

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



November 2009
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope that most of you have received my email requesting that you renew your membership ASAP. WHY? 'Cause we love you! And our dollar (exchange) is worth more; we want to keep your journal coming and we need the money.

Ken & Madeleine Webb stopped by my home the other day and dropped off more plants for our Raffle or whatever use we may have for them. When you see Ken or Madeleine please express your thanks for their generosity.

If anyone has any suggestions or questions regarding the meetings or our activities please contact me or any executive member. We will act on it immediately, if appropriate or get back to you as to the status of your suggestion/question.

Christmas is just around the corner and we will be having our annual Xmas "Pot Luck" dinner and auction. If you have anything to donate please contact Al or Gayle McRae.

Well that's it for now – look forward to seeing you at the November meeting,

Paul

EXECUTIVE

President	Paul Lawry	826-2370
Past President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Vice President	John Deniseger	390-3605
Secretary	June Bouchard	390-3605
Treasurer	Gerry Moore	756-1427
Directors	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
	Linda Lawry	390-2370
	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
	Chris Southwick	390-3415
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

COMMITTEES

Advertising	vacant	
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Helene Sullivan	758-7023
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Membership	Debbie Gaboury	
Program	Glenda Allard Barr	390-2822
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #1 – 5765 Turner Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4
Website: nanaimo.rhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12 BEBAN PARK SOCIAL CENTRE 7:30 pm

JEFF HALLWORTH

"Preventing Further Introductions of Horticultural Invasive Plants"

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

TWIGS AND STEMS



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MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE

Please pay your membership fees.

Individual: \$40

Family: \$45

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GOODIES FOR NOVEMBER

Jean Greig

Reinhold Gorgosilich

Lilian Peters

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CONGRATULATIONS TO CHRIS SOUTHWICK

On her appointment as the new
Assistant Superintendent of School District 68

We wish you all the best in your new
position, Chris!



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MALASPINA CHOIR PRESENTS LA DIVA & LE CHOIR

With guest artist Natalie Choquette
Opera and Broadway favourites

Sunday November 15

2:00 pm

Port Theatre

Tickets available at the Port Theatre ticket centre

Conference Corner

We still need someone to take on the role of Volunteer Coordinator for the September 2012 conference. The position will involve gathering names of people interested in volunteering, scheduling shifts and making sure that committee heads have enough help. This will be a fun position and very important to the smooth functioning of the conference. Please let Kathryn or Chris know if you can take this on.

We will begin fundraising for the conference very soon. Please watch for raffle tickets to be distributed at upcoming meetings. We will need your participation to make the conference financially successful. Our goal is to break even, or to make a small profit for the NRS.

I (Kathryn) have finally figured out that the ARS annual meeting in the Spring is known as the "Convention" and the Fall regional meeting is known as a "Conference". I will therefore be referring to it as the conference from now on. Sorry for any confusion this may have caused.

OUR OCTOBER SPEAKER JEFF HALLWORTH

The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society welcomes all guests to our November 12 meeting. We will be presenting Jeff Hallworth, Invasive Plant Specialist, Ministry of Forests and Range. Jeff's topic will be *Preventing Further Introductions of Invasive Horticultural Plants*. Come to learn and be surprised! Questions will be addressed after the presentation and you will find Jeff to be extremely knowledgeable in the area of native plants and invasive threats to those natives in our region.

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New Alternate Director for ARS District 1

Congratulations to Mary Parker of Nanaimo who has been elected by acclamation as the Alternate Director for ARS District 1 (BC). Having assumed this position, she is now the district's nominee for Director and will take over that job when Ron Knight's term is completed at the end of May 2010.

Mary is a veteran rhododendron collector. She is a past-president of the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and has experience on ARS committees. Mary is known as a very friendly and out-going person and District 1 is fortunate to have her as part of the leadership team.

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference — April 9 – 11, 2010

The conference is being held at Canada's premier rhododendron garden: UBC Botanical Garden, Vancouver. It's designed for all gardeners who want to learn more about rhododendrons. The conference features classroom and field experiences at 2 learning levels taught by Douglas Justice and Ron Knight, tours of 3 world-class gardens, rhodo sales, and on-campus suite accommodation. Veteran rhododendron collectors will enjoy Douglas' advanced classes and Ron Knight's novice classes will be a great place for newer club members to learn all the basics of rhododendron culture and care. Conference registrations are arriving each week from rhodophiles up and down the West Coast. In November, thanks to BC Council of Garden Clubs' president Louis Peterson (former president of Vancouver Rhododendron Society), all of their members will be receiving an information package. Rhododendron club members are reminded to **send in**

registrations now in order to ensure that one of the 100 conference spaces is reserved for you and you are eligible for the early booking discount (\$130 before December 31st; \$155 after). Conference details and a printable registration form may be obtained from the District 1 website: www.rhodos.ca (click on "registration form" and "information" halfway down the page under April 9 – 11).



ARS Research Foundation Grant Awarded

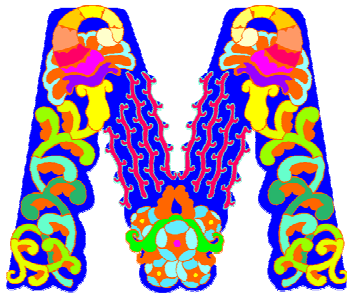
Creating new hybrid Rhododendrons for improved fragrance, fragrance in yellows, oranges and purples, handsome foliage and heat tolerance.

Kristi O'Donnell, Director Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens Greenbank, WA 98253

Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens, founded in 1961, has been involved with hybridizing rhododendrons since the 1970's. The projects objective is to create fragrant hybrid rhododendrons with uniquely pigmented flowers and handsome foliage with a tolerance of drier summer soils. On Whidbey Island, because it is in a rain-shadow, summers are drier than surrounding regions. Some crosses will use *R. macrophyllum* in the hopes that hybrids will be more tolerant of drier conditions. The public is also often unaware that many rhododendrons are fragrant. If the goal is obtained of developing hybrids with fragrance in colors such as yellow, orange or deep purple, good looking form and foliage as well as tolerance of drier soils, then this would help the broader promotion of rhododendrons.

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Companion Plants



M is for Mahonia of the Barberry Family Family: Berberidaceae

Everyone probably has a spot in their garden that they'd rather not do much in – could be too shady, with not great soil, far away in an unused corner, or on a bank. The Mahonias, or Grape Hollies, are attractive plants that just might fit the bill and not give a lot of grief. Easy to grow, undemanding (I lie – more later!), with evergreen leaves, bright flowers, colourful fruits that are not poisonous or injurious, and few pests – is this nirvana or what? From groundcover to low shrubs to stately background specimens, there is a Mahonia for nearly any place, and we are in the native range of three of the species. The flowers are most always some shade of yellow, often fragrant, sometimes powerfully so, and a close-in place to enjoy these plants is definitely called for. Berries, in clumps or pendulous clusters, are in the blue-purple-black range, and make good jelly. Foliage is leathery, pinnate, spiny to one degree or another, often red-tinted when young, and sometimes colouring purple-red in winter.

For the very smallest groundcover type, look for *M. repens* (Creeping Mahonia), a suckering form only 12” tall that's very tough – I've seen it survive in shelter near Calgary for years. A bit bigger, to 18”, with shinier, longer leaves, and also a spring to early summer bloomer, is *M. nervosa* (Cascades Mahonia). Taller again, 4-6 ft or so, also suckering into thickets of stems, and blooming May-June, is *M. aquifolium* (Oregon Grape).

Plant enthusiasts have developed selections for specific characteristics – prolific bloom, spring foliage, compact habit, or winter colour – look for names like 'Apollo', 'Smaragd', 'Moseri', and others. However, the crowning glories, in my estimation, are the tall-growing winter bloomers – *M. japonica* and *M. x media*. Call me narrow-minded, but fragrance in winter is something I go for every time, and I'd recommend these any day, despite their obvious drawbacks.

This is where that 'undemanding' issue comes in – they DEMAND that you don't plant them where they overhang a walkway! They DEMAND that you don't prune or clean up leaf litter without a good pair of gloves and stout clothing! And they DEMAND that you give them plenty of room and don't plant rhodos next to them that need to be deadheaded! Other than that, average soil, average moisture, partial shade, and shelter from the cold winter wind is all they ask, but the rewards are enormous.



Mahonia x media 'Charity'
shows upright flower
racemes



Mahonia x media 'Buckland'
shows drooping flower
racemes

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They produce soft yellow flowers in spreading racemes often a foot across, wafting a sweet delicate fragrance across the yard on any warmish winter day, and a presence to anchor any mixed border for years to come. At maturity, the canopy of foliage and bloom is held up by a multitude of stems with richly fissured bark, and the heavy cascades of fruit are good food for birds and other wildlife. There are named varieties to be found here also – ‘Charity’ and ‘Winter Sun’ are common, but others may also be available, like ‘Lionel Fortescue’, ‘Hybernant’, ‘Buckland’, and ‘Charity’s Sister’, to name a few.

Seed germinates well if sown in outdoor beds or pots to stratify, and fall leaf-bud cuttings are easily rooted. Light pruning every year after blooming keeps the plants in good shape, and old stems may be removed at the base altogether. Not really many DEMANDS for a lot of satisfaction, I’d say.

Happy Planting!

Colleen Forster

Mahonia nervosa
the richly textured bark of
our native Oregon Grape

