

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



February 2013



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The President's address has been written from Mesa, Arizona where the day time temperatures are currently 26° C and 7° at night. One week ago there were night time freezing temperatures that damaged many ornamental plants and citrus fruit. We are enjoying desert botanical gardens and seven mile hikes in the Sonora Desert Mountains. We haven't found a single rhododendron here, but we are amazed at the many desert cacti and other desert plants that can flourish with an average yearly rainfall of seventeen centimetres. Also, the Phoenix area (Scottsdale, Mesa, Phoenix) is well known for its art shows and sales. We have been enjoying a number of terrific exhibitions and galleries. As well, there are numerous car auctions here at this time of year, including Barrett Jackson which, on Saturday, sold the original Batmobile for over four million dollars.

Susan and I will be attending the 2015 Victoria conference meeting on our way home and will report on their progress.

See you all at the early February Meeting,

Art

EXECUTIVE

President	Art Lightburn	468-7516
Past President	John Deniseger	390-3605
Vice President	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Burkhard Dressler	758-1738
Directors	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Paul Lawry	816-2370
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516

COMMITTEES

Advertising	vacant	
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Membership	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
Program	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4
Website: nanaimo.rhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7 BEBAN PARK SOCIAL CENTRE 7:30 pm

SHANNON BERCH, PhD

'Soil Biology and Rhododendrons'

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

TWIGS and STEMs



GOODIES FOR FEBRUARY MEETING

Michael Miller

Craig Clarke

Liisa Rullo

11TH ANNUAL QUALICUM BEACH

SEEDY SATURDAY

Saturday February 2

10 am to 3:30 pm

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

747 Jones Street, QB

Admission by donation

Speakers, vendors, seed swap, farmer's market, Milner Gardens children's program, Master Gardeners, Seedy Café, door prizes, raffle, garden chemical collection and disposal.

www.qbseedysaturday.com

FEBRUARY RAFFLE HIGHLIGHTS

R. barbatum

R. oreotrephe 'Exquisetum'



OUR FEBRUARY SPEAKER

On February 7th, Shannon Berch, PhD, will be presenting "Soil Biology and Rhododendrons". In this program, Shannon will provide an overview of soil organisms and the roles that they play in soil. Then, she will focus on mycorrhizal fungi, especially those of ericaceous plants such as Rhododendrons, and how they affect growth and productivity. She will conclude with observations on how soils can be managed to encourage beneficial soil organism. If you'd like to learn more about making the most of your garden, Shannon is an excellent speaker with specialized information to share.

Remember that this meeting is on the first Thursday in February, due to lack of availability of our room on our usual date.

NORTHEAST ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND GARDEN TOUR

May 18 – June 2, 2013

Hosted by Eryl Morton, a well-known garden designer in Victoria. Maximum group size 16. \$4795.00; single supplement \$950.3 nights York, 4 nights Edinburgh, 3 night Grantown on Spey, 3 nights Oban and 2 nights Ayr Included Sightseeing: Harlow Castle, York Gate Garden, Castle Howard, Belsay Hall, Alnwick Castle, Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, Landford Ueda, Royal Yacht Britannia, Edinburgh Castle, Blair Castle, Glenfarclas Distillery, Balmoral Castle and Gardens, the battlefield of Culloden, Cawdor Castle, Loch Ness, Isle of Mull, Torosay Castle Garden, Crarae Garden, Loch Lomand, Glenarn Garden at Rhu, Castle Kennedy, Stanraer and Logan Botanic Garden, Culzean Castle and many more public and private gardens. Contact Janice Dalziel Janice.Dalziel@merit.ca

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2013 CVRS Tour to Washington State May 9 to 11

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society is again hosting a great tour this spring heading south on a three day-two night visit to seven spectacular gardens in BC and northern Washington State on Whidbey and Bainbridge Islands and sites in and around Seattle.

We leave Duncan Thursday morning at 8 am and head to the Saanich Peninsula where Evelyn Weesjes hosts us at her amazing 9 acre jewel - Towner Crest garden overlooking Towner Bay. In 1970, the ARS proudly awarded Evelyn the Gold medal for her work on the genus rhododendron at UBC and in 1990 the Victoria Chapter was very pleased to present her with the Bronze Medal for her Chapter work. Her garden well reflects her contributions to rhododendron culture.



We then board the Washington State Ferry at Sidney and take a leisurely cruise through the southern Gulf Islands to Anacortes. We proceed to Whidbey Island and our first stop there is the Coupeville garden of Dave and Linda Dickerson. Over the past 10 years they brought in more than 200 tons of special exotic and local rock to hardscape their 1 acre plus garden that now has more than 900 rhodos and beautiful annuals. We spend the evening at the pleasant Coachman Inn in Oak Harbour and enjoy an evening meal followed by a short presentation from local garden experts.

Next morning after breakfast we visit the famous rhodo breeder Frank Fujioka and his fantastic oceanside garden with many rare and unique rhodos followed by the Meerkerk Rhododendron gardens - a paradise created by Ann and Max Meerkerk. Before she passed away in 1979 Ann bequeathed the Gardens to the Seattle Rhododendron Society to care for as a "peaceful woodland garden with an emphasis on rhododendrons and companion plants". Fifty three acres of inspirational woodland gardens and a forest preserve offer over 5 miles of trails to breathe in the serene beauty and nature here.

After lunch we take a ferry from Clinton to Mukilteo and then the ferry again at Kingston for a short trip to Edmonds and a drive over the causeway to Bainbridge Island and the famous Bloedel Gardens. These 150 acres are a unique blend of natural woodlands and beautifully landscaped gardens, including a Japanese Garden by renowned landscaper Fujitaro Kubota, a Moss Garden, a Reflection Pool and the Bloedels' former estate home. Our final ferry of the day is to Seattle where we spend the night at a nice hotel right in the heart of downtown. The evening is free for shopping, dining and sightseeing.

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After breakfast on Saturday morning we visit the Kubota Gardens, a legacy to its founder Fujitaro Kubota who in 1927 bought two hectares of logged off swampland in Seattle and started his Rainier Beach garden. Another 7 ha were added in 1981 and the City of Seattle acquired the Kubota garden in 1987. This unique urban refuge displays over 80 years of effort including 400 tons of stone placed to create waterfalls, reflection pools and habitat for the thousands of plants this landscaper worked with throughout his long life.



Our final garden of the trip is the renowned Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, south Seattle. There are 10 hectares of botanical splendour and one of the largest collections of species rhodos and azaleas in the world.

Following lunch we start heading north with a shopping and supper stop at the Bellis Fair mall in Bellingham. Then we travel to the border and the Tsawassen ferry terminal to catch the last ferry at 9 pm arriving in Duncan around 11:30 pm.

The all-inclusive cost of the tour is \$500 per person (double occupancy) or \$ 635 (single occupancy). A **\$200 deposit** is required to confirm your seat. The price includes:

- 3 days of travel in a deluxe highway coach
- All ferry fares, gratuities and taxes
- All meals except suppers on Friday and Saturday nights
- Morning snacks/soft drinks and bottled water
- 2 nights' accommodation--Oak Harbour and downtown Seattle
- Entry fees to the Gardens

There is already lots of interest on this tour so book early by responding to wedumont@hotmail.com a.s.a.p. and mailing your deposit of \$200 per person to 1753 Peerless Road, Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L6. Cheques to be made out to Bill Dumont. Call 250 743 9882 for more info.



You will need a valid passport for this trip. Nobody gets on the bus in Duncan without a passport. We also recommend you purchase travel medical insurance for your visit to the USA. Participants should be in good physical condition but the sites are mostly well accessible.

Final payment is due April 15, 2013

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Meeting January 10, 2013– Minutes

Meeting started at 7:35

1. Welcome:

2. Glenda Allard noted it was nice to see Bill Hardy back with us.

3. President's Address:

Art reported that he has purchased a new laptop for approximately \$800.00.

Thank you to Chris, Edith, Liz and Jan for the refreshments.

4. Committee Reports:

Secretary: Received thank you letter from Loaves and Fishes for our donation from the Christmas Auction.

Treasurer: Burkhard absent reports and available in hard copy. Income from the Auction was approximately \$1100.00 and \$110.00 donated to the Salvation Army and a large box of dry goods to the Loaves and Fishes.

Sunshine: Sandra has sent a letter to Ken Gibson in the death of his daughter in December

Program: Glenda reported that the February 7 speaker will be Shannon Berch speaking on soil biology and micro organisms on plant growth.

5. Other Report:

6. Old Business - Executive spending limit: not discussed

7. New Business:

From the Executive meeting, the conference committee has proposed that the funds raised be allocated as follows:

- Bursary at Vancouver Island University be increased to \$500 from \$300
- with a second one to be created in honour of the contribution of our Island partner clubs in the amount of \$500 for their contribution to the success of the convention.
- Set aside money for Milner Garden Proposal in the amount of \$2000.
- Make a donation to the NRS

Moved by: Dick Beamish

Seconded by: Rosina Schmidt

That NRS increase the NRS bursary for Vancouver Island University to \$500 and that NRS create a bursary to be named for the Island Rhododendron Societies in the amount of \$500.00. Both bursaries will run for 3 years.

Carried

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The discussion on Milner Garden resulted in the decision to table this until more information is available. Dick Beamish suggested a hybrid garden for Milner Garden and Michael Miller suggested a North American species garden be created at Hailey Gardens.

Moved by Crystyna Sosluski

Seconded by Reinhold Gorgosilich

That NRS spend \$500.00 as a one time subsidy to the annual bus tour

Carried.

Sandra Dorman suggested that the club donate \$5.00 for each member to the ARS. This did not go to motion

8. Next meeting – FEBRUARY 7, 2013

Meeting adjourned at 9:45

From the UBC Botanical Garden

January, being January, it's difficult to know what's going to be blooming from one week to the next. Some years, January weather closes in and snow makes the garden a wonderland—not much in bloom—but beautiful nevertheless. January weather can also be comfortably benign, with mild winds off the ocean and only an occasional brush with frost.

Many times, we see early rhododendrons open their buds in January. It's usually a very tentative opening when it happens, but if we get a stretch of mild weather, the Chinese *Rhododendron rirei*, with its beautiful mauve-purple blooms crowning 4 to 5 m tall shrubs, is usually open soon after the New Year. Not long after that, the white Dahurian azalea (*R. dauricum* f. *album*) from northeast Asia and the similar, but evergreen Korean azalea (*R. mucronulatum*), which has bright violet-purple flowers, open their sizable blooms.

Even more reliable for flowers in January are the Asian boxwood relatives known as sweet box (*Sarcococca confusa*) and Christmas box (*S. hookeriana*). These small broadleaf evergreens don't look much like boxwood, nor smell like them either. The sarcococcas are known for the intensely sweet fragrance of their little white winter-borne flowers. While the flowers might not even be visible, visitors are always aware that these plants are in bloom.

Finally, the backbone of winter-flowering shrubs in local gardens has to be ericaceous (*Rhododendron* family) plants. Rhododendrons have already been mentioned, but several related genera commonly produce flowers in January. These include a number of European natives such as the heaths (*Erica* species) and strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*). In very mild weather, dusty zenobia (*Zenobia pulverulenta*), a small shrub from the southeastern US, and cultivars of the Japanese andromeda shrub (*Pieris japonica*) favour us with their blooms. Both have drooping clusters of honey-scented, bell-shaped flowers.

The Garden holds all kinds of surprises for visitors, whatever the weather, so consider a New Year's resolution to enjoy us even more often.

For winter garden photos, check out our [Flickr page](#).

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Rhubarb Sour Cream Pie

Filling:

4 c chopped rhubarb
1 egg
1 and 1/2 c sugar
3/4 c sour cream
1/3 c all purpose flour

Topping:

1/4 c flour
1/4 c packed brown sugar
2 T melted butter

1 deep 9 inch pie shell



Arrange rhubarb evenly in pie shell. Whisk other ingredients together and pour over fruit.

Mix sugar and flour in small bowl and drizzle butter over. Mix with fork and sprinkle over filling.

Bake in bottom third of 450 degree oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake until edge is puffed, filling is slightly jiggly and topping is golden, about 40 minutes. Let cool completely on rack before cutting. Pie is easier to manage if it has chilled overnight in fridge. That does not often happen at my house.

Put a pan under the pie plate as juices sometimes spill over.

Reduce temperatures if you have a convection oven as I do.