



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

June 2021



### President's Message

Hello NRS Gardeners,

It is my great honour to announce that June Bouchard and John Deniseger received a well-deserved ARS Silver Medal this past May. It was delivered to their door by ARS president Ken Webb and District 1 president Glen Jamieson.

It is also my great honour to announce that Reinhold Gorgosilich was presented the Bronze Medal by NRS President Rosina T. Schmidt and NRS VP Chris Southwick. This is in recognition of his dedicated work in support of the NRS which includes looking after our bargain table for years, propagating rhododendrons and donating them to the club. (Ed.Note see Citation, p. 9)

Thank you, June, John and Reinhold, for all your great work in helping to make the NRS the vibrant club that it is!

In other news, Wanda Brenton is now our new Sunshine Girl, after Ann Beamish decided to retire after many years of diligently looking after our social needs. Thank you, Ann, and a very welcome to you, Wanda!

I hope you had the opportunity to see Ann and Dick Beamish's spectacular "garden open-house", Doug Kitts' charming garden in Parksville, as well as Ron and Rea Sutton's developing rhododendron garden in Fanny Bay. What a wonderful collection of plants there were to admire! Our warmest thank-you to the hosts with our greatest appreciation!

There were also great Zoom presentations to watch, and hopefully you did watch them all. There was much new to discover that eventually we can put in practice too.

The last Hailey Grove work bee before the hot summer months will be on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Come September 14<sup>th</sup>, we will meet at "The Grove" once again at 10am and enjoy lunch under the rhodos.

In September we will also choose a new Executive Team. Your current president is hopeful that she might retire. We also need a few new directors. Do please consider joining the Executive 2021/22 Team!

Enjoy the wonderful days of June and please stay safe,  
Rosina

### 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	Bryan Jubinville	668-2965
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Gayle McRae	758-7589

### COMMITTEES:

Advertising	Allen McRae
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Jan Moles
Program	by Committee
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	vacant
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Wanda Brenton
Propagation	Rosina Schmidt
Hailey Grove	Bryan Jubinville
Show and Sale	Jan Moles and Brenda Lewis
Nanaimo Rhododendron Society	
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road	
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4	
Website: <a href="http://nanaimorhodos.ca">nanaimorhodos.ca</a>	

**Next Events ~ Check the [NRS web page](http://NRS web page) in late summer, as well as the September Newsletter, to see our upcoming autumn events! ☺**

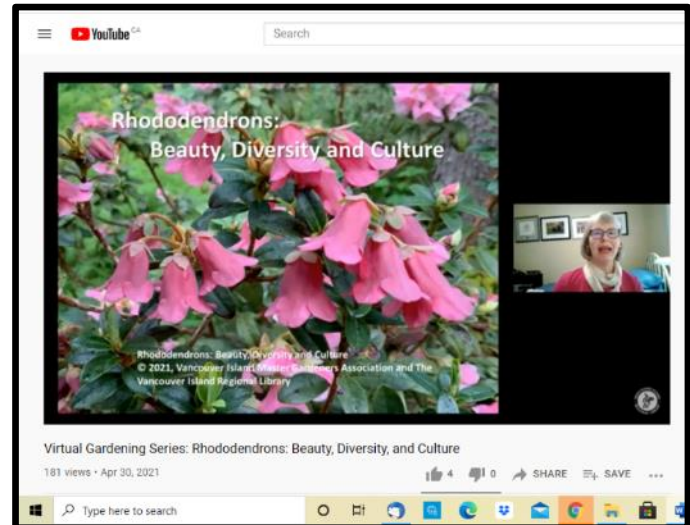
## *A Look Back at last month's presentations:*

### **“Rhododendrons: Beauty, Diversity and Culture”** by Chris Southwick – April 24th

Working with the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners and the Vancouver Island Regional Library, Chris gave us a wonderful seminar on rhododendrons. In her 75-minute presentation, she covered virtually every angle of rhododendrons and why they fascinate us so. Great job, Chris!

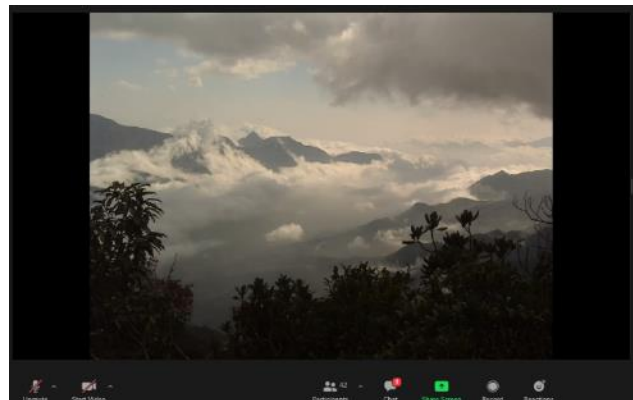
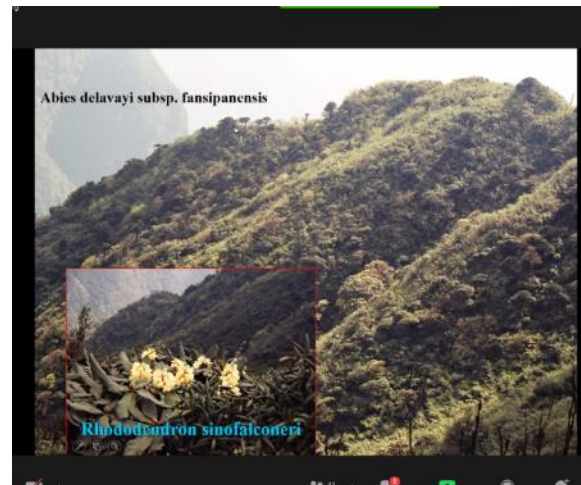
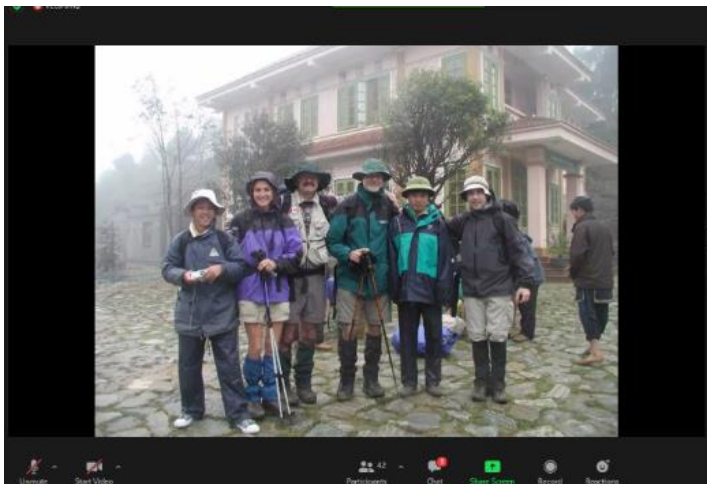
If you missed it, want to share it with friends or would like to watch it again (you'll find interesting information that you may have missed the first time), the good news is that Chris's seminar was recorded - you can find it on VIRL's You Tube Channel [here](#).

As a special treat and thank you, Chris has also recorded a BONUS video! She recorded a quick tour of her own beautiful garden so we can see some live footage of her space. You can find that video [here](#). We hope you enjoy it, and thank you, Chris, for doing that for us!



### **“Treasures of the Cloud Forest”** by Brian White – April 29th

Brian White gave an interesting talk on his many trips to the Cloud Forests of Vietnam. The stories, photographs and mixture of botanical and cultural perspectives were part of an entertaining and interesting evening. See article on pp. 12-13 for further information.

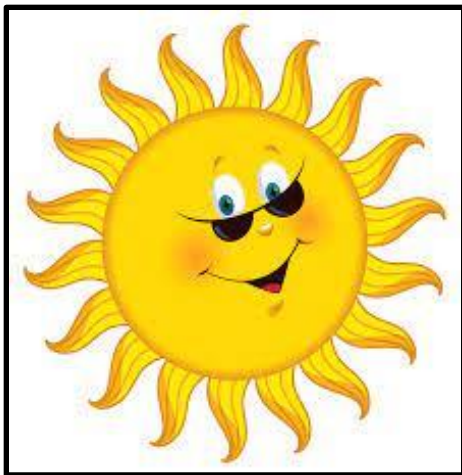


## “The New Zealand Ex-situ Rhododendron Conservation Project” by Marion MacKay – May 6th

Marion MacKay gave an interesting talk which began by highlighting many New Zealand native plants and the amazing gardens at Pukeiti. The main focus of her talk was global rhododendron conservation as many species are now endangered due to habitat loss and climate change. She discussed the importance of growing and documenting species in our gardens as an important tool in preserving these species. As gardeners, we can help by verifying the identification of our plants and ensuring that they are labelled with long lasting legible labels. There is a global project underway which is gaining momentum. Stay tuned for updates on what we can do here in District 1.



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## Sunshine person!

Please welcome our new Sunshine Girl: Wanda Brenton! Wanda will take over from Ann Beamish who did a wonderful job for so many years - our warmest sunny thanks to Ann for spreading so much sunshine over the years!

Wanda joined our fine NRS group this year and all of us will be delighted to meet her in person, hopefully come September or October. Welcome and thank you so much Wanda for volunteering!

## The NRS AGM is coming up in September!

*Community clubs like the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society rely heavily on volunteers to “get things done”! We are very fortunate to have so many dedicated people in our midst. We will be looking for a few new people to join our executive team, including the position of president. Please consider stepping up - we could really use your help! 😊*





## *A look at Art and Susan's beautiful garden....*

Long time club members Art and Susan's Lightburn have a spectacular garden in Nanoose, which they generously share with club members. This year, the pandemic prevented us from having a walk through their garden. Rosina has come to the rescue by spending some time photographing the Lightburn's garden and posting them on the club's website. Here are a few samples to whet your appetite. There are many more to be found at:

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/art-and-susan-lightburns-woodland-garden/>





## *An Early-May tour of Ann and Dick Beamish's wonderful garden*

Since we weren't able to visit the Beamish's garden this year, Rosina has taken photographs which she has shared with all of us on the club's website. [Click here](#) to check them out - here are a few examples to get you started.... Please note, photo of R. 'Naselle' (bottom left) is by Chris Southwick – all others by Rosina.



*Stay connected - check our web page - new things added regularly! <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>*



## *Open Garden at Rea and Ron Sutton's Garden ~ May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

**From Rosina:** "What great work Rea and Ron Sutton accomplished since we have seen their garden last! A huge thank-you to both of them for their gracious invitation to their garden open house! Even the weather cooperated, and we could admire their plant collection spread over the two landscaped acres to our hearts content. Thank you, Rea and Ron, we can't wait for another invitation!"

(Photos below by Rosina, June, and John)



The weather was perfect for a garden stroll!  
It was wonderful to see such a great turnout – physically distanced, of course... Haven't we all been longing for a chance to do this!





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## **WORK BEES:**

**An opportunity to spend time outdoors in a beautiful rhododendron garden when so much is in bloom, while socializing with friends (at a distance, of course...) Sounds pretty attractive doesn't it....**

- Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner –work bees have begun and will continue well into June, likely on a weekly basis. Contact John at [juneandjohn@shaw.ca](mailto:juneandjohn@shaw.ca) if you'd like to join in.
- Hailey Grove at Bowen Park – last one until September will be on Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2pm. Bring your lunch and sunny disposition. **Details on p. 14.**



## *Congratulations to Rosina Schmidt for her Bronze Medal!*

On Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at Rea and Ron Sutton's Open Garden, we surprised our hard-working president, with the presentation of a richly deserved Bronze Medal! A long-time active club member, she has done an amazing job guiding our club through the pandemic. She's been an inspiration! Congratulations!

### **The citation reads as follows:**

*"Rosina has been an active and enthusiastic member of our chapter for many years. She has served as a director and has opened her garden to chapter members. In 2019, she took on the role of president at a time when our chapter needed fresh ideas and direction. Through her leadership, the NRS has been re-energized by a new propagation group and has reconnected with the Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park. Through the global pandemic, Rosina has brought us together to be innovative and creative while using technology to keep our chapter active through virtual truss shows, online plant auctions and presentations. Her growing technological expertise includes being our webmaster, ensuring our web page is updated and relevant to members, as well as keeping us connected through video conferencing. We are so grateful for her positive attitude and organizational skills. Thank you, Rosina!"*



Rosina's thank you:

"Dear NRS Gardeners,

Once in a while, there comes a time when one is speechless. It happened to me today, when out of the blue, I was presented with a bronze medal. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your so generous attention, but I firmly believe that we collectively earned this medal. Without each of your participation, nothing could have been achieved.

Thank you for being such special club members!  
Rosina"



## ***Congratulations to Reinhold Gorgosilich for his Bronze Medal!***

The NRS executive is pleased to announce that Reinhold Gorgosilich has received a well-deserved Bronze Medal from our club in recognition of his long-term contributions to our club. He's been an important NRS member for a long time! Congratulations!

The citation reads as follows:

*"It is with great pleasure that the Nanaimo Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society bestows its highest honour on Reinhold Gorgosilich. By his long-time service in manning our "dollar table" and indeed donating a good number of the plants that come to that table, he has provided outstanding contributions to the well-being and interest in our Society. Reinhold is our resident propagator. He has given our group a number of propagating workshops and demos to help others learn to multiply our favourite genus. He is a very successful propagator and many members of our Society have interesting and healthy plants in their gardens that he has propagated and donated over the years. His generosity with his time, knowledge, and skills are highly valued. His work has brought a lot of joy to our meetings by adding another point of interest for members. Thank you, Reinhold."*



*R. 'Crater Lake'*

## *Congratulations to June and John for their joint ARS Silver Medal* *- by Chris Southwick*

The NRS Executive is delighted to announce that our dear friends and colleagues in the Nanaimo Rhodo Society, June and John, have recently been honoured with the American Rhododendron Society's Silver Medal. **Congratulations to you both.** We are so pleased that your dedication, skills, generosity and good humour have been recognized by all in District 1 and the ARS. You truly make a difference. We are so proud that although you live in Bowser, you still contribute so much to the success of the Nanaimo Chapter. Thank you!

The citation reads as follows:

*You have both enthusiastically supported many activities on Vancouver Island District 1. In particular, your efforts as co-registrars for the 2012 Nanaimo & 2019 Parksville ARS Fall Conventions were critical to the success of both*



*meetings, & over the past years you have both contributed extensively in the development of the Greig*

*Rhododendron Species garden in Milner Gardens & Woodlands. John, in particular, has been active in virtually all phases, from the planning, garden creation & establishment, plan selection, planting & ongoing weeding & maintenance, & you have supported island chapter activities by giving talks & helping organize the new "Fall into Gardening" mini-conferences*



*For all these major activities, the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to jointly award the Silver Medal to June Bouchard and John Deniseger*

**[Ed. Note:** We were touring our garden with a couple of friends when a group of "masked gardeners" made an unexpected appearance. We were completely taken by surprise and soon feeling rather overwhelmed as we were presented with the ARS Silver Medal!

Through the years, we have made many friends through the ARS, District 1 and our own chapter. To be recognized for something you enjoy doing makes it that much more special. Many thanks to all the people involved in making this happen – it was a special moment that we will never forget.

We are truly honoured to have received the ARS Silver Medal!]



## *Plant of the month - by Ron Sutton*

### ***Rhododendron baileyi***

The following description is from the Rhododendron Species Foundation: "*Rhododendron baileyi* is a rare and unusual species with attractive brown-scaly foliage and small stunning deep red-purple flowers in late spring. A rarely offered alpine species from the high Himalaya. Excellent drainage required".

It is listed as hardy to -18°C / zone 7 and from my experience can take full sun. It is unprotected from deer but they don't touch it. According to information found for it, it grows as a shrub to approximately 2m. This plant is only available, when offered, from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden.

This photo of my plant in bloom was taken on April 29, 2021.

More plant photos can be seen [here](#).



## *The ARS 2021 Fall Convention and "Fall into Gardening"*

The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society, Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and the Vancouver Island Master Gardener's Association have been working together to bring back the "Fall into Gardening" event (FiG) this October. We co-hosted the very successful inaugural 2018 "FiG" workshop in October 2018. Since the 2021 ARS Fall Conference to be held in Florence, Oregon was cancelled due to the pandemic, we've agreed to expand our FiG event into a 2-day Zoom-based ARS Fall Conference based on the theme "Fall into Gardening".

While there will be no in-person events, the virtual presentations will be available to ARS members and any garden clubs around the world at no charge. Yes, you read that correctly **"THIS WILL BE FREE!"** To accommodate the different time zones around the world, the conference will take place in two 4-hour sessions beginning at 9am PST. We will have international speakers on a variety of topics. The details are still being firmed up but will be ready to be shared with everyone very soon. You will be asked to register in advance so that we have a record of attendees for sharing information packages regarding the conference. As it becomes available, you'll be able to share the info with all of your gardening friends. The more, the merrier! You're not going to want to miss this!

**WE'VE  
GOT  
SOMETHING  
EXCITING  
TO  
ANNOUNCE!**  
**Coming soon. Stay tuned!**

## Treasures of the Cloud Forest: Plant Explorations in the Huang Lien Mountains of Northern Vietnam

Article by Lynda Chambers, editor, *In Roads* RRU.Magazine, Royal Roads University

Mix the magic of Middle Earth from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* with the wonders of Pandora from James Cameron's *Avatar* and what do you have?

A place that looks very like the slopes of Phan Si Pan mountain in Vietnam's Huang Lien National Park. It's here that Dr. Brian White, Director of the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at RRU, has conducted four research expeditions since 2002.

At the invitation of the government of Lao Cai Province and the Hoang Lien National Park Authority, he and Peter Wharton – from the Center for Plant Research at the University of British Columbia – have taken a team of graduate students to the southern side of Phan Si Pan to survey the slope's distinct plant species and recommend approaches to biodiversity protection as well as to develop environmental education programs for local hill tribe children.

"This region – home to rare, endangered and even a few never-before-identified plants – is one of the most spectacularly diverse and ecologically significant temperate zone landscapes in the world," says White. "There are magnolias, orchids, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, begonias and violets as well as huge ferns, and rare conifers in a mountain wonderland".



*Dr. Brian White, Director of the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at RRU, has seen rhododendrons 24 metres high (80 feet) with trunks you can barely wrap your arms around in Huang Lien National Park.*



*Ancient conifers, epiphytes, and lichen grow in a highly complex landscape that is basically wet granite with hardly any soil.*

Tragically, Peter Wharton died of pancreatic cancer in 2008 but White says the exploration, identification and preservation of new species on Phan Si Pan continues as a legacy and tribute to his friend and colleague.

The RRU research is part of a long-term program to preserve the botanical treasures that abound in the area while also developing a sustainable park that integrates the needs of the local people and allows an appropriate level of ecotourism. Work was being done in a collaborative fashion with a number of partners including Huang Lien National Park, Flora Fauna International and Hanoi Open University.

"In addition to two graduate students from Royal Roads visiting Viet Nam over the years, we've also had exchanges whereby faculty members from Hanoi Open University have come to B.C.," says White who began his research while at Capilano University in Vancouver.

Preserving the flora of Mount Phan Si Pan involved first collecting leaf, flower and berry samples during the daylight hours, noting their location and elevation. In the evenings



at camp, notes were prepared and the material was stored in plant presses. Three sets of herbarium vouchers were prepared: one for the renowned herbarium at Edinburgh; one for Huang Lien National Park; and one for UBC botanical garden.

“Herbarium vouchers are pressed plant samples deposited for future reference. The ones sent to Edinburgh were accompanied by DNA samples to see if we’ve found a previously unknown species, or to identify variation within species across the Himalayan mountain chain” explains White. Collecting herbarium specimens on the slope of Mount Phan Si Phan (3143m), the highest peak in South East Asia, is not a “walk in the park”. The route is steep, vertical at times, and dangerous.

“Trail conditions vary from awful to terrible to just awful again,” says White. “The weather is mostly damp, windy and freezing cold at that elevation and there are frequent lightning strikes to be wary of, not to mention hordes of leeches and slimy bamboo stems with razor sharp spikes.”

Despite the challenges, the rewards have been tangible and of note. White and his team have, for example, already seen a number of their recommendations adopted.



*The slopes of Phan Si Pan mountain look very like a cross between Middle Earth and Pandora.*

“Some areas of the mountain have been closed to hikers, and parts of the pathway up the mountain have been made safer. When we pointed out that hunting was impacting the ecosystem, the premier of Lao Cai Province banned guns in the park,” says White. As a result of the hunting ban, indigenous animals such as parrots, monkeys and squirrels have returned.



*The Hoang Lien mountain ecosystem stretches from near the Yunnan border 40 kilometers southwards to the Van Ban District.*

White’s collaborative project is an example of RRU’s specialty: “action” research focused on real world problem-solving. When faced with the problem of how to run a park, for example, with an annual budget of only US\$35,000, the park staff - with commercial partners – came up with an ingenious plan.

What if an orchid specialist helped the park staff set up a lab to propagate orchids from plants confiscated from illegal collectors? What if the orchids were then sold and proceeds went towards park management?

“That’s what’s happening now in the resort town of Sapa,” says White of the decidedly practical outcome to a problem with poachers.

What’s next? White has been growing from seed some of the rhododendrons from Phan Si Pan and hopes that in cooperation with the gardeners at Royal Roads, a small collection of high-altitude Vietnamese rhododendrons can be established in the gardens on campus.

“Many of the Rhododendron species are proving to be hardy here and some have the additional advantage of being fragrant so I hope that they can be propagated for wider use,” he says.

## *Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park* by Bryan Jubinville

Hailey Gardens are looking up with so many rhodos in bloom right now.



This past month, we once again undertook to attack the invasive species in the gardens with several of the weeds taking major hits, most notable the Holly. We also continued hitting on the various other invasive weeds... they seem to be growing everywhere. We might win someday!

The plan is to continue our efforts on **Tuesday, June 8th, starting at 10:00 hours until 14:00 hours.** Once

again, it is a volunteer effort and if you can support the program with only a small amount of time, it will be time appreciated. We usually break for lunch at about *noonish* and if you want to come out for a picnic and simply socialize it would be great just to reconnect. Imagine a cup of hot chocolate, tea or coffee come with your favourite sandwich and a dessert of some kind in the fresh air amongst the rhodos would be fantastic! Hope all are well.... maybe we will see you for the picnic lunch on Tuesday, June 8th!

**Please note: We will take a break from the “heavy labour” during the summer heat (July and August) with a restart for September.**

Thank you to everyone who's helped out in our work bees - we've really made a difference! The garden is looking so much better!

Cheers!

Bryan



Here are a couple of photos taken on May 11<sup>th</sup>. That's "Beauty of Littleworth" towering over Art and Susan. Remember it's been there nearly 50 years!!!

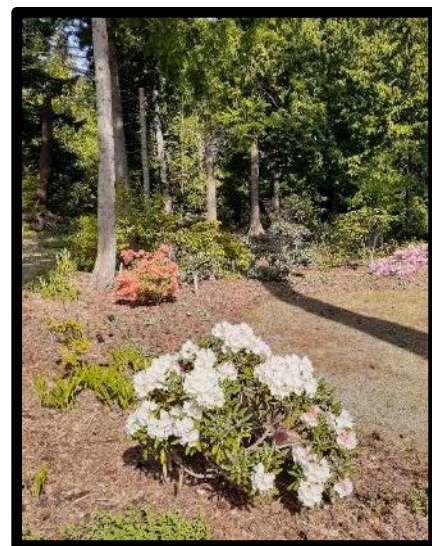
<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/hailey/>



## Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner

Volunteers from both the NRS and MARS have been participating in weekly work bees to weed, mulch and generally clean up the species garden. The garden is putting on quite a show, only 3 years after its official grand opening in 2018. The rhododendrons are thriving and the specimen trees and companion plants are growing and filling in quickly. Milner has hired a VIU Horticulture program student on a part time basis. Her main task is to look after the rhododendron collection through the next few months! Soon we'll begin the next stages of planning, including bringing in a few more rhodos to fill out the collection as well as moving on to phase 2 of the species garden.

Further work bees are planned through the end of May to mid June. If you'd like to participate, please let John know as you must register in advance due to COVID guidelines. Here are a few photos taken on May 11<sup>th</sup>.



This photo taken on May 18<sup>th</sup>, shows Jocelyn Matwe from Shaw Spotlight taking photos as part of a feature she is preparing on the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden.

### **\*\*Please note:**

Milner Gardens and Woodland is **open Thursday thru Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm**. Check their website for current details: [Click here](#)



## Remember Rhododendron 'Cynthia' in Ladysmith?? A case study of whether or not rhodos can be pruned – in this case, on a giant scale!

Let's look back at the January 2019 newsletter.

### Rhododendron 'Cynthia' in Ladysmith – the aftermath of the December storm

By John Deniseger

In 2017, Ladysmith's iconic rhododendron was listed as one of "the world's great trees" by the Bored Panda website. Rhododendron 'Cynthia' is thought to have been planted by George Fraser in 1878 and stood 9 meters high and 8 meters wide.

As we all know, we had a huge windstorm blow through the southern BC coast on December 20<sup>th</sup>. BC Hydro called it "the most damaging windstorm in their history". Unfortunately, *Cynthia* (or "*Lady Cynthia*" as it has become known locally) was severely damaged by the windstorm. Two of its three stems or trunks were broken at the base. It didn't take long before word of the damage spread. A CBC article soon followed: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ladysmith-lady-cynthia-rhododendron-damage-1.4967587>.



In early January, members from various ARS Vancouver Island chapters met with the owner, Peter Richmond, to offer advice and to take cuttings – just in case... A second follow up visit was made on January 11<sup>th</sup>. The big question was how to save what was left, as the damage was pretty significant. The general consensus seems to be that severe pruning of the remaining stem will be necessary in order to take the strain off of the weakened plant. Otherwise, the next windstorm or heavy snow load could be fatal.

Susan Lightburn's photos below give us a sense of the damage:



Here's a good photo of the remaining stem or trunk. Cynthia still has a "good side" for photos.



You can see the two stems broken off at the base.



Chris Southwick inspecting the damage. It looks like root rot....



Now, let's look back at the February 2019 newsletter.

### Pruning Rhododendron 'Cynthia' in Ladysmith

Our January speaker, Scott Wiskerke has been busy. About a week after our meeting, he spent a day pruning "Cynthia". Here are a few photos from Chris Southwick.



*The nearly finished product*



Here it is in May 2021! (thanks to Rosina for the photo!)



The next time someone asks you whether or not rhododendrons can be pruned, think of R. 'Cynthia' in Ladysmith!

*"There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments."*

*Janet K. Phillips*



## Labelling Garden Plants by Ron Sutton



**Looking for the plant identification tag you attached 15 years ago?**

Well, there's a better way. I have for some time wondered how to label up our growing garden plant collection and have seen a few different methods used by others, such as etched metal tags, painted names on rocks or using the original nursery tags and so on. Recently, I discovered a great inexpensive (~\$130) little printer that makes weather resistant laminated labels made by **Brother**, called a **P-Touch plus**.

It is cordless, unless recharging, and uses Bluetooth communication to send your label information to it from your smart phone, tablet, or Bluetooth capable desktop computer. It uses a tape cartridge, so there is no ink to handle. They offer a variety of colour label and text options.

There's free downloadable software for it.

Once you print a label, you need something to attach it to, and the best I have found, is a galvanized metal



stake. These won't break if an errant foot or gardening tool knocks it. And it's easily moved as the plant grows, also you don't have to handle it to read the plant name.

The best price I have found to date for them, is from Lee Valley <https://www.leevalley.com/en-ca/shop/garden/planting/labelling-and-marking/10458-flower-and-plant-markers>

Choose the "Rose" style. See photo. label made by Brother P-Touch printer

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**A Special thank you to Lynn Wurz for bringing the club a large supply of 1 and 2-gallon pots. The propagation group will be putting them to good use as they replot the club's cuttings.**







*"What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfillment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will ever fade."*

*- Gertrude Jekyll, On Gardening*

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*~Have a Wonderful  
and Safe Summer  
Everyone! ☺*