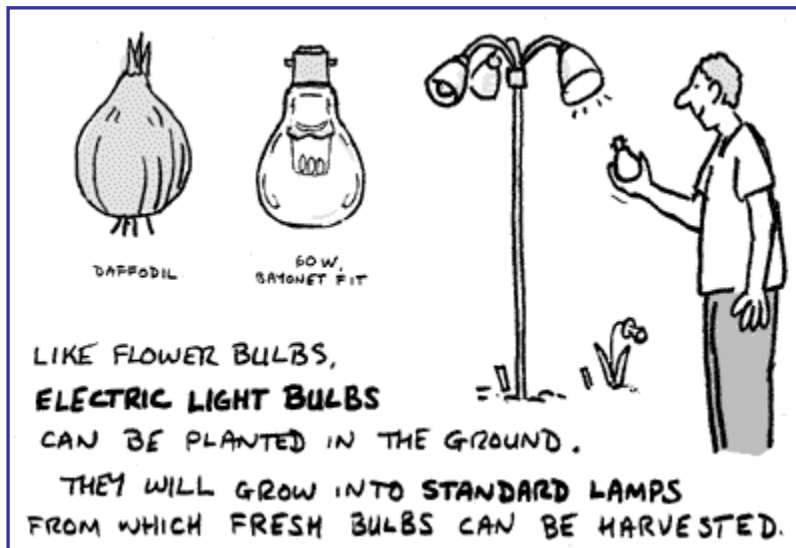
When weather permits and natural days become longer the flats are placed outdoors in a moderately shaded area. Supply with one-half strength soluble fertilizer and water as needed to prevent drying. The seedlings will grow through the summer. We stop fertilizing about the middle of July, and in the fall we transfer the 3 to 6-inch plants into individual containers for winter protection under plastic. In earlier years we left the seedlings in the original flats and wintered them over in cold frames for planting out in the spring.

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At this point seedlings are much like other small plants such as mericlones* or rooted cuttings. They will still need some protection outdoors from wind and too much sun. Windbreaks and partial shade from high trees or snow fencing, etc., are described in many books.

Whether you want to try a few or many, the growing of rhododendron seeds is great fun and an absorbing pastime. We recommend it!

*At this stage of growth the seedlings may be handled as if they were rooted cuttings or like the mericlone propagules sometimes sold at plant sales and supplied by tissue culture labs.



Don Janssen: Start your gardening in February

February arrives on Wednesday. While not thought of as a gardening month, February can include a few yard and garden activities. Outdoors, everything is weather permitting, but there are things to do inside in anticipation of spring and the 2006 growing season.

If the weather is acceptable, February starts the process of pruning apple trees. Apples should be pruned on a regular basis to keep them productive, and February through early April is a good time to do it.

Other trees and shrubs can be pruned, but be careful. Don't prune spring blooming shrubs, such as forsythia or lilac, because flower buds

were formed last season. Cut them off and the shrubs will not produce flowers this spring.

Likewise, avoid pruning maples and elms until early summer.

Another good outdoor activity for February is to scout around the yard, looking for problems that may be corrected by pruning. For example, look for branches that are broken, crossing each other, too low, or growing into buildings or other undesirable areas. As weather conditions get warmer, these limbs can be removed.

If you have not already started, February is a time for planning your 2006 vegetable garden. Draw up a plan of the garden space and allocate appropriate space for all the vegetables you plan to grow. When ordering specific vegetables, look for disease resistant varieties. These selections may produce a crop even if conditions are favorable for destructive diseases.

February is also a good time for preparing to grow vegetable and flower transplants indoors. Basics include a good growing medium, adequate lighting and warm temperatures. An advantage of growing your own transplants may be a wider selection of cultivars than purchasing transplants later this spring.

However, growing your own requires suitable conditions and space, proper timing to assure transplants are ready for outdoors at the right time, and regular maintenance. After weighing all these factors, purchasing transplants later this spring may be wiser for many gardeners.

Don Janssen is an extension educator for Lancaster County with the University of Nebraska

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2009 Rhododendron of the Year

It is time to vote on the Rhododendron of the Year (ROY) for 2009.

The ROY program was set up to establish the best Rhododendron performer in each of the geographical regions. It has become obvious that rhododendrons do not perform equally well in different climates, soil conditions, even insect populations. The American Rhododendron Society invites us to vote on our candidate for each of the categories: Lepidote, Elepidote, Deciduous Azalea and Evergreen Azalea.

The purpose of establishing the ROY three years in advance is to allow growers and nurseries to propagate and have the candidates for sale during the year they are announced as Rhododendron of the Year.

To prepare for our nomination process, we need to generate a list of our club's "**Proven Performers**" – plants that do well in our gardens and that we like to grow. Once we have developed a list I will ask you to identify your nomination for the Rhododendron of the Year for 2009.

To make things simple, I (Kathryn) will ask you to give me your list of favourite plants and I will determine to which category they belong. You can give me your list at the December or January meeting, by phone (245-7879) or by email: kd.grant#shaw.ca. (replace the # with @). We will need to vote on our candidates for the 2009 ROY in February, as we must submit our nominations by mid-March.

The following criteria should be considered in making ROY recommendations, so you should keep this in mind as you make your list of favourites:

1. Foliage should have a good green colour and retain leaves for at least 2 years (except deciduous azaleas)
2. Plant should flower and perform well 4 out of 5 years
3. Full, compact plant
4. Must be cold hardy, bud hardy and heat tolerant in your area
5. Must be registered with the ARS
6. Easily propagated
7. Easily grown in the average garden requiring low maintenance
8. Resistant to local diseases
9. Propagation material must be available for mass production and availability in 2009
10. 2009 candidates cannot duplicate previous years' ROY selections

Year	Lepidote	Elipidote	Deciduous Azalea	Evergreen Azalea
2002	Ken Janeck	Ginny Gee	R. scheppenbachii	Hino Crimson
2003	Taurus	PJM	Homebush	Purple Splendour
2004	Percy Wiseman	Dora Amateis	Arnesons' Gem	Fascination
2005	Horizon Monarch	Ramapo	Nifty Fifty	Hilda Niblett
2006	Point Defiance	Wee Bee	Washington Centennial	Silver Sword
2007	Nancy Evans	Blaney's Blue	Cecile	Mitsuki
2008	Marie Starks	Vibrant Violet	Yukon	Girard's Fuschia