

Volume 12

OCTOBER 2003



Issue 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow, what a job to move those 500 rhodo's. Perseverance and fortitude are the operative words for the Dempsters. Thank you Eleanore for your presentation last month.

We have all sorts of subjects and speakers arranged for our members and guests. Let's try and build up our membership and ask friends and relatives to join our club.

Last month I discussed hardening off of our rhododendrons; well you may have to continue watering for a bit longer if this dry weather continues. For more information on fall planting and rhododendron care, please read "Fall for Rhododendrons" by Norman Todd.

I attended the ARS District 1 President's meeting on September 21. Subjects of interest were the Milner Gardens species propagation project and species test gardens. The species study days at the Species Foundation may be held again next spring if there is enough interest. The Species Foundation rhododendron sale. The Victoria Chapter is hosting the ARS National Convention April 27 to May 1, 2005. I will be in England next month so Paul Lawry has graciously volunteered to be your host.

Richard.

EXECUTIVE

President	Richard White	752-6519
V/President	Paul Lawry	390-2370
Secretary	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Treasurer	Barb Coy	758-8497
Directors	Allan McRae	758-7589
	Mike Miller	758-2879
	Helmut Neuman	714-1840
	Chris Southwick	758-0993
	Mary Taylor	756-3984
	Anne Williamson	390-2604

COMMITTEES

ADVERTISING	Allan	758-7589
LIBRARY	Chris (temp)	758-0993
NEWSLETTER	Paul & Linda	390-2370
PROGRAMS	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
RAFFLE TABLE	June & John	
SOCIAL	Anne	390-2604
\$ TABLE	Yvonne	756-3574

MEETINGS

**October 9 - Trevor & Doreen Badminton
"Yak Hybrids"**

Will be bringing some plants to sell

November 13 - Garth Wedemire

"Maple Ridge to Mission - Rhodo Collections"

**A slide show of Rhodo Collections belonging to
the Hemmings, Ladds, Wedemires and
Dempsters**

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?
YOU CAN PAY AT THE MEETING OR MAIL THEM
IN.

1

APRIL NRS MEETING DATE HAS BEEN
CHANGED TO APRIL 15

NRS MAILING ADDRESS

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Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

NRS WEBSITE

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PAST ISSUES

www.rhodos.ca/nanaimo/newsarchive.htm

ARS WEBSITE

www.rhododendron.org

Rhododendron & Azalea News

www.rhododendron.org/news/newsindex.htm

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Paul & Linda Lawry

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Telephone: [250] 390-2370

DISTRIBUTION

Gill Taylor

DOLLAR \$ TABLE

We need more Rhodos for the dollar table. Please bring Rhodo seedlings, cuttings and/or plants.

**REGULAR MEETING
AUCTIONS**

Have you been wanting to replace a large plant with a smaller one or find you no longer have enough room for some of your larger plants?

Then, now is your chance to solve your problem and help out the NRS at the same time.

Call Craig at 390-4090 and make arrangements to donate the plant to the NRS.

All plants will be auctioned at our regular meetings.



Paul & Lynn Wurz
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The Vancouver Rose Society
The Ninth Annual Goulding Memorial Lecture

RAYFORD CLAYTON REDDELL
A Passion for Roses

Tuesday, September 30, 2003 – 7:30 p.m.

Norman Rothstein Theatre – 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.

Tickets: **\$10.00** – Free to members of The Canadian Rose Society

Call Pauline 985-6383 or Lesley 261-6417 for tickets or more information

Reception Following

Rayford Reddell owns a nine acre ranch in Petaluma, California, planted with over 8,000 roses and containing a one acre fragrant garden. An expert on roses, he is the garden columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, appears on Martha Stewart Living and is a regular contributor to Horticulture Magazine. Ray's books include: "The Rose Bible", "Growing Good Roses" and "A Year in the Life of a Rose". You can access his website at www.gardenvalleyranch.com. This should be a very interesting evening for everyone and especially for those who wish to incorporate roses into their planting schemes.



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Fall for Rhododendrons by Norman Todd

In the gardens of coastal British Columbia, the best time to plant broad leaf shrubs and trees is the fall. In October and November, the soil is still warm, the autumn rains have begun, and conditions are the best for the development of new roots. By planting in the fall, plants will become established before the burgeoning demands of spring signal the roots to send more nutrients for swelling blossoms and expanding leaves.

As long as the ground is not frozen, the roots of the broad leaf evergreens are purposefully working. To the human eye, there does not seem to be much going on above soil level, but the plant is still photosynthesising. Sugars and starches are being manufactured from the nutrients the searching roots are pumping up to the leaves.

When a plant is dug up and replanted, or taken from a container and put in the ground, the roots are always disturbed. To assist them to grow into soil in their new environment, the roots of a potted plant must be teased apart quite vigorously so that they can make intimate contact with the welcoming environment of the new, freshly prepared home. For rhododendrons this means an open, friable soil with a high content of organic matter, located in a well-drained site. Rhododendrons hate standing in water: they drown. Their roots need loose, airy, humusy soil around them.

One of the best and easiest ways to give them this open soil and the right acidity is to incorporate bark mulch. Up to 50% of the mix in the planting soil can be bark mulch – not too coarse and not dust either. Many people like to use peat moss, but much of the moss available today is so fine that if it ever dries out, it is very difficult to moisten it again. Furthermore, peat moss breaks down far more quickly than bark mulch. The number one cardinal rule for growing rhododendrons is that the roots must never go dry.

If your soil is a black humus-rich loam, you are fortunate indeed and no amendment may be necessary. You can plant the rhododendron as deeply as it was in the pot. But if the natural soil is a heavy clay, then 8 to 12 cm of coarse sand should be dug in to a depth of 30 cm before the addition of the bark mulch. Composted leaves, preferably oak, can be used instead of bark mulch. If the soil is heavy clay, you can plant very shallowly, bringing the amended soil higher than the soil level at which the plant was previously growing. Mixing some fertilizer in the planting hole is beneficial. Avoid using animal manure that is less than a year old. An excellent fertilizer you can make yourself is a mix of ground meals: 4 parts of canola, 4 of

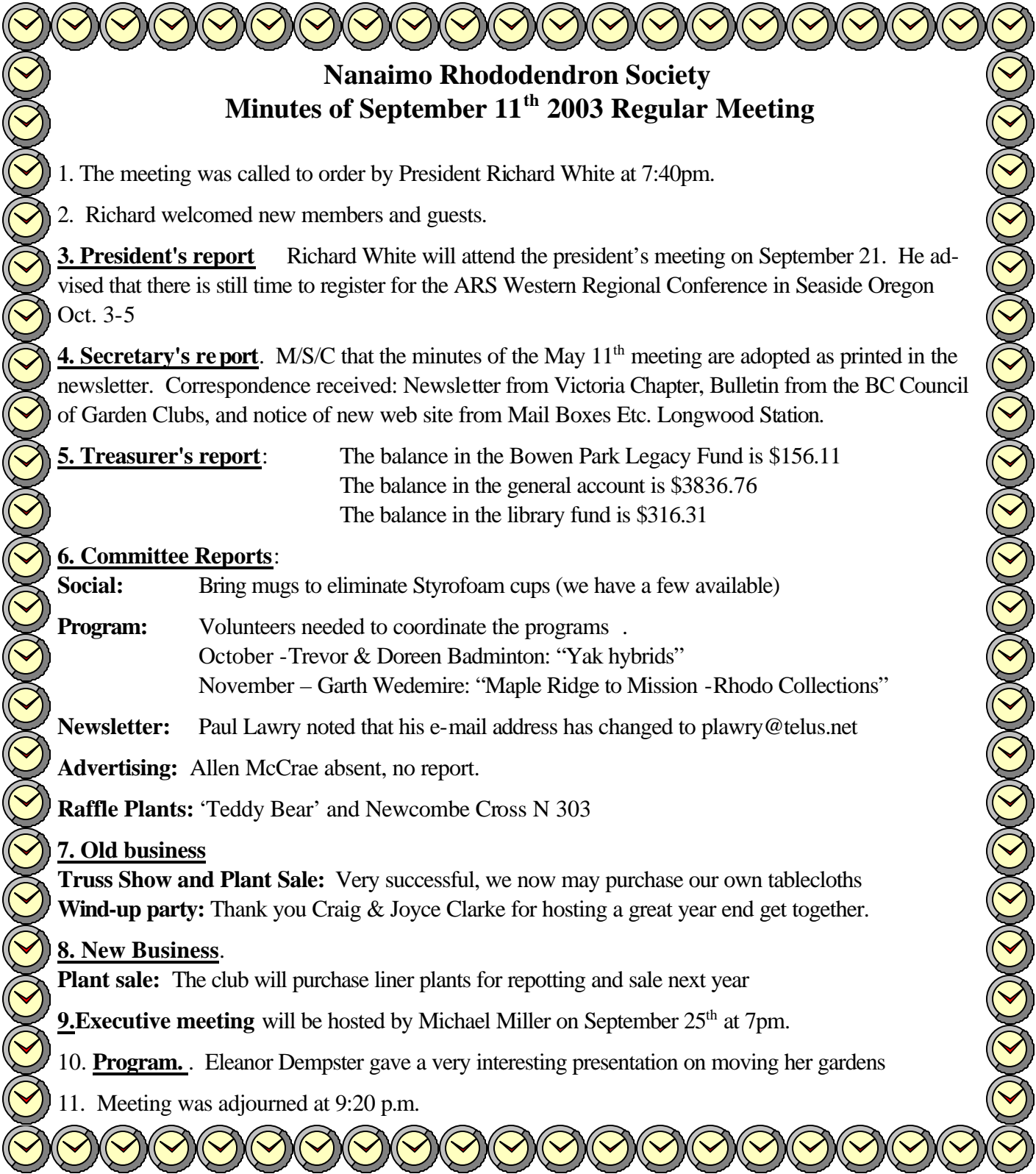
alfalfa, 4 of blood, 1 of bone and 1 of kelp plus 2 of dolomite lime and 1 of rock phosphate.

Most of the rhododendrons we grow are hybrids. Hybrids result when two or more of the plants found growing in the 'wild' – the species – have been combined by cross-pollination. Most of the species that have been used to make these popular hybrids come from climates that have relatively dry winters and high summer rainfall. In the Victoria, we have the reverse. One of the consequences of our persistent winter rainfall is that the nutrients that are at the surface of the soil get leached downwards quite quickly. Rhododendrons, which are very shallow-rooted can in fact be starved in our winter because all the goodness goes past them before they can catch their fair share. If the roots can't supply the nourishment, then the plant will draw from its stored reserves – its rainy day account, leaving less for production of flowers and foliage. The regime that I follow is to feed sparingly with a chemical fertilizer (10-8-6 with all the minor elements), five times a year. I start in November and feed every two months with the last feed on Canada Day. Rhododendrons are not gross feeders, but they do like three meals a day – light ones in the winter, heavier ones in the spring.

Choosing the right variety for the right spot is important. There are now more than 23,000 registered hybrids. This is a daunting number but, from its very size, you can be sure that the right plant for your particular location can be found. Some need almost no direct sun, some need full sun, some will grow to be trees and some will never be more than 2 cm high, some will bloom in December and some will bloom as late as August, some are deciduous, most are evergreen. Colours range through the entire spectrum except for the pure gentian blue. Even that is now a possibility with our increased understanding of genetics.

One of the convenient characteristics of rhododendrons is that because they're shallow-rooted they are very portable. For gardeners who would really like their plants to come with wheels so that they can move things around until their concept of horticultural artistic perfection is reached, rhododendrons come quite close to being ideal. They can be moved at any time of the year. The huge majority are planted in the spring and they do very well. The very best time, however, for gardeners in our area is the fall.

(This article was discovered in the VRS archives, undated, but probably first published in the early 1990's. It is both timeless and timely.)



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Minutes of September 11th 2003 Regular Meeting

1. The meeting was called to order by President Richard White at 7:40pm.

2. Richard welcomed new members and guests.

3. President's report Richard White will attend the president's meeting on September 21. He advised that there is still time to register for the ARS Western Regional Conference in Seaside Oregon Oct. 3-5

4. Secretary's report. M/S/C that the minutes of the May 11th meeting are adopted as printed in the newsletter. Correspondence received: Newsletter from Victoria Chapter, Bulletin from the BC Council of Garden Clubs, and notice of new web site from Mail Boxes Etc. Longwood Station.

5. Treasurer's report:
The balance in the Bowen Park Legacy Fund is \$156.11
The balance in the general account is \$3836.76
The balance in the library fund is \$316.31

6. Committee Reports:

Social: Bring mugs to eliminate Styrofoam cups (we have a few available)

Program: Volunteers needed to coordinate the programs .
October -Trevor & Doreen Badminton: "Yak hybrids"
November – Garth Wedemire: "Maple Ridge to Mission -Rhodo Collections"

Newsletter: Paul Lawry noted that his e-mail address has changed to plawry@telus.net

Advertising: Allen McCrae absent, no report.

Raffle Plants: 'Teddy Bear' and Newcombe Cross N 303

7. Old business

Truss Show and Plant Sale: Very successful, we now may purchase our own tablecloths

Wind-up party: Thank you Craig & Joyce Clarke for hosting a great year end get together.

8. New Business.

Plant sale: The club will purchase liner plants for repotting and sale next year

9. Executive meeting will be hosted by Michael Miller on September 25th at 7pm.

10. **Program.** Eleanor Dempster gave a very interesting presentation on moving her gardens

11. Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

"TO GROW A HEALTHY RHODODENDRON YOU HAVE TO GROW THE ROOTS".

A long time ago when we first began growing rhododendrons, a hybridizer told us, "to grow a healthy rhododendron you have to grow the roots". That clump that you bury in the ground and never see again... that clump of roots is actually a mirror reflection of your plant. Growing healthy roots grows healthy rhododendrons. Consider the following:

1) Location: Rhododendron roots are surface feeders and develop a shallow root system. Because rhododendron roots obtain much of their oxygen and water near ground level, you will not want to plant the roots too deep and you will want to provide the roots with adequate water. You can achieve this by digging a shallow hole and backfill the hole with amended soil (soil mixed with mulch). Place the roots half way in the hole and lightly cover the top of the roots with mulch. One nice point to having a shallow root system is they do transplant fairly easy.

2) Water/Drainage: Rhododendron roots love water, they can even sit in it when the temperatures are cool, but when it is hot and humid they can develop root rot. It is like drinking hot water when you are really thirsty; you usually stop after the first sip. Well drained soil is the key. Amending your soil can be very inexpensive too. You can use material such as pine needles, fresh sawdust, or bark dust. We do not recommend using fallen leaves because they can contain disease, but they do make a nice top covering in the winter months. Mix the mulch into your existing soil. Planting on a hillside or slope also provides good drainage.

3) Spacing: When planting your rhododendrons you will want to consider spacing. A quick and general rule is how tall the plant will be in 10-years is how to determine the spacing between the plants. If the rhododendrons will be 4' in 10-years, plant the centers (the stems) 4' a part. You can also stagger the plants for a more full look.

4) Fertilizing: Is it lunch time yet? Yes rhododendron roots get hungry too. We recommend feeding your rhododendron roots as early as March and then a small dose or snack every 4-6 weeks until mid-July. Fertilizing after July can initiate fall new growth that is susceptible to early frost. You can purchase rhododendron/azalea food at your local garden supply store.

Eileen Hoffman

A Sandy Rhododendron

<http://www.rhodo.com>

RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION NEW PLANT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Gardeners will be interested to know that the Rhododendron Species foundation has inaugurated a new plant distribution system for Canadian RSF members living in southwest BC. Until now, members have had to go to the RSF Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington. Thus involving considerable inconvenience; personal plans; time; expense and energy in travelling plus the hassle at the border

Beginning with the spring distribution in 2004, all plants ordered by RSF members living in BC will be delivered together, to the Botanical Garden at UBC, which will act as the distribution centre, on a date to be announced. Customs will have been cleared and one Phytosanitary Certificate will be shared. A flat \$10 (US) charge will be added to each order to assist in covering costs. Members will then have one week in which to pick up their plants at UBC. Arrangements may be made for one person to pick up several orders.

It is hoped that the new policy will be more "user friendly" to Canadians and result in more Canadians becoming members of the Rhododendron Species Foundation,

Later this fall the RSF will be sending spring catalogues and membership forms to each of the ARS District 1 Chapters. Steve Hootman, CO-Director of the RSF Garden, will give a talk on the RSF to the Vancouver Chapter on the evening of th March 18, 2004 (7:30 Floral Hall, Van Dusen Gardens). All District 1 ARS members are welcome.

Any questions about the Rhododendron Species Foundation or the plant distribution can be addressed to Joe Ronsley at 604-921-9444 or jronsley@telus.net Or go to the RSF WEBSITE www.garden.org.

Horticulture Tip

(Seattle Rhododendronland – December 1999)

Are your rhodies looking a bit chlorotic? (green veins with yellow leaves). While visiting Jim Bar-lup's garden recently, he shared his success recipe: Jim uses a combination of Epsom salts (2tbs per gallon of water) and chelated iron (per instructions on the box) mixed together with a spreader sticker (which makes it adhere to the foliage). He then sprays his chlorotic looking leaves to restore their green vitality. (Epsom salts provide magnesium) Make sure the soil is moist and the sun is not shining when applying chemicals.

PROBLEM: You're trying to find all the Web pages with a particular word in their addresses.

SOLUTION: Add the metaword "url" to your search. For example, if the word you're looking for is "sports," type URL:SPORTS (all lowercase) in the search field. Of course, you'll probably have to add other search criteria in order to limit the number of hits.

Other metawords include "title" (for finding pages with a specific word in their titles) and "domain" (for limiting searches to a specific domain, such as .org or .gov).



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BUG-BUSTING TIPS
Jerry Baker, Master Gardener
www.jerrybaker.com

When strolling through your flowerbeds and gardens, it's important that you keep your eyes open for insects. Here are some of my tried and true bug-busting tips that'll keep those wiggling and winged warriors away from your annuals, perennials, and flowering shrubs.

- Garden thugs are born bullies—they almost always pick on plants that are weaklings. So fight bugs the best way—with a good, preventative maintenance program. Give your plants plenty of sunlight and water, feed 'em well, and weed them regularly. Healthy plants will be able to fight off most bugs without any additional help.
- Aphids like the cool, dark undersides of leaves. So to shake them up—let there be light! Lay pieces of aluminum foil under affected plants. The aphids are confused by the increased light, and leave the leaves. Also, you can cut up **2 or 3 garlic cloves** and sprinkle them among your rose bushes to keep the aphids away.
- Cigarette filters can save plant lives by killing bugs. **Break the smoked filters from the cigarette stubs, remove the paper, place 6 to 8 of them on the soil surface and water thoroughly.** The nicotine will make the bugs wish they had shackled up in someone else's garden.
- Regular applications of my **All Season Clean-Up Tonic** should keep most bugs in check, too.

**1 cup of liquid dish soap,
1 cup of chewing tobacco tea*, and
1 cup of antiseptic mouthwash.**

Mix all of the ingredients in a 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, filling the balance of the jar with warm water. Apply this mixture to your plants liberally to discourage insects and prevent disease during the growing season.

*Place three fingers of chewing tobacco in an old nylon stocking and soak in a gallon of hot water until the mixture is dark brown.

- Earwigs like to nibble on the foliage and flowers of many plants, especially dahlias, zinnias, and hollyhock. To keep these ugly thugs from calling your yard home, you need to remove their hiding places. Any place that is dark and cool during the day is an ideal spot for them. Trap them by putting **an inch of soy sauce** in the bottom of an old sour cream container, and then top it off with **a thin film of vegetable oil**. Put the cover on, punch 3 holes near the top of the container, and set it in your garden. Throw it out whenever it's brimmin' with bugs.