

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi everyone:

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and are ready to resume attending NRS meetings and events. I look forward to seeing and speaking with you at the meetings and events.

Our annual Xmas Auction was a success due to the generous bidding of our members and donations we received. Please be sure to thank those businesses that contributed for their donations (they are listed in the December minutes).

Kathryn Grant passed out raffle tickets at the December meeting. The money is to be used for the upcoming ARS Western Regional Conference expenses. If you would like to help please contact her or Chris Southwick for tickets.

Let's all enjoy the New Year together – see you at the January meeting.

Paul

EXECUTIVE

President	Paul Lawry	816-2370
Past President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Vice President	John Deniseger	390-3605
Secretary	June Bouchard	390-3605
Treasurer	Gerry Moore	756-1427
Directors	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
	Linda Lawry	390-2370
	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
	Chris Southwick	390-3415
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

COMMITTEES

Advertising	vacant	
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Helene Sullivan	758-7023
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Membership	Debbie Gaboury	
Program	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
Bargain 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, JANUARY 14 BEBAN PARK SOCIAL CENTRE 7:30 pm

JOHN DENISEGER & JUNE BOUCHARD

'The Ups and Downs of Nepal'

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TWIGS AND STEMS



GOODIES FOR JANUARY

Chris Southwick
Glenda Allard Barr
Dorothee Kieser

The year 2009 was a great year for the NRS – thank you everyone for being part of such a wonderful group! The best of the season to everyone and see you all in 2010! Spring is just around the corner



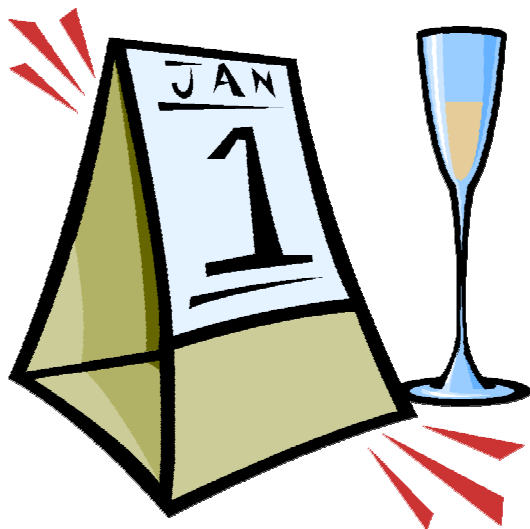
Conference Corner

Thanks to everyone who took books of raffle tickets to sell – I hope you are selling lots! If you need more tickets before the January meeting please get in touch with Chris Southwick. The draw for a \$100 gift certificate to the Mahle House Restaurant will take place at the January meeting, so don't forget to bring your ticket stubs (and money) to the meeting.

Rather than prepare another raffle for January I will be looking for feedback from you about what type of prize you will enjoy selling tickets for the most; should it be restaurants, garden centres, or do you have another idea? If anyone would like to take over the planning and management of this fundraiser please let me know.

Kathryn

OUR JANUARY SPEAKERS JUNE BOUCHARD & JOHN DENISEGER



June and John traveled to Nepal in March 2009. After spending some time in Kathmandu, they spent 2 weeks trekking in the Himalayas. Covering 125 to 150 km, and an elevation gain of 3400 meters, their journey took them through the Rhododendron forests of central Nepal, high up

into the alpine area of the Annapurna Basin.

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Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Minutes of December 10, 2009 Meeting

1. President's report:

Thank you to Sandra Dorman for organizing the potluck and setting up the tables.

Thank you to Allen and Gayle McRae for coordinating donations and pick ups for tonight's auction.

Thank you to all who have donated items to the auction.

President's Certificate of appreciation presented to Gayle McRae for all her work at the plant sale in May as well as help with the auction.

2. Correspondence: Thank you letter from student who won the scholarship offered by the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society to the Horticultural Program accompanied by letter from Vancouver Island University thanking the NRS for the \$300.00 bursary.

3. 2012 Western Regional conference: Kathryn Grant presented first of many raffles – all proceeds to go towards the 2012 Western Regional Conference. The prize for the first draw will be a \$100.00 gift certificate to the Mahle House and the draw date will be January 14, 2010, our next meeting. Ask Kathryn for booklets of tickets and bring money and ticket stubs to the January meeting.

4. Program:

January: "The Ups and Downs of Nepal" presented by June Bouchard and John Deniseger.

February meeting: Richard Hebda – Royal British Columbia Museum – Curator of Earth Sciences and Botany

Topic: Facing Climate Change on our Landscape and in our Gardens

Richard Hebda is an excellent speaker and very well known – bring a friend!

Please note that the February meeting has been changed to Wednesday, February 10th rather than the usual Thursday!!!!

5. Auction:

Our total proceeds were: \$1128.00 – thank you so much for your generous bidding.

Ten per cent of our total proceeds went to the Salvation Army.

All donations of non-perishable items were donated to Loaves and Fishes.

A special thank you to everyone who donated items to our auction

Don't forget to thank and support the following local businesses and organizations who also donated items for our auction:

Shar-Kare Feeds and Pet
Supplies
The Backyard Wild Bird and Nature
Store
Vancouver Island University –
Horticultural Program
Sharecost Rentals & Sales
Diana's Garden Centre
Green Thumb Nurseries
Turley's Florist and Potting Shed
Dig This

Ken MacKay Concrete Forming
Buckerfield's
Art Knapp
Carpe Diem Garden Centre
The Quilted Duck
International Composting
Corporation
Old Garden Topiary
Canadian Tire

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In Memorium, Beryl Riches

On December 5th, we lost one of our long-term members. Beryl Riches passed away at Wexford Place where she spent her final months. Until a year or so ago, Beryl had been tending her garden at her home near the hospital.

Beryl had a long history in this area in the world of plants and gardening. One of Beryl's earliest memories of her interest in gardening was of being in a park in Victoria as a pre-schooler and stashing horse chestnuts in her hat so that her grandparents wouldn't know she had them, and bringing them home to plant. She planted them at home and watched them grow.

Before she started school, Beryl loved to follow her grandfather in the garden as he worked with the vegetables, roses, asters, lilies and other bulbs and plants. She remembered her grandmother ordering lilies from Winnipeg; some of these were among the first regals arriving from China. They grew apples, cherries, raspberries and loganberries among other fruits, and sold black cherries. Beryl liked to climb Royal Anne cherry trees and read books there. Wine was made from the abundance of the cherry harvest. Beryl had a wonderful childhood in this area, and had fond memories of gathering watercress from the Millstream with her grandmother. (As my own grandfather told me, this was the original name of the river that is now shown on maps as the "Millstone", I was told it had been taken from the song "Under the Old Millstream".)

Beryl and her grandparents lived near the bluffs overlooking East Wellington, and Beryl spent many blissful hours in this wildflower paradise, exploring with her schoolmates for wild strawberries, cranberries, camas, erythroniums, trilliums, fritillaria, red currants, lady slippers and rock plants, among others. The first erythroniums to bloom were on a ledge on the Cliffside, and Beryl remembers climbing down some rungs that had been nailed into a Maple tree in order to capture a close-up view of these harbingers of spring. She also knew of the best spot for wild strawberries, but Beryl avoided getting too close to this, because it was also full of nests of snakes!

In 1948, Beryl married Stan Riches, and started planting at their first home in the Townsite area. She enjoyed growing tomatoes, shallots and onions, as well as many other vegetables, and fruit, including peaches, apples, plums and loganberries. In the 1960's, Beryl began to grow more flowers, including lilies, giant incurved chrysanthemums (grown under cover to prevent damage), clematis and bulbs. In the 1970's the Riches moved to their final home and began developing the garden there. Beryl's late husband, Stan, was a willing helper, and developed his own interest in roses. He also took special pleasure in his yellow magnolia.

Beryl took part in a judging course that was held at the Island Hall in Parksville in the 1980's. There were regular sessions over a period of a few months, and she learned a great deal in these sessions. Beryl judged for many years at the NHS parlour show and also at various fall fairs. In 1983, Beryl took part in the last Master Gardener's course to take place at Malaspina College.

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Beryl was also an avid member of the Nanaimo Horticultural Society (Honourary Life Member) and the Rock and Alpine Society which meets in Victoria. Along with some other past and present members of the NHS, Beryl became an awaited celebrity at the UBC Mother's Day plant sale, as one of the "limo ladies". For 11 years, they would hire a limousine to pick them up at the ferry and deliver them to the sale, then pick them up afterwards. This was great fun. They would be greeted by David Tarrant and Judy Newton and then join the crowds to select some prized specimens, and head back to the ferry, often sharing a bottle of wine that the limo driver would have chilled for them.

Beryl's most recent special interests included lilies, begonias, erythroniums, hellebores and cyclamen. Beryl grew these plants from seed, and hybridized some of her own seedlings. She has a special lily she hybridized that she called "Nanaimo Sunrise". Beryl had imported special daffodils from England and Northern Ireland, but gave this up due to the constant battle with the Narcissus fly.

Beryl was an invaluable source of local knowledge about gardening in this area with her long history of growing and enjoying plants in Nanaimo. She will be missed.

Glenda Allard Barr

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference – April 9 to 11 **The 100 available spaces are going quickly!**

The conference is at the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research in Vancouver (www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org). This is Canada's premier rhododendron garden and it's the perfect environment to learn about rhododendrons. The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference is the first in North America to be designed on a double-track classroom learning model. It features classroom and field experiences at 2 learning levels, tours of 3 world-class gardens, rhodie sales, on-campus suite accommodation, and free time in evenings to visit beautiful Vancouver, site of the 2010 Olympics. Veteran rhododendron collectors will enjoy Douglas Justice's advanced (Level 2) classes with their emphasis on species, and Ron Knight's novice (Level 1) classes will be a great place for newer club members to learn all the basics of rhododendron gardening. In fact, you could use this conference as a way to introduce gardening friends, who are not yet members of your chapter, to the wonderful world of rhododendrons.

The registration fee of \$155 is all-inclusive for activities at UBC Botanical Gardens:

- * 6 ninety-minute learning sessions taught by professional teachers in high-tech classrooms
- * a folder of notes
- * Saturday and Sunday lunches and coffee breaks
- * Free admission to the Asian and Alpine Gardens.
- * Complimentary parking

Registration is limited to 100 rhodophiles and over 50% of available spaces are now taken.

Level 2 classes are filling up especially quickly. Please **register now** to ensure that you get the learning level you want. If you need hotel accommodation, make your reservation soon because the conference committee has not pre-booked any blocks of rooms in the three recommended hotels. Conference details and a printable registration form may be obtained from the ARS District 1 website: www.rhodos.ca (click on "registration form" and "information" halfway down the page, under April 9 – 11). If you have questions, please contact Ron Knight at: rcknight@telus.net

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Companion Plants



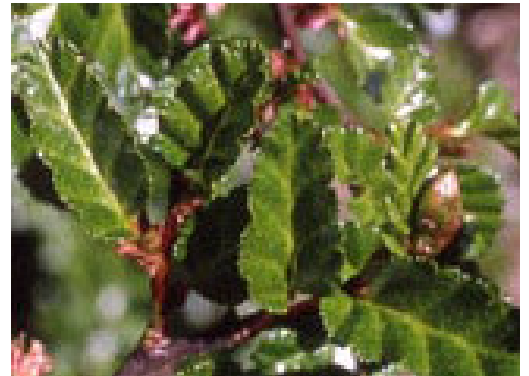
N is for Nothofagus of the
Beech Family
Nyssa of the Sour Gum or
Tupelo Family

I toyed with doing Narcissus or Nymphaea for this segment, but our newsletter has only so much space, and I'd need a book to say all there is to say about those vast groups of plants. Instead, I will tell you a 'tale of two trees', not well known or widely used, but surely worthy of attention and trial in our gardens.

NOTHOFAGUS Family: Fagaceae

The False or Southern Beeches are a small group of trees from the southern hemisphere that are just on the edge of our hardiness range. I have only grown one, the hardiest species, *N. Antarctica* (Antarctic Beech – oh yes – they really appreciate the shade on those ice stations) that is native to southern Argentina and Chile, but lost them all in pots in the cold winter of 1990.

Small crinkly dark green leaves are precisely arranged on a herringbone pattern of branches on a tree that seems to prefer to be a large shrub here in the north. I tried training them to a single stem, and did succeed – sort of! They display a definite perversity to twist and squirm, and send out branches and leaders at odd tangents – basically a botanical juvenile delinquent - but in time



Nothofagus Antarctica

I achieved a tree-ish look, I guess. No idea how they would have done later, as they became landfill after that killing winter, but I will try again one day.

Autumn colour varies through yellows-oranges-browns, and sort of sneaks up on the tree by creeping slowly along the branches. This gives a marbled look to the whole thing which is quite striking in conjunction with the branch layout. The flowers and nuts are inconspicuous.

There are a few other deciduous species, *N. procera* (*N. alpina*), *N. pumilio*, and *N. obliqua*, but at Z8-9, we're pushing the limit. The Chilean evergreen types, *N. betuloides* and *N. dombeyi*, are

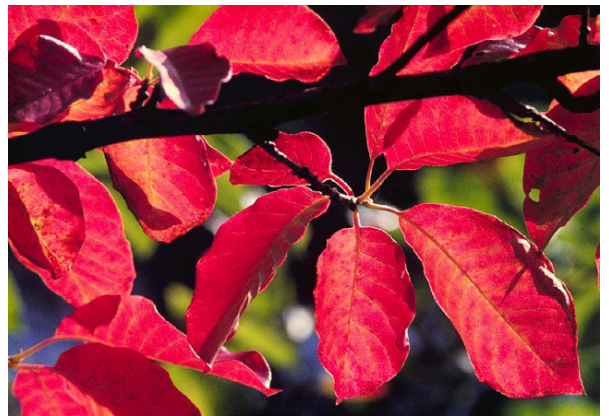
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rarely available, and probably even touchier, as are their Australian cousins *N. gunnii* and *N. cunninghamii*. If you are lucky enough to come across any of these, two factors are crucial to their survival – no cold winds, and lime-free soil. They root well from cuttings, or come from seed sown in fall. Try to find one – I was intrigued by them for the texture and unusual shapes, and look forward to another attempt.

NYSSA Family: Nyssaceae

The Tupelo, or Black Gum, or Sour Gum (not related to Eucalyptus, the Gum Tree, or Liquidambar, the Sweet Gum), is, strangely enough, directly related to the Davidia, or Dove Tree. However it displays neither the heart-shaped leaves nor the showy flower bracts of that sister tree.

There are only five species from China and North America, and the most available would be *N. sylvatica*, which has a large native range from Mexico to the eastern seaboard, and on into the southern tip of Canada. It is a perfect tree for lime-free, moist but well-draining sites, near water.



Nyssa sylvatica

The Tupelo will become a large shade tree, so give it room to mature. More importantly, it should be acquired at a small size and left in place – it hates to move! It will rival even the best maples for fall colour display – the shiny 6-inch leaves turn a kaleidoscope of yellow, scarlet and orange earlier than most other trees, and will set your pond on fire!

Flowers are inconspicuous, and although it bears small blue egg-shaped fruits, you'd have to look sharp to see them. The Chinese *N. sinensis* is equally spectacular, but not quite as hardy (Z7), and more difficult to locate in plant centers. So if the koi in your pond are aching for a shady corner, this could be the answer that you'll love as much as they do.

Happy Planting!

Colleen Forster

