



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



March 2020

### President's Message

It was touching hearing Dick Beamish and Allan McRae's remembrances of their friendships with Craig Clarke at our February meeting. We too will miss Craig's wisdom in all things "Rhododendron", but will also remember him fondly.

By the time you are reading this, our first experience with Seedy Sunday will be behind us. Hopefully we were successful in promoting our club and generating more interest in the genus Rhododendron, as our location is perfect for growing most of the rhododendron species that originate in different parts of the globe. And deer don't like them!

Remember the old rule about rhododendron fertilizing: "once before they bloom" and "once after blooming" for the established plants, but for the young plants, fertilizing in March is almost a must. It is also a good time for weevil prevention with nematodes or Tanglefoot. As the nights become warmer, the adult small black beetles emerge from the ground where they overwinter and climb up the stem to feed on the leaves. Tanglefoot around the rhododendron stem will prevent them from reaching the leaves.

And while you are at it, don't forget to release the mason bees about a week before your fruit trees are blooming! (cont'd on p.2)

### OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Past President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Secretary	Jan Moles	758-2574
Treasurer	Liz Higgins	390-9340
Directors	Bryan Jubinville	956-6178
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Gayle McRae	758 7589
	Don Noakes	778 441-4783
	Ron Sutton	905 331 5527

### COMMITTEES:

Advertising	Allen McRae
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	Committee
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	Deborah Francis
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich/Don Noakes
Website	Deborah Francis
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Ann Beamish
Propagation Group	Ron Sutton

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society  
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: [nanaimorhodos.ca](http://nanaimorhodos.ca)

email: [rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca](mailto:rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca)

Next meeting: Thursday, March. 12th, at 7:30,  
Beban Park Social Center  
Linda Gilkeson – "Don't Panic! Managing Pests of Landscape  
Ornamentals"

(President's message, cont'd)

Presently we are trying to coordinate with the City of Nanaimo's Parks Department so we can set up a day for us to help with the Bowen Park Hailey Rhododendron Grove's upgrading. Mrs. Hailey of Vancouver donated those rhododendrons to the City of Nanaimo back in 1975. Now 55 years later, they are already real trees, just as they would be in their original wilderness home. Many of the species are of "North American" variety. It will be a great exercise for all of us to give that grove some TLC. After all that pruning, sawing, and digging, it might be good to stroll through the list of books in our splendid NRS library <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/documents/pdf/Library.pdf> and choose a book to pick up at our next meeting for some future rest and relaxation.

Happy gardening,  
Rosina

## *Our Program for March:*

### **Linda Gilkeson: "Don't Panic! Managing Pests of Landscape Ornamentals"**



In this talk, Linda covers how to identify, prevent and manage common problems of our favourite ornamentals, particularly rhododendrons and azaleas. She will cover new pests, such as the azalea sawfly, Andromeda lacebug and Viburnum leaf beetle, as well as how to deal with root weevils, powdery mildews, black spot on roses, aphids and other common problems.

Linda earned a Ph.D. in Entomology from McGill University in 1986, then moved to British Columbia to work for Applied Bio-Nomics Ltd., a company that produces biological controls. From 1991 to 2002, she worked for the provincial government, promoting programs to reduce and eliminate pesticide use. She was head of the provincial State of Environment Reporting Unit for the next six years, then the Executive Director of the Salt Spring Island Conservancy until the end of 2011. Linda now devotes her time to writing, teaching and consulting.

Linda's comprehensive gardening book, *Backyard Bounty: The Complete Guide to year-Round Organic Gardening in the Pacific Northwest*, became a BC bestseller and has just been republished in a new, considerably expanded edition. She continues to self-publish books for local gardeners, most recently *Resilient Gardens: Pollinator Gardens, Garlic Diseases, Pest Update*. In the past, she has co-authored pest management training manuals for the provincial government and organic gardening books for Rodale Press. As a private consultant, Linda is a regular instructor in the Master Gardener programs in BC and is busy year around giving workshops on pest management and organic gardening.

Linda has served as President of the Entomological Society of Canada, the Professional Pest Management Association of BC, the Entomological Society of BC and the Salt Spring Island Garden Club. She was awarded a Queen's Jubilee medal in 2003 and an outstanding achievement award from the Professional Pest Management Association of BC in 2005.



Asparagus beetles ~ Watercolour by Linda

## Twigs and Stems

### Calendar of Upcoming Events:

**Milner Gardens and Woodland:** Spring Sunday openings, February 2nd to March 29th. Thursday to Sunday openings begin on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

<https://www2.viu.ca/milnergardens/events.asp>

**Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:**

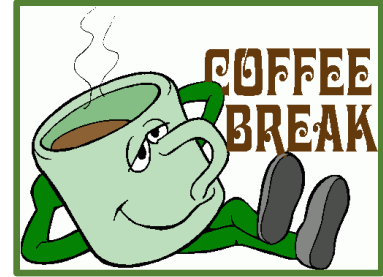
Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday March 11th; 7:30 pm.  
"Circle of Knowledge".

**North Island Rhododendron Society:** United Church in Comox, 7:30 pm, Tuesday March 10th – "Gardens of Bremen, Germany" – Judy Murakami.

**Nanaimo Horticultural Society:** First United Fellowship Church, 595 Townsite Rd; Sat. March 14th at 1:00pm.: "Wild Birds in Your Yard" – Colin Bartlett.

**Nanoose Garden Club:** Nanoose Library Center and Event Hall, Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:15: "Redefining How We Grow our Food" – Chris Hildreth.

**Qualicum Beach Garden Club:** QB Civic Center, Tuesday, March 10th, 7:30pm. "A Secret Garden: The Story of Darts Hill Garden Park" – Margaret Cadwaladr.



*Thank you to the following people for bringing goodies to the March meeting:*

*Earl Daneluk;*

*Doug Blenkarn;*

*Susan Lightburn*

**WANTED!!!!**

**Our great propagators will soon transplant the rhodo cuttings into larger pots. They would appreciate any 4-6" pots that you might have. Please bring them to the next meeting.**

## Useful Links

Victoria Rhododendron Society: [victoriarhodo.ca/index.html](http://victoriarhodo.ca/index.html)

Cowichan Rhododendron Society: [cowichanrhodos.ca/](http://cowichanrhodos.ca/)

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: [marsrhodos.ca/](http://marsrhodos.ca/)

North Island Rhododendron Society: [nirsrhodos.ca/ws/](http://nirsrhodos.ca/ws/)

The American Rhododendron Society: [rhododendron.org/](http://rhododendron.org/)

Linda Gilkeson's website: [lindagilkeson.ca/](http://lindagilkeson.ca/)

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden: <https://rhodygarden.org/>

## Now that we have all of those rooted cuttings (hopefully), how do we grow them on?



Thanks to the hard work and commitment of our propagation team, we should soon have large numbers of rooted cuttings. That, of course, is only the first step as they will need to be grown on for a period of time so that they have a strong root system and become healthy robust plants which can then be sold at future plant sales. Given the ambitious number of cuttings that have been taken, this will require a fair amount of space and attention. The beginnings of a long-term plan are taking shape.

In early February, Art Lightburn, John Deniseger and Glen Jamieson (from MARS – they have lots of cuttings too) met with Milner Gardens and Woodland's executive director, Geoff Ball. We discussed the possibility of building a cool hoop house or greenhouse structure at Milner. While the idea is still in its infancy, the intent is to create an NRS/MARS/Milner partnership and shared facility. The goal is to have this up and running for 2021. Stay tuned....

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## Raffle plants for March:



**Rhododendron 'Rocket'** 5' in 10 years; -26 deg.C

Small evergreen shrub, highly valued for its showy flowers. Flower is funnel-shaped, very frilly, 2½" across, vivid reddish-pink blotched scarlet red with prominent protruding stamens held in a conical truss. Leaves are 4" long, thick, glossy, dark green and heavily veined; coppery bronze when new. Upright habit.

Parentage: R. "Cunningham's White" x R. "red catawbiense" seedling. Hybridizer: Shammarello

### ***Rhododendron oligocarpum***

A rarely grown member of subsection Maculifera. This species forms a rounded shrub with smallish, rounded, ovate-elliptic leaves. The bell-shaped flowers (mid-spring) open deep pink before fading to pale pink and eventually white – all in the same inflorescence. This multi-colored look is quite striking. Easy in light shade and should have some heat tolerance as it is native to the low-elevation mountains of central and southern China. From wild-collected seed. Blooms in April, very hardy, heat tolerant, verticillium wilt resistant, likes even moisture, mostly sun and is evergreen.



## *January 9th, 2020 - General Meeting Minutes (by Jan Moles):*

### **President's Report: Rosina Schmidt:**

Rosina welcomed our speaker Sean Rafferty of Shirley, all guests including Christine from the Paine Centre, and all members, especially Joyce Clarke.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, we unexpectedly lost one of our founding members and one of the greatest supporters of this club, Dr. CRAIG CLARKE. On behalf of the club, Rosina expressed our heartfelt condolences to Joyce.

### **Dick Beamish – “Remembering Craig Clarke”**

Dick, a great friend of Craig from university and from working together at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, shared some memories of their times together at Toronto University and in California around 1970, and later in the seventies at the Pacific Biological Station and the Fisheries Department. Craig was a spectacular scientist, very smart, very easy to get on with and often started a conversation with a chuckle. Later, while working for the Fisheries Department, Craig and Dick got together and started buying rhododendrons, and both became involved in the fledgling Nanaimo Rhododendron Society.

Rhododendron “Cotton Candy” will be planted at the Pacific Biological Station in memory of Craig. It has the big and beautiful blooms that Craig loved. The society members will be invited to the planting ceremony.

### **Allen and Gaylle McRae – A Tribute to the Memory of Craig Clarke - Feb 12/2020**

“Nothing could have prepared us for the phone call we got from John Deniseger that day in January, with the unsettling news of Craig Clarke’s death. We both drifted through that day in shock, sadness and disbelief. “How can this be so?” was our overwhelming question. Our recent encounters with Craig were when he was our dinner guest, when we met him at his house to pick up the plants he was donating to the club, and when he phoned to say that he’d be able to come to the Christmas auction evening after all. But there was no denying the reality. Craig’s cancer had won its battle and we, in the rhodo family, had lost one of our own.

When we join an organization such as ours, we become united with others whose interests are similar. In this case, it is enjoying and learning about the genus rhododendron. Over the years, we meet monthly and at other special times, to work together for the club and its mission and in doing so, we become more closely connected into a somewhat family-like unit. Some people take on extra duties which help to ensure the smooth running of meetings and events. Craig was one of those people. While we didn’t know him from the very beginning of the club’s history, we suspect Craig was greatly involved from the start. He was an integral part of this, our rhodo family.

As we all know, Craig was a founding member of the NRS. He was also president, past president, secretary, a director on the Board for many years, and a member of the planning committee for our 2012 ARS conference hosted by the NRS. Most recently, and at the time of his death, Craig was our webmaster. He also voluntarily travelled to Vancouver to pick up and deliver back to Nanaimo the rhodos which our members would order from the Species Foundation in Washington State. Of course, he always happily helped others to get the annual truss show ready for judging.



Through all of this, Craig was there to willingly do what he could to make club activities run smoothly. There was always a ready smile, and a kind word from him. To say that his presence will be sorely missed is an understatement indeed. As with any family member who is lost to us through death, Craig will live on in our hearts as we move forward and we shall not forget his invaluable contributions to this, the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society.

We are honored that Joyce has courageously come to be with us this evening. Joyce, we are truly sorry for your loss of this wonderful man. We will keep in touch as we all move forward."

**Rosina called for: One-Minute of Silence in Memory of Craig.**

- Congratulations Susan and Art Lightburn on becoming grandparents.
- With Craig's passing, we lost our Webmaster. Deborah Francis is going to learn how to work with WordPress with the help of Garth Wedemire and will be our new Webmaster for our nanaimorhodos.ca website.
- Thank you to June and John who will send a write-up on Craig and his contribution to the club to the ARS Journal.
- The club is considering whether we can help with Bowen Rhododendron Grove - a garden that is neglected and does need urgent care.

Art Lightburn: Milner Gardens Greenhouse project.

Art and John have looked at a possible site for greenhouse; there are parts of an old greenhouse still there and it would be big enough for a quonset style hut. The objective of the building would not be for propagating, but for growing on from propagation. There is work to be done before the project could become a reality.

**Library:** We warmly thank Joyce Clarke for the donation of Craig's collection of gardening and rhododendron books. Ann Beamish is in the process of cataloguing the books prior to adding them to our library.

**Coffee break, followed by Raffle**

John Deniseger introduced our speaker Sean Rafferty who gave an excellent presentation of 'Some Favourite Himalayan Plants'. Allen McRae thanked Sean for a very interesting presentation.

**Next meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Linda Gilkeson: 'Life after Pesticides'**

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](mailto:csouthwick@shaw.ca)

## A Special Event at the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden

Rhododendron season is heating up. Milner Gardens and Woodlands is inviting members of all District One chapters to a **celebration of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden on Tuesday, April 21st, 1 to 3 pm.** Milner will be open only to ARS members at that time. It's a low-key affair with refreshments and few speeches, giving everyone a chance to wander the paths and recognize how it has progressed.



The Greig garden opened two years ago; since then, more rhododendrons and trees have been planted and bulbs and drifts of companion plants added, totally transforming the area. In all, there are more than 220 species rhodos here with a few more to come.

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### The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden could use a little of your time....

The species garden's development has been made possible through a unique partnership between Milner Gardens and Woodland, VIU and the five District 1 chapters of the ARS, including our own chapter. The garden has come a long way in a fairly short time thanks to the old adage "many hands make light work". It has very much been a project involving many people. The development of the garden has reached a new phase as we begin to regularly schedule "work bees" on the last Tuesday of



each month, beginning on Tuesday March 31<sup>st</sup> from noon to 3pm. What will these "work bees" involve? While it will vary with season and need, they'll initially focus on mulching, light weeding, and planting of more companion plants. It's a great way to contribute to and enjoy the garden, while meeting other rhododendron lovers from the 5 chapters. Future "work bees" are planned for Tuesday April 28<sup>th</sup>, and May 26<sup>th</sup>. If you'd like to join in the fun, please let John know. We'd love to see you there!

*A few words of gardening wisdom from our president* (Thank you, Rosina!)



**Dandelions in your lawn?** Count your blessings, but hurry – cut the tender new leaves and make a most delicious salad, adding oil, vinegar and salt, that is full of Vitamins A, C, E, and B-complexes, but also iron, protein and a wide spectrum of trace minerals. No wonder our ancestors brought dandelion seeds with them already on the Mayflower! Even today the Swiss folk make a yearly Dandelion Spring-cure, eating nothing but tender dandelion shoots for two weeks straight.

You will recall that the bees just love the dandelion flowers, but you too can make dandelion honey yourself! Even dandelion wine!

Dandelion roots attract earthworms around them (another great immigrant to our shores), and alone for this reason the dandelion is a natural humus-producer. The roots bring up the minerals, especially the calcium. When dandelions die, their root channels act like an elevator shaft for earthworms so they can penetrate deeper in to the soil. Yes, that is a plant full of blessings!

**Vegetable planting times**

- When the **forsythia** is blooming is the best time to plant **radishes**.
- Plant **squash, cucumber and beans** when **apples and lilacs** are blooming.
- For **tomatoes** planting, wait until **spirea** is blooming.
- For Nanaimo specifically: don't start any vegetables until the Mt. Benson snow is all melted away.



**Liquid Doom** - a nifty way of catching the undesirable bugs, especially under the fruit trees:

- One cup of sugar;
- One cup of white vinegar;
- One cup of water;
- One banana peel;



Pour into a milk jug and place under the tree. It lasts for a year.  
Happy Gardening,

Rosina



*A great big THANK YOU goes out to Garth Wedemire from the North Island Rhododendron Society for his help with our web page!!!*





Affiliated with the Master Gardeners Association of British Columbia

## **Let Your Plants Tell you: Dealing with Climate Change in the Garden**

**Saturday, March 14th, 2020: 10:30 am - 3:00 pm**

*Join Master Gardeners for seminars:*

Jessica



### **10:30 am HOW PLANTS CHANGE WITH THE CLIMATE**

Speakers, Jessica Pyett, Mt Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Inst, and Heather Klassen, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources, report on the "Coastal Forest Plant Phenology Research and Monitoring Project." This project, initiated in 2016, studies the relationship between microclimate and plant phenology – the timing of seasonally reoccurring events such as bud break, flower and fruit development, and leaf senescence.



Heather

### **1:00 pm IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES FOR GARDENERS DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE**

Grahame Ware, horticulturist, writer, alpine garden specialist, teacher and rare plant nursery man takes us back to John Loudon, the father of modern horticulture, to show us how his techniques apply to climate change today and explain what to do in our own gardens

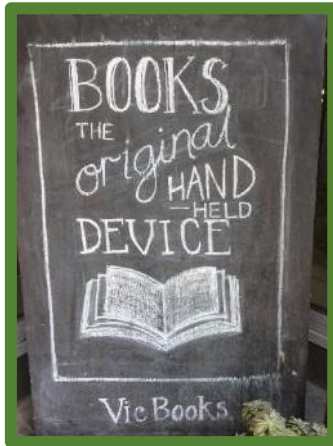


**Nanoose Place Community Centre  
2925 Northwest Bay Rd, Nanoose Bay**

*Bring your own bag lunch and mug*

**\$15/person (cash or cheque) includes light refreshments**

**To register, please email: [wendy.strachan1@gmail.com](mailto:wendy.strachan1@gmail.com)**

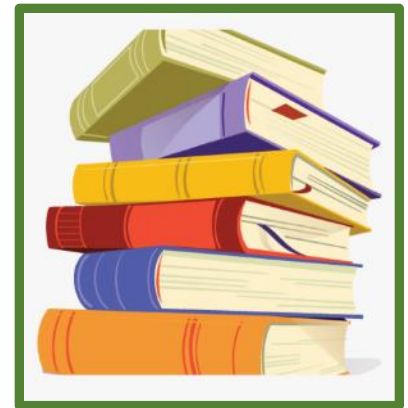


## From your Library – by June Bouchard

We warmly thank Joyce Clarke for the donation of Craig's collection of gardening and rhododendron books.

Our librarian, Ann Beamish, is in the process of cataloguing the books prior to adding them to our library.

Watch this space for a list of these new titles in a future newsletter!



## The American Rhododendron Society 75th Anniversary Convention



April 29-May 3, 2020, Hosted by ARS District 4

Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA

*20/20 Vision will include these international speakers and more:*

- Kenneth Cox from Glendoick in Scotland
- Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury in England
- Jens Nielsen, plant explorer from Denmark
- Steve Krebs and Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum
- Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

*Garden tours will include:*

- Crystal Springs Botanical Garden
- Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
- Portland Japanese Garden
- Lan Su Chinese Garden
- Iseli Nursery
- Woodburn Nursery
- The Stewart Garden (formerly Dover Nursery)
- Sebright Gardens

- Around the Sound [pre-tour](#)
- Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast Excursion [post-tour](#) including members' gardens

*Plus plant sale, photo contest, poster session, special clinics, plus:*

[ars75.org](http://ars75.org)

**Registration Now Open!**

## ARS Spring International Convention Update

-Registrations have now surpassed 200.

Plant sale [vendors](#) are now listed at the website.

-The [Post-Tour](#) is SOLD OUT, with a wait-list being taken for a second bus. The current tally on all tours is available on the [registration page](#).

-Room availability at the Heathman Lodge is already getting tight, so please [reserve](#) a.s.a.p.

-The Winter edition of JARS is out with a full convention insert and printed registration form; otherwise online registration and print options are available at the convention [website](#).



## *NRS' 1<sup>st</sup> Seedy Sunday Venture a Great Success!*



With great delight, we report that our first Seedy Sunday venture was a great success! Special thanks to Allen and Gaylle McRae for organizing it; to Art and Susan, Gaylle and Allen, Chris and Rosina for the early blooming rhododendron display that the visitors absolutely loved. Thanks also to the eager volunteers who helped with manning the table: Allen and Gaylle, Art and Susan, Val, Jan, Deborah, and Rosina. We definitely will return again come next year.

Rosina



Photos by Susan Lightburn

### **Here's what's coming this spring for the NRS:**

March 12<sup>th</sup>: NRS meeting – Linda Gilkeson “Life after Pesticides”

March 31<sup>st</sup>: work bee at Greig Rhododendron Species Garden; noon – 3pm

April 9<sup>th</sup>: NRS meeting – Shannon Berch “Soil Biology”

April 21<sup>st</sup>: Greig Rhododendron Species Garden – special invitation to District 1

April 28<sup>th</sup>: work bee at Greig Rhododendron Species Garden; noon – 3pm

May 9<sup>th</sup>: NRS plant sale and truss show- Centennial Building at Beban Park

May 14<sup>th</sup>: NRS meeting – Dick Beamish “My Favourite Trusses”

May 26<sup>th</sup>: work bee at Greig Rhododendron Species Garden; noon – 3pm

June year end potluck BBQ – date and location TBA



### **Fall into Gardening is Back!**

In October 2018, the Nanaimo and Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Societies co-hosted a very successful one day fall gardening workshop in Parksville. The event was called “Fall into Gardening” and had the theme of “Navigating Garden Myths”.

After a year off, “Fall into Gardening” will be back in October 2020! The NRS and MARS have added a new partner: the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association. This year’s theme will be “Gardening from the Ground Up”. The preliminary program includes Linda Chalker-Scott, Richard Hebda and Shannon Berch and Scott Wiskerke. **It will be held on Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, at the Parksville Community and Conference Center.** Details will follow in upcoming newsletters.



*See you at the next meeting on  
March 12<sup>th</sup>!*