

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



February 2008
February 2008



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Brrrr a bit cold eh? However, now is a good time to prune your plants. If you don't prune them, come Spring they will have new growth on the branches and stems that need to be cut off and all that new growth will be wasted. For further information go to <http://www.freeplants.com>.

Your executive is heavy into planning events: planning for the bus trip; Truss Show/Plant Sale; NRS Garden Tour and End of the Year Party. We welcome suggestions and assistance. Being an active participant is not only fun but a great learning experience.

We have four members signed up for the Species Workshop this summer. Unfortunately, there are no more openings as our additional slots were returned for other Societies to use.

Please bring items for the dollar table and if you have an extra Rhodo or two bring them for the raffle and prize table.

See you at the February meeting,

Paul

EXECUTIVE

President	Paul Lawry	390-2370
Vice President	Chris Southwick	758-0993
Past President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Secretary	vacant	
Treasurer	Barb Coy	758-8497
Directors	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Linda Lawry	390-2370
	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
	John Deniseger	390-3605
	Allen McRae	758-7589

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
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	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14 BEBAN PARK SOCIAL CENTRE 7:00 pm

DAVID MOORE

"LOOKING AT PLANTS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND"



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TWIGS AND STEMS



GOODIES FOR FEBRUARY

Val Harvey
Ann Davey

Mill Bay Garden Club
Presents

DES KENNEDY ARTISTRY IN THE GARDEN

Thursday, March 27 7 pm
Cobble Hill Hall
Tickets \$10

me@brendadumont.com or (250)743-6138
or from Cowichan Press at Mill Bay

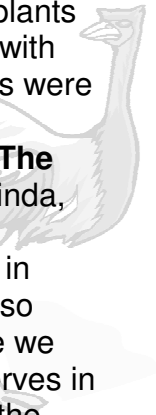
I have received some packets of rhodo seeds collected by Peter Wharton. These are available for the asking. For information phone Art at (250) 468-7516.

Our February Speaker David Moore

I grew up in middle America - born (1946) and raised in Toledo, Ohio which is an hour's drive south of Windsor, Ontario. I attended Ohio State University for four years, studying Architecture. I travelled west in 1969 and saw the beauty of BC for the first time. One year later I emigrated to Canada and lived in Perth County Ontario long enough to plan a return to BC. My first job was working for the Pacific Great Eastern (PGE) Railway pulling ties and laying track between Fort St. John and Fort

Nelson. I saved enough money to make it to the Coast and settled in Powell River in 1971. I met my wife Mary Lou MacMillan shortly after and we've been enjoying a rural lifestyle on our place 15 km south of Powell River ever since. We raised a son and a daughter. Much of my working life was spent with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. It was that work that brought me to Nanaimo on a regular basis. Mary Lou and I have been gardening enthusiasts for 35 years. I first learned of the ARS when I heard Les Clay interviewed on CBC Radio about 25 years ago. He was describing the Ted and Mary Greig rhododendrons in Stanley Park. I then visited his nursery and that started my habit of buying and planting rhodos.

Slideshow: Because our son is living in Australia, when I retired last year Mary Lou and I decided a trip downunder was a good idea for a winter holiday. What better way to start it than attending the international rhododendron conference held in Burnie, Tasmania. We spent 3 months touring Australia and a further month and a half in New Zealand. This was our first trip to the Southern Hemisphere so we were enthralled with the natural world there. We spent most of our time enjoying the National Parks and seeking out Botanical Gardens. I took hundreds of photos of plants and I'd like to share a selection of them with the group. Three rhododendron gardens were particular highlights - **The Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden** in Tasmania, **The National Rhododendron Garden** in Olinda, Victoria and the **Pukietti Garden** in New Zealand. The Royal Botanical Gardens in Hobart, Melbourne, and Sydney were also exceptional. To our delight and surprise we discovered a number of rainforest preserves in both Australia and New Zealand where the native flora is a revelation. I'll take you all over the map for an hour or so **'Looking at Plants in Australia and New Zealand'**.



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NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 10, 2007

Call to Order: President Paul Lawry at 7:30 pm.

President: Guests and members. Thanked all those who participated in the Auction, it was a great success we netted \$1088.00.

Paul again requested that someone take over the duties of the Secretary as we presently are without one.

Reminded everyone of the VI Species Workshops. There are two openings.

Treasurer: Balance of \$3897.45

Correspondence:

1. Invitation to CVI Botanical Garden's 13th Annual Spring Festival at Beban Park on March 7 – 9, 2008.
2. Gaia College is presenting 3 courses: Organic Soil Management, Organic Master Course and Organic Turf Management.
3. Invoices from Beban Park.
4. Renewal Notice from the Rhodo Species Foundation.

Committees:

Program – Chris presented the forthcoming line up of speakers. Newsletter will have more information.

Membership – Debbie – not present.

Raffle – Anne/Val – Request that members donate items for the Raffle and/or Door Prizes.

Social – Sandra – Requested that members sign the “Goodies Book” so that we will have enough munchies for the meetings.

Advertising – Michael – nothing to report.

Web Site – Members can now view photos from NRS events. If you have any photos you can send them to Craig or drop them off at our meetings.

Bus Trip – John - reported that the trip will be heading North this year, further details in the future.

Raffles/Prizes – Sorry no secretary and I forgot to ask someone to get the names of the winners.

Presentation: Glen Patterson gave an excellent presentation about his Rooftop Garden and the methods used for constructing it, also the preparation and moving of the plants from his former garden. Glen generously donated a Wollemi Pine for a silent auction the proceeds to help pay for his expenses (for coming over) with the remainder to be divided between MARS and NRS. Dick Beamish bid the highest. A big thanks to Glen and Dick.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:20pm

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Hailey Garden

by Sandra Evelyn

In April, 1975, Mrs. Ellen Hailey gave more than 350 rhododendron plants from her collection to the City of Nanaimo. These plants can be found in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park.

When I was asked to write a history of this lovely old garden I accepted but not without a good deal of trepidation. Certainly I was familiar with this garden; in fact my husband and I frequently visit the Hailey Garden in Bowen Park and now find ourselves on a first name basis with many of its occupants. Each spring we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with the Rhododendron hybrids such as '**Etta Burrows**', '**Snow Queen**', '**Avalanche**', '**Mrs. Chas. E. Pearson**'; and some species including **R. calophytum**, **R. conncinum**. There are also the many Azaleas such as **R. slippenbachii**. But a large number of these rhododendron plants seem unable to be identified. One must be content to enjoy their beauty and (if they feel so stimulated) to engage in the conjecture of the parentage of these progeny. Over the last decade many Vancouver Island rhodo-dendron experts including Bill Dale, Norman Todd, Evelyn and Nick Weesjes, Dave Dougan, Bob and Jean Rhodes and Ken Gibson have visited the garden and concur that many of the rhododendrons in the Hailey garden noticeably differ from the many hybrid and species rhododendrons they are familiar with. These unknown crosses may well be one of a kind. It seems unlikely even if modern genetic research makes these elusive plants reveal their parentage many will be recognized as registered hybrids. Along with the overall beauty of the plants in the garden this mystery of the unknown becomes part of the lure of the Hailey Garden to everyday passers by and rhodoholics alike.

But a garden's history is not only about nomenclature and botanical origins. It is also about special integrated relationships between the plants and the people who select and care for these plants. The rhododendrons in the Hailey Garden have known two owners. The garden was originally established in Vancouver and later moved to Vancouver Island by Captain Alfred and Mrs. Ellen Hailey. Today it is owned by the people of the City of Nanaimo.

As both Captain and Mrs. Hailey are now deceased and left no written records of their garden I knew it would be difficult to write of this earlier history. However, memories of those who knew the Haileys in Vancouver such as long time rhodoholic Fred Collins, along with Jean Rhodes' knowledge of items in older ARS journals and Nanaimo historian Fred Taylor's records of Bowen Park have all helped to piece together some of the story behind the Hailey Rhododendron Garden.

The first Hailey garden was located at their residence in Vancouver at 14th Avenue and Dunbar St. Here, Captain Hailey indulged his interest in arborea and had a collection of locally available magnolias. Ellen Hailey was a lab technician who worked for a medical practitioner in the Fraser Valley who had a keen interest in rhododendrons. His hobby proved addictive (who once exposed can dare to deny this?) and Mrs. Hailey was soon observed removing the grass about her home to make way for her own increasing rhododendron collection. Indeed she soon had several hundred rhodos on this city sized lot including both hybrids and species. Many of these plants were obtained by Mrs. Hailey during her frequent "shopping trips" to Halfdan Lem's nursery in the United States. Today some of his famous hybrids, which include **R. 'Lem's Monarch'** (a.k.a. Pink Walloper), can be seen in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park.

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There can be no doubt that Mrs. Hailey's interest in rhododendrons went beyond that of finding a suitable garden plant for "beside the front door". She was a charter member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society which formed in the early 1950's. From 1959 through 1962 she was secretary-treasurer of the group. In April 1963 she undertook to chair a committee for a display of rhododendrons in the Vancouver Horticultural Society show. Frequently she was called upon to judge at rhododendron shows.

By now "rhododendroning" had become a family affair in the Hailey household. The early meetings of the Vancouver Chapter of the ARS were held in members' homes and gardens. Captain and Mrs. Haileys' three children - a daughter and two sons - were always on hand to greet the guest members and serve refreshments. For whatever their reasons these children did not retain an interest in their parents' garden and the City of Nanaimo became the welcoming beneficiary to many of the rhododendrons.

The second Hailey Rhododendron Garden was planted in Nanaimo in 1967. Captain Hailey had accepted a post in Nanaimo as port warden and the family moved to their new home in the Hammond Bay area just past the lagoon. Not about to leave her beloved rhododendrons behind Mrs. Hailey had a backhoe load them onto two forty foot flatbed trucks and transported to Nanaimo. Here they flourished in a garden that was soon to become vastly overgrown as the family engaged in other interests including a summer home on Thormanby Island. With failing health Mrs. Hailey may have been expressing her concern for her plants' survival when she asked local rhododendron growers to propagate some of her prized species plants but this was never accomplished.

On March 21st, 1975 Captain Hailey was returning in his small pleasure craft from a short holiday to the family summer cabin. Despite his lifelong experience with the sea (his transport carrier was torpedoed off South Africa and he and another Nanaimo man, Capt. Clarke spent several hours in shark infested waters before rescue) Captain Hailey's craft overturned. Although he had lashed himself to the transom Captain Hailey was unable to withstand the cold waters and he died from exposure. Mrs. Hailey found she could no longer keep her home and garden and decided to move back to Vancouver to be closer to family and friends. Once again she faced a priority of establishing a new home for her many rhododendrons. She gave her species collection to the Vancouver Parks Board where Alleyne Cook undertook to arrange their planting in Van Dusen Gardens. The hybrids, numbering some 350 plants, she gave to the Nanaimo Parks Board. It is interesting to note, however, that some species did find their way into the Bowen Park Hailey Garden. In April, 1975 the planting of these rhododendrons in Bowen Park was overseen by city gardener Anders Olsen in what was to be the third and final Hailey Rhododendron Garden. Unfortunately the plants were either not tagged or the tags were lost and no records were kept of the identity of the individual plants.

Until recently the Hailey Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park has not received the attention it so richly deserves. Lack of funding and manpower saw the plants grow to overcrowd each other. It became obvious that many of the plants had been propagated by graft as suckering rootstock (mainly *R. ponticum*) began to overpower the scions. This suggests there are some rare and hard to propagate specialties in the collection. *R. 'Susan'* and *R. 'Robin Hood'* are two such specimens that have been identified. Vandalism, too, took its toll. Some plants have been found uprooted and others mysteriously disappeared. However with the installation of a watering system and a dense mulching of sawdust most of the rhodos survived happily enough. Today many of these plants have reached a height of fifteen feet or more.

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In 1992 the Nanaimo Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society was established and the membership was encouraged to visit and enjoy the Hailey Gardens. In June, 1993 eight of the founding members formed a work party and volunteered to "dead-head" (remove the spent blooms) of the plants. Interest mounted within the group and it was proposed that Bowen Park including the Hailey Garden could be used as the NRS principal display garden. A comprehensive plan was worked on by the executive of the NRS and the City of Nanaimo whereby the NRS asked to "adopt" the rhododendron grove in Bowen Park as part of the city's "Volunteers In Parks" program. With this permission granted in winter of 1994 the NRS voted to provide the sum of \$1500 for the purpose upgrading and expanding the irrigation system. This sum will be matched by an equal amount from a city grant. Present plans include extending the watering system, plant identification and tagging, improvements to pathways and general maintenance. In future, they also hope to provide for additional plantings.

The Hailey Rhododendron Garden lies in the beautiful Millstream River valley in Bowen Park. It can be reached by three access routes. One may start from the Bush Street parking lot and covered picnic area. From here follow the roadway that runs adjacent to the Millstream River. A smaller parking lot to accommodate about six cars is located halfway between the Bush Street lot and the Hailey Garden. A sign "The Hailey Rhododendron Garden" is on the left-hand side. If you approach from the upper valley proceed downstream past the animal farmyard. Alternatively, leave the parking lot behind the tennis courts on Bowen Road and adjacent to the Bowen Park Clubhouse and follow a woodland trail that descends into the garden. Of course if you should choose (and you most definitely should) to time your visit to these gardens during April and May the colourful, towering and sometimes scented trusses announce you have arrived at the Hailey Rhododendron Garden.

Reprinted from the Newsletter of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society, V2, #9, May 1994

Hailey Garden Update

*By Lillian Hodgson
September 1994*

I was interested the article on the Hailey collection because Ellen and I were very close friends and I was very much involved in the building of her collection. I had a car and I was the driver on our frequent "cross Border shopping" for plants. High on our list was Halfdan Lem in Seattle and Lester Brandt and Hjalmer Larson in Tacoma.

Halfdan Lem was a 6' plus Norwegian with a great sense of humour. If he liked a woman he pinched her bottom and not everyone was so honoured. Any cross that had a calyx was called a "Toodlee-oo" and the big ones were all "Wallopers". This has caused a lot of confusion and other people have tried to straighten it out by naming and registering individual clones. When you purchased plants, you were also given more and the car groaned under the weight as we sailed through the border - no restrictions in those days.

Lester Brandt was a very intelligent man and a scholar and his plants reflected his background. His unnamed treasures were kept in separate greenhouses where the public could not see them. That did

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not stop Ellen. She knew a good plant when she saw one, and Lester reluctantly parted with a beauty. I suspect he had a backup. He was tragically murdered during a robbery by young hoodlums.

Hjalmer Larson lived close by and we always found room for a few more rhodies - many of them gifts. Plants from these three sources may not have been registered at the time but many were later.

There were, of course shorter excursions to local suppliers but most of the nurseries were still specializing in the Dutch hybrids, which at that time were grafted onto *R. ponticum* (azaleas were on *R. luteum*). Rooted cuttings and tissue culture came later.

Len Living, together with Ellen and me were Charter members of the Vancouver Chapter and Len knew that we were looking for some of the newer English hybrids so he imported them. The Naomi and Loderi crosses then became available in very limited numbers. Ellen wanted them all. Another local specialist was Hyland Barnes, a retired banker.

We often drove to Mission to visit her old friend Dr. McKee for whom she worked as a lab technician for many years. Dr. McKee also had property at Abbotsford where he had a collection of rhododendrons, including large specimens of *R. decorum*. He did not personally hybridize but left this sexy job to the birds and bees and collected the seed pods when they were ripe. At least the decorum parent was known and many beautiful plants were shared. He even named one 'Ellen Hailey' but it was never registered or even tagged to my knowledge. After his death, his daughter, Mrs. Selby took over.

Another source was the Greigs, especially for species. Ted would often sell us the stock plant to the chagrin of Mary (that is how I obtained the original *R. augustinii* 'Royston'). However, she knew that she could always take cuttings whenever she wanted.

Greigs of course specialized in rhododendron species and only tried their hand at hybridizing on a limited basis. Ellen often obtained plants from Greigs that were unnamed but later registered. One of Mary's favourites was a plant that had the colours of a Queen Ann Cherry and she named it 'Queen Anne' but it could not be registered because the name was already in the registry.

Like all people who collect rhododendrons, we could always find room for one more plant and because we were dealing with young plants fresh out of the nurseries, we did not take their eventual size into consideration. At the time of the Hailey's move to Hammond Bay, none of her rhododendrons were too large to be moved (not for her, anyway).

Captain Alfred Hailey was a gentleman in every sense of the word and a dedicated Civil Servant. While he was Harbour Master of the Port of Vancouver, he realized that his position was at the whim of Ottawa politicians and there was always the possibility that they would move him to Ottawa. There were two wishes that he expressed to me. One was never to live in Ottawa and the other was never to die at sea. When the Ottawa request finally came through, he balked and refused, so he was sent to Nanaimo on very short notice. It was all downhill from there, with no time to prepare the plants for either moving or planting. On arrival, they were heeled in a Hammond Bay and then Ellen had a stroke and was in Nanaimo Hospital for a long time. She signed herself out - probably too soon - to be with her beloved plants. Then came the biggest blow of all: the death at sea of Alfred. Gerry Langton and I made several visits to Nanaimo while she was in the hospital and at her husband's death. She depended on him so much and now

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that was taken from her. Confined to a wheelchair, she moved in with her son in an apartment in North Vancouver and died soon after.

I am personally pleased that the Nanaimo Chapter is going to restore this collection. Perhaps somebody with propagating skills will be able to share these plants with others. Many of the Loderi plants are either scarce or not in cultivation and such plants as '**Loderi Superlative**' (the pride of her Dunbar St. garden) should be in every collection where it can be given space. This plant, like the Wallopers, is probably a triploid and is well named.

Many of the old Dutch hybrids have been discarded in favour of newer crosses but they are still beautiful plants and should not be neglected. Ellen was very selective. Some of the plants in the Park collection may actually be named varieties unknown in the Lower Mainland.

I am enclosing a list of what I remember growing in the Dunbar garden. Some of them may have been lost in the 1955 freeze or during the move to Vancouver Island, but it will give you a base on which you might be able to identify and label. I would suggest that you obtain slides or coloured photographs of the plants that I have listed and next Spring try to identify as many as you can. At age 83, I cannot guarantee 100% accuracy. Azaleas are not included in my list. Many of them were Exbury and hose-in-hose Ghents. As these latter were grafted, they probably have gone back to *R. luteum*.

[Included in the 5- page list of plants is the azaleadendron 'Glory of Littleworth'. Lillian notes that Ellen Hailey won the toss for it and "I still don't have it"].



R. 'Halfdan Lem'