



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

June 2022



### President's Message

Hello NRS Gardeners!

It was thrilling to see the great cooperation by all NRS members, under the guidance of our Executive team, during the recent initiatives to celebrate the "Year of the Garden". We should all be proud to have developed such warm camaraderie in our club as well as the willingness to give a hand where a hand is needed. Both of this year's fundraising initiatives, the "Truss Show and Plant Sale", as well as the "Public Garden Tour" went beyond our expectations, and we are extremely thankful for the job well done by the organizers and all the helpers.

The NRS will celebrate the end of the year with a picnic at Dorothee Kieser's lovely farm on the 11th of June. Please see below (p.2) for more information. While most of our current Executive graciously offered to serve for another term, Ann Beamish and Allen McRae are resigning as directors. For the many, many years of their great service to the NRS, our warmest thank-you!

Come September, rather than a regular meeting, the NRS will celebrate the club's 30th anniversary at Rea and Ron Sutton's charming acreage property in Fanny Bay – this will also be our AGM (Full details in the September newsletter). At that time, hopefully, we shall have a new president as I am resigning from this position. I am humbled and thankful to many members for their help through my three years of being the NRS president, especially to our editors June and John, and hope to leave the club in better hands. I will continue to coordinate the Hailey Grove work parties, the propagation initiative, the Truss Show and Plant sale, as well as working on the website. For me it was a great three-year pleasure. Thank you all!

See you at the picnic!

Rosina T. Schmidt

### OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Past President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Secretary	Deborah Francis	
Treasurer	Ron Sutton	416 951-1373
Directors	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Dorothee Kieser	390-4136
	Gaylle McRae	758-7589

### COMMITTEES:

Advertising	Allen McRae
Library	Ann Beamish / Gaylle McRae
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Jan Moles
Program	by Committee
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	Deborah Francis
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Wanda Brenton
Propagation	Rosina Schmidt
Hailey Grove	Kevin Francis
Show and Sale	Jan Moles and Brenda Lewis

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society  
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4  
Website: [nanaimorhodos.ca](http://nanaimorhodos.ca)

End of Year Picnic at Dorothee Kieser's  
6299 Pearce Rd in Nanaimo  
Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00



## **NRS WIND-UP PARTY**

**A reminder for our NRS Potluck Wind-up Party!**

**Saturday, June 11th – 2:00 pm**

**Dorothee and Robert Kieser's home and garden**

**6299 Pearce, Nanaimo**

Don't forget to bring cutlery, plates, cup or glass

A potluck dish that you love to make and share

A chair to relax on and a beverage of your choice

**Ham, coffee, tea and non-alcoholic punch will be provided by the club**



We will be having a draw for plants. If you can, please bring a plant that some other member would appreciate.

**\*\*Bring your friends, neighbours, or visiting relatives to help celebrate our year-end!**

**Please car pool if you can**

**See you ALL at the Wind-up Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 2:00**

## **Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:**

**Milner Gardens and Woodland:** – open Thursday thru Sunday from 10am to 4pm. You may wish to check out the Fairy Weekend at Milner from June 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. The fairy houses magically appear in honour of Veronica Milner's belief in fairies. Check the Milner website for details: [Milner Garden Events](#)

## ***Live the Garden Life - check this out to see what's going on in our area***

In recognition of the "Year of the Garden", Milner has created "Live the Garden Life" on the Milner website. It is a guide to local resources to support the mid-Island community in getting out into the garden.

Whether you visit our Milner's beautiful gardens for inspiration, join a garden club to meet other gardeners and share knowledge, are planning your first garden and want to gain knowledge, or take courses to learn more about gardening, celebrate everything gardens do for us at a local garden event, or check out our trusted web resources, ... see the listings in each category. For more information, click here to ["Live the Garden Life"](#).

## *A look back at some of our events:*

The Rhododendron Revival Project – by Christine Quist (VIU Horticulture Program Instructor and NRS member)

The Vancouver Island University (VIU) Horticulture Department is excited to announce they are a 2022 recipient of a VIU Engage Grant. This grant intends to allow VIU faculty to build or expand collaborative research projects with community partners. The grant will support Rhododendron research that aims to continue the current initiatives underway at VIU Milner Gardens & Woodland Gardens (Milner Gardens) that sustains rare and endangered Rhododendron species in the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden. Some of the Rhododendron species at Milner Gardens have been growing there since 1960 which is a significant lifespan for a woody shrub. Over time, these rare and unique Rhododendron species have experienced adverse environmental and biological pressures such as drought, winter storms and disease leading to a decline in health.



Photo by Rosina Schmidt. (Left) Geoff Ball, Jessica Gemella, John Deniseeger, Sally Vinden, Denise Winter, Chris Southwick, Christine Quist.

Together, horticulture students in the Horticulture Technician Foundation Certificate Program at VIU, Milner Gardens staff and the local Rhododendron Societies work together to share knowledge and experience and contribute to the success of the project.

An overarching goal for this project includes the revival of Rhododendron species at risk in the garden through propagation of plants that require replacement and/or population expansion. Another goal is to identify and propagate Rhododendron species from Milner Gardens that aren't commonly propagated or are difficult to propagate in commercial production settings. The project also creates a networking opportunity between the three groups involved and has proven to be valuable in building relationships that continue to strengthen the VIU and wider community.

**Ed. Note:** Christine is hoping to have 4 or 5 NRS members join the rhododendron collection and "sticking" team in the fall. The intent is to have students come to our meetings in the fall to provide us with updates and progress reports on the project.

*Stay connected - check our web page - new things added regularly!*

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>



## *May was Garden Tour Month!!!*

Robert Nixon's Garden (Photos by Rosina)



Dorothee Kieser's Garden (Photos by Rosina)







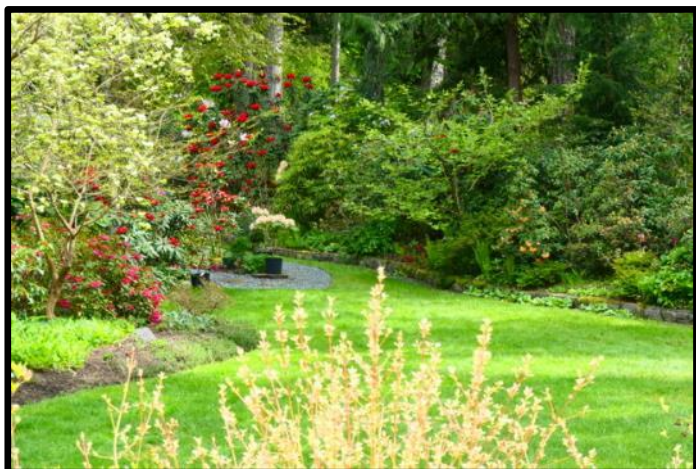
Chris Southwick's Garden — from Rosina



Chris with R. 'Mary Greig'



R. 'Etta Burroughs'







Dick in the garden



Ann and Sandra enjoying the sunshine

### What You Plant

Poet: H. Joseph Chadwick

You've planted love and friendship,  
And since you planted those,  
Your garden's surely blooming  
With lovely memories . . .

And life has been much brighter  
For everyone you've known  
Because of all the gladness  
And happiness you've sown!



R. 'Black Widow'



## *Public Garden Tour - May 14-15 (photos by Rosina unless otherwise noted)*

Although the weather didn't cooperate, our May 14-15 Public Garden Tour was a success. Many intrepid gardeners braved the elements and joined the fun of visiting beautiful gardens and meeting wonderful people!

A great BIG thank you to the organizers – Gaylle McRae, Chris Southwick and Deborah Francis; to the numerous and dedicated garden sitters; to the various venues that sold tickets; as well as to all the gardeners who opened their gardens and worked hard to have it ready for the tour!



Staying warm at the O'Neil's garden – photo by Mike O'Neil



Lynn Lepin in her lovely garden; photo by June Bouchard



Beautiful rhodos at the McRaes – photos by Gaylle McRae



Eliane Leclerc and Deborah Francis  
garden sitting at McRae's





In the rain at the Kieser's garden – Loderi King George stole the show – photo by Deborah Francis

**A Brief Propagation Group update from Rosina:** The 2021 cuttings remain in Allan Murray's generous care. He'll let us know when they need to be repotted from their current 4-inch pot into a 1-gallon pot. The 2020 cuttings are doing well in Rosina and Chris's gardens and should be ready for market in 2024. We are looking for greenhouse space for the upcoming 2022 cuttings. We anticipate the completion of the shadehouse project at Milner later this summer.

**\*\* Our propagation group could use more 2-gallon pots. If you have pots that you'd like to donate to the group, please contact Rosina or Chris.**



## Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee at Bowen Park



Although the NRS is taking a break over the summer, the work bees at Hailey Grove will continue – it would appear that nothing stops the invasive plants from showing up! So, mark your calendar and come and join the fun on the following dates – always the second Tuesday of the month from 10am to 2pm:  
June 14<sup>th</sup>; July 12<sup>th</sup>; August 9<sup>th</sup>!



**As they say... “Many hands make light work!” Bring your lunch and a sunny disposition! 😊**

Hailey Grove work party photos from May 10th, 2022 as these dedicated NRS volunteers were getting the garden ready for the Garden Tour!

- 1 - Kevin and Deborah Francis;
- 2 - Elaine Hutchison;
- 3 - Rosina Schmidt





## *Plant of the Month* by Ron Sutton

### *Rhododendron maoerense*

This is a species rhododendron belonging to sub section *fortunea*. Not much is known about it, as it is a relatively new introduction. It is found in north east section of Guangxi China growing 1800-1900 metres above sea level on mountain sides. This is a tree form rhododendron that will ultimately grow to 8-12 meters high, but only 6 feet in 10 years. It produces flowers similar to *R. fortunei* but without the fragrance. The large purplish pink flowers open in early to mid-May, and are approximately 4" across in trusses of 8-9 flowers.

This rhododendron is quite hardy. The RSBG (Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden), where I got my plant from, lists the hardiness down to -5°F/-20.5°C or hardiness zone 6b. The first photo of my plant was taken May 10, 2020. The second photo was taken this year on May 18, 2022. It didn't bloom at all in 2021. This year's cool spring is mainly responsible for it opening later than is seen in the first photo.



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## *Fall into Gardening is Back*



On October 23, the Mount Arrowsmith and Nanaimo Rhododendron Societies along with the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association are hosting a one-day fall gardening workshop at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre.

This year's theme will be "**Your Garden and Climate Instability**". Details will follow in upcoming newsletters.



*A Nanaimo Newcomers group  
being introduced to Genus  
Rhododendron by Chris  
Southwick* - All photos by Rosina Schmidt



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### Acquiring Plants from the USA by Ron Sutton

Some people have asked me how I got the American plants I purchased into Canada.

I started getting plants from the USA approximately twenty years ago when I discovered a business called Greer Gardens – they would ship plants anywhere in the world. Greer Gardens had an extensive offering of rhododendrons and azaleas, as well as many other plants. I also have imported from Van Veen Nursery, RSBG and Forest Farm. It is a great way to acquire "difficult to find" plants. Even as I type this, I have Van Veen Nursery in Oregon USA, rooting me 15 different rhododendrons.

Greer Gardens has since closed but there are a few other plant selling businesses in the States that will ship you their plants. Some require you to spend a certain minimum dollar amount. For the **serious** gardener or plant collector, the process is worth the expense, and it is expensive.

First you are paying in US dollars, and the Canadian to US dollar exchange is approximately \$1.20 for every American one. There is also the expense of a **required phytosanitary inspection document** by Canada Customs to bring plants into Canada. The fee for it ranges between \$40-\$80 US, depending which State you are getting from, and it doesn't matter whether you are getting one or twenty plants, the fee is a fixed amount. Add to that the expense of shipping, which will vary depending on the size and weight of your order. You then also have to pay State taxes and Canadian duty taxes on the value of your order. Lastly, some plants will die on you, no matter how much effort you give to their survival. If you are not discouraged yet, read on.

I will assume, if you are reading this, you live on Vancouver Island or mainland BC.

I have been importing species rhododendrons and other plants from the RSBG (Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden) for the past four years - they account for most of my importing. They have two mail order sales a year, one in the Spring and the other in the Fall. They sell plants you will not find anywhere else. In the past, they shipped B.C customer orders to the UBC botanical gardens for pick up. They stopped that practice, and recently for Vancouver Island purchasers, started

shipping to customers using a service called Seawings. <https://www.seawings.ca> Seawings has a warehouse in Blaine Washington and they bring all kinds of American purchased goods, purchased by people here, to Vancouver Island via their warehouse at Sidney airport. The process is as follows. For your first order using Seawings, you have to let them know it is coming. After that, you are in their system and don't have to give them notice of a shipment. They will contact you when it arrives.

When you have your shipment prepared, put your name, then Seawings and their address.

When you go to pick up, show Seawings your bill of sale and then they will give you the phytosanitary documentation to take to customs in the Sidney airport terminal. You then give it and your bill of sale to Customs. They will then calculate the duty tax for you to pay and copy the phytosanitary document. You then return to the Seawings office and show them proof of duty payment, where upon they will bill you for the cost of bringing them to you and hand them over.

That above explains how I get plants from the RSBG. Other US plant sellers that will ship directly to you will have you pay for all that in advance, or sometimes the carrier will bill you for the duty.

I have only lived on Vancouver Island for four and a half years, and because of the ongoing Covid pandemic, I have only plant shopped south of the border once. In 2019, I went to Washington State to plant shop and pick up a plant order from the RSBG. I shopped a couple of nurseries and garden centres. However, before doing this trip, I prearranged to meet up with a Washington plant inspector to get my plant purchases inspected and the required phytosanitary document issued. I met up with this inspector on a weekend at her home and paid a US\$90 inspection fee due to it being outside normal working hours for her. She was terrific, I would employ her services again.

I got a separate phytosanitary document for my RSBG order using the inspection agent they had on site. In hindsight, I should have just had my selected agent do it all and only paid for one phytosanitary inspection.

At the Canadian border at Sumas, chosen because I figured it would be less busy, things went well. I showed the Canadian border agent my bills of sale and two phytosanitary documents. He asked me questions, how long I was in Washington for, was I bringing these plants for a business, and had I done this before? I answered his questions, then he handed my documents back and sent me on my way. I didn't have to pay anything extra crossing the border, probably because I was in Washington long enough to be exempt a certain duty dollar figure.

Driving is the best way of getting plants from the States as they remain in the pots they're sold in, plus you get to pick your own specimens rather than taking what they decide to ship to you. It is also much less stressful for the plants, plus less chance of breakage. The other advantage is you get to shop places that don't ship. Now having said all that, you should know that certain plants cannot be brought into Canada. Some are banned outright and others need a permit. Pleione orchids are banned, some conifers etc.

I have had no problems with rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias, Japanese maples, and camellias and a few other plants. If you are wondering if a plant you are interested in can be brought into Canada, check it on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA): [https://airs-sari.inspection.gc.ca/airs\\_external/english/decisions-eng.aspx](https://airs-sari.inspection.gc.ca/airs_external/english/decisions-eng.aspx)

You do this, by entering the plant name in the search box and following the prompts. For example, you first enter the plant name, then hit enter. You will then find world locations, choose United States and hit enter, then choose which source State, then choose your destination province, and then end use, propagation (sowing or growing). Next, choose with soil or related matter. You will then see instructions for the CBSA (Canadian Border Security Agency) that are also your requirements, which for the above-mentioned plants, is just a phytosanitary document. American inspectors are quite knowledgeable about Canadian import restrictions, they will help you also. It was an American inspector who flagged a Pleione orchid I wanted, as banned.

I was recently interested in getting a *Berberis thunbergii* 'Orange Rocket' from a nursery in Washington. I ran it through the CFIA website and learned that I needed an import permit and a phytosanitary for it. I am considering getting the permit, for not just the plant, but for also the learning experience of getting one. Here is a link to Washington's plant inspection site, where you can see fees, and instructions for an inspection.

<https://agr.wa.gov/departments/plant-health/export-inspection>

Happy Shopping!  
Ron Sutton



# *The Year of the Garden*

It's been a very busy time over the last few months as we celebrated the "Year of the Garden". Thank you to all of you who helped make it all work whether you opened your garden, set up and displayed trusses, put away chairs at meetings, introduced speakers, donated plants, acted as garden sitters, sold raffle tickets, ran cash registers, billeted speakers, brought goodies, helped set up or take down, brought friends, promoted our club, or all of the other things that it takes "to be the NRS".



**And the biggest thank you of all goes to Rosina, our outgoing president! Over the last 3 years, she has guided our club through the challenges of a global pandemic. She's kept us connected and moving forward, embracing technology by improving our website, and enabling us to use Zoom to access wonderful speakers. We even had a virtual truss show and a virtual auction! Through her guidance, we now have an active propagation group and we've reconnected to the Hailey Rhododendron Grove in Bowen Park. Membership has remained strong as we've attracted a number of new members. Thank you, Rosina! You've done an amazing job!**



*Enjoy your gardens and the summer to come! See you at the June wind up and then in the fall! ☺*