

# The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter  
February 2018



## President's Message

Hang in there, spring is coming! These rains are going to stop! The good news is that the days are getting longer. Our Lee's Scarlet, winter jasmine, weigela, snow drops and hellebores are now flowering. Things are looking up. At our last Executive Meeting, we voted to purchase some 2-gallon rhodos to sell at our plant sale. Chris and Doug selected 56 plants for the sale in May. Brenda Lewis, our plant sale coordinator, will be asking you to consider donating a larger plant (3+ gallon size) for the plant sale as some people like the larger plants, especially if they are in bloom. The Executive also unanimously passed a motion to support a one day "mini conference", jointly with MARS, in Parksville on Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018. John Deniseger and Chris Southwick have offered to help with the organizing of this day. At this year's "Plant Sale and Truss Show", we would prefer if you would bring in your trusses on Friday night. In order for the judges to get started at 8:00 am Saturday, trusses must be in by 7:30 am for judging, otherwise they will only be on the display table.

Several positions are open on the Executive this coming year - if you haven't been on the Executive, now is your chance!

Hope to see you all at our next meeting!

All the best,

Allen

## EXECUTIVE

President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Vice President	vacant	
Past President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Gayle McRae	758-7589
Directors	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Don Noakes	
	Dick Beamish	758-2574

## COMMITTEES

Advertising	Jan Moles / Gerry Moore
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	Doug Kitts
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	Susan Lightburn
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich
Website	Craig Clarke
Bus Tour	

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Next meeting, Thursday, February 8th, at 7:30 – Beban Park Social Centre

Wildflowers of Switzerland and Austria by bike

By Anne Allen and Ian Duncan



# Twigs and Stems

## Goodies for February:

Ann Beamish, Linda Moore, Elaine Hutchison

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**\*\*\*Please note:** The date of our annual Plant Sale and Truss show has been changed to Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018!

## Calendar of Upcoming Events:

***Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, Wednesday Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018- Regular meeting - 7:30 pm:***

The February meeting will feature the ever popular **'Panel of Experts'**. Bring your questions.

***North Island Rhododendron Society, Tuesday, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – Regular Meeting – 7:30 pm:***

The February meeting will feature Geoff Ball. Geoff 's presentation will give an overview of Milner Gardens & Woodland and an update on the new species garden.

***Upcoming Central Vancouver Island Seedy Saturdays:***

Qualicum Beach: February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00 to 3:30 - Qualicum Beach Civic Center. **Theme:** Sow, Grow, Enjoy!

Comox Valley: March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00 to 2:00 - Florence Filberg Center, Courtenay. **Theme:** Bountiful Harvest.

Nanaimo: Seedy Sunday on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 to 3:00 – NDSS.

***Spring Sundays at VIU's Milner Gardens and Woodland:***

Sundays February 4th to March 25th

Garden open 11:00am to 3:30pm, last entry 3:00pm.

Tea Room open 11:00am for tea, soup and scones with last seating 3:00pm.

Admission: adults \$6, youth \$4, includes tax. Children 12 and under accompanied by an adult, Milner Gardens members and current VIU students with card - free admission.

<https://www2.viu.ca/milnergardens/>

***"Dig into Spring with the Master Gardeners":*** Saturday March 3rd, 1:00 to 3:00, Oliver Woods Center; Guest speaker: Egan Davis – "What wild plants and their habits can teach the home gardener". For further details, see ad on page 7 of this newsletter.

Our February program:

*Wildflowers of Switzerland and Austria by Bike* by Anne Allen & Ian Duncan



Touring Switzerland and Austria would delight anyone; however, touring on a bicycle is so much better. Anne and Ian did just that; a five-week trip provided a wondrous array of forest and lakeside trails, wildflowers, panoramic views, river paths winding ahead and constant interruptions for "Photo Stops"

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Minutes of the NRS January Meeting

Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018

1. President's Report. Allen welcomed everyone- all guests, members, new members and our speaker, Rose McCully. He also reminded people to buy raffle tickets as we had two rhododendrons, Checkmate and Cosmopolitan, a hardy fuchsia and a book on Mason Bees donated by Rose McCully.
2. Doug Kitts introduced the Speaker, Rose McCully. Rose then gave a most interesting and entertaining presentation on the life and habits of mason bees. She brought a table full of objects which were passed around and showed us how these remarkable little bees live and help our plants to thrive by their pollination. She also brought some of her mason bee equipment and dormant bees for sale during the break. \*\*\*
3. Doug Kitts thanked Rose for her presentation.
4. Coffee Break followed by the Raffle draw.
5. Secretary's Report. Ann was absent due to illness. We wish her a speedy recovery. A letter of thanks was received from "Loaves and Fishes" for our donations to them from our Christmas Pot Luck.
6. Treasurer's Report – Gaylle gave us an updated report.
7. June and John reminded all members to submit contributions which they would like to see put in our Newsletter.
8. Craig reminded us to submit our orders from the Species Foundation.
9. A motion was passed that the NRS purchase 2 or 3 Magnolias from the RSF for the rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens.
10. Next Executive Meeting. The meeting will be held on Thursday, January 18th, 2018 at 2pm at Chris Southwick's.

\*\*\* For more information on Mason Bees, check Rose's website at: [www.jrfarm.ca](http://www.jrfarm.ca)

## The N.R.S. is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

We've come a long way since September 1992! We have lots to celebrate and be proud of! Through the years, we've all learned so much about rhododendrons and horticulture, participated in plant sales and shows, toured countless gardens but most of all we've met so many special people.

In the upcoming months, we'll be highlighting some of the club's past activities and events. Please send us your photos or stories – we'd love to hear from you!

### Twenty-Five Years of Bronze Medal Winners!

Ward & Donna Porter -2000



Craig Clarke – 2002



Richard White – 2005



Chris Southwick – 2008



John Deniseger – 2008



Michael Miller – 2009



Paul Lawry – 2010



Gayle & Allen McRae – 2011



Gerry Moore – 2013



June Bouchard – 2013

Sandra Dorman - 2013



Ann & Dick Beamish – 2014



Art & Susan Lightburn - 2015



Glenda Barr - 2016



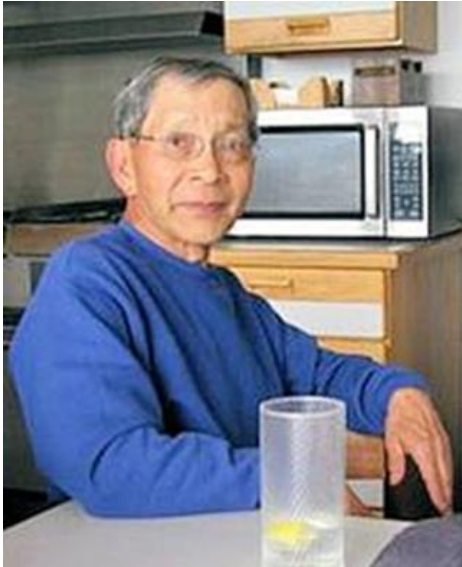
Kathryn Grant - 2017





## My Favorite Hybridizer – Frank Fujioka!

*By Paul Wurz (Reprinted with permission from NIRS and Paul Wurz)*



If you are ever in the market for the most elusive beautiful rhododendron, you might want to do a bit of web searching and check out some of the well-known hybridizers. Over the years, I became very interested on who created some of those special rhodos in our garden, as well as the rhodos on my “wish” list. The name of some hybridizers frequently came to the surface: Halfdam Lem, Davis, Thompson, Jack Lofthouse, Jim Barlup, Dr. Ned Brockenbrough, Harold Greer, and Frank Fujioka are some of the most prolific.

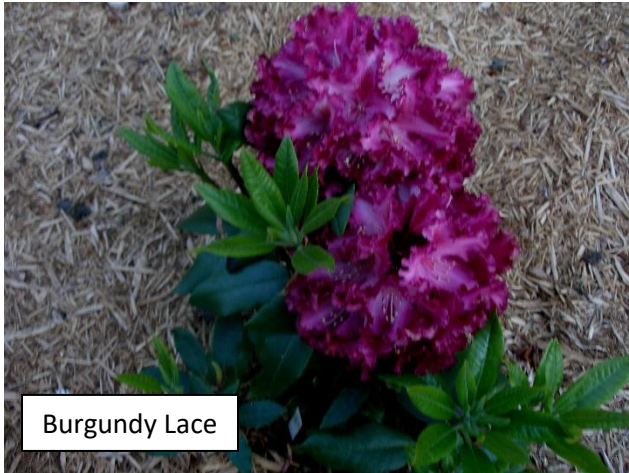
From the preceding list, my favorite would have to be Frank Fujioka for many reasons. Aside from producing some of the most beautiful rhododendrons, Frank is also one of the most generous, caring individuals in the rhodo world. The youngest of 10 children, Frank was born in Hawaii and later graduated from the University of Oregon and pursued a career in teaching. At this time, Frank states that he “couldn’t tell the difference between a dandelion and a rose”! Frank moved to his current residence on Rhodie Lane, in Freeland, WA (Whidbey Island) 27 years ago, after retirement. I don’t know which came first Rhodie Lane or Frank – I guess I could have asked him!

Frank basically learned his skill from reading books, researching and eventually practicing. His first hybrid which he developed at the age of 27 was Vibrant Violet,



a *R. augustinii* hybrid which continues to be one of my favorite plants. Fifty-two years later, Frank has put together a list of approximately 35 registered rhododendrons. This list could very easily be quadrupled if he wasn’t so particular and fussy in registering his plants. Apparently, the two nicest gardens on Whidbey Island are Frank’s garden and Frank’s discard pile! Of his list of 35, I think I have all but 2 in my garden, the exceptions being Golden Pleasure, and his latest, Chicken Little – I also have another 3-4 that he has not named or registered.





Although Frank no longer hybridizes, he continues to evaluate some of his un-named hybrids in his gorgeous garden. And although Frank says he is slowing down, his garden is as beautiful as ever!

I asked Frank what his favorite creation was but he did not give me an answer. Of all his rhododendron hybrids, I would select Seaview Sunset as one of the most perfect rhododendrons, which would include truss, foliage and habit. His most outstanding foliage plant would have to be Chemainus (it also has a very attractive truss). I have included some pictures of some of his outstanding plants – the others can be viewed on the Hirsutum website.



### Seen in Passing...



Lee's Scarlet with 20+ blooms in different stages. Snowdrops up and Kramer's Red showing color!

Most rhododendrons with heavy bud set, looks like a good year coming.

Small bird life on land in Craig Bay area at notably low levels with predator hawks and owls in abundance.

Good early leaf colour on the rhododendrons after adopting the late Norman Todd's fertilizing schedule, starting with light frequent applications in early December to replace nutrients washed away by the heavy rains.

### Milner Species Garden Update

As the new year begins, work will continue on multiple fronts: a) completion of mulching; b) building deer fencing lattice panels; c) planting of more rhododendrons, trees, and companion plants. There will be opportunities for you to help out as we'll be having regular work bees through the winter into the spring. Working on the project with volunteers has been both rewarding and a lot of fun. The garden is really beginning to take shape. We got back to work on January 15<sup>th</sup> and plan on continuing every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9:00 to noon, weather permitting. If you'd like to join in the fun, drop by the garden for one of the sessions or let John know you're interested at [juneandjohn@shaw.ca](mailto:juneandjohn@shaw.ca).



## Raffle Plants for February meeting



*R. campylogynum* 1' -24 deg.C 3-4/3-4/3 EM

A small dark green leaved species with white to rosy purple flowers; needs sharp drainage. Good container plant. Yunnan

Photo: Ian Efford



### Wild Ginger

Flowers: distinctive reddish-bronze buds open to become full trusses of orange corollas

Foliage: medium-green leaves

Structure: 4 to 5 feet in 10 years

Hardiness: untested; most of the parents are rated at -5 or 0 degrees F.

Placement in your garden: some light shade is fine. Apricot Fantasy X Hill's Low red

Hybridizer and photo: Jim Barlup

# ***Dig Into Spring***

## **with Master Gardeners**

Featuring horticulturist  
**Egan Davis:**  
“What wild plants and their growth  
habits can teach the home gardener”  
**March 3, 2018**



**Oliver Woods Community Centre,  
6000 Oliver Road, Nanaimo, BC  
March 3, 2018, 1:00pm – 3:00 pm  
Public welcome: \$15 at the door**

*Space is limited! Register by Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> [jodiwalk@shaw.ca](mailto:jodiwalk@shaw.ca)*



## Food for Thought! By Chris Southwick

Think about joining the NRS executive next year! Every year, our club runs smoothly because there are a number of people who volunteer to help ensure that it does so. This year there will be another change in the executive and new folks will be asked to help out. One of the traditions that has been formed over the years is that the executive meets in the homes of its members. This has the advantage of being more personal which always encourages social interaction and, depending on the time of year, a tour of the host's garden. Another tradition is that the host provides some tea or coffee and a snack following the meeting.

Occasionally, one is asked for the recipe of a particular treat or another. The following is a recipe for Sugar Plum Cake that Chris received from her friend Linda French. You can substitute other fruit (either fresh or frozen) depending on what you have on hand. At the January executive meeting, Chris had substituted blueberries for the plums.



### Sugar Plum Cake – Linda French

¼ c. white sugar

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tbsp. melted butter

Set these three ingredients aside. (They can be doubled if you're making a 9 x 13 cake.)

16 – 20 firm blue plums (split in 2)

2 cups flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

1 cup white sugar

½ cup butter

2 eggs

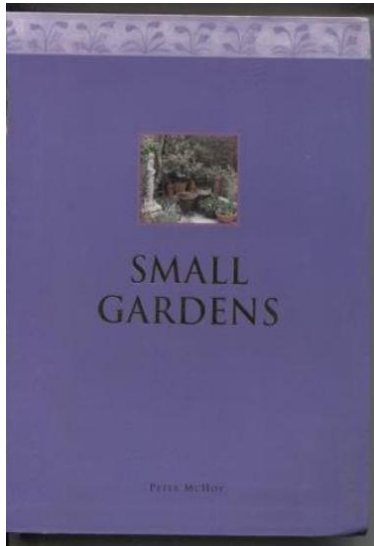
1 tsp. almond extract

1 cup milk

Mix cake ingredients, 30 seconds at low speed. High speed 3 minutes. Put into 9 x 9 or 9 x 12 pan, greased & floured. Stand plum halves or fruit throughout the batter. Sprinkle with cinnamon mixture. Bake 40 minutes at 350 degrees or longer if you use frozen fruit. – Serve a bit warm with ice cream or whipping cream.



## From your library... by June Bouchard



### Small Gardens by Peter McHoy (2002)

The first line in the introduction of this book is that “Small gardens can still have a big impact...” and this well written how-to book certainly demonstrates that. Reminding us that “small” in a garden is a relative term, McHoy provides advice on a variety of aspects of design and planning, including step-by-step instructions on a variety of projects specifically aimed at gardening on a smaller scale.

The book is divided into three main sections: elements of design, features and structures, and choosing plants. The first part covers design basics such as choosing a garden style; working with difficult sites or shapes; adding elements like fencing, screens, focal points, storage, patios and more; and a special section on gardening in very small spaces such as balconies, roof tops or verandahs. The second part, “features and structures”, covers the garden floor, forming boundaries, container choices as well as rock and water gardens. The final section of the book, “choosing plants”, offers advice on selecting the best plants for your garden using a variety of criteria including exposure, soil, colour, scent and personal preferences – it also features lists of the best picks for the various criteria as well as a section on building a kitchen garden and attracting wildlife.

This is a great little book which offers inspirational ideas and useful advice on soft and hard landscaping on a small scale, including fencing, arches and pergolas, lawns, ponds, rock gardens, and much more. There are also over 700 colour photographs, diagrams and illustrations. It is a great companion on a very rainy and stormy afternoon while we dream of milder days and early blossoms appearing in the garden. Check the NRS library for this book and for a number of other excellent reads. **Please consider recommending / reviewing books – either from our library or other specific books that you feel might be of interest to other NRS members – any contributions would be much appreciated.**

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*See you all at the  
February meeting! ☺*