

The Rhodomentum



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

May 2023

President's Message

Dear NRS members,

This post is being written early, on April 4th, as requested by our terrific newsletter editors.

I recently learned that we are forecasted to have another cooler than average spring. A look at the 14-day forecast trend on the Weather Network's website supports this. The warmest forecasted day in the next 14 for Fanny Bay with be on April 18th, with only 11°C predicted. At least we can use the rain.

Our upcoming May 20th bus tour has room for 40 people, and as you know, will involve a trip to north island nurseries, gardens, and a winery. Tickets are \$55, with wine tasting being extra. David and Joyce Mitchell are working hard to make it a wonderful outing, so please seriously consider going. I will send out information on how to purchase your tickets.

I'm looking forward to John Deniseger's April 13th talk on "Why I Grow Rhodos", although I suspect it is the same reason I do. Our May 11th meeting has no speaker planned, instead, some experienced rhododendron truss show competitors will share their knowledge on how to choose and take cuttings for entry into the truss show. Please bring rhododendron flower truss cuttings or even a potted flowering rhododendron for demonstration, even if you have no intention of entering. They can be elepidote or lepidote rhododendrons, or even azaleas. Interesting foliage rhododendrons, flowering or not, are welcomed too – as there is a category for just foliage. (See full details on p.2)

I should point out that some members have opened their personal gardens for touring. Here is a great chance to see what some of your fellow members are growing, and get information about a plant that catches your interest. See Nanaimo Rhododendron Society | NRS Website for the schedule.

Lastly, our June windup potluck is being held this year at Chris Southwick's garden on Sunday June 18th (note date change from June 10th).

Best regards, Ron Sutton, NRS President & Treasurer

Our next meeting - Thursday, May 11th, at 7:30 "Trusses! Trusses! - Show and Tell"

OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373				
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415				
Past President	Rosina Schmidt	758-7589				
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Advertising Margaret Cadwaladr Library Ann Beamish / Gaylle McRae Newsletter June Bouchard / John Deniseger

Membership Jan Moles Program by Committee Raffle Val Harvey Social **Deborah Francis** Bargain Table Reinhold Gorgosilich

Website Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt

Bus Tour David & Joyce Mitchell

Wanda Brenton Sunshine Rosina Schmidt Propagation Hailey Grove **Deborah Francis**

Show and Sale Jan Moles and Rosina Schmidt

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Website: nanaimorhodos.ca

Our Program for May: Trusses, trusses, trusses - Show and Tell

The May 11th, 2023 Nanaimo Rhododendron Society's Program for the evening will be all about rhododendron trusses.



This will be a very different program than what we've had in the past. We are asking all members in attendance to bring in either one flower truss or a potted rhododendron with the plant either in bloom, or demonstrating interesting foliage. Remember that foliage is also a category for the annual show on the 13th of May. The

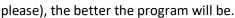
truss or plant can be your own or a plant grown on by someone else, a friend or neighbour (with their permission, of course).

'trusses', soon after we joined the NRS, we were puzzled and had visions of peaked wooden structures holding flowers..., or who knows what... We soon found out that a 'truss', as it refers to rhododendrons, is: "A group of flowers which join one rhachis or flower-stalk. Rhododendrons have trusses of 2 to 40+ flowers, depending on the variety, the trusses varying greatly in shape from upright to loose." (from Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons by Peter and Kenneth Cox, 1990).

Editor's Note: When we first heard the word

This will be a 'show and tell' session. A brief description of the plant (for example, the name, age, where it was purchased, and parentage if known) would be both helpful and interesting. **This program is not a competition!** We hope it will be a fun learning experience for everyone. Bottles filled with water will be provided at Beban for folks to put trusses in.

Every person bringing a truss or plant will get a free raffle ticket for an unusual or hard-to purchase rhododendron – the prize will be a very early rhododendron called "Lee's Scarlet". The more trusses or plants-in-pots our members bring in (only 1 each,











PLEASE NOTE:

Many thanks to the following people for bringing goodies to our upcoming May meeting: April Johnston Eliane Leclerc and Elaine Hutchison

Chris found the following article in the Victoria Rhododendron Society April 2023

Newsletter. It sums up some of the key points rather nicely.

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS OR ADVICE ON ENTERING YOUR TRUSS IN A TRUSS SHOW Adapted from Enchanted Gardens

- PERFECT CONDITION IS ESSENTIAL. This means healthy, unblemished foliage. Use the leaves as a frame. A perfect circle
 picture is ideal when viewing the truss.
- BLOSSOMS SHOULD BE OPEN, BUT NOT OVER-MATURE. One with a still-closed bud is preferable to one with drooping florets.
- TRUSSES WILL BENEFIT FOR A 24 HOUR HARDENING OFF PERIOD TO PREVENT WILTING DURING THE SHOW.
 Cut the stem and place in a draft-free, cold room for 24 hours after placing in luke-warm water. If rain is expected extend this process for a few days.
- 4 BEFORE THE TRUSS IS PLACED IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO RE-CUT THE STEM BASE.
- VERY EARLY VARIETIES CAN BEEN KEPT IN DRY SEALED PLASTIC BAGS IN THE REFRIGERATOR. Place truss in a dry sealed plastic bag until the day of the show. Blow into the bag to inflate so the tissue of the flower will not be damaged.
- TAKING YOUR TRUSSES TO THE SHOW ALSO MATTERS. FOR A SHORT DRIVE, LAY THEM IN A SHALLOW BOX..For longer drives it is better to put them upright in water in pop bottles or cans, that are braced to prevent tipping.
- BE BRAVE. If your truss is unusual, rare, difficult to grow and even if the foliage is not in the best condition, enter it anyway. Many times the newest plants have been attacked by weevils. We have a category for such beauties.



N.R.S. Calendar - Spring is coming! There are many events being planned – you will want to mark your calendars!! It's going to be busy!!!! Don't forget to tell your friends!

April 18th, 2023: Hailey Grove Work Bee

April 21st to May 6th: Various open NRS members gardens - see p. 6 or

http://nanaimorhodos.ca/ for further info.

May 9th, 2023: Hailey Grove Work Bee

May 11th, 2023 meeting: "Trusses! Trusses! Group discussion" - Details on p.2 above. May 13th, 2023: NRS Plant Sale and Truss Show – complete details pp. 7-14 of this newsletter.

May 20th, 2023: Bus Tour – going north! See page 5 for further details!

June 18th, 2023: NRS Year-End Get Together – details will be in the June newsletter!

Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:

- "Dwarf Ferns for Small Garden Spaces" with Margot Moser; Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday, May 10th, 7:30pm
- Annual Plant Sale and Show: April 22nd, Qualicum Beach Curling Club: 9:00-1:00 pm

North Island Rhododendron Society:

- "AGM at McNabb's Garden"; Tuesday, May 9th.
- Annual Plant Sale and Show: Sunday April 30th, K'omoks First Nation Hall @ 3320 Comox Road: 10:00 to 1:00 pm

Cowichan Rhododendron Society: Annual Plant sale, Saturday May 13, 10:00 to 2:00 pm, Venue TBA

Milner Gardens and Woodland: open Thursday through Sunday: 11:00 to 5:00. Spring plant sale and speaker series: April 22nd and 23rd: 11:00 to 5:00 pm (see page 18 for further information). Check the Milner website for details: Milner Garden Events



We now are on Facebook as the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. Upcoming events will be posted there and members will be able to add photographs or items of interest to members. (Thank you, Margaret, for setting that up!)

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



Mark your calendar! Our Annual N.R.S. Bus Tour is Back!!! Saturday, May 20th, 2023



The 2023 NRS Bus Trip plans are well under way. The private gardens we have chosen are highly recommended by our scouting experts, we know they are accessible by bus (saves hiking in to view them) and will be worthwhile venues. We have also arranged the schedule to allow stops at a combination of venues. The specific number of these will be determined by our final itinerary; there will be at least one nursery and may include a market and/or a winery. We promise games and prizes for your travel entertainment, including a new feature of a bus door prize! Please feel free to tell your friends, family and others interested in gardening about the trip. We are visiting two other garden clubs with invitations to join us so participation is limited to first come first served.

This year's trip will be centered largely in the Comox Valley. Specific gardens and destinations will be revealed at the start of the trip.

Meeting Place: North end of Woodgrove Mall, next to Chapters and Starbucks

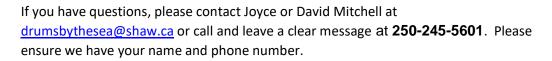
Time: Departure at 7:30. Please get there early. Anticipated time of return between 6:00 and 6:30 pm.

Tickets: \$55 per person in advance, plus gratuity for driver. **Reserve your seat early as seating is limited to 40 people!**

To Register – send an email to nanaimorhodosociety@gmail.com Make sure to include names of attendees, contact email address and method of payment.

Payment methods:

- Pay by e-Transfer NRS Events email address: nanaimorhodosociety@gmail.com
- Pay by cheque Payable to NRS Events and mail to:
 Box 241, 101-5170 Dunster Rd.
 Nanaimo, B.C. V9T 6M4
- Or by cash at a NRS meeting





"The best way to garden is to put on a wide-brimmed straw hat and some old clothes. And with a hoe in one hand and a cold drink in the other, tell somebody else where to dig."

Texas Bix Bender, Don't Throw in the Trowel

NRS MEMBERS OPEN GARDENS SCHEDULE – Spring 2023



As we slowly move into spring, a number of club members are generously opening their gardens to club members. It's always fun and inspiring to visit gardens in the spring!



Here is the schedule as it stands so far – check the NRS webpage regularly for updates:

21st of April – 3–5 pm, Margaret and Jim Cadwaladr – 3175 Bay Str., Nanaimo, NEW!

28th of April – 3–5 pm, Lilian and Stanley Peters – 6200 Sechelt Dr., Nanaimo, BC;

2nd of May – 3–5 pm, Chris Southwick – 6647 Green Acres Way, Nanaimo, BC;

5th of May – 3–5 pm, Mike and Mary O'Neil – 25 Ashlar Ave., Nanaimo, BC;

6th of May – 3–5 pm, Wanda Brenton – 3043 Jameson Road, Nanaimo, BC; NEW!

April Johnston's garden in Ladysmith – Date TBA – check the NRS Website for further details. NEW!

Plant of the Month by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron rivulare

This beautiful plant is a species Tsutsusi (evergreen) azalea. It is found in China South-Central, China Southeast, to Myanmar.

The foliage is made up of colourful, shiny, silvery new leaves with red hairs.

The branch stems are also covered in hairs.

In late June it produces open trusses of approximately ten light purple, flowers with a darker throat.

My plant was purchased from the RSBG, so I will use the information they provided. It is listed as hardy to 0°F/-18°C, and will tolerate a fair amount of sun. It is estimated to grow to four feet in 10 years. My plant, seen in the photo taken June 22, is in a pot until I find the ideal place for it.

Very little information about this rhododendron is found anywhere, not in my dedicated species books, or online. The Red Book of Rhododendrons doesn't mention it either. If the name is mentioned anywhere, it is under *R. calostrotum*. Here is a direct link to the RSBG page for it Rhododendron rivulare CGG#14120 279sd2010 – Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden



N.R.S. Plant Sale and Truss Show is coming soon!

Time to think about and prepare for our May 13th plant sale and truss show!



- We need volunteers for the day of the sale you'll have the opportunity to sign up at our upcoming meetings.
- Divide and pot up perennials to bring to the club's sale table.
- Bring trusses to the truss show you just might win a ribbon!!!
- Come to the May meeting to hear all about what makes a beautiful truss.
- TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS ABOUT THE NRS TRUSS SHOW AND PLANT SALE!!!

TRUSS SHOW AND PLANT SALE Important Information from Rosina

We're hoping to fill out our volunteer sign-up sheet at our next regular meeting on May 11th.

The NRS Truss Show and Plant Sale pamphlet is posted on our website: http://nanaimorhodos.ca/truss-show-and-plant-sale/. Please forward it to your friends and neighbours.

Friday, 12th of May at 5:30 pm - door opens for setting up the tables. 5:30-7:30 pm please bring in your perennial plant donations.

6:00-7:30 pm trusses are being accepted. Doors close at 8:00 pm.



Rosina will be there at 6:00 am - door opens for vendor's delivery.

The members arrive as per the sign-up sheet.

7:00 bring in your trusses for the show - although we'd prefer you to bring them in on Friday evening.

9:00 - 10:00am: judging of the trusses. 10:00am: the door opens to the public.

2:00pm: the show and sale end and we clean up.

4:00pm: the hall is locked after another successful day!

Note: please bring your own refreshments. There will not be a coffee table or a food truck.





NRS Annual Plant Sale and Flower Show

Beban Park, Centennial Building 2300 Bowen Road, Nanaimo Saturday, May 13th - 10:00 am to 2:00 pm



The plant sale hosts vendors and growers from all over Vancouver Island, specializing in rhododendrons, unique and interesting perennials, alpine and woodland plants, bulbs and seeds....

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

A great place to get a beautiful plant for your garden, for a friend, for Mother's Day....

Join us - admission is free!

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

"Queer things happen in the garden in May. Little faces forgotten appear, and plants thought to be dead suddenly wave a green hand to confound you." W.E.Johns

Annual NRS Truss Show 2023

Saturday, May 13th at Beban Park Centennial Building 10am to 2pm by Jan Moles

Our Truss Show and Plant Sale for 2023 is back to the Saturday before Mother's Day. If you have a beautiful rhododendron bloom in your garden, think about entering, just one truss, or many. We have quite a few new members this year so take the challenge, make one entry to the show. Every bloom helps to make our show spectacular and the process for entry is clearly explained on the web site. Instructions for preparing the truss by our very own expert Chris Southwick (a frequent winner) are also available on the web site. Click here for details. SO, come help us make it once more a showcase for rhododendrons!

There will be display tables available; if you do not want to enter the competition and you have a favourite in your garden that is in glorious form, bloom or foliage, consider bringing it for the display only table to help make the show more appealing to the eye and to share the joy! See below, a few photos from previous shows.



2022: The judges Sean Rafferty and Garth Wedemire take their time and look seriously at each class. Glenda and Deborah are explaining the layout, following the judges to record the results and re-arranging the entries for better visibility when necessary.

There will be notes recorded from the judges where they have comments to make about a specific entry.



The best in show winner for 2022: Peach charm.



Your hard working registration scribes in 2022

Consider entering a truss this year – it is not just for experts; it could be a flower truss, an azalea spray, or a truss into the foliage class. New members entering the show for the very first time can win a prize



Two long term members celebrating an outstanding entry in the foliage class



The foliage table, with judging & workers in the background

Hope to see you all on the weekend of the show, if you don't want to enter come and enjoy the spectacle!

To enter involves gathering your entries the night before, filling in your entry forms in advance, turning up between 6pm and 8pm on Friday May 12th to make your entry if at all possible, or around 7 am on the Saturday morning for those who

really can't make it on Friday because they live outside of Nanaimo. Club members will be available from 7am on Saturday to help set up your entries, answer any questions....

Detailed instructions on how to enter are available on our website under Truss Show. There is a poster available for download on the website if you have somewhere you can display it, or hand it out. **All help with advertising is very welcome.**

Last minute instructions for entering Rhodo Trusses to the show on 13th May 2023

- 1. Be sure to read the Hints and Tips section below on 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 6pm and 8 pm on Friday, May 12th if possible please. If you come from afar and need to register on Saturday 13th, registration clerks will be available from 7:00 am and the last entries will be accepted at the registration desk at 8:00 am; all entries arriving after that time will not be entered and will be displayed on the 'display only' table. Judging starts at 9am.
- 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 <u>in exactly the same order</u> 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 the entry classes can be found on the NRS web site 'Truss Show' section, and also a long list of rhodos by class. 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, <u>in the order in which they appear on page 1 of the form</u>. 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. There is lots of help available from the registration desk for those who need it. Good luck!





R. oreotrephes is an Elepidote Species.

Species are botanically identified plants originating from seed or cuttings.



'Black Widow', a 'red' hybrid was the PEOPLE'S CHOICE in 2019.

Hybrids are plants resulting from cross-breeding of more than one species, hybrid, or combination thereof.

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 bring it for the 'display only' table.

Tips on Exhibiting Trusses and Sprays (also to be found on Web site)

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 (bottles and corks are available at registration).

Prune judiciously, if need be, to enhance the shape of a spray. You can remove a damaged leaf or two, as long as you leave a set of leaves in good condition encircling the bloom. Remove additional leaves further down the stem. 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 past their best. 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".



Thor won BEST IN SHOW in 2019, it has a 'Lax Truss' where the individual flowers are loose, not rigid



'Irene Koste'r featured in the 'Azalea (Truss or Spray)' class in 2019: Multi-stems emerging from a single stem



Foliage: R. macabeanum, winner of 2020 online show.



R. schippenbachii winner of 2020 online show.

Truss Show Registration Form – to be handed to registration clerk

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

Truss Name	Truss Name

Here are a couple of photos from last year's truss show (thank you Ron).

Let's make this year's truss even better! Bring your trusses to the show, whether it's your first time or you're a veteran at this. You can bring one or as many as you want. You might even win your first ribbon! © It's one of the club's ways of celebrating the amazing beauty and diversity of rhododendrons!



A look at part of last year's truss show....



Our judges Sean Rafferty and Garth Wedemire hard at work with a challenging task...

**Don't forget to bring a truss to our May 11th meeting. It's a further opportunity to learn about what makes a good truss, what judges might be looking for, how to grow better trusses and plants.... You will also get a chance to win the difficult to find early blooming R. 'Lee's Scarlet'!

Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee ~ Bowen Park

By Deborah Francis, coordinator

Holly and Ivy in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden, sounds idyllic but it is not. We need your help to assist in removing invasive species from Hailey Grove at Bowen Park. Come and be part of the fun!

The next monthly work bees will be held on Tuesday, April 18th and on Tuesday, May 9th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. If you can spare a little (or a lot) of time, all are welcome to spend some time in the rhododendron garden. Weather permitting.



An interesting fact shared with us by Paul Lawry

When holly (Ilex aquifolium) senses that its leaves are being gnawed on by deer (or other wanna-be forest-restaurant-visitors), it activates certain genes that cause the leaves to become pointed and thus spiny when they grow back. Thus, in taller hollies, the upper leaves (which are out of reach) have smooth edges, while the lower leaves are spiny.

A March 27th update on last fall's cuttings – from Rosina.

Greetings from our cuttings. So far 245 out of 300 made it. Chris and I just counted them. **Editors note:** that's a >80% success rate – well done!!



May Gardening Calendar

Best to roll up your sleeves; the gardening work starts in earnest!

Rhododendrons: 2nd fertilization. Deadhead the trusses and clip the leaf buds where needed for bushier plants.

Mason Bees: Protect from rain.

General Gardening: Annuals and hanging baskets can go outside after May long weekend. Apply Slow Release 14-14-14 to annual planters and hanging baskets. Feed fading bulbs with bulb fertilizer and allow stems to die back naturally. Sow new lawns with lawn seed; fertilize with turf starter. Use sulphur spray on roses to control spread of fungal diseases.

Happy gardening, Rosina

The NRS gets around....



The District 1 President's meeting was hosted by the North Island Rhododendron Society on March 30th. Rosina, Art and Chris represented the NRS at the meeting.



April 4th was a beautiful sunny morning – 12 members of the NRS, MARS and NIRS took advantage of the opportunity to do some clean up at the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner. (photo by John Deniseger)

On Tuesday April 11th, the 5 Island Chapters of the ARS celebrated the success of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner. We had a great turnout on a coolish but sunny spring afternoon. (Photos by Rosina Schmidt or June Bouchard)



Garth Wedemire and Alan Campbell enjoying a break...



David and Joyce Mitchell

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society









Please mark your calendar:
The annual year-end wrap-up party will be held at Chris Southwick's home and garden on Sunday, June 18th. Further details will be in the June newsletter as well as on our website!



April 22nd & 23rd, 11am - 5pm

SPEAKER SERIES:

Saturday, April 22nd, 11:15am - 12:15pm

Angela Einarson, Vancouver Island Master Gardeners

"Planning your Vegetable Garden"

Saturday, April 22nd, 1:30pm - 2:30pm Scott Nicol, North Arrow Landscapes & Christine Quist, Instructor, VIU Horticulture "Naturalistic Gardens: Establishing Meadows and Wild-Inspired Gardens"

Garden Admission: \$7.00 Milner Member Early Entry Saturday, April 22nd 10am - 11am milnergardens.viu.ca 2179 Island Highway W, Qualicum Beach



Present Don MacWatt





To speak on

Cyclamen, Fritillaries & Peonies

Monday, April 24, 1-3 p.m.
(doors open 12:30),
PARKSVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE,
Room 109
223 Mills St., Parksville

\$5 at door includes entry in prize draw & coffee/tea & goodies.

Don MacWatt is well known to the gardening community in the Ladysmith area. He has a passion for cyclamen, peonies & fritillaries. He will be bringing a sampling of plants for sale.









Looking forward to seeing you all at our May 11th meeting - don't forget to bring a rhododendron truss!!! ③

