

The Rhodomentum



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

March 2019



Happy March!

What a difference a month makes! At the end of January, spring seemed just around the corner. Then February came along... We were fortunate to have very little snow damage in our garden, despite nearly 60 cm of the white stuff.

What's coming up over the next little while?

- We'll be placing an order for plants through the Rhododendron Species Foundation.
- An opportunity at the March meeting to join Milner Gardens at a special discounted price.
- We'll start reserving seats for our annual spring bus tour at the March meeting.

Looking ahead to May's AGM, our club, like our gardens, can only thrive under the right conditions. As always, we rely on everyone doing their part and taking their turn. In May, we'll be looking to renew and refresh our executive. Their will be openings to fill, including our ongoing need for a club president. Something for you all to think about as we move forward....

Happy Gardening! Spring can't be far away, can it?
See you at the March meeting.
John and June

EXECUTIVE

President	Vacant	
Vice President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Past President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Secretary	Jan Moles	758-2574
Treasurer	Liz Higgins	390-9340

Directors

Craig Clarke	390-4090
Art Lightburn	468-7516
Susan Lightburn	468-7516
Don Noakes	778 441-4783

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Jan Moles / June Bouchard
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	Committee
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	Susan Lightburn
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich
Website	Craig Clarke
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road

Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: nanaimorhodos.ca

email: rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca

Next meeting: Thursday, March 14th, at 7:30, Beban Park Social Center

Ole Jonny Larsen – all the way from Norway!

"Rhododendron Species Culture in Scandinavia" and "Jean Rasmussen in Norway"

March program: Main presentation: *“Rhododendron Culture in Scandinavia”*; and short presentation on *“Jean Rasmussen in Norway (Frank Kingdon Ward’s 2nd wife)”*.

Ole Jonny Larsen comes to us from Norway where he teaches language, literature and history. He is also a passionate collector of plants and has one of Norway’s biggest private collection of rhododendrons. He has written many articles for Scandinavian rhododendron magazines as well as the R.H.S. and the A.R.S. journal. He is a member of the A.R.S. Seed Exchange and the Rhododendron Species Foundation. His travels include 3 plant hunting expeditions to Yunnan and Sichuan, China. He has also written books on the great plant hunters, rhododendrons species culture in Norway and most recently, on his experiences with big leaved species in Norway. He runs a small nursery where he produces and sells a great variety of rhododendron species each year and is an in-demand speaker. He was a featured speaker at the 2018 ARS Conference in Bremen, Germany.



Rhododendron Species culture in Scandinavia (approx. 1 hour):

The interest in rhododendron culture is high in Scandinavia, especially along the coastline. The Norwegian west coast (where I live) has among the best climate in Europe for growing rhododendrons, after the British Isles. Collectors in Denmark and Norway have been doing lots of research over the last decades to test out which species can be grown, and the results have been surprising. Especially in western Norway, the so-called “big leaved species” have had focus over the last years. One of my special interests are American native species. This talk will also show lots of rare and newly introduced species now being tested out in Scandinavia.

Jean Rasmussen in Norway (approx. 10 minutes):

Jean Rasmussen (Jean Maclin, Jean Ward) was the second wife of the famous plant hunter Frank Kingdon Ward. After Ward’s death (and before!), she lived in Norway for many years. This presentation tells the story of her adventurous life, her years in Norway and her relation to Kingdon Ward which may not have been as romantic as it is often referred to. There will be lots of photos from her life in Norway and the place where she lived.

Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Chris at 250-390-3415 or 250-616-2742 (cell)

or send her an email at csouthwick@shaw.ca

Twigs and Stems

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

Goodies for March meeting - thank you to the following people:

Chris Southwick, Baerbel Dressler, Glenda Barr.

Milner Gardens and Woodland: Spring Sunday openings through March 24th; 11:00 to 3:30.

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society– Ole Jonny Larsen: “Plant Hunting – the experience of an amateur”. QB Civic Center, March 13th; 7:30 pm. **Please note – same presenter as NRS but different talk.**

Nanaimo Horticultural Society: First United Fellowship Church, 595 Townsite Rd, March 9th. Noon- workshop by El Martel – “Lawn damage by chafer beetles and other pests”; 1 pm Kathy Claxton – “Keep calm, plant on – make gardening fit you!”

Nanoose Garden Club: Colin Bartlett – “Wild birds and gardening”; Nanoose Library Center and Event Hall, March 1st; 1:15 pm.

North Island Rhododendron Society: Ole Jonny Larsen: “Plant Hunting – the experience of an amateur”. United Church in Comox, March 12th; 7:30 pm. **Please note – same presenter as NRS but different talk (same as MARS).**

Qualicum Beach Garden Club: Roger Griffiths: “Alpine flowers of BC and a bit beyond”. QB Civic Center, March 19th; 7:30 pm.

We Volunteers

Our meeting Coffee Breaks just wouldn't be the same without someone coordinating it. ...

Please consider stepping up to help with this and our two annual potlucks – it might just be the perfect volunteering opportunity to share with a friend – maybe do alternate months? Talk to Susan at our next meeting to find out more – she would be happy to help get you started. **And of course, the position of president is still vacant – another opportunity that could be shared with a friend!**



NRS Program

Date	Speaker	Topic
April 11, 2019	Margot Moser	Native Plants
May 9, 2019	Graham Sakaki – Research and Community Engagement Coordinator for the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI).	Mt Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve and Milner Phenology Project

The West Coast Gardener – February 2019 – part one (by two frustrated gardeners)

February 1st: Lee's Scarlett looks beautiful this year, spring is going to be early..... Mental note: send a photo to family and friends back east.

February 2nd: Seedy Saturday in Qualicum Beach, such a celebration of coastal gardening – spring fever comes early!

February 3rd: Flurries, cool day, catch up on indoor activities – no big deal.

February 4th: Flurries, -6C last night, Lee's Scarlett turned to mush – Witch Hazel marches on.

February 5th: thru 7th: Sunny, cold but beautiful out!

February 8th: Another 10 cm of snow – it won't last, the west coast snow shovel (rain) will come soon.

February 9th: Wind chill -10 to -14C – what is this? Eastern Canada???

February 10th: Another 25 cm of snow! Are you kidding?

February 11th: Spent the day digging out, then it started snowing again – enough already!

February 12th: Would you believe another 20 cm of snow – had to dig out all over again. Where are the snowdrops? Crocuses? Family and friends back east are now actually **asking** for photos of flowers. ☹️

Useful Links

Victoria Rhododendron Society: victoriarhodo.ca/index.html

Cowichan Rhododendron Society: cowichanrhodos.ca/

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: marsrhodos.ca/

North Island Rhododendron Society: nirsrhodos.ca/ws/

The American Rhododendron Society: rhododendron.org/

Linda Gilkeson's website: lindagilkeson.ca/

Nanoose Bay Garden Club: nanoosegardenclub.ca/

At the March meeting: David Mitchell will give us an opportunity to join or renew our Milner Gardens and Woodlands membership at a discount:

Single \$20 (regular \$30) Household \$35 (regular \$50)



Raffle plants for March meeting

Carmen (*R. sanguinum* ssp. *didynum* X *R. forrestii* ssp. *Rothschild*) 1' -18 °C 4/5/4 EM

A very choice dwarf, dark-red rhododendron. Plants are prostrate, very slow growing, and form a low emerald green mound. The flowers seem oversized, and are dark red and waxy. It blooms in May.



Sir Charles Lemon (natural hybrid of *R. arboretum* ssp. *cinnamomeum*)

A superb plant with something to offer year-round. White flowers with faint red spotting, blooming in April. May take a few years to bloom. Foliage dark green with bright cinnamon-brown indumentum. The new leaves unfold white. In 10 years, it will be 5



feet in height. Needs afternoon sun protection. Stunning when backlit by the evening sun. Hardy to -18 C. Sir Joseph Hooker collected the seed in northern India in 1849-51. The seed produced a prized specimen in Cornwall, which was propagated and subsequently become the source of all *R. "Sir Charles Lemon"* around the world.





Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society presents:
The Plant Hunter: Experiences of an Amateur

Meet Ole Jonny Larsen, author of books on the great plant hunters of the past, well-known in Europe as a Norwegian speaker and lecturer. A plant hunter himself he has taken part in recent sorties to China.

Wednesday March 13, 2019
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre, 7:30 pm
Admission: \$5 at the door

The West Coast Gardener – February 2019 – part two

February 13th: Beautiful sunny day – the end is in sight...

February 14th: More snow in the forecast; NRS meeting cancelled! What???

February 15th: The snowplow came by. Dug out the driveway entry again....

February 16th: Snow came crashing off the roof today. Spent time digging out again.

February 17th: IT'S MELTING! SUNNY AND 7C TODAY

February 18th: Still melting... but ever so slowly – below zero temperatures every night. Please, MELT FASTER!!!

February 19th: Should have paid more attention on Groundhog Day. Did he see his shadow or not?

February 23rd onward... Now, we're covering our early bloomers every night...

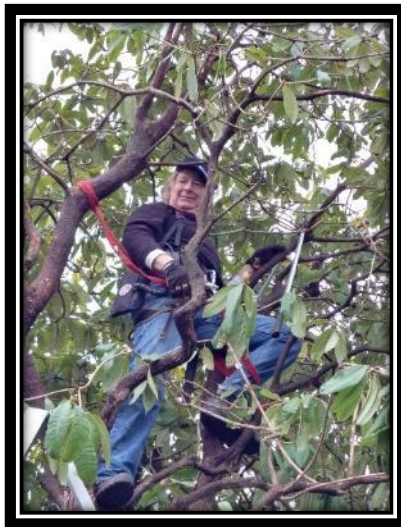
March 1st: Goodbye to the longest February....at least it wasn't a leap year!

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



“When it snows, you have two choices: shovel or make snow angels!” (unknown)

Rhodos Worth Growing by Chris Southwick

(Editor's Note: Thank you Chris for submitting this for our newsletter – we love receiving submissions from our members – we're always looking / hoping for more!)

I have found that the following dwarfs are reliable bloomers and are easy care, grow to be a nice short mound, suitable for most front gardens and they are available at most plant outlets. They are also sun tolerant.

R. Patty Bee and R. Ginny Gee are both hybrids of Warren Berg's. The former is a good shade of yellow which is an excellent contrast beside some of the many small purple rhodos. Ginny Gee gets completely covered in a nice shade of pink with a white throat.

"Patty Bee" - Photo by Garth Wedemire



"Ginny Gee" - Photo by Garth Wedemire

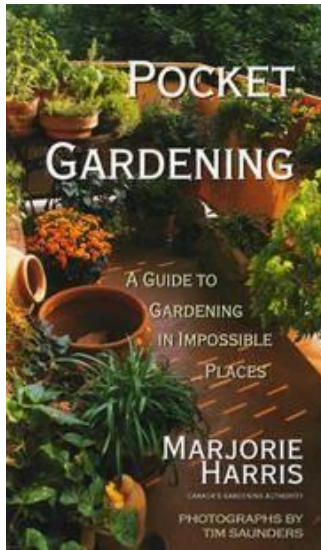
One of my most favourite rhodos is the white form of *R. kiusianum*. It is deciduous, but the branching stems are exquisite even in winter as they have a branching habit that is very "oriental" in form. When this lovely little plant blooms, it is covered in white and the new foliage is a beautiful fresh green.



R. Kiusianum - Photo by Susan Lightburn

All three of these dwarf varieties grow wider than tall and in ten years or so might be 4 or 5 feet wide by 2 feet tall.

From your library... by June Bouchard



Pocket Gardening: A guide to gardening in impossible places by Marjorie Harris (1998)

I first read this book nearly 20 years ago when the NRS had just purchased it for our library. I enjoyed it then and going through it again, I still find it a very relevant read, regardless of the size of your garden – there’s always a “problem pocket” somewhere that offers a challenge.

From the back cover: “Marjorie Harris thinks it’s time to redefine the garden. Even one plant can be a garden, just as long as an imagination is involved – and anyone, anywhere, with any outdoor space at all, can be a gardener. “*Pocket Gardening*” is a practical, inspiring guide to making the most of: small spaces; shady corners; containers; balconies and roofs; parking lots and alleys; and much more.”

And from <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6067263-pocket-gardening> : “A terrific book for those who have never gardened before and don't know where to begin, and for those gardening sophisticates who need help to solve a problem that's been plaguing their outdoor space for years. Pocket Gardening deserves a place right beside every gardener's gloves and watering can.”

Check it out – you’re almost certainly going to find something that you can use in your garden!

Mark your calendar!

The 19th Annual N.R.S. Bus Tour

Destination – Saanich Peninsula

Saturday, May 4th, 2019



Continuing our tradition of visiting a great mixture of gardens, nurseries and special places!!! More details at the March meeting and in upcoming newsletters.

It’s not too early to book your seat – sign up at our meeting or contact David and Joyce Mitchell at 250 245 5601 or David’s cell at 250-729-6498 or email at drumsbythesea@shaw.ca

February in the Garden



NRS pruning demo with Scott Wiskerke:



Photo by Rosina Schmidt

Scott Wiskerke followed his excellent talk on pruning in January with a demo on March 2nd at Dorothee Kieser's place. At least 20 people braved the coolish weather on a beautiful sunny morning!

In the words of Chris Southwick:

"I learned a lot and so did some of the folks I talked to. It was such a treat to be in the garden with hands-on demo and explanation. He was so very good. Thank you for organizing him, John and thank you, Dorothee and Robert, for offering your garden and providing the coffee and treats, too!"



Photo by Rosina Schmidt



Photo by Susan Lightburn



Photo by Dorothee Kieser



Photo by Dorothee Kieser



Looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting!