

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



March 2013



FROM THE PRESIDENT

A question: Is it too early to declare spring? With five rhodos in bloom: *R. moupinense*, *R. sichotense*, Olive, Rosamundi, Lee's Scarlet, and with Coral Glow, *R. lutescens* and Cilpenense showing lots of colour, we would like to say "no". Additional evidence is the new leaf on some of the roses and photinias, heathers in full bloom, the lawn growing and our honeybees bringing in pollen (pussy willow and heather, I guess).

Perhaps we should use the local plant indicators - Trilliums coming up and the colour changing on the Alder and Willow branches, neither of which is happening yet.

This year our rhodos are well budded and will give us a good show. We have twelve rhodos that will flower for the first time in our garden, Fragrant Red, Lem's Orange, *R. sutchuenense* (from seed), *R. hyperythum*, *R. discolor*, Airy Fairy, Triploid Vulcan, etc. Some of our efforts are starting to pay off.

Our executive is working hard to bring future events for our members' enjoyment. We are now short of Directors. So if you can spare a little time during the year, talk to one of the executives and find out how you can help the club maintain its excellent programs. John Deniseger is arranging a Salt Spring Island bus tour with sign up starting this meeting. Space will be limited so don't miss out.

Answer to the question: I will say spring has started, but I have been wrong before.

See you at the meeting,
Art

EXECUTIVE

President	Art Lightburn	468-7516
Past President	John Deniseger	390-3605
Vice President	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Burkhard Dressler	758-1738
Directors	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Paul Lawry	816-2370
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516

COMMITTEES

Advertising	vacant	
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Membership	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
Program	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

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NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, MARCH 14 BEBAN PARK SOCIAL CENTRE 7:30 pm

PANEL OF EXPERTS

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

TWIGS and STEMs



GOODIES FOR MARCH MEETING

Gaylle McRae

Joyce Mitchell

Sandra Dorman

NANAIMO SEEDY SUNDAY

Sunday March 3

10 am - 3 pm

Bowen Park Auditorium

MARCH RAFFLE HIGHLIGHTS

*R. morii - narrow leaves, white to
spotted pink flowers*

*R. quincefolium - deciduous, purple
edged leaves*

*R. 'Starbright Champagne' - Frank
Fujioka hybrid, good blotch*

Seen In Passing

- * 77 members and guests attending the
NIRS February meeting with Terry
Richmond speaking about rhodo fertilizer*
- * lots of noisy barking from the
Northwest Bay sea lions (must be
herring season)*
- * a great yellow orb appearing in the
sky more frequently*
- * a large Pileated woodpecker taking long
chunks from our cedar trees*

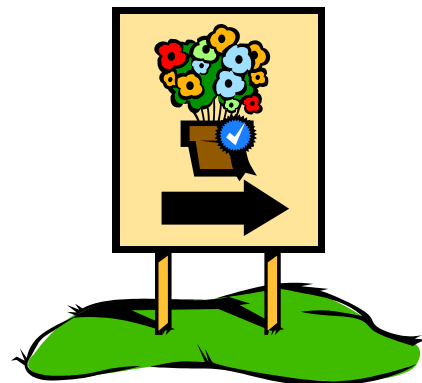
OUR MARCH SPEAKERS

The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society will host an expert panel at the March 14th meeting. Guests are most welcome, and this will be an opportunity to bring your questions regarding rhododendrons. The panel will consist of Ken Webb, an amazing propagator from the Victoria area, our own Dick Beamish, who, with his wife, Ann, has a spectacular mature rhododendron garden that is noticed by many on Hammond Bay Road, and Terry Richmond of Port Alberni, who has sold and consulted on rhododendron growing for many years. If you wish to submit questions in advance, please send them to Glenda at glenda_barr@telus.net. It will be hard to stump the wisdom of these three rhodoholics!

Notice to ALL Members, Their Children, Friends, and Neighbours

Now is the time to start potting-up, planting, dividing, or digging up plants for our revenue table at the up-coming **Show & Sale**. Last year the table brought in almost enough to pay for the hall rental.

No books or magazines required this year.



NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Early rhododendrons currently in bloom by Harold Fearing

In mid-January *R. ririei* and *R. sichotense* were beginning to show color. *R. ririei* is one of the earliest of what might be called conventional rhododendrons, i.e. those with a standard globular truss with a number of flowers. It makes a nice plant. Ours is about 6 feet high in 15 or so years. The leaves are moderate sized, maybe 10-15 cm by 4 or 5 cm, matte green on top and much lighter, almost white underneath. The flowers are an interesting plum purple. Some people don't like that color, but I have always thought it looked rather



R. ririei

nice against the leaves. For us it usually shows significant color around the first of February, but doesn't reach peak bloom until early March. It has been a bit shy about blooming, but I noticed this year that the south side of the plant, which gets four or five hours of direct sun, is covered with buds, whereas the north side has only a few. Maybe it needs more sun than it is getting.

Another very early blooming variety is *R. sichotense*. This is a fairly newly named Russian species native to eastern Siberia, so it should be as hardy as one can get. It is a much smaller plant that probably won't be more than a few feet tall. The leaves are elliptic 3-4 cm. long by 1-2 cm. wide. They are partially deciduous, though this year most have remained on

the plant. Those that remain turn a really nice mahogany brown in the winter. The flowers are 1-3 clustered together, a nice rosy pink. I have only had it for a couple of years and so don't have very good records, but I think it will be in full bloom by mid-February. It makes a real cheery addition to the garden at that time.

A very similar species is *R. ledebourii*. It is a native of western Siberia and Mongolia so again it should be perfectly hardy. Superficially the plant looks just like *sichotense*, only with somewhat smaller leaves and supposedly smaller flowers. It is showing color now as well and so I would expect it to also peak in mid- February sometime. What we used to call *R. dauricum sempervirens* or 'evergreen dauricum' is apparently now considered to be this *R. ledebourii*. Both *ledebourii* and *sichotense* are part of the *R. dauricum* complex, and some people consider them just subspecies of *R. dauricum*.



R. ledebourii

The 'regular' *dauricum*, which is more commonly found in gardens, is supposed to be more deciduous than the above two. It is also much more widespread, and can be found across southern Siberia, in Mongolia, northern China, and Japan. It is quite variable, and can have flowers ranging from pink to purple to white and blooming from very early to almost midseason. There are many named varieties. I had one, *R. dauricum* 'Nanum', which reliably bloomed - one or two flowers - on January 25. It usually lost all but a few leaves in the winter, however last winter did it in completely. Two white varieties, *R. dauricum album* and 'Arctic Pearl', a seedling of *dauricum album*, bloom in the first and third weeks of March in our garden. They are supposed to be partially deciduous, though they have kept most of their leaves this winter. The leaves remain green however, quite different from *ledebourii* and *sichotense*.

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R. mucronulatum var mucronulatum



R. 'Olive'

There is one other species in this same subsection, namely *R. mucronulatum*. For us this is not a particularly early blooming variety as the individuals we have usually don't reach peak bloom until the end of March. There are lots of varieties though and I think some bloom much earlier. Flowers can be a deep rose pink ranging to fairly pale pink, as in the cultivar 'Cornell Pink'. An important feature which distinguishes *R. mucronulatum* from the *dauricums* is that it is completely deciduous. This year even the ones we have in the greenhouse lost every single leaf. The flowers then come out before or with the leaves.

Among the hybrids, 'Olive' has been the most reliable early bloomer for us, and one which is commonly available in local nurseries. It is a moderate sized plant with rosy pink flowers. In our gardens, both in Vancouver and in Abbotsford, it has always bloomed on Valentine's Day, about half the time, like last year, in the snow. We will see about this year. Other early hybrids, which usually get started in mid-February, are 'Tessa Bianca' and 'Seattle Springtime'. Both are white, and 'Seattle Springtime' is a prolific bloomer. However one degree of frost turns the petals brown, so does need a protected location.

By mid-February a lot of the species get started, and the bright reds of *R. strigillosum*, *R. barbatum*, and *R. Smithii* start to show - often in the snow. Some varieties of *R. Moupinense* start then too, and by the end of February many things are in bloom. But that is a subject for next month's column.

Reprinted from 'The Yak' February 2008

Plants Worth Growing Lee's Scarlet

- elepidote hybrid, caucasicum x unknown
- extremely early & long-time blooming, Christmas through March depending on location
- very hardy -21deg.C
- flowers rosy crimson fading to bright pink
- 4' in ten years



NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

NRS General Meeting February 7, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:30

Approximately 50 people in attendance.

Art introduced and welcomed six guests. He described some of the desert vegetation and gardens that he and Susan enjoyed while recently in Arizona.

The 2015 convention meeting in Victoria was well represented with all clubs in Districts #1 being present. An organized list of speakers to invite was discussed and eliminated down to six choices to be contacted, Ken Cox and the youngest Rothschild among them. Ideas as to the format of the conference were debated, with the possibility of the conference being 5 days in duration. Art and Susan were given a tour of the Mary Winspear facilities, which looked well suited for the 2015 Conference.

Milner's Species Garden meeting was held on Jan 30th, with all Vancouver Island clubs represented.

The group toured the proposed area to be utilized, and discussed the scope of the proposal. The discussion on the structure of the advisors came to no conclusion. Also discussed was the cost of clearing. A memorandum of understanding is to be drawn up.

Ann Beamish was unable to attend the meeting, and therefore no secretary's report or correspondence was provided. June Bouchard took the minutes.

The Treasure's report was tabled for all to read.

The Sunshine person had nothing to report.

Debbie Gaboury was absent, and so no Membership report was issued.

The March Program will include a panel discussion, with Terry Richmond, Dick Beamish, and Ken Webb as our panelists.

The May 11th Sale & Show needs a new leader. Possibly Paul Lawry will fill this position.

Burkhard will send a cheque to the ARS, which will cover the extra \$5.00 per person for our 44 full time members as discussed.

Mary Parker sent out a notice encouraging members to attend the Seattle Conference May 1st-5th

New business – Craig Clarke will handle plant orders from the RSF, and delivery to Vancouver Island will be arranged.

Thank you to Craig Clarke, Mike Miller, and Chris Southwick for our coffee treats.

Art encouraged everyone to purchase our raffle tickets.

After the coffee break Glenda introduced Shannon Berch PhD PAg as tonight's speaker – a good program on soils and the importance of mycorrhizas symbiotic relationship with plant roots, including Ericoid Mycorrhizas for Rhododendrons.

Meeting adjourned 9:15

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Glenda's Favourite Apple Cake

2 eggs, well-beaten	1 cup vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups sugar	1/2 tsp salt
3 cups whole wheat flour	1 tsp baking soda
3 cups apple slices	1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla	

Mix eggs and sugar. Add dry ingredients, then apples and oil (I use olive). Grease and flour a 9x13 pan. Pour in batter. Sprinkle top with 1/2 cup brown sugar. Bake at 300 F for an hour or until it tests done.

Keeps well in refrigerator. Best served the next day.



NEW ARS E-JOURNAL

Instructions for accessing the e-journal:

1. Go to the ARS Office website: www.arsoffice.org
2. Click on "View Journal American Rhododendron Society online edition"
3. If you already have a username and pass-word, click on "login" and fill them in.

If you do not have a username and password, click on "Register Now" and follow instructions for obtaining them to gain access.

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have tried this procedure myself. To register you will need a username, a password (**you will choose your own username & password**), and your **membership number**. Your member-ship number is to be found on the front (white) protective cover of the mailed ARS Journal. As well, the member's numbers can be accessed through Art & Susan Lightburn and Burkhard Dressler. A demonstration of the procedure will be shown at the March meeting.