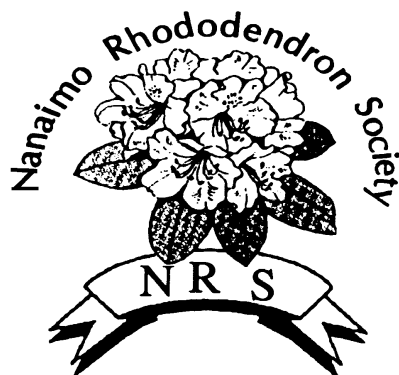


GENERAL MEETING - November 14 – 7:30 P.M. – BEBAN PARK



NOVEMBER 2002



Volume 11

Issue 3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard is away hunting Rhodos
in
Whitehorse

LEST WE FORGET



VOLUNTEERS for NOVEMBER

RAFFLE : June & John
\$ TABLE : Yvonne
GOODIES : David Walker
Mary Hardy
Angkana Hechler
Darleen Budd

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V/President	Mary Taylor	756-3984
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ARS WEBSITE

www.rhododendron.org

RHODODENDRON & AZALEA NEWS WEBSITE

<http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html>

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GENERAL MEETING - November 14 – 7:30 P.M. – BEBAN PARK

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society - Minutes of October 10th Regular Meeting 2002

1. The meeting was called to order by President Richard White at 7:36pm. There were 57 members and guests present.

2. Richard welcomed guests from the Nanaimo Horticulture Society and from Dashwood Gardens.

3. Secretary's report. Correspondence received: Letter from Tom Schuetz of the American Rhododendron Society regarding demonstration and display gardens; from Bernice Booth at the BC Council of Garden Clubs regarding changes to their constitution. It was moved/seconded/carried that the minutes of the September 2002 meeting be adopted as printed on page 7 of the newsletter.

4. Treasurer's report: The balance in the Bowen Park Legacy Fund is \$156.00
The balance in the general account is \$3028.14
The balance in the library fund is \$367.67

5. Committee Reports:

Library: Members were requested to return outstanding books. Who donated the book on Butterfly Gardening? There are several new books added to the library collection.

Program: Paulette Galloway reported that June Bouchard and John Deniseger will speak on The Keukenhof Gardens at our November meeting.

Newsletter: Send articles and notices to Paul Lawry (email: plawry@shaw.ca)

6. Old Business

Terry Richmond is coordinating donation of mature plants to Ucluelet. Give him a call at 250-723-6677.

7. New Business

Richard asked for volunteers to organize a fund-raising raffle.

The executive will discuss the ARS proposal for a dues increase in 2004.

8. Next executive meeting will be hosted by Ann Williamson on October 17th at 7pm

9. Door Prize winners: Richard White, Angkana Hechler, David Scoby, Verna Richmond, Allen McRae, Richard Little.

Raffle winners: Craig Clarke, Ann Williamson, David Walker, Beryl Riches, Sherry Mauro.

Name Tag Draw: Allen McRae

10. Speaker: Dr. Hannah Nadel showed slides of a fascinating variety of plants in East Africa.



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22nd Annual American Rhododendron Society Western Regional Conference “Mountain to Sound – A Rhody Experience”

by Chris Southwick

Friday evening, September 20th to Sunday morning, Sept. 22nd, was the Western Regional ARS Conference held in Bellingham, Washington. Programs for the weekend included a slide show of the Abkhazi Garden to classical music by Sidney, B.C.'s own Bill Dale who happens to be an associate member of our Nanaimo club. Bill organized this to follow a dessert social on the Friday evening.

On Saturday morning, I attended a session on Rhododendron Species in the Garden by Steve Hootman, the co-director and curator of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington. Since I enjoy species rhodos so much, I chose that talk over a talk about ornamental grasses given by Doug Kirk of Kirk's Nursery and Gardens on Whidbey Island. Jean Greig attended that talk and she was inspired to go out and purchase some new ornamental grasses when she returned home to Canada. The second program that I attended that morning was a slide show on Fragrant Rhododendrons given by Don Wallace of the Singing Tree Gardens Nursery in McKinleyville, California. His nursery specializes in fragrant rhododendrons. Mr. Wallace had some of his choice plants on hand to auction following the morning program and these plants went for approx. \$50 US. The third program that I attended was ably presented by Diane Thompson, the president of the Seattle Rhododendron Society. She has been a landscape designer for over 20 years and encourages rhododendron gardeners to plan for colour throughout the year. It was interesting to see that she must have been at the same conference as Jamie Wallace – as some of the same material and gardens were featured in her talk.

This weekend, if you recall, was an exceptionally sunny and calm weekend – perfect for the highlight of the weekend, a tour to magnificent Mt. Baker, standing 10,788 feet above sea level. On Saturday afternoon, those on the tour experienced the diverse flora from Puget Sound to the shoulders of Mt. Baker. Baker, or Komo Kulshan in the native Indian language, is a glacier-covered volcano, and is the second most active volcanic formation in the Cascade Range as well as a world-record setter for the most annual snowfall. We managed to see *R. albiflorum* (not in bloom, obviously) as well as many other interesting alpine plants, including the alpine blueberry which was heavy with fruit. The tour stopped at Heather Meadows and Artist Point, one of the most spectacular areas accessible by vehicle in the North Cascades. We Canadians haven't cornered the market on breathtaking viewpoints. Two of the Cascades most beautiful peaks, Mt. Baker and Mt. Shuksan at 9,127 feet serve as backdrops for the fantastic alpine meadows with their photogenic islands of stunted trees and alpine tarns.

After an excellent banquet dinner, Canadian Brian Minter, horticulturalist and founder of Minter Country Garden gave a most lively talk and slide show about ways to inspire and push the limits of our gardens. As is his style, he brought along many new and interesting plants that would work well to keep summer and fall interest in a rhodo-

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dendron garden.

Sunday morning gave rhodo enthusiasts a choice of going to hear Steve Hootman talk about species rhodos and the subsection Falconera and Grande, or to listen to hybridizers discuss some of the latest issues under the able direction of Frank Fujioka. Steve's program was again very enlightening – even though I'd heard some of it on the Species Weekends last spring. This ageing brain doesn't always take it all in even though I take notes and re-read my material!

This was a very successful conference with many people from the American Pacific Coast as well as enthusiasts from across North America. There were a few Canadians in attendance – we counted sixteen in all, with the largest contingent coming from the Vancouver Island North Chapter, three in total, Paul Wurz, Harry Wright and Bernie Guyder, although the Nanaimo Chapter was represented by myself, David Moore and his wife.

This conference was well thought out in my opinion. The organizers tried hard to keep costs to a minimum with the hotel cost at \$69 (US) a night, which included breakfast and the registration fee at only \$46 CDN. The tour to Mt. Baker cost \$39 CDN and that included an terrific box lunch. I plan to continue to attend these conferences in the future and would encourage anyone interested in attending to get in touch with me if you would like to car pool. It is a great way to meet other people interested in rhododendrons and to learn more about the genus and their companion plants.

Fall Program 2002-2003- Schedule

November 14, 2002- John Deniseger & June Bouchard –The Keukenhof Gardens

December 12, 2002- Annual Christmas Auction

January 9, 2002- “The Best Parts of My Garden & How That Happened”
Panel Discussion - Richard White -Moderator

Members TBA

Submitted by Paulette Galloway

Fertilizing Rhododendrons the Organic Way

Terry Richmond
Port Alberni, British Columbia

When fertilizing rhododendrons, we should look to nature to show us the way. In nature, mulching and fertilizing is a continuous process with the current year's mulch being gradually transformed in subsequent years to usable fertilizer. Nature's rhodo food begins with a leaf, needle, twig, petal and fruit fall - in short, any and all matter that falls to earth or flows into their area in ground water.

Rhododendrons, because of their environment and the shallow layer of organic matter in which they grow, have evolved a massive root system consisting of literally thousands of tiny, shallow running feeder roots. These roots are extremely efficient in extracting life sustaining plant nutrients from their immediate area. Root systems will be much smaller in a benign climate because a smaller amount of nutrients is required to maintain plant health. Conversely, rhododendrons in exposed and/or harsh conditions will have a vastly increased root system to extract every ounce of nourishment from their surroundings.

So how do we fertilize rhododendrons in our garden? First, any literature on fertilizing rhododendrons assumes that your plants are growing in the correct medium. Again, as in nature, this medium should be extremely high in organic matter, well drained, well aerated and moderately to slightly acidic. Fir and pine bark, composted oak leaves and evergreen needles, decayed wood, well rotted sawdust, coarse peat moss, reed sedge and topsoil high in organic matter are some of the materials that can be combined in endless combinations to provide excellent growing mediums. Growing medium acidity or pH value is not nearly as critical when growing plants in an organic medium using primarily organic fertilizers. One good quality compost for rhododendrons contains oak leaves, evergreen needles, alfalfa and washed seaweed. Between the various layers, an organic nitrogen such as canola meal, fish meal or blood meal can be added.

A word of caution! Rhododendrons, because of their previously mentioned tiny feeder roots, can be easily damaged through over-fertilization, especially when using high analysis chemical fertilizers. Elements to be cautious using include nitrogen, iron, sulfur, boron, sodium and calcium. Contrary to popular belief, rhododendrons do not hate calcium. In actual fact the reverse is true. They will gorge themselves on available calcium until they make themselves sick. With respect to iron, a few years back a respected rhodo grower suggested I supply more iron to help combat the effect of full sunlight in my exposed garden. He was undoubtedly right, but I supplied so much iron sulfate that severe leaf scorching occurred. A little fertilizer goes a long way, especially with small plants.

I fertilize in early spring around the end of March using all the organic fertilizer and soil amendments that I can obtain. When I combine ingredients, I try to duplicate natural fertilizer analysis. For instance, in canola meal (6-2-1) and in fish meal (3-2-1) the nitrogen is two to three times that of phosphorus and three to six times that of potassium. Three advantages of organic fertilizers over their chemical counterparts is in their trace element and humic content and in their extended time release of nutrients.

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Some fertilizers in the following list contain up to 34 trace elements, while seaweed is reported to contain every element presently known.

Blood meal: nitrogen and trace.

Bone meal: phosphorus and calcium and trace.

Fish meal: complete N-P-K and calcium and trace.

Canola meal: complete N-P-K and trace.

Cottonseed meal: complete N-P-K and trace.

Powdered alfalfa: complete N-P-K and trace.

Worm castings: complete N-P-K and trace.

Powdered rock phosphate: phosphorus and 32 trace.

Green sand: potassium and 34 trace.

Kelp meal: potassium and all trace.

Dolomite: calcium and magnesium.

My base organic fertilizer and filler recipes in volume parts are as follows:

Fertilizer Recipe:

2 parts fish meal

2 parts canola meal

2 parts alfalfa

1 part worm castings

1 part dolomite lime

1/2 part rock phosphate

1/2 part bone meal

1/2 part kelp meal

1/2 part green sand

Filler Recipe:

5 parts sand

5 parts double screened fir bark or 5 parts composted fish waste.

The filler, equal in volume to the fertilizer total, is used to prevent clumping of the meal type fertilizers and to minimize the dust problem associated with mixing finely ground or powdered materials.

Thursday, November 14

Holland's Spring Flowering Bulb Masterpiece -The Keukenhof Gardens

Speakers-John Deniseger & June Bouchard

June shared with me that they have both always been interested in plants. June from her rural Quebec background & John whose father always had a vegetable garden even in the middle of the city.

They have always had some semblance of garden in their early years together but really got into gardening big time when they moved to their home 17 years ago.

What they will be sharing in this November's meeting is the day they spent visiting the Keukenhof, one of Europe's great gardens. The slide presentation will be a collage of images depicting a beautiful spring day in the Netherlands.

The members will come away with a few ideas and inspiration on how to plant their spring bulbs in their own west coast gardens. Remember there is still time to add more bulbs to next spring's display.

Paulette G.