

# The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter  
May 2018



## President's Message

We have finally moved into Spring. The robins are chirping in the morning and at night. Many of our rhodos are coming out. Our big plant sale and truss show is on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM to 2 PM. If you haven't signed up yet to help, contact Brenda Lewis at 250-751-3639. Please bring some plants for our table. Larger rhodos are welcome, but not too big. Please consider taking on a role in some capacity for our Society.

Our speaker this month will be John Brimacombe. His topic is the "Use of Hardy Palms and other exotics to create Mediterranean Gardens". I hope to see you all at the meeting on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM.

Our annual "Bus Trip" is on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. This year we are going south – remember that friends are welcome! Bring a cheque or cash with you to the meeting if you have not already signed up for the trip.

All the best,

Allen

## EXECUTIVE

President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Vice President	vacant	
Past President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Gayle McRae	758-7589
Directors	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Don Noakes	
	Dick Beamish	758-2574

## COMMITTEES

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

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Next meeting, Thursday, May 10, at 7:30

Beban Park Social Centre

Speaker: John Brimacombe

"Pacific Northwest Palm & Exotic Plant Society: Not just palms, but a palette and a paradigm"

## Twigs and Stems



**Goodies for May – with thanks:  
Joyce and Craig Clarke; Reinhold Gorgosolich**

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**Please note:** The date of our annual Plant Sale and Truss show will be Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018!

### Calendar of Upcoming Events:

#### ***Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, Wednesday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 - Regular meeting - 7:30 pm:***

- The May meeting will feature Nancy Moore on “Shade Gardens”.
- MARS Garden Tour – May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

#### ***North Island Rhododendron Society:***

- Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> – Annual Mother’s Day Garden Tour.

#### ***Nanaimo Horticultural Society, Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 - First Unitarian Fellowship Church of Nanaimo, 595 Townsite Rd***

- All About Gardening in Containers - Grow Anything, Grow Anywhere, Mix It Up, Move It Around, Change It on a Whim.

#### ***May at VIU’s Milner Gardens and Woodland:***

- Now open every day: 10:00am to 4:30pm – gate closes at 5:00pm.
- Tea Room open noon to 4:00 pm for tea, soup and scones.
- Mother’s Day Tea – see web page for details.

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

**May is AGM month – please consider joining the NRS Executive!!!**



The NRS will be looking for volunteers to fill in a number of positions including: president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer.

Many thanks to the outgoing members who have donated many hours of their time to our society!

## Our May program will feature John Brimacome:

John is a retired physics teacher who has been dabbling in Mediterranean style gardening for over 30 years. He has been president of the Pacific Northwest Palm & Exotic Plant Society for 6 years.

This wide-ranging PowerPoint presentation deals with the practical use of hardy palms & other exotics (such as hardy succulents, citrus and eucalyptus) to create Mediterranean or subtropical style gardens outdoors in BC and the Pacific Northwest (USDA 7b – 9). John will be bringing a wealth of information on palm care, including cold protection techniques as well as paper handouts for many palm topics (planting, pruning, protection, etc).

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## Two Island Rhodo Societies Sponsor 1 day Fall Conference

Mount Arrowsmith and Nanaimo Rhododendron Societies are co-hosting a one-day fall conference that should be of interest to all island gardening groups. It will be held on **Sunday, October 28, 2018** at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre from 10 am to 4:30 pm, with 5 speakers confirmed.

The theme is **“Navigating Garden Myths”** and presenters will be Washington State University horticulture scientist Linda Chalker-Scott, UBC Botanical Garden curator Douglas Justice, teacher and radio personality Jeff de Jong, and Comox horticulturists Dany Fortin and Shane Tillapaugh on crevice gardens. Attendance is limited to about 100 on a first-come basis. Cost for the day will be \$25, or \$30 at the door if there is space left. Coffee and tea will be provided, but you will need to bring your own bag lunch. There will be a door prize and a small silent auction.

Because seating is limited, participants are urged to register early by sending a cheque to 2018 Conference, mailed to MARS PO Box 342 Qualicum Beach V9K 1S8.

Here is the *draft* program:

10:00-10:10 AM Intro

10:10- 11:10 AM: Linda Chalker-Scott: Garden Myths – Facts or Fiction

Break (15 min)

11:25- 12:25 PM: Donna Balzer - Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is: Grow Better Food Faster

12:25-1:15 PM: Lunch

1:15-2:15 AM: Douglas Justice – topic

2:15-3:15 PM: Jeff de Jong – Rhododendrons Need Friends Too!

3:15- 3:30 PM: Break

3:30-4:30 PM: Danny Fortin/Shane Tillapaugh – Crevice Gardening

**Register soon as space will be limited!!**

## An Update on our Annual Bus Trip:



Joyce and I, with the gracious assistance of John and June, our incomparable tour organizers for years past, and Barrie Agar, currently the president of the Cowichan Valley Rhodo Club, have identified and toured six delightful gardens and one nursery in the Cowichan Valley, as well as a relatively new estate winery for this year's tour.

To us, these gardens are reflective of what makes visiting them both interesting and memorable. They range in size from relatively small to very large; from relatively new to well established. Moreover, they exhibit the "work in progress ethic" that gardeners share. Beds were being spruced up and renovated; lawns were shrinking to make way for new beds. Plants were being divided, either in preparation for the multitude of upcoming plant sales that keep clubs and charities funded at this time of the year, or to be relocated to new beds or more favourable locations. These gardens also vary in their topography - from relatively flat to somewhat hilly. Comfortable footwear will be essential! Many will have "resting or viewing" areas for those who appreciate the option of enjoying an overview when the close-up viewing is too physically demanding.

### Logistics:

- Wearing apparel; comfortable for the weather! Shoes comfortable for walking in a variety of terrains.
- Pick up and drop off - North end of Woodgrove Mall, near Starbucks/Chapters by 7:30; South end to be determined (will depend upon need). Return home estimated to be 6:15 to 6:30. Of course aside from unexpected traffic, return times depend upon the willingness of participants to pay attention to timelines established for each venue.
- Food - bring your own lunch and snacks as needed. Lunch space will be at the winery.
- Cash or cheques only for our stop at the wholesale nursery and display garden.
- Washroom needs - not all hosts can provide full washroom options as some are on small septic systems; we will note availability in our tour handout. There's also a bathroom on the bus.
- Travel entertainment: books, magazines, along with the much anticipated puzzles & games (prizes included).
- Detailed itinerary and garden descriptions will be distributed on the bus.

At this time, April 30<sup>th</sup> we have about 30 persons paid or on the "sign up" list. We still have room for approximately 15 more people. I would appreciate a phone call or email to confirm participation (if you haven't paid). Reminder cost is remaining at \$45/person for members and guests. Phone 250-729-6498 or email [dlminfo@shaw.ca](mailto:dlminfo@shaw.ca). We will be inviting both the Duncan Club and MARS before our next meeting offering available seats to interested people. We are hoping for a few more NRS members before these invitations go out.

Further questions? Other suggestions? Contact me.

David Mitchell

## The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden Official Opening (excerpts from the Milner Gardens and Woodland newsletter)



The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden was officially opened on a sunny Sunday afternoon April 22nd. Geoff Ball, Executive Director of Milner Gardens & Woodland, welcomed the crowd which included members of the Greig family and representatives of the five District 1 Island Chapters of the American Rhododendron Society, Vancouver Island University, Qualicum First Nation, and Milner Gardens and Woodland Society Board along with guests, volunteers and staff.

Keynote speakers included Chief Michael Recalma of the Qualicum First Nation, Dr. Ralph Nilson, President and Vice-Chancellor of Vancouver Island University, and John Deniseeger, Director on the Board of the Milner Garden and Woodland Society.

Vancouver Island University's Milner Gardens & Woodland in partnership with the five Vancouver Island chapters of the American Rhododendron Society are very proud to open the new Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens. This garden highlights the tremendous diversity of form and range found in the genus *Rhododendron*. The goal is to house 250 specimens of species rhododendrons at final completion.

The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden is named in honour of Ted and Mary Greig, both pioneer rhododendron propagators in BC, who were instrumental in the development of the original heritage rhododendron collection at Milner Gardens.



The ribbon cutting ceremony was led by Dr. Craig Clarke, Chair, Board of Directors of the Milner Gardens and Woodland Society, with Sue Mouat (daughter of Ted and Mary Greig), Jean Greig (daughter-in-law), assisted by Jane Drown (granddaughter) and accompanied by the extended Greig family.

Following the ribbon cutting, the new sign for the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden was unveiled by Jean Greig, pictured at the right (seated) along with her family including (l-r): Nancy, Charles, Jane and Chris.



Attendees were welcomed to stroll the pathways in the new garden while cake and refreshments were served on the Pool House Gift Shop Patio.



## SEEN IN PASSING



Susan Lightburn, our intrepid photographer, hard at work!



Lots of happy ARS members at the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden opening!

**Have you seen something "...in passing..."??? Please let us know - we can include it in our next newsletter!**

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### **The N.R.S. is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary!**

We've come a long way since September 1992! We have lots to celebrate and be proud of! Through the years, we've all learned so much about rhododendrons and horticulture, participated in plant sales and shows, toured countless gardens but most of all, we've met so many special people. Over the past few months, we've been highlighting some of the club's past activities and events. Thank you to those of you who sent us photos.

Here are a few more from previous plant sales and truss shows...



## Raffle Plants for May meeting:



### **Rhododendron 'Ginny Gee'**

Incredibly free-flowering, Rhododendron 'Ginny Gee' is a semi-dwarf evergreen shrub of great popularity. Blooming in mid spring, it displays a profusion of small, trumpet-shaped, ruffled white flowers, about 1 in. across (2.5 cm), with delicate pink mottling at their edges, held in terminal clusters of multiple bright rose-pink. 'Ginny Gee' is certainly one of the best small rhododendrons to grace our gardens. Draped over a big rock or wedged between two big rocks, it is a complete synthesis of realism and abstraction. Pink and white, inside and out, it is a profusion of contentment. (Norman Todd)



(photo by Susan Lightburn)

***R campylogynum* 1' -24 deg.C 3-4/3-4/3 EM**

- a small dark green leaved species from the Yunnan province of China with white to rosy purple flowers  
- needs sharp drainage. Good container plant

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Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Chris at 250-390-3415 or send her an email at [csouthwick@shaw.ca](mailto:csouthwick@shaw.ca)



# Nanaimo Rhododendron Society

## Annual Flower Show and Plant Sale

Beban Park Centennial Building

Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm



Members enter rhododendron trusses to the flower show, illustrating the great variety of rhodo blooms and foliage, hybridized and species. Judges will choose the best in class.

The plant sale hosts vendors and growers from all over Vancouver Island, who sell specialty plants, not just rhododendrons, but alpine and woodland plants, bulbs and seeds, and many perennials.

*Join us – admission is free, guests are welcome!*

***A great place to get a beautiful plant for Mother's Day!***

For details of the event, see: <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/truss-show/>





**Annual Truss Show - Part 2** by Jan Moles  
**Saturday, May 12 (The day before Mother's Day)**

If you have a beautiful rhododendron in your garden, blooming at the right time, think about entering it, just one truss, or many. Think about entering a truss into the foliage class; foliage can be stunning.

Access valuable information and tips from the winter 2013 ARS journal, the NRS website and the NRS May 2012 and 2013 newsletters.

**Last minute instructions for entering Rhodo Trusses to the show on 12<sup>th</sup> May**

1. Be sure to read the section attached (p. 12) on tips for picking your entries for the show, on preparing them for entry and on displaying your rhodo trusses to the best advantage.
2. Entries need to be received at the registration desk between 6:30 and 7:30 pm on Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup> if possible please. If you come from far and need to register on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>, registration clerks will be available from 6:00 am and the last entries will be accepted at the registration desk at 7:30 am; all entries arriving after that time will not be entered and will be displayed on the 'display only' table.
3. Please complete the two-part registration form:
  - a. page 1 is a list of your entries with the class if at all possible please. (the clerk will retain this page)
  - b. page 2 is a list of your entries **in exactly the same order** as is on page 1 (this list is for you to keep track of your entries and to help transfer them to the show table)  
(You can find the 2-page registration form on the NRS Web site and also in the newsletter below. A list of rhodos by class can be found on the NRS web site 'Truss Show' section and if in doubt, help will be available at the registration desk to find the correct class for the entry).
4. At the registration desk, please put your entries in the water bottles provided and line them up on one of the tables adjacent to the desk, **in the order in which they appear on page 1 of the form.** Corks are available to help display your entries to advantage in the bottles.
5. Take your registration form to the desk. The registration clerk should return page 2 to you.
6. You will receive a card for each entry from the registration clerk which will have the name and class of the rhodo truss and an entry number on a small sticker.
7. Put each card into a wooden card-holder next to the correct entry, and with the help of a registration clerk, the entries will be transferred to the show display tables to the correct sections.
8. Good luck!

If you have a particular rhodo truss or foliage, beautiful, a bit different that you think people might like to see – but not for entry to the show – please feel free to bring it for the 'display only' table.

<b>Number Please leave blank</b>	<b>Entrant's Name</b>	<b>Truss Name</b>	<b>Category/Class</b>

Truss Name	Truss Name

## 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 in the 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 (except for the hammerhead class). Hammerhead definition (Seattle) is "inflorescence with multiple rachis emanating from a single leaf stem".

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R. yakushmanum X tsariense (photo by Doug Kitts)

*Looking  
forward to  
seeing you all at  
the May  
meeting! ☺*