



The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

March 2021



President's Message

Hello NRS Gardeners,

A very warm welcome to our new member, Ian Knipe! We hope he will find our diverse activities delightful, just as all of us do.

Sadly, it was a great shock to hear the news that Vancouver Island's Rhododendron Community lost a great friend in February - Paul Wurz, the creator of Hidden Acres Gardens in Campbell River! We will miss his insightful how-to-grow rhododendrons presentations, visits to his botanical-like gardens at Hidden Acres, and his warm 'hello' wherever we crossed paths. It is a great loss to the rhododendron community.

Hopefully, you had the opportunity to see all seven Zoom presentations last month. They were all splendid but some of them were real GEMS! Ken Nentwig's presentation on "*Water Efficiency in the Landscape*" comes to mind. It would have been wise to store some of that rain that we had this winter, and Ken did give us a few suggestions just what to do, besides mulching our plants to prevent evaporation during the summer months. More excellent presentations in lieu of in-person meetings are lined up for March. Please see [our webpage](#) for dates.

Don't forget to release your mason bees in a week or two, just as the first fruit trees start to bloom. It's a good time to fertilize your rhododendrons, roses and other plants as well.

Our next Hailey Grove work party at Bowen Park will be on March 9th at the Grove from 10 am to 2 pm. Park at the tennis courts parking lot and bring your lunch. Bryan Jubinville will be delighted to see you there, and so will the Grove!

Happy gardening and see you at Hailey Grove!
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 Gorgosolich
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Ann Beamish
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: nanaimorhodos.ca	

Next Events

**March 6th, at 1pm - Linda Chalker-Scott – *Raised Garden Beds for Vegetables* –
a zoom presentation through the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association**
March 20th at 7pm - Brian Minter – *What's New in Edible Gardening*

Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott – our “Featured” March Zoom speaker

Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott has a Ph.D. in Horticulture from Oregon State University and is an ISA certified and ASCA consulting arborist. She is Washington State University’s Extension Urban Horticulturalist and an Associate Professor in the Department of Horticulture, and holds two affiliate associate professor positions at the University of Washington. She conducts research in applied plant and soil sciences, publishing the results in scientific articles and university Extension fact sheets. She is the award-winning author of five fascinating and fact packed books on horticultural myth-busting, sustainable landscapes and gardens, and plant science. She has been featured in “*The Science of Gardening*”, a video series produced by The Great Courses, and she is one of the *Garden Professors*, a group of academic colleagues who educate and entertain through their blog and Facebook pages.



(Editor’s Note: Many of you may remember her as the keynote speaker at our “Fall into Gardening” event in Parksville in October 2019.)

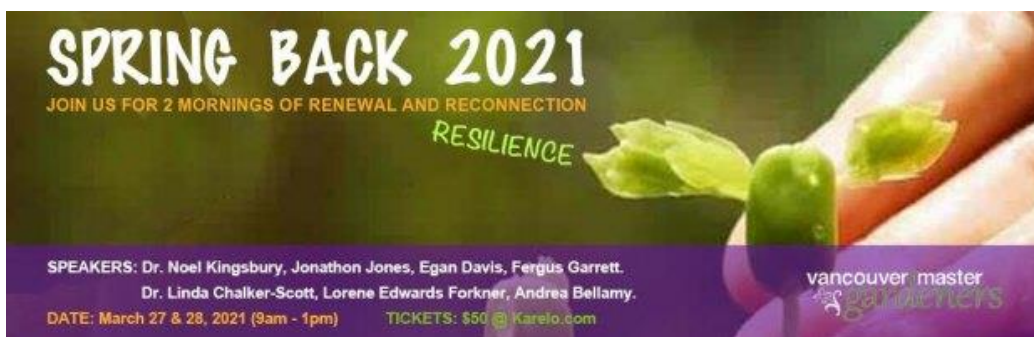
Brian Minter – our second “Featured” March Zoom speaker



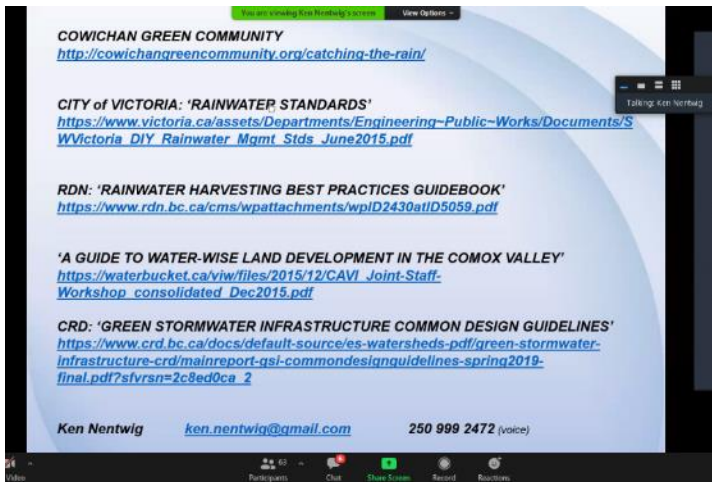
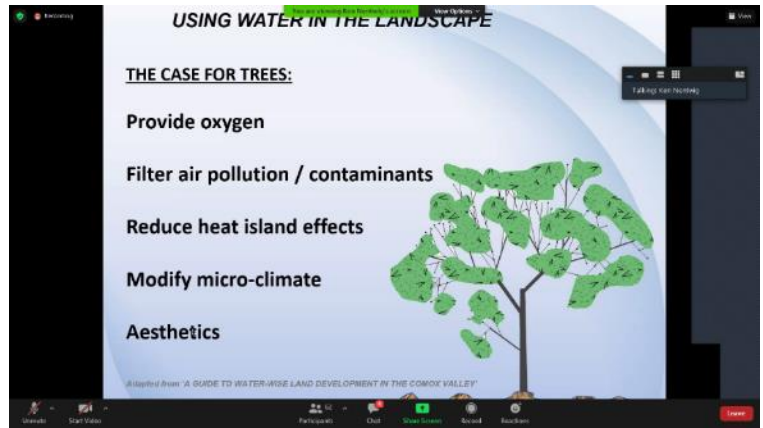
Brian Minter, a University of British Columbia graduate (BA) and Master Gardener, quickly became BC’s go-to garden expert through his experience at both the garden centre and the display gardens. He has hosted countless radio and television shows, is a frequent gardening columnist, and is the author of Canadian Best Seller, ‘Brian Minter’s New Gardening Guide – Fresh Approaches for Canadian Gardeners’.

A recipient of the Order of Canada, an Honorary Doctorate of Technology, and many other awards, Brian is well known from his magazine and syndicated newspaper columns and TV and radio programs.

Here’s another event coming in March. For further info go to: [Spring Back](#)



Looking back at February: Ken Nentwig did an excellent presentation on “water in our landscape and in our gardens”, building on the idea of rain gardens, water conservation, healthy soil, and mulching. The presentation was well attended with over 60 people from throughout Vancouver Island participating, leading to good follow up discussion. If you missed it, the presentation is still available at <https://youtu.be/Zn6rXci16nM>



Odds and Ends....

Propagation update from Rosina:

- Our 2019 cuttings are progressing well in their one-gallon pots, and will be fertilized with 12 grams per pot of 10-8-8 fertilizer in the next few days. They continue to be tended by Deborah Francis, Bryan Jubinville, Chris Southwick and Rosina Schmidt in their own gardens.
- The 2020 cuttings in Allan Murray's propagator and under his loving care are doing well too. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions any plans with Paine Centre greenhouses are on hold for now.
- **Your Propagation Team still needs 2-gallon pots.** Please drop off at Rosina's place, 3196 Merry Men Way, Nanaimo. Many thanks!



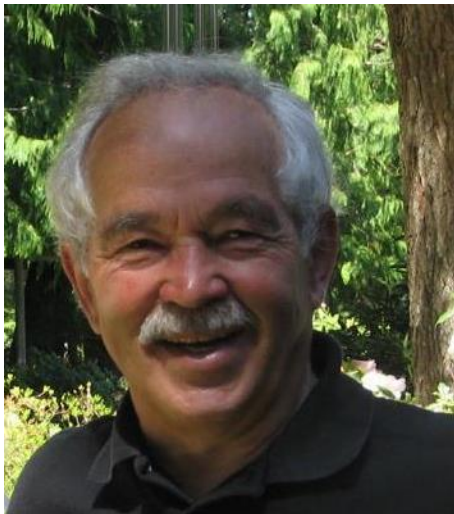
- **Members' Garden "Open Houses" – update from Rosina:**

This year we plan to have members' garden "open houses" starting in April. We would love to see your garden also – contact a member of the executive if you'd like to open your garden to club members. The schedule is updated regularly on our nanaimorhodos.ca website.

Plant sales will be included at some of the open gardens. If you have any plants to contribute to this event, it would be wonderful. All proceeds go to the club. Please mark your calendar, so you will not miss it. Hope to see you there!

- **What's Blooming now?** Our webmaster Rosina has added a page on our web site showing what's currently in bloom. Please send your photos of rhodos that are blooming now to rosinatschmidt@gmail.com who will put them on the website, unless they're already there. [Click here](#) to see what's in bloom at various times of the year!

Sad News...



We were shocked to hear of the sudden passing of Paul Wurz on February 20th. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his wife Lynn and their family.

Paul's loss will be felt throughout the rhododendron community in District 1 and beyond. Through the years, he's been a fixture as a vendor at our plant sales and has given many presentations and propagation demos to our club. He was an important member of the Greig Species Garden advisory group at Milner. Together with Lynn, they developed a beautiful rhododendron garden and nursery. They generously hosted our club several times, as part of our annual bus tours. Paul loved to tell stories and laugh, while welcoming you with a big smile and a hug. We'll miss him dearly...



What's Coming Up?

Despite Covid19, we are planning things to do, places to go, events, and work bees... As part of the new normal, all of the usual protocols apply e.g., physical distancing, hand sanitizers, masks, etc. There will also be more on-line events coming – stay tuned!



Work Bees

- Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner –work bees on hold until further notice – hope to have a mulching bee in March.
- Hailey Grove at Bowen Park – work bees planned for Tuesday March 9th from 10am to 2pm. Bring your lunch and sunny disposition. **Details on p. 7.**



Open Gardens



- **The open garden at Allen and Gayle McRae's originally scheduled for February 27th has been rescheduled to April 17th and will also include a plant sale – full details will be in the April newsletter.**
- April and May will see more open gardens hosted by Allen and Gayle McRae, Dick and Ann Beamish, Chris Southwick, June and John – with more to come. Check future newsletters or [our website](#) for updates.
- Milner Gardens and Woodland –**through Saturday March 27th, the gardens will be open on Fridays and Saturdays from 11 am to 3 pm.** Check their website for current details: [Click here](#)

Zoom based speakers and seminars – links and passwords will be sent to you a few days prior to each event:


Saturday, March 6th, at 1 pm – Linda Chalker-Scott – *Raised Garden Beds for Vegetables* – a zoom presentation through the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association

Saturday, March 20th at 7pm: Brian Minter – *What's New in Edible Gardening.*



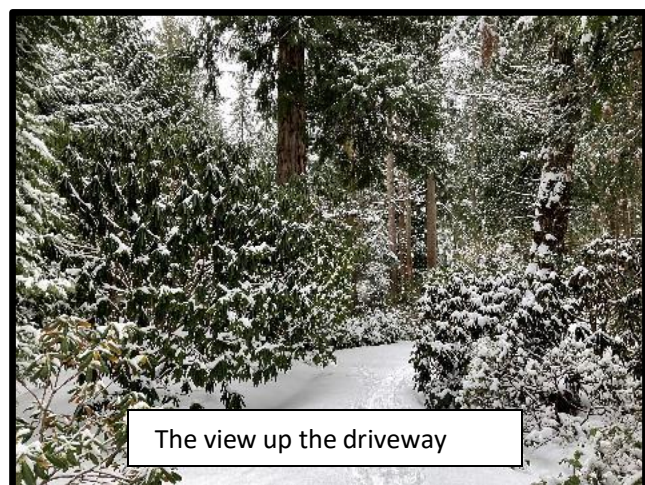
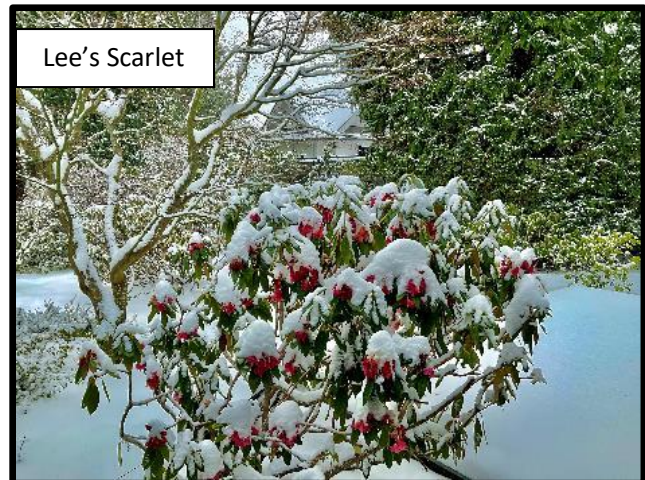
Stay connected - check our web-page - new things added regularly! <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

Seen in Passing...

- Happy skiers!
- Snowfall for Valentine's Day 
- Crocuses, snowdrops, winter aconites....
- Early blooming rhodo flower buds opening...



February snowfall: just when we were starting to think that spring was just around the corner after such a mild winter, Mother Nature sent us a little cold snap and snow. Susan Lightburn captured the beauty of the moment in their garden.



Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park



Throughout 2020, NRS volunteers held a number of work bees to begin the clean-up of the Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park. Working with Nanaimo Parks and Recreation staff, and following COVID 19 protocols, more work bees are planned through the spring. **The next work bee is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9th from 10 am to 2 pm.**

From Bryan, our intrepid Hailey Work bee coordinator: *"Work bee went well in February. Everyone had a smile and John had fun with Jenny, Ivy, Holly and I am sure there were other invasives he did not tell us about."*

Next work bee is set for March 9th. Again, Bryan will try to have the 'Sun' come out with a few more Celsius' friends. Celsius only brought 4 or 5 of his friends in February. I'm hoping we get about 10 or 11 friends in March!"

Here are a few photos from the February 9th work bee, taken by Rosina. The snow began to fall 24 hours later....



From Rosina: *Thank you, Bryan, for arranging today's Hailey Grove work party! All great workers and the job was beautifully done!!! The attached photos each tells a thousand words!*

Thank you, Joyce and David Mitchell, for popping in to see us at work and also for donating all those 2-gallon pots.

Thanks again and see you all next time.



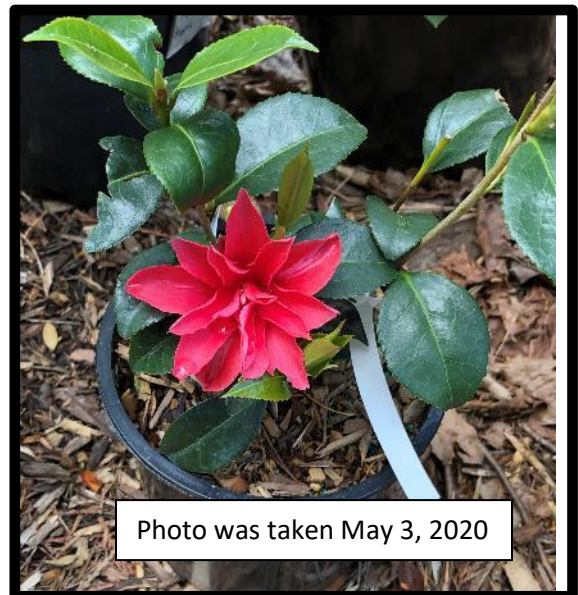
Here's a photo taken by a friend the next day. (photo by John McKay)

Plant of the month - Camellia 'Freedom Bell'

by Ron Sutton

For plant of the month, I have chosen a camellia. One of the benefits of gardening here on Vancouver Island is that we can grow camellias. It was definitely one of the reasons I moved here. Last month, Kathy Lintault, a camellia enthusiast, gave a wonderful Zoom presentation on these fine plants. If you missed it, it can be seen here: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/c4jbReg7SVAQal3XAEBF6klrfCgTbaLPaCphlYQ_fAZTdbwsQvG0Drl2zx0t_wYV.h6AQU9WBcr3RUERm Use Zoom Passcode: y3!+ceg5

One camellia I had searched all over for, that is difficult to find, is **Camellia 'Freedom Bell'**. Then, I surprisingly found two at a well-known Canadian box store's garden centre. C. 'Freedom Bell' produces beautiful 3-4 inches (8-10 cm) semi-double flowers in a bright red colour. The petals are somewhat elongated, and leaves are dark semi-glossy green. Information gathered indicates that it blooms March to April in the Pacific Northwest. My plant, seen below, was in bloom in early May. Camellia 'Freedom Bell' will grow 6-10 feet tall and 4-8 feet wide. It likes part shade in acidic soil and is hardy to zone 7.



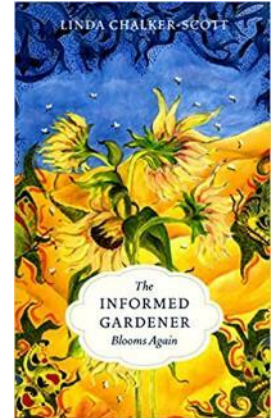


Don't forget to change your clock before you go to bed on March 13th! ☺

*It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.
~Charles Dickens*

From your Library – by June Bouchard

Well, along with our monthly in-person meetings, access to the NRS's wonderful library has been put on hold. In the process of re-organizing our own collection of books recently, I came across *The Informed Gardener Blooms Again* by Linda Chalker-Scott which I borrowed from the NRS in February 2020. To mark the first anniversary of this loan, and considering that Linda is our next Zoom speaker, I thought it would be appropriate to do a brief review of this gem of a book!



Picking up where her book *The Informed Gardener* left off, Linda uses scientific literature to address a number of what she calls “common gardening myths”, from mulches and soil additives to a number of planting know-how’s including how / what / where / when to plant.

The following summary from [Goodreads](#) says it all:

“The Informed Gardener Blooms Again provides answers to questions such as:

- Does using drought-tolerant plants reduce water consumption?
- Is it more effective to spray fertilizers on the leaves of trees and shrubs than to apply it to the soil?
- Will cedar wood chips kill landscape plants?
- Should I use ladybugs in my garden as a form of pest control?
- Does aerobically brewed compost tea suppress disease?

Every year Chalker-Scott receives hundreds of e-mails from around the world on these and related topics. Her advice, based on more than twenty years of experience in the field of plant physiology, has helped home gardeners, landscape architects, and nursery and landscape professionals to develop scientifically based sustainable landscaping practices.”

Although you obviously can’t get it from the NRS library right now, you can get it from the Vancouver Island Regional Library: [Click here](#) to reserve a copy now.



AMERICAN RHODODENDRON
SOCIETY 2021
VIRTUAL AND LIVE CONVENTION
RHODOS DOWN EAST: EXPLORING
THE NORTH ATLANTIC REGION
June 3-6, 2021

Virtual Convention and onsite events
at the Old Orchard Inn, Wolfville,
Nova Scotia



While the pandemic has made in-person attendance difficult, the host Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society has taken a more creative approach. The ARS spring convention will be both virtual and live. Registration for the virtual conference is now open! All presentations, garden tours and networking opportunities will be available online. Early bird registration for the virtual convention is open. Prices will increase on April 1st, 2021. The overall deadline for registration is May 1st, 2021. Visit the convention website for more details at: [convention details](#)

Speakers include **Ken Cox**, famed Scottish rhododendron breeder from Glendoick Nursery in Scotland; **Joe Bruso**, rhododendron breeder from Massachusetts; and **Todd Boland** from Newfoundland's Memorial University Botanical Garden. The Convention will start with a lecture on "Introduction to Mi'kma'ki" by **Gerald Gloade**, a Mi'kmaw Naturalist and educator who will tell the stories of the first people that explain the natural history since the area was covered by ice.

Garden tours, both virtual and in-person, will include the **Kentville Research Centre**, **Annapolis Valley Historic Gardens** and **Peggy's Cove barrens** as well as private gardens. Networking opportunities will include the **Breeder's Roundtable** where you can hear about the latest trends in Rhododendron breeding, the **ARS Next Gen Project** which will show how to involve the next generation in your local ARS club, as well as social events that feature the seafood, cider and wine from our local producers.



*"Spring is when you feel like
whistling even with a shoe full
of slush."
- Doug Larson*

*"Be Calm; Be Grateful;
Mostly, Be Happy!"
(From our local Lighthouse Country
Living Newsletter ☺)*