NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

November 2005

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The rains have arrived, so we can stop watering our rhodos for now. I am sure you all enjoyed Glen Jamieson's talk about his adventure into Yunnan Province, southern China, with Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Foundation. Thanks to Maurice Mauch for volunteering to send out letters and pick up donations re the December potluck dinner and raffle. We still need volunteers for the potluck dinner and raffle and the plant sale and Truss Show in May - sign up for one of the committees. Our speaker on Nov. 10th will be the "Bug Lady", Jessica Dawe, on how to control your garden pests naturally. Hope to see you all at the meeting.

Allen

EXECUTIVE

President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Vice President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Secretary	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Treasurer	Gaylle McRae	758-7589
Directors	Valerie Harvey	754-6659
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Pat Schulson	245-3369
	Mike Miller	758-2879
	Chris Southwick	758-0993

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Mike Miller	758-2879
Library	Vacant	
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Program	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Pat Schulson	245-3369
Dollar Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #1 – 5765 Turner Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: http://nanaimo.rhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

NEXT MEETING

November 10, 2005 BEBAN PARK 7:30 PM

JESSICA DAWE – "THE BUG LADY"

CONTROLLING PESTS NATURALLY
bring samples of your pest problems for her recommendations

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
General Meeting
October 13, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 by President Allen McRae. There were 35 members and guests present.

Secretary's report: M/S/C to adopt minutes of September meeting. Correspondence: thank-you note from Christine North; letter from member David Moore inviting members to visit him in Powell River; notice of Fraser Valley Orchid Society show; newsletters.

Treasurer's report: Balance in general account - $2440.59. Balance in Legacy account – $156.35. Legacy account is being rolled into the general account and will show in the general account balance next month. Library fund - $54.42. I encourage people to renew their membership if they have not done so already.

Social: thanks to those who brought goodies tonight.

Membership: due now $40 family $30 individual

Library: everyone should take home a book!

Raffle: plants have been donated by Al Campbell and Richard White.

Please volunteer for committees: there is a sign-up board for auction, plant sale, bus trip.

Next Executive meeting Thursday October 20 at Michael Miller's.

Doorprize winners: Kathryn Grant, Darleen Budd, Barb Coy, Linda White.
Raffle winners: Rosina Schmidt, Barb Coy, Maurice Mauch, Jean Rhodes, Reinhold Gorogsilich, Liisa Rullo, Richard White, Janice Quick.

Al Campbell announced that the Rhododendron Species Foundation is interested in collecting seed from *R. albiflorum*. On Mt. Benson; if anyone is hiking in the area keep a look out. *R. albiflorum* is reported to grow at 800 ft in Muchalaht Inlet (near Gold River).

Glen Jamieson gave a fascinating talk and slide show on his trip to Yunnan.

R. albiflorum
Photo by Sally and John Perkins

Most members of the rhododendron society are aware that 90% of the known rhododendron species grow naturally on the Asian continent on the mountain ranges within the Nepal, Yunnan, Burma triangle. Here on Vancouver Island we can claim at least two native species. R. macrophyllum, the more well-known species, grows only at two known locations on the Island, one at Rhododendron Lake west of Nanoose and the second location being on the San Juan Ridge west of Shawnigan Lake. The lesser known species is *R. albiflorum*.

Perhaps *R. albiflorum* is not as well known as its larger cousin because it grows in more sub-alpine locals. *R. albiflorum* has been documented as

growing at various altitudes from 4000 ft. on Mt. Brooks in Strathcona Park, 3500 ft. on Mt. Arrowsmith near Port Alberni and on Mt. Brenton near Chemanius, 3300 ft on the San Juan Ridge and at the 2300 ft. level on Mt. Benson near Nanaimo.

Many seed collectors and rhododendron species growers, such as the Rhododendron Species Foundation at Federal Way Washington, have tried growing *R. albiflorum* from seed collected from these higher altitudes with dismal success. Perhaps seed collected from the lowest growing forms on Mt. Benson could meet with more success.

In the book *Wild Flowers of the Pacific Northwest* by Lewis J. Clark and edited by John Trelawny of Victoria, R. albiflorum is noted to be "…found at the 800 ft. level near Muchalaht Inlet." It is this observation that has caused quite a stir with the Rhododendron Species Foundation as well as the members of the Western North America Rhododendron Species Project.

I realize that 'near Muchalaht Inlet' covers a lot of territory from it's entrance at Nootka Island to its head at Gold River but this low level form of *R. albiflorum* needs to be verified and seed collected. Surely some hikers, hunters, loggers or other nature buffs familiar with the area or who know of people familiar with or live in the Gold River area could get the word out there and track down this elusive 'lowlander'.

This note has been sent to all ARS Chapters on Vancouver Island with the hope that a member in one or more of these local societies will have more information or knowledge of this low altitude form of '*albiflorum*'. Now is the time for seed collection.

Al Campbell
Cowichan Valley Chapter

A major research institution has announced the discovery of the heaviest element yet known to science - "governmentium." It has 1 neutron, 12 assistant neutrons, 75 deputy neutrons and 111 assistant deputy neutrons for an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons that are further surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like sub particles called peons.

Governmentium has no electrons and is therefore inert. It can be detected however since it impedes every reaction it comes into contact with. A tiny amount of governmentium can take a reaction that normally occurs in seconds and slow it to the point where it takes days.

Governmentium has a normal half life of three years. It doesn't decay but "re-organizes", a process where assistant deputy neutrons and deputy neutrons change places. This process actually causes it to grow as in the confusion some morons become neutrons, thereby forming isodopes.

This phenomenon of "moron promotion" has led to some speculation that governmentium forms whenever sufficient morons meet in concentration forming critical morass. Researchers believe that in Governmentium, the more you re-organize, the morass you cover.

Rhododendron Species

There are more than 850 different natural species in the Genus (group) *Rhododendron.* These wild types, called *species* (as opposed to hybrids), are native to the temperate regions of Asia, North America, and Europe, as well as to the tropical regions of southeast Asia and northern Australia. None is indigenous to Africa or South America. By far, the largest number of wild species rhododendrons, including the most beautiful of them, are native to Asia. Wild rhododendrons are found from sea level to 19,000 feet in elevation**,** where they occur in a variety of habitats including alpine regions, coniferous and broadleaved woodlands, temperate rain forests, and even tropical jungle conditions.

Rhododendrons exhibit an enormous diversity of size and shape**,** from prostrate groundcovers growing no more than a few inches high to trees more than 100 feet tall. Between the prostrate alpine forms and large trees are a variety of shrubby forms in all shapes and sizes. Leaf size ranges from less than 1/4 inch to over three feet long, and also appear in a variety of shapes**:** rounded, lance-shaped, and elliptical. The flowers may be white, red, pink, yellow, approximate blue, purple, magenta, orange, and in various shades and mixtures of most of these colours. There is diversity, too, in bark texture and colour. And while March, April and May represent the peak months for flowering, some rhododendrons can flower as early as January in an ideal climate, and others as late as August. The actual beauty of many is supreme, in flower, in decorative new growth, in foliage, in bark and in structure, even in fall colour so far as the deciduous azaleas are concerned.

Rhododendrons, not surprisingly, are among the most popular shrubs that people grow where conditions are suitable. They grow best in climates that avoid extremes in temperature and have substantial rainfall. They also require a slightly acid soil. Hence, the west coast of Britain and Scotland, and the coastal Pacific Northwest of North America come close to ideal conditions. In the Pacific Northwest of North America the rhododendron is ubiquitous in both public and private gardens. Indeed, because the winter weather west of the Cascade Mountains is relatively mild, the blooming season is often quite long at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, where flowers often begin to appear in early January on two or three species. The majority bloom from March through May with a smaller number of species flowering in June and July. The last species to flower

is called *Rhododendron auriculatum* and it is especially attractive with its large white trumpet flowers which are fragrant! The last azalea, flowering even later, is *Rhododendron prunifolium*, with salmon pink flowers opening after the new leaves have developed. But while other places vary in their proximity to the ideal so far as climate is concerned, they are also conducive to rhododendron cultivation, though the variety of species that will thrive will usually be more limited.

The state flower of Washington is the Pacific rhododendron, *Rhododendron macrophyllum,* which means "rose tree with large leaves." *Rhododendron macrophyllum* grows in the wild from British Columbia, Canada, to southern California, the flowers being typically various shades of pink and mauve, with the occasional white. There can be no question, however, that most of the most beautiful species, far surpassing *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, are native to Asia.

Most of the rhododendrons people grow are hybrids, rather than natural species. *Rhododendron* species as found in the wild grow, flower, are pollinated, and set seed. The seedlings are usually pollinated by the plants of the same species, and generally look similar to the parent plants, though there may be small, and sometimes considerable, variations among them. But they remain the same species. For example, a plant belonging to the species *Rhododendron macrophyllum* is pollinated by another plant of *Rhododendron macrophyllum.* The resulting offspring are also *Rhododendron macrophyllum*, though the shade of colour, for instance, may be different from that of either parent.

Hybrid rhododendrons, on the other hand, are plants resulting from the cross-pollination of one species with a different species or hybrid. When this happens the offspring may look quite different from either parent. For example, when pollen is taken from a plant of *Rhododendron macrophyllum* (Pacific rhododendron) and used to pollinate another species of rhododendron, such as *Rhododendron catawbiense*, the Catawba rhododendron native to the east coast of the United States, the seedlings will have characteristics of both parents mixed together. Sometimes, when two or more species occur in near poximity to each other in the wild, and flower at the same time, nature will do the cross pollinating to produce what are called 'natural' hybrids. But people have been artificially creating hybrid rhododendrons for many years, by hand pollinating one species or hybrid with the pollen from another, and there are now tens of thousands of hybrid rhododendrons. Instead of the Latin names given to natural species, hybrids are named in the vernacular, such as 'The Honorable Jean Marie de Montague,' 'Pink Pearl,' 'Cynthia,' 'Unique,' and 'Purple Splendor.' The purposes for hybridizing can be various: larger flowers, different forms with different colours, larger flowers that are more cold or heat tolerant, etc. Many are very beautiful, but most appear, to species enthusiasts at least, to lack the elegance and natural beauty of the species themselves.

Azaleas are also rhododendrons. The group of plants commonly called azaleas are actually classified by botanists as belonging to the Genus *Rhododendron* and the name for each type of azalea has both the word "*Rhododendron*" and the species name, just as with other rhododendrons. For example, the common flame azalea of the eastern United States is botanically called *Rhododendron calendulaceum*. Azaleas can be either deciduous--they lose their leaves in the autumn--or evergreen, or semi-evergreen. That is, in the last case they lose some but retain most of their leaves throughout the winter. (It should be noted, in fact, that other rhododendrons can also fall into these different categories; *Rhododendron mucronulatum*, for instance, is completely deciduous, but this is a rare exception among them.) Deciduous azaleas are native to the eastern and western areas of the United States and Canada, Japan, China, and scattered locations across eastern Europe. Evergreen azaleas are found only in central-eastern and southeastern Asia. Hybridizers have made innumerable crosses among the azaleas, as they have among other rhododendrons, and there are thousands of hybrids. Azaleas can be more heat tolerant than many other rhododendrons, and are particularly popular in hot places, like the American southeast and the cities of Japan.

From Rhododendron Species Foundation website

Twigs AND STEMs

Goodies for November meeting:
Ann Davey
Val Harvey
Brenda Lewis
Reinhold Gorgosilich

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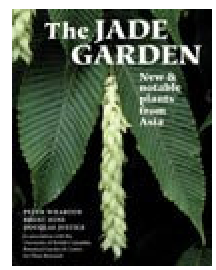
Memberships are due!

Please pay your membership fee in order to be on the club list and to receive your ARS Journal.
$30 Individual, $40 Family
Memberships may be mailed to
Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #1 – 5765 Turner Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

The Jade Garden is an authoritative guide to 130 of the most fascinating yet little-known ornamental trees, shrubs, and perennials from "the green mantle" of Asia. Based on detailed research and observation at one of the largest and oldest collections of Asian plants in North America, the subjects of this book were chosen for their superior garden qualities, their rarity in everyday horticulture, and their commercial availability. From an extraordinary, nearly black geranium with reflexed petals, to a ground-creeping honeysuckle with bicolored flowers and blue berries, gardeners are sure to find something new and exciting in these pages. Although plants included are from the "cutting edge" of plant exploration and discovery, the authors have included only those selections that have undergone thorough evaluation at the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden for hardiness and garden appeal. In addition, the authors have taken special care to exclude potentially invasive plants, allowing readers to be confident that any selection from the book will be an environmentally responsible one. Every plant has a story; the authors provide many colorful histories and enthusiastic accounts — often of their own firsthand encounters with the plants in their wild Asian habitats. For the scientifically minded, introductory essays provide a useful background on Asian geography and floristics. With many of its plants appearing in a garden book for the first time, *The Jade Garden* is certain to be a groundbreaking horticultural event.



NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

ARS Convention in Victoria April 27 – May 1 2005

By Craig Clarke

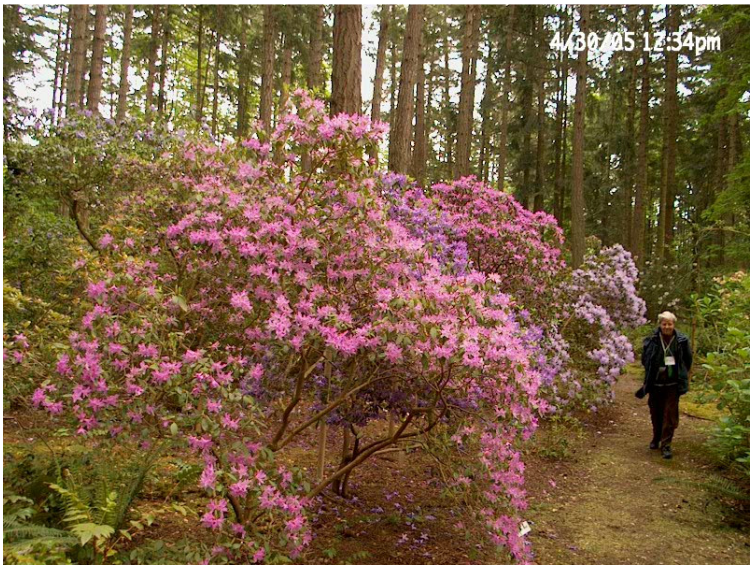
The annual convention of the American Rhododendron Society held in Victoria earlier this year was a real treat. The Victoria chapter was celebrating its silver anniversary and with the experience as host of a very successful convention in 1989, a notable event was created once more. The convention was opened by Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor, Iona Campagnolo who is a keen gardener as well as a very poised speaker.

The bus tours to local gardens covered an amazing range from small suburban yards in Victoria to large forest gardens in Saanich and Sooke. The Dora Kreiss garden on the Strait of Juan de Fuca 65 km west of Victoria has about 400 rhododendrons, many of them species, nestled under towering western red cedar, western hemlock and Douglas fir trees. *R. hodgsonii R. macabeanum* towered 5 metres skyward. Her *R. praestans* was a very impressive 3.6 metres high.

Joyce Clarke in Dora Kreiss Garden

Roy Blackmore's garden in the Metchosin area had a wonderful variety of interesting features including a deck with an imposing view, large rhododendrons and a pond with a fountain.

A perennial favourite of mine is Evelyn & Nick Weesjies garden 'Towner Crest' in North Saanich. They started it in 1982, planting 250 species & 300 hybrid rhododendrons plus many other trees and shrubs making an impressive total of more than 3000 plants. All the work was done by hand to avoid damage to the tree roots. About 7 of the 10 acres of property were planted. Evelyn & Nick both worked at the UBC and their expertise is reflected in an exceptional garden.



Evelyn Weesjies with *R augustinii*.

There was an excellent line up of speakers. Dr. Ben Hall from the University of Washington reviewed his work on use of DNA sequences to verify rhododendron classification. During the conference, he

visited Rhododendron Lake to collect more material for his research on populations of *R. macrophyllum*. Dr. Eric Allen from the Pacific Forestry Centre talked about insect and disease introductions including Sudden Oak Death. John Hammond gave a presentation on the many remarkable rhododendron gardens in western Scotland. Dr. Quentin Cronk from the UBC Botanical Garden gave a humorous presentation on the growth of our passion for rhododendrons. Judith Walker gave a very comprehensive presentation on the network of pioneers who introduced rhododendrons into British Columbia. Peter Wharton from the UBC Botanical Garden showed slides of his collecting trips to southern China. Joy Stones and Ted Cutlan gave a comprehensive presentation on their nursery and gardens in Tasmania (Allen & Gaylle McRae are planning to attend the Tasmanian convention next October, so we have the opportunity to learn more about rhododendron cultivation down under).

Keshab Pradhan of Sikkim was honoured by the ARS with the Rhododendron Pioneer Medal for his work in assisting modern plant explorers in obtaining seed from Sikkim. He was previously awarded the ARS Gold Medal at the 2003 convention. Sonja Nelson was awarded the ARS Gold Medal for her many contributions including her excellent book, *Rhododendrons in the Landscape*, editing the material to produce the *Pacific Coast Rhododendron Story* and serving as editor of the ARS Journal.

Sonja Nelson receiving the ARS Gold medal

Growers from both sides of the international boundary contributed an impressive array of rhododendrons for the plant sale. The truss show was updated daily.

In sum, the convention was an informative and enjoyable event. I recommend that you attend the next ARS convention when you get the opportunity.

2005 Annual Christmas Party and Auction

Our annual Christmas party and auction will take place on December 8. In addition to a plate of "finger food", all members are asked to bring something for the auction. This will reduce the work required of the executive to solicit donations from local businesses. Please bring a plant from your garden or some other item suitable for auction, or to include in the raffle draws. As in years past, 10% of the profit will be donated to the Salvation Army. There will also be a collection of non-perishable food items for the Salvation Army food hamper program.