

# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



MARCH 2005



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring is in the air. Greetings from S.E. Asia. Gayle and I have just returned from visiting Malaysia, Bali (Indonesia) and Thailand (Bangkok, Cheng Mai). Very hot (36 C) and humid – much tropical growth. Great orchid and hibiscus gardens in K.L., Malaysia. Fantastic plant shops in Cheng Mai, but alas, no rhodos.

My *R. moupinense* is now in bloom and Snow Lady is about to flower.

Our next meeting on March 10th should be interesting with Bernie Guyader speaking on Dwarf rhodos.

Remember to sign up for the ARS Convention in Victoria soon to get the early bird rates.

All the best, Allen.

## EXECUTIVE

President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Past President	Richard White	752-6519
Vice President	Paul Lawry	390-2370
Secretary	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Treasurer	Barb Coy	758-8497
Directors	Anne Williamson	390-2604
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Mary Taylor	951-0671
	Mike Miller	758-2879

## COMMITTEES

Advertising	Mike Miller	758-2879
Library	Chris/Brenda	758-0993
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Program	Richard White	752-6519
Raffle	June & John	390-3605
Social	Anne Williamson	390-2604
Dollar Table	Yvonne Harding	756-3574

## NEXT MEETING

MARCH 10, 2005 BEBAN PARK 7:30 pm

BERNIE GUYADER  
"DWARF RHODODENDRONS IN THE ROCK GARDEN"

# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

## Minutes of the February 10, 2005 General Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:30 by Paul Lawry. There were 48 people in attendance and 2 guests.

No new news to report.

Treasurer's report: Balance in general account is \$3003.92, Legacy fund is \$156.27, library is <\$73.58>

Newsletter committee: Paul explained what was involved in doing newsletter job.

Social: there are enough volunteers for all meetings.

Advertising: no new reports

Program: Richard talked about Bernie Guyader to talk on March 10 about dwarf rhodos in the rock garden. He will ask him to bring in rhodos to sell at the meeting.

April: Bill Rhodes will talk about tender rhodos

May 7: Show and Plant Sale

Library: budget is overspent. Have some outstanding books to bring in.

Dollar table: sold out

Nametag draw was won by Debbie Gaboury. Door Prizes: Val Harvey, Rosina Schmidt, Barb Little.

Raffle: Angkana Hechler, Michael Miller, Barb Little, Brenda Lewis.

Bus Tour: Date is May 14, 2005 and plans are being made to go to North Island – possibly Greig garden in Royston.

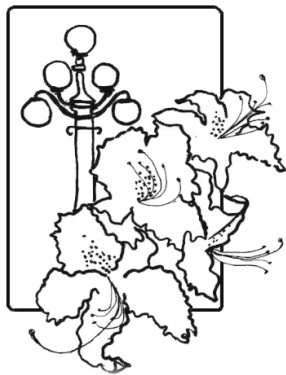
Glenda Barr mentioned article on George Fraser in Garden Wise magazine, also Seedy Sunday at Bowen Park, and Garden Show March 11 to 13 at Beban Park.

We voted on donation to Species Foundation and it was passed.

Dr. Roy Taylor gave his presentation re: his Mediterranean garden in Lantzville.

## SILVER SALUTE

VICTORIA'S 25th ANNIVERSARY



ARS CONVENTION

VICTORIA

BRITISH COLUMBIA

APRIL 27 - MAY 1

**2005**

## Our Special Museum Event! Thursday April 28 7:30 to 10 pm

Come for dessert, coffee and no-host bar in a most unique setting -- The Royal British Columbia Museum, a world class attraction. The 3rd floor will be at our exclusive disposal for the evening. Here you will see the First Nations Big House, typical of the homes built in the Pacific North West Coast. Also, you can view an outstanding collection of masks, argillate carvings from the Queen Charlotte Islands and artifacts from the Nass River peoples, the Nisga. Then, travel back in time to the early 1900's to visit the Old Town, the Cannery and the Water Wheel. The other exhibits include displays of the European explorers when they began the fur trade in sea otter pelts with the First Nations peoples. The 20th Century Hall presents eclectic collections from that time. Please plan to join us to meet the ARS Executive, say hello to old friends and make new ones in a most wonderful setting.

Remember – March 15 is the deadline for early registration – the convention price increases from \$100 to \$140 after that!

# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

## 2005 Rhododendron of the Year Awards Northwest Region

### **Elepidote Rhododendron: 'Horizon Monarch'**

R. 'Nancy Evans' x R. 'Point Defiance'

Flower greenish-yellow with a small, vivid red flare, openly funnel-shaped, wavy edged, 4" across. Held in large ball-shaped truss of 5-8 flowers. Blooms midseason. Leaves elliptic, apiculate apex, cuneate base, concave, 6-3/4" long, olive green. Upright, spreading plant habit. Grows to a typical height of 6 ft. in 10 yrs. Cold hardy to 5°F (-15°C). Hybridized by Brockenbrough.



Photo by Steve Henning



### **Lepidote Rhododendron: 'Ramapo'**

R. *fastigiatum* x R. *minus* var. *minus* 'Carolinianum Group'

Flower pinkish violet, held in small clusters. Very floriferous plant. Blooms early midseason. Leaves bluish-green, elliptic, very aromatic. Dense and very compact habit. Grows well in sun or partial shade, being more compact in sun. Reaches a height of 2 ft. in 10 years. Plant is cold hardy to -25°F (-32°C). Hybridized by Nearing.

Photo by Harold E. Greer

What is the difference between a rhododendron and an azalea? All azaleas are rhododendrons. They belong to the subgenus *Pentanthera* (deciduous) and the subgenus *Tsustusti* (mostly evergreen) by the revised classification, or to the Azalea Series by the Balfourian System. All azaleas are elepidotes (they never have scales). All Azaleas have five lobes to the flower. Most (not all) azaleas have only one stamen for each lobe of the flower, meaning they have five stamens, while most other rhododendrons have two stamens for each lobe, meaning they have 10 or more stamens. Azaleas tend to have appressed hairs (hair that grows parallel to the surface of the leaf). This is particularly true along the midrib of the undersurface of the leaf and is easily seen in the so called "evergreen" azaleas. Azaleas have tubular funnel or funnel shaped flowers. You would need a microscope to see this, but, while the hair on "standard" rhododendrons will often branch, the hair on azaleas never does.

Harold E. Greer. *Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons*; Offshoot Publications, Eugene, OR; 1996.

# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

## 2005 Rhododendron of the Year Awards Northwest Region

### Evergreen Azalea:

#### 'Hilda Niblett'

(R. 'Glacier' x R. 'Tama-giku') x R. 'Getsu-toku'

Flower pale tints of strong pink to pale purplish pink, variously marked strong red, throat greenish white spotted deep pink or deep purplish red, broadly funnel-shaped, wavy edged, 3-1/4" across. Blooms early midseason. Leaves elliptic, about 1-1/2" long. Spreading habit. Grows approximately to 3 ft. tall in 10 yrs. Hardy to -5°F (-21°C). Hybridized by Gartrell.



Photo by Richard F. Clapp



#### Deciduous Azalea: 'Nifty Fifty'

unknown x (R. 'Knap Hill Yellow' x R. 'Klondyke')

Flower vivid yellow with vivid orange-yellow throat, broadly funnel-shaped, wavy edged, 4-1/2" across. Held in ball-shaped truss with 13 flowers. Blooms early midseason to midseason. Leaves elliptic, broadly acute apex, cuneate base, flat, 2-1/2" to 3-1/2" long, slightly bullate, slightly hairy below, deciduous. Upright, spreading habit. Grows to a height of 3 ft. in 10 yrs. Hardy to -15°F (-26°C). Named for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Rhododendron Society. Hybridized by Arneson.

Photo by Harold E. Greer

### Newsletter Editor and Distributor Retire!

NRS owes a thousand thanks to Paul and Linda Lawry for their eight years of service as our newsletter editors and distributors. They have produced a quality product and have been instrumental in keeping our members informed and amused. Thanks very much, Paul and Linda.

# NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

**Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker**  
**The Raj and the Rajah**

By **Norman Todd**

It is perhaps stretching things a little to equate the geopolitical importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century oil with that of ornamental plants. However, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, impeding the desires of an imperialistic plant hunter who wanted to explore in Sikkim caused the British Raj to roar almost as loudly as the United States recently has. **Joseph Hooker**, a citizen of the then greatest political and military power, was the person and the response to his detainment now seems pompously heavy handed.

Joseph Hooker, the son of **Sir William Hooker**, the well-connected first Director of Kew Gardens, had achieved considerable fame from his being the botanist with **James Clark Ross**, 'the handsomest man in the navy', on the expedition of H.M.S. *Erebus* and H.M.S. *Terror* to the Antarctic, (1839-43). Ross was the first to reach the magnetic South Pole. The voyage was perilous, extremely demanding of strength and stamina but scientifically rewarding.

Botanists were third class citizens in the eyes of the British Admiralty. **Joseph Banks** had to pay his own way when he sailed with **James Cook**. **Alexander Menzies** received the shoddiest treatment from **George Vancouver**. **William Bligh** might not have suffered a mutiny if the Admiralty had issued his sailing orders with the same dispatch as was given to men of war. (Isn't it revealing that despite all ships being feminine, when they carried a few guns they were 'Men'). Bligh was only going on a botanical expedition to bring breadfruit trees from Tahiti to the West Indies, not going to fight and conquer. **Darwin** got a berth on the *Beagle* by being a friend of the captain and he had to pay all of his expenses. Joseph Hooker was not exception. First, he had to get himself qualified as a medical doctor. He then signed on the *Erebus* as the lowly Assistant Surgeon. He had to provide almost all the equipment and supplies he needed to pursue his geological and botanical interests.

Hooker, the senior, at one point was Regius Professor of

Botany at Glasgow University but he pined for the brighter lights of London. Joseph, the son, went to Glasgow High School (as I did) but father found the curriculum limited and had Joseph and his brother taught privately at home. At the age of seven, however, Joseph attended his father's botany lectures. Glasgow High School revelled in its history - it had a lot of it - but I never heard a Hooker mentioned. I suppose the limited curriculum was not a matter for institutional pride.

William Hooker used every ounce of influence he had to secure a grant from the Admiralty for his son to travel to India and carry out some surveying and botany. He got a free passage on the ships taking the new Governor General, **Lord Dalhousie**, (*R. dalhousiae*) to India. Dalhousie was aggressive by nature and during his tenure annexed large territories (Punjab, Burma *et al*) to India. This caused great resentment and was one of the main causes of the Indian Mutiny (1857). Some of Dalhousie's imperious attitude may have rubbed off on Hooker.

The area Joseph wanted to explore was the small state of Sikkim. This was virgin territory for Europeans. The Himalayan state of Sikkim is bordered by Tibet in the north, Bhutan to the east, India to the south and Nepal to the west. Currently a state of India, its area is 7300 square kilometres. In Hooker's day it was larger and independent, ruled by a Rajah. The Rajah was understandably anxious not to upset his more powerful neighbours. Having foreigners with large entourages roaming his state, surveying and making maps and carting off large amounts of plants and rocks would cause intense curiosity and in all probability, hostility. To many of its inhabitants it was religiously offensive. Prior to Joseph Hooker's arrival on Sikkim's border this did not seem to have been considered by the British Raj as much of a problem.

Hooker landed in Calcutta where he visited the Botanic Garden. Names associated with the garden, **Roxburgh**, **Wallich**, **Griffith**, **Falconer**, are all commemorated in the language of rhododendrons. He traveled north to Darjeeling, close to the Sikkimese border, arriving there in April 1848. There, he met **Brian Hodgson** (*R. Hodgsonii*). They struck up a close friendship, which was

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fortunate because Hooker was stuck in Darjeeling for many months. He lived with Hodgson who was a bit of a recluse. Hooker called him the 'most unclubbable' of men. He had been British Resident in Nepal. He had studied Nepalese life and culture and became an authority on Buddhism and collected Sanscrit manuscripts but he got too friendly with the Nepalese and was therefore considered unreliable by his superiors and dismissed. He planned to go with Hooker to Sikkim but his health was very poor.

**Dr. Archibald Campbell** (*R. campbellii*, later sunk because it was already named *R. arboreum*) was the British Political Agent to Sikkim. He was the only other Darjeeling resident privileged to enjoy Hodgson's hospitality. Campbell requested permission for Hooker to take his party into the mountains of Sikkim but was refused time and time again by the Rajah. In the end he resorted to using very bellicose language and threatening an invasion. Eventually, the intervention of the Governor General of India persuaded the Rajah to give his consent. Hooker was always suspect when traveling in Sikkim. Occasionally, he was welcomed by the local chiefs but was shunned, or worse, most of the time. Being beyond British jurisdiction, not only he himself but anyone guiding him was liable to incur severe consequences. He was skating on very thin ice which often cracked but didn't yet shatter. He would return to Darjeeling after each of his forays. He had a fetish for reaching Tibet. This was totally taboo - as was visiting Kangchenjunga, a very holy mountain to Buddhists.

All this while Hooker was an assiduous letter writer, most often to his father but frequently with Darwin (who described him as being 'impulsive and somewhat peppery in temper') and less often with his mother and fiancée. The ever-adoring father published in his *Hooker's Journal of Botany*, without Joseph's permission, some of his first letters from India. One trip in Bengal was described, in the *Athenaeum*, as being 'about as interesting as a voyage to Gravesend'.

For his last and longest excursion - it had been denied three times by the Rajah - Hooker mustered a party of forty-two attendants. Campbell undertook to send on rice and other essentials every fourteen days and

promised to join him later on. Joseph set off on 3 May 1849. After much parlaying with the local boss (Soubah) of the Sikkimese precinct nearest Tibet, Hooker became impatient and very critical of Campbell. He was incensed when Campbell wrote him advising him to accept the Soubah's word on what was permissible. Hooker's comment on this was, '(Campbell) would have me stoop to any amount of insolence & overbearance, & this I will not'. He later did reach the Tibetan border accompanied by a Tchebu Lama and Campbell and while the latter two were conferring with the chief of the Tibetan border guards he spurred his pony into a gallop until he reached Lake Chalamoo several miles inside Tibet. Such was the energy expended that he broke the pony's bridle and had to walk the last few miles.

The return route was extremely trying. One pass they had to cross was 18,600 feet high. Again passing near the Tibetan border they were turned back by a Tibetan guard. The Sikkimese guards were nervous and one pointed his bow and Campbell who defended himself with a stick. Later Campbell was tackled and bound at the wrists. No violence was inflicted on Hooker. Campbell was held prisoner for over a month during which time he was tortured by twisting the cords around his wrists with a bamboo wrench.

At this point the Raj roared. The Governor General summarily dismissed the functionary who was holding fort in Darjeeling while Campbell was traveling with Hooker, for having behaved in a too placatory manner. The Rajah was warned that, unless he released the hostages, British troops would invade and 'exact a severe retribution'. The prisoners were released but the Rajah was punished anyway. He lost some territory and lost his British subsidy. Campbell was subsequently criticized for being insensitive and unnecessarily harsh. Hooker did not agree and felt he had let his friend down. "If anyone is to blame I am", he said. Hooker was invited to join the British punitive force but refused. Nor was he interested in going to neighbouring Bhutan. 'I would not go there for the world, let the Rajah promise as fairly as he would, without 500 men in front of me and as many in the rear.'

Hooker's rhododendrons numbered 43; twice the number

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*Hooker - continued from page 6*

of species then known. He collected and described thousands of other plants and was particularly interested in ferns, mosses and lichens. He succeeded his father as Director at Kew. He was President of the Royal Society and became a huge presence in the scientific world. A listing of his publications needs ten pages. He lived to be 94. His son-in-law followed him as Director of Kew.

The Victoria Rhododendron Society will be honoured by having **Keshapo Pradham** from Sikkim as a speaker at the American Rhododendron Society's annual convention in April 2005. We will then hear about some of the famous rhododendrons of his country. I think it is a fair criticism of Joseph Hooker that in his mind a plant had little life until it was given a Latinized name by a European botanist. There is, I believe, little record of his being curious about what the inhabitants of a plant's provenance called it or knew about it. When provisions were short he did resort to eating some of the plants that the locals did. Keshab Pradham is vigorously active in the preservation of the Sikkimese rhododendrons. No doubt, Sir Joseph will arise somewhere in his talk.

*Reprinted by permission from the Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter - February 2005*



INNOCENT SLUGS ARE BEING TORTURED  
BY GARDENERS.  
BRING THEM HERE SO THAT WE  
CAN LOVE THEM BACK TO HEALTH.

## David Tarrant's Garden Tour of New Zealand Nov 9-25, 2005

Our itinerary starts off in the cooler south island, in the Scottish town of Dunedin, where we will visit the Otago Peninsula. Highlights here include visits to Lanarch Castle and Glenfalloch Garden, as well as a special Scottish Heritage dinner. Then on to beautiful Christchurch to see the Christchurch Botanic Garden, Broadfields, and other exclusive private garden experiences. We then depart Christchurch for the North Island, where a short panoramic inter-island flight takes us to New Plymouth. Here we will explore Tikorangi, The Jury Garden, The Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust, Pukekara Park, and Tupare Gardens. After a scenic motorcoach ride from New Plymouth to Rotorua, we will experience Maori culture at a traditional Marae feast. Finishing in Auckland, on the warmer, more temperate North Island, highlights include Highwic Historic Homestead, Eden Gardens and the Parnell Rose Gardens. We will also experience a special treat on the New Zealand gardening scene, the Ellerslie Flower Show, which takes place at the famous Auckland Botanic Garden. Included is a special advance preview at the exclusive opening night Gala. Group size is limited to ensure quality, book soon!

For a detailed itinerary and to reserve your space please contact:  
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