

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



May 2013



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The dull grey of winter is becoming a distant memory with many plants in bloom early this year. Despite some light late frosts the blooms have mostly stood up well and are very showy around and under our flowering cherry and fruit trees. For us, the waiting has been worth it with twelve "first-time blooming" rhodos and a count of approximately ninety rhodos flowering at the same time.

April and May are a very busy time of the year in the garden and attending the many club functions. As you all know the Plant Show & Sale is coming up shortly (Sat May 11th, with set-up Friday evening starting at 6 pm). A reminder: if possible, bringing in your trusses on Friday can help the show run smoothly.

The May meeting is also a renewal time for a number of executive and volunteer positions. So please come and support, or better yet volunteer for the vacant positions. All of our Directors and committee members have been serving us very well, but could use help in many club functions,

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

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4
Website: nanaimo.rhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 9 BEBAN PARK SOCIAL CENTRE 7:30 pm

**BARRIE AGAR
'Japanese Gardens'**

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

TWIGS and STEMS



GOODIES FOR MAY MEETING

Ann Beamish

Jane Lauzier

Susan Lightburn

NIRS TRUSS SHOW & SALE

Sunday May 5

10 am to 1 pm

K'omox Band Hall

3320 Comox (Dyke) Road, Comox

NIRS GARDEN TOUR

Sunday May 12

10 am to 4 pm · \$10

MAY RAFFLE HIGHLIGHTS

R. williamsianum

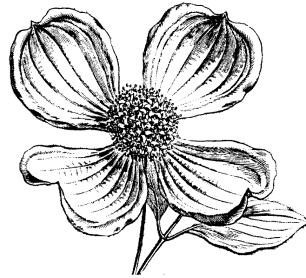
R. 'Seaview Sunset'

and the tender but yummy R. edgeworthii

NOTE NEW DEPARTURE TIME FOR BUS

TOUR ON MAY 18

7am INSTEAD OF 7:20



Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association

VIU is offering a new course – Advanced Gardener:
Theory and Practice

Designed for enthusiastic home gardeners, this course provides an overview of gardening basics. Topics include: soils; composting; plant identification; shrubs, trees, perennials and annuals; berries; vegetables; plant propagation; pruning; weeds, pests and their controls. The program emphasizes environmentally responsible gardening practices. Advanced Gardener: Theory and Practice is deemed equivalent to Master Gardener Theory. Upon completion, students are invited to take the Volunteer Service Component to qualify for the full Master Gardener certificate.

The course begins Saturday, September 14, 2013: 9 am – 4:30 pm (12X) excluding Thanksgiving weekend, and costs \$685 plus tax. The course will be held at the Paine Horticultural Centre, 2324 East Wellington Road, Nanaimo. Attendance at an information session on May 22, 2013, from 6-8 pm is required.

The instructor is Jessica Gemmel.

Contact the VIU Continuing Education Cowichan office 1-888-747-3519 toll-free or 250-746-3519.
www.viu.ca/ccs/certificates/mastergardener.asp.

OUR MAY SPEAKER

The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society will be hosting Barrie Agar, Head Gardener at Royal Roads, with a program about Japanese Gardens. Barrie is a very knowledgeable gardener, a great photographer, and has a delightful sense of humour.

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Pot Party

(potting up that is)

Dave & Noni Godfrey (NIRS), Al & Marie Beiberstein (MARS), Ian & Shirley Efford (CVRS), and Art & Susan Lightburn (NRS) met at the Lightburn's on a nice Sunday (April 14th) afternoon for a quick garden walkabout and then potting up approximately 130 Trillium seedlings into 1 gal pots. These will be shared and grown on by the 5 Vancouver Island clubs for future use as good will and at plant sales. The planting went very well with lots of hands busy and followed by a tea, a good chat and Noni giving lessons and information on the mini iPad.



Seen In Passing

- ✚ full moon - low tides - clam chowder
- ✚ the last of our leeks and the first spears of our asparagus on the barbeque
- ✚ a surprise - our *R. edgeworthii* having the first flower shyly hidden away
- ✚ a tiny bright green frog hiding up in the flower tube of *R. 'Elizabeth'* waiting for bugs



Rhodos Worth Growing

Yellow Rolls Royce

Attractive foliage and habit, 5 ft in 10 years. The rhodo covers itself with rich yellow flowers that have a small red blotch. A very good frilly yellow that lasts and lasts. Takes a fair amount of sun and is good to -13 C.



Watch for this plant at the sales!

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Getting to Know Each Other - by June and John

This month, we would like to introduce Val Harvey to you. Most of you will know Val's welcoming smile from the raffle table as you come to each meeting. Thank you Val for sharing a little bit of yourself with us.



1. How long have you been growing rhododendrons?
Val has been growing rhododendrons since the early 90's, about 20 years. Her first rhododendron was Malahat which is now about 7ft after a few trimmings.
2. How long have you lived on Vancouver Island?
Val is originally from Scotland but was working in Bermuda when she met and married her husband Glyn. They returned to the UK and moved here in 1975, where both their children were born – Garfield and Tracy.
3. Describe your best day in the garden.
Val's ideal day in the garden is a warm and sunny spring day with no obligation to be anywhere else. It's a day to putter around with the companionship of her pets who love to follow her around the garden!
4. What other interests do you have?
Val LOVES dogs, particularly Newfoundlands. She has been a member of the Nanaimo Kennel Club for many years. She is also a CKC Evaluator for the Canine Good Neighbour Program and has been involved in the Therapy Dogs Program with St. John's Ambulance.
5. What's your favourite rhododendron?
Always a difficult question but Val is drawn to "the Augustiniis", particularly Electra and one from Milner Gardens. Another favourite is Trewithen Orange – very different and an unusual colour.
6. What do you like about the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society?
Val likes the people and the sharing of knowledge. Everybody's knowledge matters and no one tries to tell you what to do.
7. More about Val...
Her favourite Scotch: Val enjoys The Balvenie, a nice single malt scotch - "very nice but expensive" – a special treat! And her favourite Scottish hero is William Wallace!

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The 13th Annual N.R.S. Bus Tour Saturday, May 18th, 2013



Continuing our tradition of visiting a great mixture of gardens, nurseries, and special places, this year we're going to Saltspring Island.

Cost: \$40 per person (includes Ferry and Saltspring Island Vineyards wine tasting)



Where do we meet? At the Northfield/Nanaimo Parkway parking lot– the bus will be leaving at 7:00 am. We expect to return at approx. 6:30 pm

Don't forget to bring a picnic lunch and appropriate clothing. Bring a friend...

Call John to reserve a seat 778 424 3605

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Beautiful species Rhodo to be auctioned at May meeting



Rhododendron sinofalconeri RSF accession # 104sd2007.

A spectacular new introduction brought to the west in 1996, this species forms a large compact and spreading evergreen tree with leaves up to one foot in length. As the name of this new "big-leaf" implies, this is the Chinese or eastern "version" of the closely related *R. falconeri* of the Himalayas. The flowers are borne in a large rounded to flat-topped inflorescence and should be pale to rich yellow. Appreciates some protection from the hot afternoon sun. So far has proven to be hardier than *R. macabe anum*. Native to broad-leaved forests from 5,250 to 10,000 ft.

Donated by Joyce & Craig Clarke. Reserve bid \$22.00

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"-John Keats Truss Show Saturday, May 11

Don't miss this great opportunity to participate, to show and to see a wide variety of beautiful Rhododendrons. The truss show will be set up during the Friday evening of May 10. To avoid delays and confusion on Saturday am, consider bringing your trusses for the show between 7 and 8 PM Friday evening. Alternately, trusses can be entered well before 8 AM Saturday morning. Also, to expedite your entries, please bring a list with your name, rhodo entered, and its appropriate class, (see below) You can also bring noncompetitive sprays and extra trusses for display on the exhibition table. The judges this year are Glen Jamieson and Linda Derkach. 2012 witnessed a record entry of trusses. This occurred in spite of the absence of several regular contributors. The article on truss shows in the ARS journal, winter 2013, is recommended.

Truss Show Classes

Alpine species
Azalea (truss or spray)
Blotch/Flare hybrid
Elepidote species
Lax truss
Lepidote species
Pink hybrid

Purple/blue hybrid
Red hybrid
Salmon/orange hybrid
White hybrid
Yellow hybrid
Foliage only
Scented
Hammerhead

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Tips on Exhibiting Trusses and Sprays

A day or two before the show go around and make a list of the blooms you will pick on Friday morning, the day before the show. Organize whatever containers you will be using to transport your blooms to the show. They needn't be elaborate. Empty bottles or cans work well. Be careful to avoid crushing the blooms. Fill the containers with water almost to the top. Bottles in six-pack cartons are great for transporting blooms.

Picking blooms always takes more time than you think it will! When choosing trusses, select ones that have straight stems with the bloom at the top. Don't choose ones with crooked stems that are growing at odd angles (e.g. pointing straight down). When choosing sprays, look for ones that will present themselves gracefully in a bottle. Pieces of cork can be used to stabilize the stem in the neck of the bottle.

Prune judiciously if need be to enhance the shape of a spray. Avoid choosing entries with bruises. Sometimes rain damage is inevitable, but avoid it if you can. Look for freshness. In a spray, it is better to have one or more unopened flower buds (for they frequently open after they have been picked) than to choose blooms that are already open and going over. Some judges like to see one or two unopened or partially opened buds, but a **truss must not have flowers from more than one bud.**

Here come da' judges....



Three Nanaimo members judging the MARS Truss and Flower Show on Sat April 27th, 2013

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society - General Meeting - Minutes April 11, 2013

Meeting called to order by the President, Art Lightburn, at 7:31 p.m.

Secretary - Paul Lawry acting meeting Secretary as Ann is away.

Guest - Marie Bieberstein (Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society)

Bus Tour – John gave a brief update on the Bus Tour to Salt Spring Island on May 18. Still a few spaces available, contact him if you wish to sign up for the tour.

Member Profile – June spoke about the new column in the Newsletter “Getting to Know Each Other” a monthly profile of members. She requested volunteers to submit information.

Programmer - Glenda Barr reported that our May speaker will be Barrie Agar, Royal Roads, on Japanese Gardens

VIU Awards – Should be receiving information on the recipients shortly.

Hailey Rhodo Grove – Just a reminder that the Grove, located in Bowen Park, is starting to bloom.

NB Ph meter: Art mentioned that Craig had purchased a PH Meter and would be willing to sell it to the club for member use. Asked how many would be interested in using the meter and 8 members responded to the affirmative. Approval was given by the membership to purchase the meter from Craig.

Trillium Response: Art & Susan donated Trillium plants to the club and Reinhold reported that 27 were sold at \$5.00 per plant.

Bargain Table – Reinhold reported that he still has some plants left to be purchased.

Membership – no report

Treasurer – copy of Financial Report on front table for examination.

Show & Tell - Berberis Darwinii – Art brought this plant, in full bloom, to show members - available at Arrowsmith Greenhouses.

- Sandra Dorman had a great floating display of Hellebores.

Sunshine – Sandra happily relayed that no illnesses had been reported by members.

Show & Sale – We have 11 vendors signed for the show. Brian will be handling the advertising and will be having posters made for members to place on bulletin boards, etc. We are having new signs made to be placed by the roadside and intersection directing people to our sale.

Preparing Trusses – Al Bieberstein (MARS) gave a very informative talk on preparing Trusses for the show.

Reminder - Members to bring trusses on Friday night if possible.

Goodies - Thanks to those who brought goodies: Elaine Hutchison.

Bill Harvey – Who was unable to attend the meeting, welcomed everyone to stop by and see his garden which is now in full bloom.

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Plant Sale Posters – During the break, Susan Lightburn passed around the signup list for the distribution of the plant sale posters.

Raffle – following the break, the door prize & raffle plants were distributed.

Program – Glenda Barr, programmer, introduced the speaker Lois Blackmore. She gave a brief review of the life of Jim Barlup, an ARS Gold medalist, who has hybridized many new plants soon to be available. Lois followed with great photos of his 100+ named hybrids.

Meeting adjourned: 9:20

Garden Chatter (by Mary Palmer)

A few good garden hints from recent March issues of Amateur Gardening.

*Don't forget to give your watering cans and pots a good cleanout before using them this year - they may contain fungal spores, as well as the usual muck in them.

*It is time to dig up those snowdrops you promised friends - they will perform much better next year than if you allow the bulbs to dry out.

*Check variegated evergreen shrubs - if they have some shoots that have reverted to plain green - remove them before they take over the whole plant. *While you are at it, look for stems that have come up from under the graft on shrubs such as "Harry Lauder's Walking Stick". I remember seeing a huge old rhodo in Vancouver one time - half with red flowers, the other half with purple. What a sight - but you might also have a grafted rhodo - best not to let that happen to it.



*Last call for trimming tall ornamental grasses (if the snow didn't do it for you) and shrubs such as lavender. Don't cut into the old wood on lavenders and ornamental cytisus.

*Remember though, gardening is supposed to be a pleasure. If it has become a burden, best to pack up and try another hobby. There are always jobs to be done - but if they don't all get finished, -Oh well, maybe in the fall....

*This is a good time to look around the bases of your hellebores and cyclamen. The little plants may be too small to put on the sale table this year, but they will be nice robust plants in a year. Hellebores take about 3 years to go from seedlings to flowering plants, but what a lovely surprise you get, when they do bloom. I have some nice hybrids now that I added a few pots of dark purple and large-spotted white to my plants in the woods.

*If you have any unusually coloured leaf elders, prune them hard now to encourage fresh stems and foliage. It should be safe to cut the buddleias back hard now - I killed a couple of these by pruning in March as advised - now I wait until warmer days in April or even May. Late- blooming clematis should also be pruned now at the latest.

*Does your pond go green in summer? Barley straw is the answer. Advice in the magazine suggests 2 oz. of straw (available as pet bedding?) into a fine-mesh net bag, including a bit of garden soil to encourage rotting. "Put a poly block or a small plastic bottle to act as a float, tie one end to a stone so the bag is suspended just below the surface of the water. Position it near moving water to spread the inhibitor around, and replace it when the straw has rotted."

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**Allium fistulosum* (Welsh or Japanese bunching onions), with a flavour like chives, but these are evergreen, make a lovely clump of green onions year- round. Easy to grow from seed.

*To add to the argument about sealing or not sealing tree wounds (we all had large wounds to prune or repair after this past winter), it is recommended that you rub a bit of dirt on the larger wounds - they won't be as noticeable, and beneficial fungi and micro-organisms will help heal the wound.

*Talking of slugs, here are some plants reputed to be slug-free when mature.
Nigella, Echinops, Ceanothus, Lavender, *Alchemilla mollis*, Hebes, and Lilies in pots.

*Alliums



Allium giganteum

are loaded with little black seeds in the fall). The leaves look rather floppy and take time to die down in fall, but planted among Hostas, Rhodos or other shrubs, or with ornamental grasses, they are not too noticeable.



Allium christophii

These are such rewarding plants, for they look nice among the rhodos, and the deer don't eat them. I picked up some further information from the Oct. 2006 issue of *Gardeners' World*.

Apart from *A. schoenoprasum* (Chives) most of them are planted in fall. They enjoy sun, but hate wet feet in winter. Don't plant the large-flowered varieties too close together, as they need room for those giant flower heads. Small-flowered ones can be closer together and can be left to form a clump.

I found *A. moly* (small, bright yellow flowers) really ran rampant in the rhodo bed, but the larger ones seem to multiply more slowly. You can also start them from seed, (your own if you wish) for those big seedheads



Allium schoenoprasum



Allium moly

"This is a large and happy family: there are about 700 assorted aunts and cousins, all of whom are related by blood or marriage to the humble onion. Most are pretty hardy and there are varieties to suit almost every growing condition and the caprice of every gardener. There are flowers that vary in size from cabbage (*A. Schubertii*) to ping-pong ball (*A. caeruleum*) from waist-high (*A. giganteum*) to little ankle-biting *A. forrestii*." Colours range from bright yellow to many shades of mauve and purple to pure blue, and white. A couple of white ones I plan to look for are *A. 'Mount Everest'*, which grows to 4', and *A. 'Silverspring'*, white with a pink centre, grows to 24".

N.I.R.S. May 2007