

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



October 2006
October 2006



FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this the weather continues to be warm & dry. Keep your shrubs and trees well watered so that they can recover from the summer drought. It will take a number of heavy soaking rains to restore the soil moisture at depth.

Along with a number of our members, Joyce and I attended the ARS 2006 Western Regional Conference in the Harrison Hot Springs. There were a number of interesting presentations including a "mystery speaker", John Farrer whose grandfather was a cousin of Reginald Farrer, an early plant explorer in the Himalayas with John Forrest and Euan Cox in the early 1900s.

A reminder that the RSF fall plant sale catalogue is available online at <http://www.rsfcitymax.com/f/2006FALLLIST.pdf>. If members wish to purchase plants, let me know by the time of our October meeting. The plants will be delivered to UBC during the first week of November.

Craig

EXECUTIVE

President	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Vice President	Paul Lawry	390-2370
Secretary	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Treasurer	Linda Lawry	390-2370
Directors	Valerie Harvey	754-6659
	Debbie Gaboury	758-1204
	Glenda Barr	390-2822
	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Mike Miller	758-2879
	Chris Southwick	758-0993
	John Deniseger	390-3605

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Mike Miller	758-2879
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
	Helene Sullivan	758-7023
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	245-7879
Program	Chris Southwick	758-0993
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: nanaimo.rhodos.ca
email: nanaimo@rhodos.ca

NEXT MEETING

OCTOBER 12, 2006

BEBAN PARK

7:30 PM

KRISTI OZERO

GARDENING WITH DEER

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

TWIGS AND STEMS



Goodies for October meeting:

Doug Blenkarn
Debbie Gaboury
Anne Williamson
Glenda Barr

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Membership Fees are due!

Please bring your membership to the fall meeting or mail to the club address on the first page of the newsletter.

Individual - \$35
Family - \$45
Associate - \$15

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Fall Tour is Off!

The possible trip to Milner Gardens talked about at the September meeting will not be taking place, as Milner Gardens is closing after October 9. If you want to see the fall colour there, you'll need to go this weekend.

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Island Specialty Nursery Sale

September 28 to October 13

Island Specialty Nursery is continuing to reduce stock in anticipation of moving.

Discounts up to 60%.

- ❖ Black bamboo
 - ❖ Cyclamen, Colchicum, Nerine
 - ❖ Dormant native bulbs
 - ❖ Maples, Gingkos, Dogwoods & other deciduous trees
 - ❖ Much, much more!
- 10 am to 5:30 pm Thursday to Monday
including holidays
closed Tuesday and Wednesday

3797 Chemainus Rd, Chemainus
246-9355

KRISTI OZERO

Kristi Ozero is a Certified Horticulturist and Garden Designer. Upon finishing her Horticulture studies at Malaspina University-College in 1999, she worked at Milner Gardens and Woodland for four years creating the plant records department and researching the rhododendron collection. Over the past seven years, Kristi had been self-employed as a landscaper, horticulture consultant and garden designer. Most of her clients reside in Fairwinds in Nanoose Bay, which is how she got acquainted with the challenges of gardening with deer. In 2004, she was hired by a private island resort to redesign the 90 acre grounds and golf course to be more deer resistant. Kristi has just completed the Garden Design program at University of British Columbia and currently works at Cannor Nursery in Parksville.



GARDENING WITH DEER

In this presentation, the challenges of gardening with deer will be discussed and lamented. Deer habits and home owner expectations will be discussed. Some strategies for discouraging deer will be covered including physical barriers, sprays and home remedies. Tips will be offered on what qualities to look for in a plant that make it deer resistant. Slides will be shown of deer resistant plants and design ideas to reduce the impact of deer in your garden.

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GENERAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 with Vice President Paul Lawry chairing. There were 31 members and guests present. Paul welcomed visitors and new members.

Secretary's report: minutes of May 2006 AGM adopted. Correspondence: various newsletters, donation request from Milner Gardens.

Treasurer's report: current balance \$2685.17.

Membership: fees are due: \$35 for individual, \$45 for family, \$15 for associate. Membership gives you a discount at some garden centres; show your membership card.

Raffle prizes were donated by Paul Lawry, Gary Anaka.

Social: please give Pat feedback on the strength of the coffee. Sign-up book for goodies was passed around.

Program: October – Kristi Ozero? (not yet confirmed)

Garden Tours: John is planning a Spring garden tour to Saltspring. Possible fall tour to Milner Garden. Members are invited to tour the International Composting Corporation facility at Duke Point on October 7. Meet at ICC at 11 am.

Reminder about the ARS Western Regional Conference at Harrison September 22 – 24.

Craig will be placing an order with the Species Foundation. Please let Craig know what you would like to order by the October meeting. The plant list is available on the ARS website.

The new Philip and Joy Paull Award for cumulative points was displayed.

The Best in Show trophy was awarded to Doug Blenkarn for his entry *R. 'Phyllis Korn'* at the May show.

Doorprize Winners: Paul Lawry, Chris Southwick, Linda Lawry, Kathryn Grant.

Raffle winners: Val Harvey, Charles Hardy, Brenda Lewis, Pat Schulson, Donna Porter. Ray Lauzier.

Chris introduced our speaker Donna Hill, who spoke on gardening with native plants.



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What's In Bloom? - October

Acer Palmatum
Fall Colours



Anemone
'Robustissima'



Castanea Sativa
(Chestnut Husk)



Cimicifuga
Simplex



Cyclamen
Hederifolium



Hydrangea Paniculata
'Grandiflora'



Stewartia
Pseudocamellia Seed



Primula Capitata
SSP Mooreana



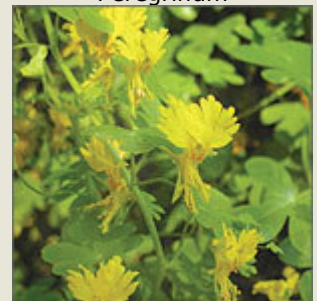
Schizostylis
Coccineus



Schizostyli
'Mrs Hegarty'



Tropaeolum
Peregrinum



NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

The Rhododendron Species Foundation

Mission Statement

The *Rhododendron Species Foundation* is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation, research, acquisition, evaluation, cultivation, public display, and distribution of *Rhododendron* species. The Foundation provides education relating to the genus; and serves as a unique resource for scientific, horticultural, and general gardening communities worldwide.

The RSF will use the following means to achieve this mission:

- Acquire and maintain as comprehensive a collection of *Rhododendron* species as possible.
- Conserve *Rhododendron* species through the cultivation and distribution of selected forms and documented wild collected material as obtained in the field or by other means
- Support the **Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden**, a living plant museum and effectively designed garden for the display and cultivation of *Rhododendron* species along with other plants with which they associate.
- Provide information, education, and support of research for persons interested in the genus *Rhododendron*.

Rhododendron Species Foundation

The Rhododendron Species Foundation is a non-profit organization founded and incorporated in 1964 by members of the American Rhododendron Society in order to secure the finest authentic forms of *Rhododendron* species, and to develop a comprehensive collection of this plant genus. Conservation has become of primary importance in recent years due to the destruction of *Rhododendron* habitat in many areas of the world.



Following initial discussions among *Rhododendron* breeders and enthusiasts in the Pacific Northwest, the real origin of the Rhododendron Species Foundation may be said to lie with a visit to England by Dr Milton Walker in March of 1964. The purpose of his visit was to explore the possibility of importing cuttings of the best forms of *Rhododendron* species growing in both public and private British gardens, many from the original wild collections. Among the gardens he visited were Windsor Great Park, Wakehurst, Leonardslee, and the major Cornish gardens, including Caerhays. In September he wrote to these gardens, as well as to Brodick, Wisley, Corsock, Leggygowan (Northern Ireland), Glenarn, Logan House, Younger Botanic Garden of Benmore, Stronachullin, and the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, to request cuttings. But there was a problem. Due to American import regulations the cuttings could not be brought into the United States directly from Europe. They could, however, due to an extraordinary flexibility on the part of the Canadian Department of Agriculture and Canada Customs, be imported into Canada. Dr. Walker contacted Mary Grieg, owner of the Royston Nursery on Vancouver Island, to inquire if it would be possible for the cuttings to be imported and propagated in British Columbia. As a result of Mary Grieg's further inquiries, arrangements were made with the University of British Columbia, and the first shipment of cuttings arrived there from Brodick Castle in September, 1964. Subsequent shipments arrived in Vancouver that same fall, and over the next several years from other major British gardens. At UBC they were propagated by Evelyn Jack (now Weesjes), who in the process took on much of the correspondence with the British sources. The plants were grown on for up to two years, and, with a sharing agreement providing that one plant of each

selection be kept at UBC, then sent on to Oregon to become a permanent part of the RSF collection.

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The RSF *Rhododendron* collection was first housed on Milton Walker's property at Pleasant Hill, near Eugene, Oregon. The first plants were sent there in October, 1968. Three years later the collection was moved to the property of RSF board member P.H. (Jock) Brydon, near Salem, Oregon. By the fall of 1973 it had become apparent that the collection was becoming too large for the Brydon property, and a committee met with George Weyerhaeuser (a relative of committee member Corydon Wagner), who was immediately and enthusiastically receptive to the idea of providing space on the new Weyerhaeuser corporate campus. In 1974 the Weyerhaeuser Company generously leased at no cost a permanent site of 24 acres for the collection at its corporate headquarters in Federal Way, Washington. Weyerhaeuser also developed the site by installing the main service road, pathways, irrigation system, and laying down 37,000 cubic yards of sawdust for the planting beds. (This last measure was a serious mistake, because the decaying sawdust turned into a mushy substance trapping water and denying the plants oxygen. Many plants were lost, and years later the beds continue to be renovated.) The collection was relocated from Salem to the Federal Way site in 1975, and planted in accordance with the geographic area of species origin.

In the fall of 1974, the first staff person was hired to develop the Garden and curate the collection. His name was Kendall Gambrill. Ken was hired as a gardener, and was recognized officially as the curator, but quickly became *de facto* the RSF's first Garden Director. A plant propagation program was also initiated, and a propagating greenhouse, lath house, and office were built. From their beginnings Ken Gambrill worked with all these facilities, but by the early 1980s he was at considerable odds over many issues with Executive Manager Karen Gunderson. By 1984 morale was so low as a result of the animosity between these two people, who were of equal authority in running the garden, that Ken Gambrill resigned, to the very real regret of the organization. During Ken's ten-year tenure considerable development had taken place, beginning with the planting of the new garden at Weyerhaeuser.

A membership program was started in 1976, with membership gradually building, ultimately to over 750 members from 15 different countries. Plant distribution to members was also begun about this time, with the profits helping to support the garden. 1980 marked the opening of the Garden to the public on a limited basis, the formal establishment of a coordinated volunteer program, and the completion of a garden master plan that proposed replanting the collection in the Garden to reflect taxonomic groups (those species that are most closely related are planted near one another). This replanting was completed in 1984.

While Ken Gambrill's leaving was definitely a loss to the garden, it did give the Board of Directors an opportunity to eliminate the split directorship and hire a single overall Executive Director. It appointed Richard Piacentini as the first person to occupy this position, with this title, in 1984. In 1985 Karen Gunderson retired as Executive Manager, after serving the RSF for nearly ten years.

An International Rhododendron Species Symposium organized by the RSF was held in Tacoma, Washington, in April, 1985. Education has always been a primary goal of the RSF. One way to serve this objective is to provide horticulture students with practical hands-on experience. The Student Intern Program was inaugurated in 1986. Since that time 48 budding horticulturists have worked and studied in the Garden and nursery.

In 1989 the new garden Gift Shop opened adjacent to Weyerhaeuser's newly constructed Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection, sharing a common entry, courtyard, and visitor facilities. A new structure was built in 1995 near the Gift Shop for the sale of plants to the public.



Executive Director Richard Piacentini resigned in 1991. He moved to Michigan where he became director of the Leila Arboretum. The position of Executive Director was left vacant for a year, with Board President Donald King filling the role temporarily. In 1992 John Fitzpatrick was appointed to the position, which he

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filled for only one year, being replaced by Scott Vergara, who in turn served only two years, from 1993 to 1995. Again, upon Scott Vergara's departure, the Foundation was left without an Executive Director. This time the position was left vacant for three years, with President Fred Whitney first serving as Acting Director (1995-1997), then President Honoré Hacanson filling the same position until 1998, when Curator Steve Hootman and Garden Manager Rick Peterson were appointed joint Executive Directors.

Awareness of the Foundation by the general public increased in the nineties, as did the misperception that the RSF was an organization that awarded funds to other institutions, a primary purpose of many foundations. In 1993 a decision was made to name the 22 acre display garden the **Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden** and to use this name for public relations purposes.



In 1997 an anonymous member of the Board offered a matching challenge grant of \$400,000 for the RSF Endowment fund. Members, granting agencies, and friends met the goal, and then some, to boost the fund to over one million dollars. A small portion of the interest from the Endowment helps fund garden operations.

In the mid-1990s it was gradually becoming clear that simply propagating plants vegetatively from good forms of the species primarily in British gardens was not adequately serving either the needs of gardeners as the membership grew, or the mandate of the Foundation, especially in regard to conservation. This was especially true as areas in Asia previously closed had been opening up for new exploration, and at the same time habitat destruction was taking place at an unprecedented rate. The gene pool of plants in cultivation had to be increased, and it was decided that in many ways the intraspecific variations were as important to have in cultivation as what were considered the superior forms. While there was some debate among members of the Board concerning propagation and distribution of wild collected seed, the ultimate decision to do so placed the RSF in a whole new context, where it served a function similar to what had been taking place in the 19th and early 20th centuries when most of the species had been introduced into cultivation for the first time.

Wild collected seed was propagated in the 1980s on a very limited basis. Beginning in 1993 propagation of seed was greatly increased, initially from outside sources. Then, in 1995, Curator Steve Hootman made his first expedition to China where he made numerous rhododendron seed collections. Since that time he has participated in or led additional botanical expeditions to China, Sikkim, Tibet, India, and the states of North Carolina and Alaska. Exchange of seed with other collectors continues and the collection has been augmented considerably by member/supporters, including among others, Warren Berg, Garratt Richardson, and June Sinclair.

The RSF hosted the 1999 Rhododendron Species Symposium, the second such event, in Bellevue, Washington.

With the increase in plant sales through mail order, nursery volunteers funded the construction of a new building to be used specifically for the spring and fall plant distributions. The structure was completed in the fall of 2001. And in 2003 a new, state-of-the-art, propagation greenhouse was constructed to replace the aging facility built almost thirty years previously, thereby increasing the propagation success and capacity enormously.

Early in the 21st century an RSF website was set up, and in 2004 Bill Spohn, a new RSF Board member and lawyer in Vancouver who taught himself how to create websites, revised and much improved it, making it much more attractive, expanding all sections, and establishing a full photo section. The website was made into something that was useful, and in which RSF members can take some pride.

Expansion of the collection continues, as does the international profile, reputation, and authority of the RSF.

from the RSF website www.rsf.citymax.com