May 2016

President's Message

This is such an exciting time of year when you love the genus rhododendron! The bloom has been absolutely outstanding this year, likely due to the very mild winter, the early warmth and last summer's sunny weather. The down side is that many plants are blooming much earlier than they ever have and when it is warm and sunny, the bloom doesn't last as long.

The excitement is in the air with our Annual Show and Sale weekend almost upon us. So many of our club members are actively supporting this initiative in one way or another. We do hope that many members will bring some trusses to the show as one of our main goals is to help educate the general public regarding the incredible differences in size, shape and colour of blossoms as well as size, texture and shape of leaves in rhododendrons. The more trusses we have to display, the better the show! Don't forget we have a class for foliage and we don't often have many entries in that category.

The May 12th general meeting is our annual general meeting where we will be forming a new executive. A big thank you goes out to Gaylle McRae and Brenda Lewis for volunteering to phone club members to encourage folks to allow their names to stand for next year's executive. We do have quite a number of folks who will be stepping up to take on an executive position, but we do need more people to be members at large. Please consider volunteering. You won't be sorry.

Thanks once again to John Deniseger and June Bouchard for their excellent work in organizing such a wonderful bus tour on April 23rd. Well done, once again! Your efforts, John and June are very much appreciated.

For those of you who are helping to set up the show on sale on Saturday evening, April 30th, the doors to the Centennial Building will be open at 6:30 pm. Hope to see you all on May the 1st!

Chris

EXECUTIVE		
President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Vice President	Brenda Lewis	751-3639
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Krystyna Sosulski	729-0948
Directors	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Dorothee Kieser	390-4136
	Gaylle McRae	758-7589
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
COMMITTEES		
Advertising	Jan Moles	
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	585-2706
Membership	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
Program	Art Lightburn	468-7516
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533
Website	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Sunshine	Edith Higgins	390-9340
Bus Tour	John Deniseger & June Bouchard	
Truss Show	Doug Blenkarn	
Spring Sale	Ann Beamish	

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
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Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4
Website: nanaimorhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

Next Meeting

Thursday May 12, 7:30 pm Beban Park Social Centre

John Deniseger – "The New Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner"

Garth Wedemire – "The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden"

Twigs and Stems

GOODIES FOR MAY

Jean Grieg

Erna Murdoch

Susan Lightburn

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

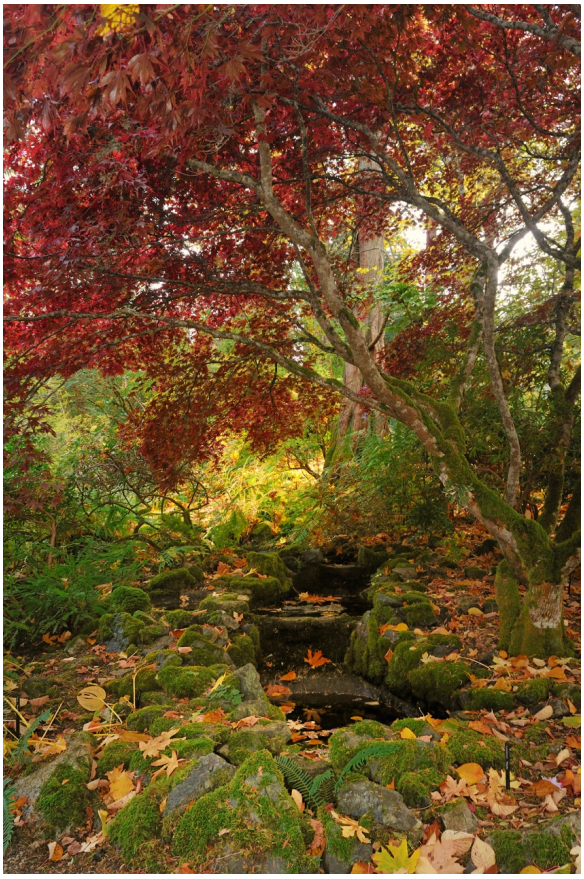
RHODO SHOW AND PLANT SALE

Sunday May 1

10 am – 2 pm

Centennial Building, Beban park

Admission free



Milner Gardens

OUR MAY PROGRAM

This month's program is in two parts. John Deniseger is a long-time club member and past president and a member of the Milner Gardens and Woodland Board and the Rhododendron Species Garden Advisory Group. He'll be giving us a short presentation, "The New Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner", which will outline the progress and vision of this exciting new collaborative project. Following John Garth Wedemire will give a presentation on the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way and recent advancements on the garden. Garth, a long time rhododendron club member, has recently moved to Vancouver Island and is now a member of the North Island Rhododendron Society while maintaining his director position on the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden.

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden

BUS TOUR 2016

Forty four intrepid gardeners headed south on Saturday, April 23rd and had a wonderful day exploring five stunning private gardens, enjoying lunch and a guided tour at Dominion Brook Park in Saanich, discovering a lovely nursery (Russell Nursery) in Deep Cove, and tasting as well as learning all about cider at Merridale Cidery in Cobble Hill. The weather cooperated and the sun was with us for most of the day!

lunch time

NRS members in Harris Garden

The Stitt garden

R. 'Bambino'

In the April newsletter, Glenda Barr sent in a photo of a seedling that goes back to our former club president, Gord Galloway, who passed away in 2000. The seedling had been grown on by Glenda and was blooming for the first time. Continuing with Glenda's idea, we've included photos of 3 of Gord's plants that we have in our garden.

John and June

Open pollinated Sinogrande: about 3 feet high, pale yellow trusses appeared this year for the first time Healthy plant, although it could use a little more moisture/humidity (particularly last summer)

Unidentified "Gord" seedling: pale pink, slight scent, about 3 1/2 feet high. Healthy robust plant.

Unidentified 'Loderi King Gord' seedling: pale pink, quite scented, red bracts, about 4 1/2 feet high. Suspect that one of the parents is Loderi 'King George' - thus we've called it 'Loderi King Gord' just for fun. Healthy robust plant.

Rhodos Worth Growing

Rhododendron Horizon Monarch ('Nancy Evans' x 'Point Defiance') 1.83 m (6'), -17^{0} C, M, 4-5/4.
This hybrid from Dr. Ned Brockenbrough in Seattle is fantastic. It is the most upright, cone shaped truss of any yellow. Red buds open to a mellow, warm yellow flower with small vivid red flares. Gigantic trusses of 15 or more flowers are very showy. Large, leathery, deep green leaves.

Rhododendron Horizon Lakeside — ('Nancy Evans' x 'Lem's Cameo') 3' (0.92m), -17^{o}C
Large, delicately fragrant flowers are pale yellow with a bright carmine throat. A compact plant, buds young.

Let's Talk Hybridizing: Hybridizing with Elepidote Polyploid Rhododendrons
Jim Barlup
Bellevue, Washington

Hybridizers are experimenting with polyploid breeding with the hopes of creating stronger growing plants with heavier foliage and larger, thicker flowers. Working with elepidote tetraploid rhododendrons is a challenging experience. What I have learned is limited, but perhaps it is enough to be of interest to other hybridizers following this same path.

One way of categorizing rhododendron polyploids is according to the number of chromosomes. Most rhododendron are diploids with 26 chromosomes. A tetraploid has a double set of chromosomes, or 52. An even number of chromosomes is needed for a plant to accept pollen and produce seed. A triploid has an additional half set of chromosomes totaling 39. It is assumed that you cannot cross onto a triploid because of its uneven number of chromosomes. Polyploidy is defined as any plant with more than 26 chromosomes. In the absence of scientific testing, it is difficult to categorize plants accurately. In general, our only way to detect a tetraploid is by its increased leaf, flower and plant size as compared to a normal or diploid plant. In other words, we are guessing which plants might be tetraploids. Trial and error in hybridizing efforts can, to some degree, confirm or deny these assumptions. Without scientific chromosome counts, we may make wrong assumptions.

"Probable" tetraploid seedlings, 2 1/2 years old: ('Phyllis Korn' X 'Trude Webster'), ('Horizon Monarch' X 'Gargantua'), ('Phyllis Korn' X 'Virgo')

Photo by Jim Barlup

I've heard that 'Phyllis Korn', 'Gargantua' and 'Horizon Monarch' are all triploids. If we assume that a plant is a triploid, we may erroneously avoid using it for hybridizing. I have successfully crossed onto each of these plants. Therefore, I conclude that they are not triploids. I crossed 'Phyllis Korn' and 'Horizon Monarch' with 'Point Defiance', 'Trude Webster', 'Very Berry'*, 'Virgo'* and 'Gargantua' pollen. The crosses all took and the seed germinated. Repeating the crosses gave the same results. 'Phyllis Korn' pollen worked just once on 'Whitney's Late Peach'*, which I assume to be a tetraploid. It had large, heavy leaves and 5-inch (12.5 cm) flowers. I lost the plant during a very cold winter and cannot remake the cross. Was that cross accurate? I think it was, but the only way I can prove it is to have 'Phyllis Korn' pollen work on another tetraploid. The pollen of 'Horizon Monarch' ('Nancy Evans' x 'Point Defiance') so far has proven to be sterile, as most, but not all, 'Nancy Evans' crosses have sterile pollen. So far, I have not been successful in producing seed using the pollen of 'Horizon Monarch'. However, an established plant at Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens was observed to have many seed pods. If it self-pollinated, then the pollen is viable.

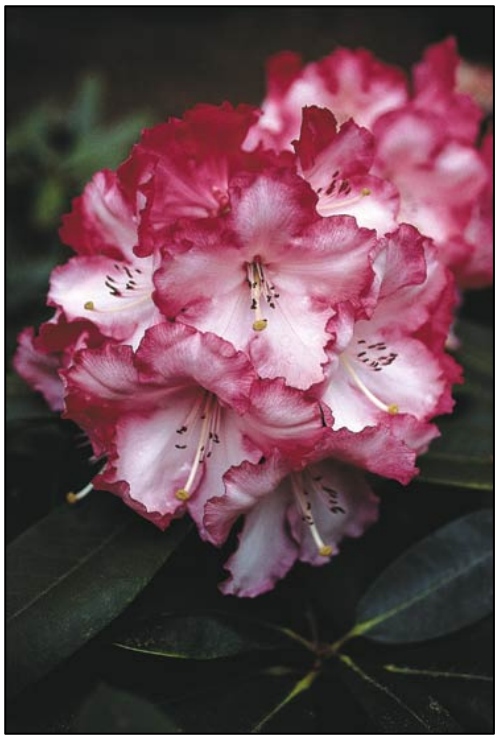
Once you identify the plants that seem to be tetraploids, you can try to make crosses between these plants. Usually the offspring will be tetraploids. If you cross a diploid with tetraploid pollen, you may get wonderful seed pods, but germination is very difficult. I have found the germination rate with 'Point Defiance' crosses to be less than 3 percent, if they germinate at all. The results may be a diploid or a tetraploid. A cross of 'Janet Blair' with 'Point Defiance' produced one plant that appears to be a diploid. A cross of 'Calsap' with 'Point Defiance' produced five plants, probably diploids. The seed from at least thirty other such crosses did not germinate. Frank Fujioka crossed Jim Elliott's 'Flirt' ('Britannia' x *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushimanum*) with 'Point Defiance' and germinated one seedling. It has a huge, beautiful truss and is probably a tetraploid, but the pollen appears to be sterile. Ned Brockenbrough crossed 'Nancy Evans' with 'Point Defiance' and got just a few seedlings, but among them were 'Horizon Monarch' and 'Patricia Jacobs', both beautiful tetraploids. This year I managed to cross 'Mindy's Love' ('Nancy Evans' x 'Lionel's Triumph') with 'Trude Webster' pollen and had very good germination. There are some very strong growing plants in

this group of seedlings, which appears to be a mixture of diploid and tetraploid seedlings.

I continue to use pollen from what appears to be tetraploids (such as 'Trude Webster' and 'Point Defiance') on low growing hardy plants such as 'Ingrid Mehlquist', 'Fantastica' and *Rhododendron degronianum* ssp. *yakushimanum*. Yes, I do get seed pods from some of these crosses, but so far no seed has germinated. One of my goals is to work with a dwarf tetraploid. So far all of the possible tetraploids that we have to work with are large growers. We only need one breakthrough with a dwarf, semi-dwarf or low grower to start a whole new generation of plants. Don Wallace crossed 'Orange Marmalade' with 'Point Defiance' and has what appears to be a low growing tetraploid plant. Unfortunately, the pollen appears to be sterile. I consider his cross a major accomplishment. A cross of *R. proteoides* with 'Point Defiance' or 'Trude Webster' pollen would be of great value to hybridizers if it turned out to be a dwarf tetraploid. One must have visions for the future.

Briggs Nursery worked with colchicine treated plants in an attempt to obtain tetraploid forms of known plants. At this point, two elepidote plants have been tested and have obtained that status: 'The Hon. Jean Marie de Montague', now known as 'Briggs Red Star', and 'Nova Zembla', now known in its tetraploid form as 'Supernova'. 'Supernova' has accepted pollen from 'Gentle Giant', 'Trude Webster' and 'Gargantua', and I currently have seedlings growing from those crosses. The pollen of 'Supernova' has not worked so far on other tetraploids, but it is too early to know if it is sterile or viable. I have not worked with 'Briggs Red Star', but I have a plant budded for hybridizing in 2002. New excitement!

There are many mysteries in this field of endeavor. 'Gargantua' (a registered name) is a seedling of *Rhododendron decorum* ssp. *diaprepes* and has been tested and supposedly thought to be a triploid yet its pollen is the most powerful and fertile of this whole group. Clint Smith and Loyd and Edna Newcomb have made successful crosses using 'Gargantua' pollen. This year 'Gargantua' set seed with pollen from four different tetraploids. The seed has germinated and the seedlings are growing well. There were no takes using diploid pollen. I am not a scientist. I do not know the answers to this intriguing puzzle. I am thankful that plants cannot read so they don't know what they are supposed to do. All I know are the results. Harold Greer has crossed plants that appear to be diploids with 'Trude Webster' as the seed parent. ('Trude Webster' x 'The Hon. Jean Marie de Montague') produced 'Very Berry'*, and ('Trude Webster' x 'Lydia') produced 'Grand Slam'*. I consider both of these hybrids to be tetraploids. I tried fourteen different diploid pollen crosses on 'Trude Webster' this past year. No seed set. I'll try again next year. However, crosses with 'Gargantua' and 'Point Defiance' set large seed pods. I also got smaller pods from 'Summer Peach' ('Whitney's Late Peach'* x 'Phyllis Korn'). Does this mean that my 'Phyllis Korn' cross has polyploid capabilities? Will the seed germinate?



'Legend' ('Point Defiance' X 'Lem's Monarch')

Photo by Jim Barlup

From my limited observation, it appears that 'Trude Webster' pollen applied to dwarf diploids would be the most logical way to obtain a dwarf or semi-dwarf tetraploid plant. The pollen takes are considerably more than with 'Point Defiance' and germination is easier to obtain. In December 2001, I planted eight crosses using 'Trude Webster' pollen on probable diploids. It will be interesting to see what germinates and whether they appear to be diploid or tetraploid. It is usually obvious as polyploid seedlings have triple the growth rate. I will continue to use 'Point Defiance' pollen on diploids even when I know that germination is close to impossible. It is a challenge.

Tetraploid plants to consider for hybridizing would be 'Horizon Monarch', 'Virgo'*, 'Very Berry'*, 'Point Defiance', 'Lem's Monarch' or any plant from the Walloper Group. 'Gentle Giant', 'Reverend Paul', 'Canadian Beauty' and her siblings seem likely possibilities. My own plant of 'Legend' ('Point Defiance' x 'Lem's Monarch') has accepted tetraploid pollen and set seed. 'Point Defiance' is not an easy plant to get pollen from but it appears in some trusses. I'm sure other hybridizers could list even more possible tetraploids. If you find a plant you think is a tetraploid, try 'Point Defiance' or 'Trude Webster' pollen on it. It just may work. If it fails try again another year. A cold wet spring can certainly affect a plant's ability to set seed. I continue to test questionable pollen and questionable plants for three or four

years to determine if either is viable or sterile.

'Taurus' remains a mystery to most of us. I have concluded it is not a triploid, just a very difficult and temperamental tetraploid or diploid, but which is it? Over the past few years I have made many crosses onto 'Taurus', both with diploid and tetraploid pollen. Only the tetraploid pollen showed faint signs of working. If what I planted was indeed seed, it never germinated. Unfortunately, my 'Taurus' plants have always been in pots and are not well established. I believe an older, well established plant would give more positive results. This year I got tiny seed pods, all from tetraploid pollen. I have four seedlings with 'Trude Webster', two with 'Very Berry'* and three with 'Gargantua'. Thank you 'Taurus' for such generosity! These results have all the characteristics of tetraploid pollen taking on a diploid plant. The seedlings are small, possibly suggesting they will all be diploids. It is too early to tell. This year Merle Sanders sent me an open pollinated seed pod he found on his huge, well established 'Taurus'. Will it germinate and what will it produce? Merle has many tetraploid-type rhododendrons in his garden. It would appear that a bee can do better than I.

Last year I obtained pollen from a colchicine treated 'Besse Howells'. Much to my surprise, it took on 'Point Defiance' and on 'Horizon Monarch'. This had to be tetraploid pollen to take on probable tetraploid plants. Another breakthrough for hardiness! Hopefully they will be tetraploid plants. I have many seedlings growing from the 'Point Defiance' cross but only a few from the 'Horizon Monarch' cross. This is normal. 'Horizon Monarch' is a difficult plant to work with and seed germination is minimal even when crossed with another tetraploid.
If you choose to work with these giants, do not be concerned about their taking forever to bloom. They vary considerably in bloom time. My hybrid 'Legend' ('Point Defiance' x 'Lem's Monarch') bloomed in three and a half years. A sibling took ten and a half years to bloom. It is still a reluctant bloomer, whereas 'Legend' has set multiple buds from a rooted cutting in its second year. My cross of ('Phyllis Korn' x 'Trude Webster') produced beautiful well branched plants. All seem to be tetraploids. One of this group set a bud in two and a half years. I can hardly do that with a diploid cross.

By this time you have obviously concluded that I am calling certain plants tetraploid with no scientific evidence to justify such claims. Research on the chromosome count of these plants, especially 'Taurus', would be of great value. I find hybridizing with elepidote tetraploids to be a very exciting field with many new challenges and potentially outstanding results. Until we have more scientific data on which plants are truly polyploid, the best we hybridizers can do is to share what we observe from our own experimentation.

* Name is unregistered.

Jim Barlup, a member of the Cascade Chapter, authored the Tips for Beginners series on hybridizing in the following issues of the Journal: Vol. 50, No. 2; Vol. 50, No. 3; Vol. 50, No. 4; Vol. 51, No. 1; Vol. 51, No. 2; Vol. 51, No. 3; Vol. 51, No. 4.

R. ‘Elsie Watson’
- in a pot on Jean Greig’s deck. See what you can do in a sunny and windy deck. Amazing!

Quinoa Walnut Rosemary Casserole

Easy, Hearty & Flavorful, Light but Filling Quinoa Recipe

Delicious with sautéed green veggies on the side, crusty artisan bread and hummus.

Total prep & cook time: 45 min **4 Servings**

Nutrition Data Per Serving, 88 g: 295 cal, 32g carb, 16g fat, 321mg sodium, 5g fiber, 9g protein, low Cholesterol, good source Vit A, Manganese. Estimated glycemic load: 28.

Quinoa Casserole Ingredients:

1/2 cup walnuts, soaked in water for 6 hours or longer - we soak overnight in the fridge, in a covered container, then drain and rinse 1 c quinoa, soaked 5 minutes, rinsed and drained in a colander 1 Tbsp olive oil

1 - 2 garlic cloves 1 medium carrot, peeled and diced 1 stalk celery, diced 1 unsalted veggie bouillon cube 1 1/2 cups boiling water 1/4 - 1/2 tsp crushed dried rosemary leaf, or 1 tsp fresh 1 bay leaf

Optional: 1/2 cup frozen peas 1/4 cup parsley, minced Fresh ground pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Soak the walnuts ahead in the fridge the morning or evening before cooking
2. Soak quinoa 15 minutes to an hour, rinse three times through a fine metal strainer, leave to drain
3. Heat olive oil on medium in a large sauté pan or frying pan
4. Crush, peel, stem, and mince garlic cloves
5. Wash and dice celery (slice lengthwise, then crosswise, in thin slices)
6. Peel and dice carrot (slice lengthwise in four, then crosswise in thin slices)
7. Stir fry garlic, celery and carrot until beginning to brown
8. Shake quinoa to get out any remaining water, add to pan, and sauté until dry
9. Add crushed rosemary leaf, and bay leaf, stir to heat through
10. Stir in 1 1/2 cups boiling water, optional salt and bouillon cube, bring to boil, cover and simmer 15 minutes
11. Add the frozen peas on top, cover and simmer another 10 minutes
12. Chop walnuts coarsely, mince parsley, and stir into casserole with the peas
13. Turn off heat, stir in fresh ground pepper to taste, then serve

Recipe Tips: For our version of this quinoa recipe, we used carrots instead of red peppers, garlic instead of onion, a veggie bouillon cube instead of soy sauce, olive oil instead of sesame oil.

We added a celery stalk, a bay leaf, parsley, and also soaked the walnuts instead of roasting them to get rid of the bitter tannic acid flavor and brown color. We reduced the amount of water because of soaking the quinoa.

To 'crush' rosemary, we whizzed whole dried rosemary leaf in our trusty spice grinder (aka coffee grinder). You can also use a mortar and pestle, or just crumble it with your fingers.

If you use a salted bouillon cube for this recipe, you'll need very little added salt. Check the label on the box.

May'16 Raffle Rhodos

Rhododendron 'Lemon Dream'
3', - 20^0 C, M
Rhododendron 'Lemon Dream' — ('Creamy Chiffon x degronianum ssp. degronianum 'Exbury') Abundant, frilly, lemon yellow flowers adorn this lovely rhododendron in mid-May. Growth habit is low and compact with dark green rounded foliage that has a touch of cinnamon indumentum underneath. A great yellow rhododendron.
Recommended by: Terry Richmond (NRS Associate member)

Rhododendron Wadanum

Azalea (Japan) 5' -18C
Tree-like growth, covers itself with widely funnel-shaped flowers - pink or white, foliage turns bright fall colours. Blooms in April.

Fall colour

Rhododendron 'Powder Snow'
Elepidote. (*yakushimanum*, Exbury form x *macabeanum*).Jim Barlup, Bellevue, WA.
Flowers 20/dome truss, funnel-campanulate, 2.2" (55mm) long x 2.5" (65mm) wide, 6 wavy-edged lobes; light pink in bud, opening yellowish white throughout, with a deep purplish red dorsal flare, discrete spots extending beyond the flare, and with shorter flares on adjacent lobes. Truss 4.5" (115mm) high x 6" (150mm) wide. Leaves held 2 years, elliptic, rounded base, broadly acute apex, down curved margins, 5.8" (145mm) x 2.2" (55mm); semi-glossy, moderate olive green above; new growth with heavy, greenish white tomentum, mature leaves with thick, brownish orange hairy indumentum below and on petioles. Shrub 4' (1.2m) tall x 3' (0.9m) wide in 17 years; dense habit. Plant hardy to at least 0°F (-18°C). Early April bloom.